

**THE CFSP FACTOR: A COMPARISON OF U.S. AND
FRENCH STRATEGIES**

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From all appearances, the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is a casualty of the events set in train by the events of September 11. The elusive unity of outlook among the fifteen, the necessary condition for an operative CFSP, was shattered by the sharp divisions over Iraq. Honest differences of interpretation and prescription have been exacerbated by the bitter exchanges and factional rivalries that dissolved any sense of communitarian spirit. The United States, for its part, has exploited the opportunity to pursue a strategy of divide and neutralize. Washington deployed its formidable instruments of influence to marshal support for its hard-line policy, forestalling the attempt by the French-German tandem to forge a common EU position to counteract American policy. Washington thereby also confirmed its declared aim to prevent the emergence of any power or bloc of states that could countervail the U.S. did not make an exception for the EU.

UNITED STATES

Current American attitudes toward CFSP are inseparable from judgments formed in the ferment surrounding the disputatious crisis on Iraq. The fraught diplomacy it evoked has brought into sharp focus the full implications for transatlantic relations of the radical changes in the United States' strategic vision wrought by developments since September 11.¹ A decade's equivocation as to its post-Cold War world role has been resolved in terms that heighten traits long associated with the distinctly American approach to foreign policy: exceptionalism, unilateralism and moralism.² They have been melded into an assertive internationalism imperial in scope and design, that has been labeled "Wilsonianism in boots."³

Extrapolation of the war on terror into an open-ended commitment to restore national invulnerability by eliminating threats, manifest or potential, wherever they appear is now the dominant theme of American foreign policy. Its concomitant is a

restructuring of relations with other powers that accords the United States maximum freedom to define problems by reference to overarching US interests, to determine the necessary course of action, and to execute it as Washington sees fit. It will rely on its own judgment and, as far as possible, its own means. The galvanizing of national will to pursue so audacious a strategy “has put to rest whatever urge for retrenchment the Bush administration may have felt” when it came into office.⁴ Although it remains unclear whether the country at large is ready to assume the enormous burden of constructing and sustaining a world order built to American specifications, with the United States as its superintendent, the prevailing mind-set at the heart of the administration is imbued by a sense of mission that recognizes few bounds. The picture is complicated by the contest within the Bush administration between the “realists” represented by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and the “Democratic imperialists” represented by his deputy Paul Wolfowitz. Signs indicate that the more ambitious goals of the latter have gained the upper hand in shaping the President’s own thinking.⁵

The thrust of the new strategy liberates the United States from the ambiguities and constraints of multilateralism. It obviates the need to consult before the fact (rather than brief after the fact), to build consensus on a policy, and to share powers of operational control - a modus operandi that ran against the American grain in Kosovo. The frustration over the restrictions imposed by the dynamics of a 19-nation coalition left a sour taste that was all the more irritating because Operation Allied Force seemed to be the model for coalition operations to come, at least those that mixed diplomatic and military elements. General Michael Short, who directed the air campaign, gave vent to these frustrations in extolling the virtues of a coalition of the willing headed by the United States as opposed to another war conducted by committee. In the future, he argued the United States should say: “We will take the alliance to war and we’re going to win this thing for you, but the price to be paid is that we call the tune.”⁶ Few at the time thought

this was a realistic model given the American interest in burden-sharing. It has proven prophetic. The American manner of dealing with both Afghanistan and Iraq has been typified by an unqualified confidence in its own judgment and prowess. Those who wish to align with the United States are expected to exhibit deference in accepting this cardinal truth.

Post 9/11 America has cast itself in a heroic mold. Heroes don't work through committees. At a moment of destiny, its most powerful instinct is to confront the challenge squarely. From the outset, Washington was dismissive of its allies whose offered their assistance in the war on terror in general and specifically to the campaign in Afghanistan. NATO's invocation of Article 5 – activating its mutual defense provisions – produced a outpouring of support. The United States' response was slow in coming and highly selective when it did so. European governments were ready, willing and able to join forces with the United States. But few were chosen. Those who were in effect assigned auxiliary roles in the main American effort. What was impulse now has become official doctrine. The notion that "the mission makes the coalition," rather than the coalition (i.e. Alliance) shaping the mission is at the core of official thinking about the value of allies.⁷ Any organizational arrangement that **requires** the United States to engage with other governments, participating in a collective process of deliberation, is seen as an unacceptable constraint. It is an encumbrance to be avoided.

This line of reasoning legitimizes, indeed makes imperative, American unilateralism. Structural conditions are permissive of a foreign policy so conceived. The United States, from its position of unrivalled global power, enjoys both a unique capacity to shape its environment and to control events. Moreover, it is in some respects buffered from the consequences of its errors and misjudgments. It has a large surplus of political capital to expend and an ability to replenish it. Many governments find it in their interest to accept, even to contribute to sustaining American leadership. Washington can deploy a

formidable array of incentives, disincentives and instruments of suasion to convince other governments to follow its lead. The very willfulness of the Bush administration discourages criticism, by raising the cost of opposition while rendering it futile. This situational logic allows them to follow their instinct to take their own counsel.. In most instances, they believe that others can be persuaded or cajoled into going along with American policy. Those opposing the American view are likely to be disinclined to try to thwart its will or unlikely to be successful if they make the effort to do so - an assumption belied by the implacable opposition of France and Russia in the Security Council. The price to the United States of overriding or dismissing contrary positions is tolerable - an assumption confirmed by reaction to the failure to gain a majority to back a second resolution.

What are the implications for American attitudes about CFSP? First, latent American apprehensions about the EU organizing itself to conduct a concerted global diplomacy have been deepened. Second, there is a corresponding desire to define the EU's contribution to international stability in terms that limit its admittedly positive influence to the European continent, and functionally to the performance of peacekeeping and related missions. Financial contributions to projects approved by Washington, such as the reconstruction of Iraq, are welcome however. Third, Washington will move actively to defend any policy area that engages major American interests from intrusion by the EU except insofar it has value as an auxiliary to its own policies, as in dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian situation. Finally, the United States will pursue a strategy of cultivating a set of bilateral ties with member states to ensure that its interests are acknowledged and respected on any matter Washington deems of consequence. Taken together, these elements of an emerging American strategy toward the European Union could have the effect of weakening community bonds and hampering the building of CFSP buttressed by ESDP. That outcome would be an

acceptable cost to the United States so long as the EU maintains its viability while integrating new members through eastward enlargement.

To put this line of thinking in perspective, we should remind ourselves that CFSP has never bulked large in the United States' strategic vision. The long history of abortive take-offs and inflated expectations that left a yawning gap between rhetoric and reality has dulled sensibilities about its European partners' prospective venture into the realm of world politics – at least insofar as serious political and security matters are concerned. The community building enterprise itself has been smiled upon as contributing to consolidation of the democratic project of post-Communist Europe. We should recall that Washington as early as 1990 urged the European Union to take the lead in the historic enterprise of bringing the former Communist lands into the fold of free-market democracies. Toward this end, it urged the Union to accelerate its schedule for eastwards enlargement and to bolster the extent of direct and indirect economic assistance it could offer, especially in providing liberal market access. It followed that the United States should take a benign view of the quartet of projects set in motion by the Union in the 1990s: launching EMU, consolidation of the Single Market, enlargement and the building of a European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP).

The last evoked the least enthusiasm. Intended to add a “hard power” component to CFSP, ESDP drew attention to the EU's declared ambition to take its place on the international stage in way that earlier expressions of CFSP had not. Washington saw the initiative as potentially consequential in both positive and negative ways. Its promise of strengthening the allies' military capabilities had been long an American objective and freshly proclaimed in NATO's Defense Capabilities Initiative of 1997. Enhancement of the Europeans' collective ability to assume responsibility for a range of peacekeeping missions conformed to a Euro-American division of labor that could relieve the United States of burdens it was only too willing to shed. This favorable

interpretation coexisted with concerns that a European specific, EU affiliated set of defense bodies could compete with or encroach upon NATO's area of jurisdiction. In addition, it was never deemed central to the strategic purpose assigned the EU, that of integrating the two ends of the continent. By contrast, in the minds of a majority of European governments, developing ESDP, and thereby breathing new life into CFSP, are more closely associated with the overall community building project.

These divergent perspectives have bred misconceptions. Proclamations of U.S. support for deepening the EU in parallel with enlargement gave the impression that Washington thinking was more positively disposed toward ESDP than in fact it ever was. Because the United States sees its national interest served by a vibrant EU, and because most Europeans have seen ESDP as a natural part of the process, the latter tended to assume a favorable American disposition toward the Union's ambitions to pursue a full-fledged CFSP that has always been qualified. Steadfast, even enthusiastic at times about the EU, the United States has temporized about its acquiring a security dimension and has had mixed feelings about CFSP. The counterpart misapprehension in Washington is that the transatlantic debate over the form of ESDP, and the proper place for CFSP, can be wholly insulated from the broader processes of Union construction. These misreadings exacerbate the difficulties of pulling American and European viewpoints into unison while complicating the challenge EU governments face in reconciling their own differences.

The principle of selectivity has guided the thinking of successive American administrations since the Cold War's end as to where, how, and whether to commit itself militarily and to make significant investments of political capital. Ideally, it would like to have the option of acting itself or devolving the responsibility onto allies. The more capable the allies, the greater the resources they have at their disposal, the wider the range of missions they could conduct without impairing performance to an extent that

does harm to American interests. The bungled EU attempts at mediation during the breakup of Yugoslavia, along with European governments' dubious role in UNPROFOR, serve as negative points of reference for American policy-makers. Today's shift in strategic focus away from the Balkans underscores the value of having available able allies ready to relieve the United States of unwanted burdens.

CFSP/ESDP is attractive insofar as they create capabilities that otherwise do not exist. Tangible capabilities in the security realm would take the form of enhanced forces made possible by the cost savings of coordinated R & D and procurement programs, integrated units such as the Euro-corps, specialized competencies, e.g. peacekeeping and organizational mechanisms for expeditious decision-making.⁸ The intangibles are potentially even more valuable. The Union can serve as an "enabler" of collective action by virtue of its legitimacy producing capacity. That is to say, actions that are dangerous, claim substantial resources or entail coercive pressure can be more readily justified in the minds of skeptical, risk-averse publics if they are seen as representing the common will of the Union. The weakening of Euro-identity doubtless has reduced the EU's ability to elicit this response. Internecine warfare over Iraq has further undermined the sense of solidarity and sapped the will of member governments to act in concert. Nonetheless, there is reason to expect that the damage is not permanent.

The logic, and the sentiment, of acting multilaterally through the EU conforms to and may well draw strength from the strong swing in public opinion to seek legitimacy for military action through the United Nations Security Council. European publics were as one in their overwhelming opposition toward a war in the Gulf, especially one not formally sanctioned by the UNSC. This was in stark contrast to the sharp divisions among their governments. That shared feeling owed something to a lack of confidence in American leadership and resistance to its willful, impulsive unilateralism. It conforms as well with the longstanding desire to find reassurance in shared attitudes with

community partners. That latent community feeling, admittedly, will be less evident among new members – especially in the wake of the fracas set off by President Jacques Chirac’s petulant criticism of those governments or candidate states who had the temerity to publicly back U.S. policy in direct contradiction of the line being pressed by France and Germany. It also remains true that the ‘esprit communautaire’ varies among ‘old’ members. Germany, along with most smaller countries, are more inclined to seek protective cover from the EU (and other multilateral organizations) than is Britain or France. While an enlarged, heterogeneous community will find it harder to reach consensus, the principle of lodging authority in international bodies to decide matters of war and peace is likely to militate in favor of common efforts where reasonably possible.⁹

The paradox for the United States is that the desired availability of an EU competent to take on missions it prefers either to avoid or make only a limited contribution to presupposes a viable CFSP with the resources generated through ESDP. Yet, conditions that are enabling of concerted policies by EU member states are equally conditions that permit the EU to chart a course that may diverge from that of the United States – even if there is scant chance that CFSP will take shape as an avowed counterweight to the United States. This conception, promoted by France, strikes only a thin resonance elsewhere. Moreover, as a practical matter it cannot be realized in a diverse, 25 member Union. That said, an EU consensus that forms on a particular issue stands a better chance of leading to concerted diplomacy were there an efficient apparatus for making and executing policy in place.¹⁰ It is also favored by the widespread uneasiness about the Bush administration’s maverick ways. There are signs that these factors are coming together in the reinvigorated EU efforts to have a hand in resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – as discussed below.

Broadly speaking, an operative CFSP by its very existence will tend to attenuate American power. If we understand global power in terms of the ability to set agendas, to

identify and to define the “problem,’ and to structure the field of action – as well as the ability to determine outcomes – then the presumed hegemony of the United States rests in good part on the deference it is accorded by other governments. That deference is a compound of the belief that in exercising an essentially benign influence the United States is creating public goods of which they are beneficiaries; and that no one else is in a position to do so – or do so on an equally satisfactory basis. These postulates certainly have held true for security matters; although the first increasingly is being questioned. However, American hegemony is not uniform across the board. On commercial matters, the European Union rivals the United States. Setting the ground-rules for international trade and devising mechanisms for enforcing them, is a domain where the EU demonstrably is prepared as a collective entity to assume the responsibilities/opportunities of performing system maintenance functions in its members’ enlightened self-interest. It seeks to cast the system in formats that are congenial to member countries’ own structures, practices and principles that balance efficiency, stability and equity. They are not identical with American conceptions and preference scales. On questions ranging from the appropriate standards of what constitutes fair competition to the economic philosophy underlying the International Monetary Fund’s terms of conditionality, there are contending ideas of what serves the interest of an integrated global economy.

The same economic influence wielded by a unified EU on the shaping of global institutions theoretically could be deployed as an instrument of CFSP. As the world’s biggest market, trading unit, and provider of financial assistance and technical aid, the EU possesses a formidable array of tangible assets that could be used to induce or coerce. Already, the lure of membership, existing or prospective preferential trade agreements, the granting (or withholding) of associate status, and various aid packages are used to solidify ties (as with Russia), to encourage the peaceful settlement of

disputes (Cyprus, Bosnia, Macedonia) or to underwrite accords (the Palestinian Authority as established under the Oslo accords). These are assets that can only be activated by working through the machinery of the Commission. When one speaks of the economic tools available to the EU to influence the behavior of other states, one is referring to power sources that have been transferred to Brussels. They are beyond the power of any one member to offer, however strenuously some current members try to get mileage out of a self-designated role as expeditor. In practical terms, however, EU assets can only be activated where and when there is at least tacit accord among member governments on objectives and their appropriateness as policy means. Thus, they did not figure in the intense, competitive bargaining to win the votes of uncommitted members of the Security Council on the vexed question of a second resolution to legitimate an attack on Iraq. They could not given the divisions within the EU.

However, had member governments been of one mind in opposition to the United States their power in the bidding contest for undecided votes would have been greatly enhanced. As it were, at the height of the crisis, Commissioner for External Relations Chris Patten weighed in with the public statement that the Washington should not presume that the EU would not rush in with an open wallet to finance reconstruction in the aftermath of a war undertaken by a coalition of the willing without UN approval.¹¹

In truth, that was not an entirely credible threat. Mr. Patten does not have the discretionary authority to make that decision. It is the recriminations among EU members that may slow the flow of the \$100 million in pledged reconstruction aid to Iraq; but eventually flow it will. For most EU governments would judge it both irresponsible and the relinquishing of possible influence over the shaping of a post-war settlement in the Middle East to stand aloof.

As for the United States, it behooves Washington to take notice of what measure of influence a united EU could exercise even as it remains confident of its ability to

prevent any consensus antithetical to American policy and interests from forming – even in circumstances where the Union is not paralyzed by internal strife.

The search for resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian issue is the one important world problem on which there is a EU consensus. The consensus on the need for, and outlines of a settlement is long-standing. It predates Oslo, enabled the Union to put the Union's full weight behind its implementation, and has survived the fierce fight over Iraq policy.¹² Indeed, the prospect of another war in the Gulf has reinforced the commonly held conviction that a diplomatic initiative should be taken as soon after the war as possible to mitigate the inflammatory effects on Arab public opinion – and, thereby, both encourage Arab governments to back the proposed road-map for a settlement and the Palestinians to negotiate from the position of weakness they are in. Even the two most prominent European leaders supporting President Bush, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Spanish Premier Jose Maria Aznar pressed the American administration to make the road-map public early on in the crisis, to ease domestic political pressures as well as to prepare the ground for the diplomatic process. Only grudgingly did Bush agree to go so far as to issue a statement in favor of the plan (without revealing its details) on the eve of battle.¹³

In a series of delays, the United States first argued that publication should await the outcome of the Israeli election, then the formation of Prime Minister Sharon's cabinet, then the conclusion of the war in Iraq – before finally conceding to making some reference to the plan. Tactical considerations in the bilateral Israeli-American relationship explain the administration's behavior in part. In truth, Washington had been less than enthusiastic from the outset about the formation of the Quartet who were the joint sponsors of the road-map: the United States, the European Union, the United Nations, and Russia. Nor was the peace conference slated to inaugurate the process an idea that appealed to the Bush administration. It has jealously sought to safeguard its

place and prerogatives as the indispensable broker of any settlement. Washington has made it clear that the EU was welcome to participate only so long as it took no action that did not first pass muster in Washington. Secretary of State Colin Powell was echoing the President in telling European leaders that the issue touched upon 'vital interests' of the United States. Any encroachment by the EU would have serious consequences. EU governments in fact have wrung their hands in private at what they saw as Washington's self-defeating attitude while refraining from public criticism. Their ability to influence matters in any case has been circumscribed by the implacable hostility of the Sharon government to any role for the EU which he bluntly accuses of an anti-Israeli bias in the light of its criticism of the Israeli crackdown on the West Bank and in Gaza. The United States' unwillingness to restrain the Israelis coupled with reiterations of support for their actions has cut the ground from under the EU. Talk of suspending Israeli's preferential trade Association Agreement with the EU, a potential tool of leverage given that the EU market accounts for the biggest portion of Israeli exports, which surfaced in Spring 2002, and then briefly revived in September. died in the face of American opposition and Israeli intransigence.¹⁴

The easy success of the United States in neutralizing the EU's attempt to operationalize its CFSP on an issue member states judged as important, and on which there has been a strong consensus, is instructive on a number of counts. For one thing, it highlights how the United States is critically placed to control the diplomatic action in places where it sees a major stake. The special nature of the tie between the United states and Israeli is a key element in that configuration. It is by no means the only one. The mesh of relations Washington has woven with major Arab governments – Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia – is the product of a long history that accords the United States an unmatched respect and credibility. In the eyes of all regional parties. it makes the United States appear as the only power that can promote and underwrite a peace settlement.

From that structurally defined position, it is able to keep at arm's length others who pretend to a role in the process – the EU among them.

These conditions do not replicate themselves elsewhere to the same degree. But there is no denying the advantages afforded the United States by factors that go beyond its sheer power. The intangible assets it has built up over half a century as global superpower may be diminished somewhat by its current policy of aggressively using its military power, unilaterally. That may create opportunities for the European Union insofar as it is viewed as more benign and has a more accommodating style. By the same token, a righteous and aggressive United States oblivious to the benefits of multilateralism can be expected to resist any challenge to its dominant position. It will require more will and commitment on the part of EU governments than evident to date to address the U.S. as an equal in an approximation of how it acts on in the economic realm. The requisite level of trust will be hard to generate in the wake of the fracas over Iraq policy.

A consideration of American ways of handling CFSP should not be limited to instances where it could hinder U.S. policy or challenge an established interest. Some EU initiatives either reinforce or complement American policy. The Balkans provides an obvious case in point. The multifaceted EU involvement has occurred in conjunction with the United States. It undertook a successful intermediation in Macedonia in 2001 that facilitated resolution of the crisis created by the insurrection aiming at secession by the country's ethnic Albanians. High Representative Javier Solana worked hand in glove with NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson with American blessing. The United States did have its own man on the scene, Ambassador James Pardew, who in his formal capacity as representative of the OECD undertook his own initiatives. Although the coordination among the three was less than seamless, the Western parties did work together well enough to achieve their common objective. Moreover, Washington

recognized and appreciated the contribution of the EU – one of whose members, Greece, had a material interest in the crisis' outcome. The European Union is now poised to relieve NATO of responsibility for operation Allied Harmony in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). It will rely on some NATO assets (planning and intelligence capabilities) made available under terms of a Security Agreement and Crisis Consultation Agreement negotiated between the two organizations . A smooth transition in FYROM, and the experience garnered there, will confirm readiness for the more ambitious objective of succeeding NATO in directing the Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia. That conforms with the Bush administration's stated wish to reduce and soon conclude completely American participation in the peacekeeping operation. The EU's peacekeeping vocation, featured in the Petersberg tasks, dovetails with the United States' interest in husbanding its military personnel for occupation duty in Iraq in Afghanistan, and be free for other possible military engagements.

The EU's success in carrying out these missions should over time restore a measure of credibility to ESDP and instill confidence that member states can act in concert where there is consensus on the utility of activating CFSP. An active peacekeeping role for the EU in the Balkans may have the positive effects of status enhancement associated with demonstrated competence. But it would be doing so as party to an implicit division of labor with the United States that devolves onto its European partners tasks it has neither the interest nor inclination to take on itself. Washington will continue to pursue a strategy aimed at preventing the EU's emergence as a unitary actor on the international scene except in selective roles. The ingredients of that strategy are already observable: establish strong bi-lateral ties with congenial governments who will place friendship with the U.S. above their commitment to developing the Union's CFSP; ensure subordination of ESDP to NATO through strict interpretation of existing accords that stipulate the terms and conditions for activation of

ESDP provisions for joint action; and keep the EU out of issue areas where Washington has a significant interest by urging local parties to disqualify the EU as a major player, e.g. the Sharon government.

FRANCE

The European Union has been at the heart of the French strategy that emerged during the 1990s to adjust to the end of the Cold War and its verities that provided the bearings for France's foreign policy. A strengthened EU was visualized as the institution that at once would ensure that a reunified Germany could not dominate European affairs and could serve as countervailing power to a hegemonic United States. European Monetary Union was the prime instrument for achieving the former objective. Endowing the Union with the full panoply of powers needed to take its place in the world arena served the latter objective. Animating a CFSP strengthened by ESDP were the elements in the politico-security domain that complemented the series of steps (launching EMU being the most critical one) taken to enhance EU influence in the economic domain.

Four premises underlay this strategy. First, American hegemony was not wholly benign, its uniquely valuable contribution to maintaining international stability notwithstanding. The term hyper-puissance conveyed this anxiety that the United States' leadership was not always enlightened or wise and that the extent of American influence was itself unhealthy, especially since as there were inadequate checks on how it was utilized. Second, France's interests, and the interests of the world community, were best served by devising mechanisms for constraining the American Goliath. As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, a country that exercised disproportionate influence within the EU, and a nation with a deep tradition of active

engagement in world affairs, France had the opportunity and the obligation to take the lead in promoting what was heralded as a “multipolar” international system.¹⁵

Third, France could serve as a pole of attraction for those – especially in Europe – who shared its apprehensions about unbridled American power. It could do so by virtue of its universal message, its independence, and its skillful diplomacy. Finally, such a strategy was compatible with the fostering of constructive relations with the United States based on a pragmatic recognition that working together with France could pay dividends for Washington. These strands of French foreign policy are braided; hence, we can only make sense of French thinking about CFSP by placing it in the wider strategic context. Through two presidencies, and several governments, France has striven unceasingly to implement this ambitious – if not audacious – strategy.

France has evinced greater discomfort with the United States’ dominant world position than other European allies. It is explained in part by France’s exalted self-image that precludes it from accepting the role of subordinate partner, deferential and hesitant about stating its own views or forcefully pursuing its own line of policy. French political elites believe that France, by virtue of experience and world vision, should be one of the handful of countries to have a distinct viewpoint on matters of consequence which deserves to be heard. Its ideas are presumed to have as much validity, and at least as much potential to contribute to global well-being, as the designs and policies of the United States. The instinct to pronounce those views, the search for platforms from which they may be amplified, is reinforced by the conviction that overweening American power is by its very nature a danger, on two counts: it allows the United States to make policy without Washington’s preferences being tested through diplomatic discourse, and the deleterious effects of misguided policies are magnified by the absence of counterweights. It follows that the checks and balances of a “multipolar” system better serve the cause of international stability. The present French conception of multipolarity

of course differs from traditional notions of balance-of-power in that there is no presumption that the power rivalries of a zero-sum game are its mainspring. Rather, it implies a concert, to a considerable extent institutionalized, whose members share a core commitment to maintaining international peace. Moreover, the bonds among the Western democracies have constituted a community of values (a Kantian community) whose solidarity goes well beyond narrow, short-term calculations of interest.

China or Russia, do not hold the same place in the French vision of a multipolar world as does the United States. That said, France's interpretation of what the "West" means in practical terms is qualified. As former Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine has put it, "the community of values remains relative and an alliance system is not sufficient to create a common identity."¹⁶ The European Union has a semblance of common identity, and destiny, that the Euro-American partnership does not. Creating a "Europe-puissance" is at once a natural outgrowth of the community-building project and the basis for a healthy cooperative relationship with the United States. The challenge for France has been two-fold: to impart momentum to the former by setting as its objective a conception of the transatlantic partnership rejected by most EU countries; and to persevere in this effort even while exercising the right to affirm France's own foreign policy. The desire to have a respected European voice on CFSP enunciate a French worldview without an evident French accent now seems farther from realization than ever. Before the Iraq crisis, patience was the watchword in Paris. In an admonition addressed to a domestic audience, Védrine made the point that "the worst enemies of a common foreign policy are impatience and naiveté. It is a marathon task."¹⁷ The length of that marathon now seems greater than ever, and patience needed in abundance.

It is instructive to remind ourselves how much the outlook for CFSP, and the atmospherics, have changed in the past eighteen months. From the vantage-point of early 2001, the advent of the Bush administration, French diplomacy had chalked up a

significant success even while incurring some partial failures. Within the EU, the signal development was the launching of ESDP made possible by the British *volte-face* at St. Malo in December 1998. The goal enunciated in the Maastricht Treaty of providing the EU with a defense arm suddenly appeared realistic, if not immediately within reach. Partnership with Britain in pressing for ESDP both made the project more credible in terms of military assets available and creating a critical mass within the Union that would add defense to the *acquis communautaire*. That is, the idea of a EU security vocation would be reified with attendant expectations that member states could not shirk responsibility for addressing a range of issues often avoided in the past. French hopes have not been fulfilled. The multiple projects that make up ESDP have stuttered along, hampered by stagnant or declining defense budgets in several countries, Germany foremost among them. As a consequence, deadlines for meeting headline goals have slipped. Some momentum has been maintained thanks to the deistic push imparted by a series of EU summits. Most troubling from Paris' perspective were signs of declining interest on the part of a British government whose dedication to full engagement in Europe seemed to weaken coincident with the blossoming of Prime Minister Tony Blair's relationship with President Bush.

Ironically, a renewal of Anglo-French collaboration in pushing ahead with ESDP occurred in early February at the very moment that the relationship was being torn by the two governments' antithetical positions over the Iraq crisis. The Declaration On The Reinforcement Of European Cooperation On Security And Defense Matters, issued at the conclusion of a summit meeting at Le Touquet, laid out an ambitious set of measures that, were they implemented, would go a long way toward fulfilling the potential in the original ESDP design.¹⁸

Blair and Chirac affirmed that the PESC's field of action "should conform to the global vocation of the Union's foreign and security policy and be in a position to support

effectively the foreign policy objectives of the Union.”¹⁹ In addition, it supported the principle of mutual assistance among member states of the EU faced with threats that bear on their common security. Other provisions aligned Britain with longstanding French proposals to create an inter-governmental agency within the EU for the development and procurement of defense equipment. The agency would encompass an extensive array of functions intended to strengthen the technological and industrial base for a European defense industry that would be competitive at the international level. Finally, there was a commitment to improve the planning and deployment capabilities of the EU’s embryonic rapid reaction force. A number of these proposed initiatives match a similar set of ideas agreed between France and Germany in November.²⁰ The Declaration is marked by a striking compatibility on issues that had been the object of disagreement previously. Whatever optimism about the future of ESDP may have been generated by the accord reached at Le Touquet, however, it has been overshadowed by the rancor between the two leaders as the Iraq crisis came to a head.

Similarly, the laborious effort to draft a constitution for the EU, which would consolidate the existing set of treaties and agreements, has encountered the same turbulence. Postponement of its formal adoption at the December summit in Rome now seems likely. More important, discord over the provisions for reforming mechanisms and procedures for CFSP is being accentuated by the fallout from the acrimony over Iraq. France’s hopes to exalt the EU into international actor cast in its own image always was predicated on the belief in its ability to have its ideas about process and substance prevail. Confidence in that dubious proposition had been shaken at times but never abandoned. The historic achievement of Europeanizing the Deutsche Bundesbank (and with a Frenchman slated to be its next Director) fed this conceit. The bruising battles at the Nice summit in December 2000 over the Common Agricultural Policy and voting formulas produced results skewed in France’s favor but seemed to signal that

widespread resistance, especially on the part of Germany, made French tenaciousness in getting its own way a thing of the past. The prospect of enlargement to a membership of twenty-five pointed to the same conclusion. France's goal of expanding the EU's mandate while retaining control on matters of core national interest – such as foreign and security policy – is tantamount to trying to square the circle. Still, Paris has persisted.

France's tack in the proceedings of the Convention on Europe's Future chaired by former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing has been to push for strengthening the Council at the expense of the Commission. It has promoted the twin ideas of establishing the position of Council Presidency and consolidating the office of the Commissioner for External Relations with that of the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy to create an approximation to an EU foreign minister. The incumbent of that position would be accountable to the Council. Authority for setting and directing CFSP thus would rest with the inter-governmental body. On this principle, Britain has been on the same wavelength as France, although what it visualizes as the scope and character of an invigorated CFSP was more modest. Opposition has come predictably from federalist minded Germany, smaller member states, and the Commission itself. Prospective members, preoccupied with more nitty-gritty issues, tended to be ambivalent – hesitant to relinquish their newfound sovereignty to supranational bodies yet leery of a Council centered system that could be dominated by its largest members. The war of words set off by Chirac's condemnation of the candidate government's backing of the U.S. on Iraq did not resolve their ambivalence; what it did do was to firm their resolve to prevent French dictation of Union positions and actions on questions of foreign and security policy.

The all-enveloping drama of the mounting crisis with Iraq was played out in a series of short, intense acts. France was a central protagonist in all of them. Its

audacious diplomacy displayed itself in two venues: the United Nations Security Council and the European Union. Much of the action involved a set of interlocking bilateral dealings: with Germany, with Britain, and with the United States. President Chirac's strategy had as its specific objective putting the brakes on what was seen as the Bush administration's headlong rush to war. It was a war that Paris judged unnecessary, avoidable and liable to produce more negatives than positives. Unnecessary because (1) Saddam Hussein did not pose a clear or present danger to either stability in the Gulf or the security of the West; and (2) whatever latent threat was posed by his WMD programs could be contained through a combination of aggressive inspections and deterrence. Avoidable because the new inspection regime inaugurated by Resolution 1441 backed the threat of force (which France implicitly admitted existed because of the Bush administration's hard-line strategy) had a high probability of uncovering and eliminating the largest part of Iraq's capabilities, vitiating the need to invade and occupy the country. Undesirable because it would have the nefarious effects of lending a hand to Islamic terrorist groups by inflaming anti-Western passions, destabilizing moderate regimes in the Middle East, setting a precedent for preventive war with unforeseeable repercussions, and emboldening the United States to undertake further risky ventures. As the crisis moved towards its climax, it became progressively clearer that for France the heart of the issue was the United States' unilateral bent toward using its power in reckless ways. Abstract apprehensions about American hyper-power had become reified in the Bush administration's expressed dedication to a radical agenda to be pursued with scant regard for the principles of international law or the niceties of multilateralism (whether of the UN or alliance variety). French distrust of the administration, and the President personally, was widely shared across Europe – and beyond. This emboldened Paris to challenge the United States. President Chirac relished being cast in the role of champion of enlightened international principles, exactly

the role he and much of the French political class aspired to. The United Nations Security Council was the most congenial setting for playing it. There, France was a privileged member of an elite concert.

France's permanent seat on the Security Council gave it a platform for trumpeting its ideas for dealing with Iraq and provided the mechanism for constraining the United States. Resolution 1441 had committed Washington to the sole goal of disarming Iraq while giving a chance to the UN inspection teams of accomplishing that end peacefully. The compromise language had left ambiguous, though, the basis for assessing its success and a timetable for doing so. It was predictable that disagreements would arise as to where the threshold of compliance lay and whether it had been crossed. The Bush administration's drive to have the UNSC declare Iraq in non-compliance, clearing the way for military operations, led to the bruising fight in which Washington and Paris vied for the votes of Council members. France won the battle in that its energetic diplomacy managed to deny the United States the 9 votes that it sought. It lost the war, however, to prevent Washington from launching an assault to topple Saddam

Circumstances dictated that France concentrate its diplomatic campaign in the United Nations. The European Union figured in the French strategy as a possible source of reinforcing political backing for the campaign. From the beginning it was self-evident that formal activation of CSFP to place the full weight of the Union behind its anti-war stand was impossible. British Prime Minister Tony Blair's staunch support for President Bush precluded consensus. Nonetheless, President Chirac embarked on a strenuous effort to represent the French position as the European position, in name if not in fact. He was encouraged to take this dubious course by two factors. One, as noted, public opinion across the EU was very nearly uniform in its opposition to taking up the war option – especially if it lacked the endorsement of a second, explicit Security Council

resolution. Those government leaders who publicly aligned themselves with President Bush, e.g Spanish Prime Minister Jose-Mara Aznar and Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, did so in the teeth of overwhelming popular opposition. If France could not rally a unified EU, or at least a unified bloc of continental members, under its banner, it could presume to speak in the name of a European public.

The daring decision to try and do so was due in good part to the opportunity to harness Germany to the cause. Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's rejection of the Bush administration's "adventure" in the Gulf was more adamant and unqualified than France's. He absolutely ruled out Germany's approval of, or participation in the use of military force, and thereby brought down the wrath of the Bush administration. France's had benefited from its relatively more moderate position in the protracted negotiations at the U.N. on Resolution 1441. By January, as it became apparent that Washington and Paris were on a collision course in the Security Council, President Chirac succeeded in enlisting Chancellor Schroeder in a high profile joint proclamation of commitment to a policy of beefed-up UN inspections and rejection of the American call to arms. This much heralded manifestation of Franco-German leadership was in line with a series of initiatives by the two governments taken since the previous fall. Schroeder's political weakness at home, and estrangement from Washington, had led him into the arms of the French who seized the opportunity to restart the Franco-German motor within the EU. – and with France in the driver's seat.

The lure, for Paris, was irresistible. The reading of the EU's susceptibility to direction by France and Germany was far off the mark, though. It had the small immediate success of an anodyne declaration by the fifteen that fudged clear differences among them. Almost immediately, that was overshadowed by the public statement of eight current and prospective members expressing their support for the Anglo-American position.²¹ Orchestrated by Tony Blair to counteract the Franco-German declaration, it

glaringly exposed the split among EU governments. It thereby dispelled any illusions Paris might have that the EU could be mobilized to buttress the French diplomatic campaign. The competing demarches, the failure of either side to forewarn the other of what was coming, along with the readiness of all to make a mockery of common statements bearing the imprimatur of the CFSP exposed the raw truth that its credibility depended on avoiding the consideration of matters of consequence where no underlying consensus existed.

President Chirac's displeasure at the British-led counterattack was aggravated soon afterwards by a second letter signed by 10 central and eastern European governments that placed them clearly on the American side.²² It spilled over in his vehement denunciation of those prospective and would-be members of the EU who had the temerity to state their opposition to the French and Germans. In an outburst that mixed disdain with menace, he accused them of being "ill-bred" and as having missed a fine opportunity to have "kept quiet." Chirac's intemperance is notable for revealing not only France's distinct lack of enthusiasm for enlargement, which inevitably would dilute French influence, but also the depth of unrealistic expectations that an inner core of old members, led by the Franco-German tandem, could still orient the Union.²³ The old order cannot be restored, however one reworks the structures and procedures for CFSP. The question to be faced was not how a large EU majority might be empowered to act through the Union in the absence of full consensus. Rather, it was the value of the EU as any kind of force multiplier when divisions were both wider and deeper than ever envisaged.

The Iraq saga has had serious consequences for France's world position. Its international status has been enhanced markedly by its dogged, often eloquent and – in the UNSC – successful resistance to the American juggernaut. Some of that respect has been won with public opinion within the EU; some with like-minded governments –

above all, Germany and Russia; even more of it outside of Europe.²⁴ Yet, a chasm has opened between France and Britain (its indispensable partner for making ESDP a reality); it has won the enmity of several governments who will joining the Union at the end of 2004; and finds itself cast as a villain by an unforgiving Bush administration. Where does this leave French foreign policy with what particular implications for the European Union?

Certain things are evident. The cloudy prospects for ESDP have dimmed early French aspirations that the EU acquire the capacity to act independently on European security affairs and develop the habit of consultation as a prelude to forging joint positions on outstanding issues. The central element in the French strategy for countervailing American power while magnifying its influence in world affairs, the EU, is now gravely weakened. Whatever progress is made in building up the material and institutional capacity of ESDP, whatever new arrangements for streamlining the Union's decision-making mechanisms for its CFSP, the requisite political unity is missing. Recriminations from the recent past will make it harder to regenerate it in the future.

It would be wrong, though, to conclude that CFSP is fatally wounded, or that France's opportunities to reach its foreign policy ends through the EU have been closed off. There are three reasons why announcements of CFSP's death are premature. First, so long as there are common interests served by acting in concert, it makes sense to have the necessary apparatus available. The EU is going to take over management of Operation Allied Harmony in the FYROM. It most likely will have the responsibility for SFOR dropped in its lap. It will be called upon to provide reconstruction assistance to post-war Iraq, an enterprise that cannot be undertaken without regard to mandates and political context. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict will have to be addressed; and on this last the fifteen have both shared outlooks and shared interests. Second, the United States will create incentives for EU members to work together, by its acts of omission as

well as by its acts of commission. The Bush administration, occupied elsewhere, wants to be rid of its peacekeeping obligations in the Balkans. Only the Europeans can take their place. As Nicole Gnesotto has written, more America (and NATO) outside Europe means more EU inside Europe.²⁵ The EU is the logical organization through which Europe can act. In the Middle East, Washington will have to come to grips with the festering Palestinian issue. All EU governments are aware that the United States has lost a measure of its credibility as an honest broker. They have strong reason to make their views heard and their presence felt through actively trying to make the Quartet arrangement effective, even while acknowledging the crucial role of the United States. The Bush administration's strong bias toward the Sharon government will make that a ticklish task; but the high stakes do not permit EU states to stay obediently on the sidelines.

Furthermore, if Iraq is the opening phase in a wider strategy to act preventively against states that pose potential threats to the United States, or even so contemplated, it will be incumbent upon the Europeans to consult among themselves how far down that path any of them wishes to accompany Washington, while perhaps devising their own alternatives.²⁶ Finally, there remains the Union's global presence as an economic power on par with the United States – even if it now lacks the will to deploy its resources in the routine conduct of an equally wide-ranging foreign policy. It is an international player *faute de mieux*.. The economic policies it pursues, e.g. its position on contentious issues in the Doha round of trade negotiations, have consequences for countries whose well-being is a political concern of EU members. The growing place of the Euro in the international monetary system produces similar effects and carries similar responsibilities. Economic-political linkages cannot be elided.

For France, the road ahead may not be clearly demarcated but there are identifiable guideposts. One, it will continue to press for building up the capabilities of a

competent ESDP. The unavoidable missions awaiting the EU in the Balkans ensure that it will have supporters. Britain, its natural partner in leading ESDP, still has the incentive of establishing itself as a full player in the EU that motivated its initial move at St. Malo. Indeed, it could acquire greater importance were Tony Blair's Iraq induced political weakness to foreclose prospects for a successful referendum on entry into EMU. Two, the popularity of France's stance on Iraq among European publics is a possible asset in creating a pool of goodwill that could offset the widespread suspicions about the self-serving character of France's EU policies. It will take evident French diplomatic skill, and less evident tact, to take advantage of this favorable circumstance. Three, Paris will have to tread a fine line that taps that positive sentiment without lapsing into anti-Americanism (or seeming anti-Americanism). Europeans currently hold a pronounced negative view of the Bush administration. That does not mean they are ready to join a project of organizing the European Union as a counterweight to the United States. French leaders must use a mode of address that does not smack of French-American feuding.

One hopes that de Tocqueville's commentary on his native country is no longer wholly valid. He described France as a country "more capable of heroism than virtue, of genius rather than common sense, more ready to conceive vast projects than to accomplish great enterprises."²⁷

CONCLUSION

The current crisis is at once a crisis for Euro-American relations overall, for bilateral ties between the United States and major allied governments, for the European Union, and for NATO as well as for the United Nations. The complexity of the multifaceted diplomatic field is exceptional only insofar as the interplay involving national governments and multilateral organizations has been unusually intense. Looking back

at the episodes of coercive diplomacy and/or conflict involving the Western powers in post-Cold War period, it is apparent that foreign policy has become a multi-level 'game' characterized by three intersecting spheres of deliberation, decision and execution. They are the domestic; the regional organizational (NATO as well as the EU); and the international organizational, i.e. the United Nations. The emergence of transnational processes associated with CFSP (itself embedded within the unique structures of the embracing European Union) adds to the importance of the second of these spheres. One effect is to accentuate the overall challenge to governments of designing and executing strategies that are at once effective, politically acceptable (to publics and allies) and legitimate. The room for maneuver is expanded even as new obligations, constraints and opportunities are opened. Forecasting outcomes, either of individual episodes or longer-term developments, is therefore a low-confidence enterprise. That said, mapping the field of play and systematically examining how the action unfolds (an exercise more ambitious than goes well beyond this paper's modest contribution) will be of singular value in both aiding us to understand the dynamics of the system and clarifying the wider implications of what strategies are followed and how they are conducted.

¹ That strategic doctrine has been expounded in a series of Bush administration reports and speeches: President George W. Bush State of the Union Address January 29, 2002; Speech at the United States Military Academy, West Point June 18, 2002; "National Security Strategy of the United States of America." September 2002; "National Strategy To Combat Weapons Of Mass Destruction" December 2002.

² President Bush has personally set the moralistic tone of his administration's foreign policy in evocative statements, such as: "We are in a conflict between good and evil, and America will call evil by its name" (Speech at West Point Commencement, op. cit); and "The liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world, it is God's gift to humanity" (State of the Union, op. cit.)

³ See the cogent, insightful analysis of the ideas and political forces at play in the United States by Pierre Hassner, The United States: The Empire of Force or the Force of Empire? Chaillot Paper no. 54 Paris: Institute for Security Studies September 2002.

⁴ Simin Serfaty, "The New Normalcy" *Washington Quarterly* vol 26 no 2 Spring 2002.

⁵ See Hassner, op. cit. Wolfowitz was the primary author of the controversial draft of the Pentagon's Defense Planning Guidance document was leaked in March 1992. Its outright rejection of collective internationalism and unvarnished proclamation of a comprehensive strategy to ensure American domination provoked a torrent of criticism in the United States and abroad, forcing the Bush administration to disown it. The draft document, dated February 18, 1992 was excerpted in *The New York Times* on March 8.

⁶ Quoted in Michael Evans, "General wants the US To Call The Shots In Kosovo," *The Times* (London), January 27, 2000.

⁷ "National Security Strategy of the United States of America", op. cit.

⁸ I discuss these issues in Europe's New Security Vocation McNair Paper no 66 Institute for National Strategic Studies 2002.

⁹ The effects on ESDP of enlargement is examined in Enlargement and European Defence After 11 September ed. Antonio Missiroli Chaillot Paper no. 53 Paris: Institute for Security Studies June 2002.

¹⁰ The institutional and procedural requirements for an effective EU foreign policy are insightfully examined by Steven Everts Shaping A Credible EU Foreign Policy (London: Centre for European Reform, 2002)

¹¹ Reported in George Parker, "France warns of electricity in the air as leaders meet" *Financial Times* March 20, 2003

¹² Steven Everts makes the case for a more assertive EU policy in *The EU and the Middle East: a call for action* (London: Centre For European Reform, January 2003).

¹³ For a somber assessment of the Bush administration's post-Iraq policy see Philip H. Gordon, "Bush's Middle East Vision" *SURVIVAL* vol 45, no1 Spring 2003.

¹⁴ The EU did adopt a unilateral declaration at the conclusion of an unfruitful Association Council meeting that called for an immediate cessation of "activities contrary to international humanitarian law and human rights." This was condemned by Israel for "turning its back on Israel." Reported in *EUObserver* 23 October, 2003.

¹⁵ France's conception of a multipolar international system is elaborated by former Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine in France In An Age Of Globalization with Dominique Moisi (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2001); see also Michael Brenner and Guillaume Parmentier Reconcilable Differences: French-American Relations In The New Era (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2001).

¹⁶ Hubert Védrine, "Clarifier l'identité européenne" *Le Monde* 5 December 2002.

¹⁷ Hubert Védrine, Discours a la Conference de l'IFRI, Paris, 3 November, 1999.

¹⁸ Franco-British Summit Le Torquet – Pas De Calais 4 February 2003.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Joint Press Conference President Jacques Chirac and Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder Paris 21 January 2003.

²¹ Declaration by Spain, the UK, Italy, Portugal, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Denmark. 29 January 2003.

²² Letter of the Vilnius Ten: Slovakia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Pomania, Slovenia, Albania, Croatia and Macedonia. 5 February 2003.

²³ A searching critique of Chirac's maladroitness diplomacy is provided by Pierre Hassner "Guerre: qui fait le jeu de qui?" *Le Monde* 24 february 2003.

²⁴The extent of the deterioration in foreigners' image of the United States are measured in the findings of The Pew Research Center report on the eve of the Iraq war; America's Image Further Erodes, Europeans Want Weaker Ties, March 18, 2003.

²⁵Nicole Gnesotto, "Reacting To America" *SURVIVAL* vol 44 n0 4 Winter 2002-03.

²⁶The case for European engagement with the issues of preventive and preemptive war is made by Francois Heisbourg, "A Work in Progress, The Bush Doctrine and Its Consequences," *Washington Quarterly* vol 26 no 2 Spring 2003. See also the papers prepared for the CEPS/IISS Europeab Security Forum on "Pre-emptive military action and the use of force" Brussels, 13 January 2003 by Carl Bildt and Walter B. Slocombe, and the 'Summing-up' by Francois Heisbourg, accessible at www.eusec.org

²⁷Quoted in Simon Serfaty, "Idées Simples Mais idées Fixes" *La Revue internationale et strategique*, no 45.