

DIIS REPORT

**ATLANTIC REFORM**  
A EURO-ATLANTIC AND A DANISH  
PERSPECTIVE

*By Hans Mouritzen*

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Danish Institute for International Studies, DIIS  
Strandgade 56, DK -1401 Copenhagen, Denmark  
Ph: +45 32 69 87 87  
Fax: +45 32 69 87 00  
E-mail: [diis@diis.dk](mailto:diis@diis.dk)  
Web: [www.diis.dk](http://www.diis.dk)

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Ph: +45 56 36 40 40  
Fax: +45 56 36 40 39

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*Hans Mouritzen, dr. scient. pol., is a senior research fellow at DIIS in 'Danish and European foreign policy.' E-mail: [hmo@diis.dk](mailto:hmo@diis.dk)*

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## **Executive Summary**

Although new Atlantic institutions or treaties are unnecessary, existing institutions should be reformed. The need for both meta-strategic (i.e. referring to an Atlantic division of labour) and strategic dialogues should be the main incentives behind Atlantic institutional reform. The mega-enlargements of both the EU and NATO and large-scale terrorism are important new parameters for such dialogue. The present report presents and synthesizes some of the best think-tank proposals towards the reform of Atlantic institutions. In view of the theoretical assumptions followed here, reform must be a 'package deal' – essentially reconciling French and US/UK interests – in order to be realistic.

The two major channels of Atlantic cooperation, NATO and the EU-US dialogue, both need reform. A steering committee, consisting of the US, the UK, France, Germany, Spain, Poland, a handful of rotating members plus the EU High Representative, should be set up in NATO to prepare the meetings of the North Atlantic Council, although consensus should remain the decision-making procedure in the Council (including veto power). The NATO Secretary General and the secretariat should be strengthened through a career civil service and the abolition of the quota hiring system. A common budget should be used to fund national forces that are used in joint operations. NATO task-expansion should be avoided, both functionally and geographically.

The EU-US summits should provide an opportunity for strategic informal dialogue, and should not be bound by a bureaucrat-driven agenda. The grand strategic questions concerning relations with Russia, China, the Middle East, Africa, etc. should be dealt with here (hopefully not overestimating the EU's and its member-states' geographic reach). The EU side should always include the leaders of the UK, France, Germany, a few rotating non-great powers, the Commission plus the High Representative (or EU Foreign Minister, if this post can be established without a Treaty reform). The frequency of summits should be doubled so as to be held biannually. Moreover, whereas the EU should continue to borrow 'hard power' from NATO (Berlin+), NATO should borrow 'soft power' from the EU.

What may seem rational from an overall Euro-Atlantic perspective is not necessarily so as seen from the perspective of one particular nation state. Denmark is

discussed here as a case in point. In view of Denmark's Atlanticist orientation, coupled with its EU defence reservation, a strengthening of the EU-US channel at the expense of the NATO channel would cost Denmark influence. The specific reform package advocated above will probably be acceptable, but it is in not wholly satisfactory. Even though it is neutral in relation to the two channels, after all, it entails a certain strengthening of the great powers in both of them. It is not altogether obvious whether the collective Euro-Atlantic benefits – which will also be Danish benefits – can outweigh the costs that Denmark is likely to suffer from adopting a narrow national perspective.

In spite of a status quo that is favourable to it, Denmark is currently striving offensively and proactively, in close cooperation with the US, to reform both NATO and the EU-US channel. The 'US connection' is the key to understanding Danish reform proactivism.

## Preface

Atlantic relations<sup>1</sup> reached a low ebb in connection with the war in Iraq in the spring of 2003. The war did not have a clear UN mandate, and only a few European allies joined the US war effort. Since then, Atlantic relations have gradually improved again. Political will in the direction of further improvement currently seems to exist on both sides of the Atlantic.

However, this is no guarantee that a new breakdown, a 'new Iraq', will not occur. In order to prevent this and taking into account the enlargements of key institutions like NATO and the EU, as well as the advent of terrorism as an important issue on the agenda, think tanks on both sides of the Atlantic have presented several proposals. Apart from substance, they have addressed the question of institutions. The present report presents and synthesizes some of the best current proposals for the reform of Atlantic institutions. My argument is that they must be politically balanced in relation to major Euro-Atlantic players in order to be realistic. Also, in contrast to most think-tank prescriptions, the proposals discussed below are integrated into a theory-based whole concerning international politics and the role of international institutions therein. The reader may disagree with the assumptions, but at least they are made explicit in what follows.

After this initial analysis, we shall examine how the interests of one particular European state, Denmark, are affected by the preferred set of reform proposals. What may seem rational from an overall Euro-Atlantic perspective is not necessarily so when seen from that of a particular nation state.

The study has been supported by the Danish *Ministry of Foreign Affairs* and financed by the *Ministry of Defence*. Interviews have been carried out with top politicians within the field and high-ranking civil servants in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who are here thanked for their generous devotion of time and interest. I also participated in a workshop in Washington, D.C., from 27-29 April 2005, on Atlantic relations in the light of the European Constitutional Treaty, which was arranged and financed by the German Marshall Fund of the United States. Valuable comments have been offered by both colleagues on both

<sup>1</sup> I shall use 'Atlantic' rather than 'Transatlantic' relations or cooperation here. The prefix 'trans-' seems to me to be redundant.

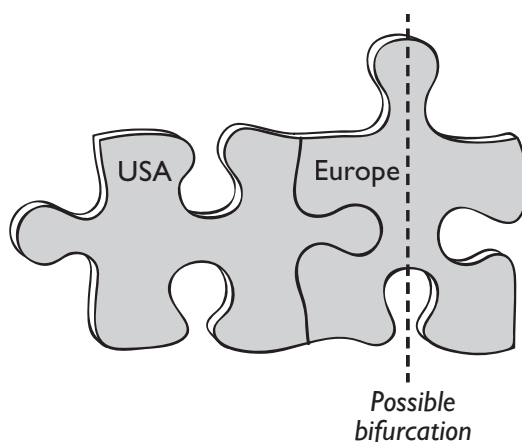
the 'Europe' and 'security' departments at DIIS. Also, I am grateful to Kurt Wise, intern from Duke University, North Carolina, USA, and *stud.scient.soc.* Morten Lihn Jørgensen for excellent assistance in the research process. However, responsibility for the content, including any errors or misjudgements, is mine alone. The manuscript was finalized in mid-February 2006.

## Two Euro-Atlantic Scenarios: Symbiosis vs. Bifurcation

Among several options, this report assumes that there are two realistic ten-year scenarios for the Euro-Atlantic area. They do not reflect the author's wishful thinking for Europe, but are based solely on what has been argued elsewhere to be the two most likely developments.<sup>2</sup>

The first scenario, the Euro-Atlantic symbiosis, entails a conscious (but fragile) division of labour between the US and the EU for the purpose of safeguarding stability and democracy in Europe and its salient environment. The second, by contrast, implies a Euro-Atlantic bifurcation – not an *Atlantic* bifurcation, but one that runs right through the middle of Europe. The two jigsaw pieces in Figure 1 illustrate America and Europe. Put together, they symbolize Euro-Atlantic cooperation in high politics (the symbiosis) for the safeguarding of common values. The point is that they cannot be disentangled, as they were put together. The European piece would break into two parts (bifurcation), as illustrated by the dotted line.

Fig. 1. Two jigsaw pieces: any Euro-Atlantic bifurcation will run right through the middle of Europe



<sup>2</sup> Cf. Mouritzen 2005.



Whether one or the other scenario prevails depends primarily on whether terrorism against the US and its closest allies will continue. This, of course, cannot be predicted with any certainty. *Should* bifurcation prevail, however, it can be predicted which states will be on which side and why (Atlanticists versus Continentalists). The distribution of states will, in rough outline, follow the distribution provoked by the 2003 Iraq war, because the same geopolitical mechanisms will be involved. The positioning of each state will be determined by its own set of past and, primarily, present geopolitics. For several states, their present geopolitics will lead them to balance the German-French continental axis by following the US lead.

Should bifurcation prevail, Atlantic institutions like NATO, the EU-US dialogue, or the OSCE will mostly become redundant, the political will to use them lacking. They may persist as empty shells, but hardly anything more. Only bilateral (state) relations will be important. In other words, the discussion of new Atlantic institutions or the reform of existing ones in this report *presupposes* the existence of a symbiosis and its the related political will.

### **Euro-Atlantic Symbiosis: The Need for Institutions**

This symbiosis is not as idyllic as it may sound. It is based, essentially, on a fragile compromise between Paris and London regarding Atlantic relations (a compromise on the Atlantic compromise, actually). Europe is neither quite as Atlantic as the British would prefer, nor as independent as the French would like. The symbiosis prevailed in the post-Cold War period until it started to malfunction during 2002 with the looming Iraq crisis. With the start of President Bush's second term in early 2005, however, it seemed that major actors on both sides of the Atlantic were positioning themselves for a fresh start. Not least President Bush's symbolic visit to EU institutions in February 2005 (the first time they had ever visited by an American president) seemed to pave the way for a new symbiosis.

Whereas institutions are redundant in the bifurcation scenario, they are an important instrument for states in the symbiosis scenario. Multilateralism is the order of the day (though, as always, it is preferred by Europeans more than Americans). Of course, a symbiosis may be created through a great power *directoire* because basic geopolitical interests on both side of the Atlantic favour it. However, the *maintenance* of a symbiosis is dependent on continuous dia-

logue over both strategic and more specific issues – it is not a once-and-for-all agreement. Such continuity is strengthened by institutions, in particular if they are well-functioning and allow strategic debate.<sup>3</sup> Also national vested interests attached to the institutions may help to preserve the symbiosis.

In order to re-establish a Euro-Atlantic symbiosis, is it possible simply to return to the pre-Iraq institutional set-up? Is institutional reform, or even innovation, really necessary? Why not just continue from where the Atlantic dialogue started to malfunction in the autumn of 2002? Simply because wide-ranging new developments have taken place, namely:

- the recent *mega-enlargements* of the EU and NATO, the two key entities for Euro-Atlantic relations
- the revised issue priority in the Atlantic dialogue after 9/11, i.e. the advent of *terrorism* as issue no. 1 on the agenda. In this process, American *unilateralism* has been strengthened.

The enlargements of the EU and NATO mean that so many more actors wish to have a say on the European side of the Atlantic. This obviously presents problems of manageability, aggregation and representation that can only be solved through some form of institutional adaptation.

Terrorism and the ensuing Euro-Atlantic bifurcation over US unilateralism and 'preventive action' (e.g. Cornish 2004, p. 69) entailed institutional malfunction, with vetoes or threats to veto in NATO and the UN Security Council (not to mention EU paralysis). To pre-empt any future repetition, Euro-Atlantic actors need to agree on two key questions: 1) the conditions for the use of force (apart from self-defence); and 2) the proper means of promoting democracy and the rule of law (Eide and Bozo 2005). This includes a common or converging understanding of the roots of terrorism and its long-term prevention. Of course, these questions will be discussed ad hoc in each and every crisis situation. However, a symbiosis will be stabilized if convergence can be reached on these two questions in general terms, free from the urgency of a specific crisis. Such convergence is facilitated by making available and keeping open suitable channels of dialogue.

<sup>3</sup> As Simon Serfaty suggests, 'the most stable international orders are ultimately those that are sought and achieved multilaterally through institutions rather than unilaterally at the expense of these institutions' (*Renewing the Transatlantic Partnership*, p. 24, CSIS, May 2003).

Whereas the enlargements and terrorism are challenges, whether planned or unplanned, there is also a need for Atlantic *progress*, i.e. heightening the symbiotic level of integration. Whereas the Atlantic players should discuss strategy with respect to Russia, China, terrorism, poverty or other challenges, logically prior to that there is a need for a consensus on *meta-strategy*. This means an agreement on who should have primary responsibility for what – in other words:

- an agreed Atlantic division of *labour* in high politics, whether geographical and/or functional.

Most states instinctively shun the idea of a division of labour, because they feel that this more or less threatens their own control of events by yielding responsibility to a partner. On the other hand, if the required mutual trust is present, this saves resources and simplifies procedures, thus representing progress.<sup>4</sup> With a *geographical* division of labour in its pure form, each party can concentrate on stabilizing one or more regions (e.g. for the EU its neighbourhood; for the US the rest of the world). With a *functional* division of labour, on the other hand, the parties can each concentrate on a certain way of exercising power and influence, based on their respective strengths (the EU predominantly ‘soft power’, the US predominantly ‘hard power’).<sup>5</sup> Moreover, various combinations of geographical and functional divisions of labour are conceivable and, probably, preferable. As with the strategic issues mentioned above (on the conditions for the use of force and the proper means of supporting democracy and stabilization), the meta-strategic discussion is facilitated by suitable and well-functioning institutions – in particular if there are frequent opportunities for high-level talks.

Taken together, the twin institutional enlargements, terrorism and the need for both meta-strategic and strategic dialogues should be the main incentives behind Atlantic institutional reform. As we shall see in the following section, voices advocating such reform have been raised, notably since the Iraq crisis.

<sup>4</sup> Cf., for instance, Gyarmati 2005:5, Kennedy 2004, Rudolf 2003, Tertrais 2002.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. ‘Venus’ (Europe) vs. ‘Mars’ (the US) in Kagan’s (2003) oversimplified formulation, according to which the US is bellicose when necessary, whereas Europe is inclined towards softer means, respecting international law. The biological origin of the term ‘symbiosis’ typically refers to a mutually beneficial relationship between plants of *different* species. It presupposes, in other words, a division of labour.

## Reform Discussions since Iraq

Atlantic partners and commentators have agreed on two things: first, Iraq was an Atlantic failure, and secondly, this failure ought not to be repeated. Recommendations for avoiding future failure, however, have been widely divergent. Among conservative commentators in America, a few discarded the post-Cold War symbiosis and NATO altogether and recommended instead strong bilateral ties with America's 'real friends' in Europe, such as the UK, Denmark or Poland (Cimbalo 2004). Within the confines of a renewed symbiosis, major conservative think tanks suggested that NATO 'remains the preeminent transatlantic security organization',<sup>6</sup> while putting most of the blame for past failures on the Europeans' alleged lack of burden sharing. Many American think tanks, together with the European ones, have nonetheless stressed the EU-US dialogue as the most important channel of future common strategy.<sup>7</sup> This difference in emphasis – NATO vs. the EU-US dialogue – is indicative of the think tanks' views on the desirability of the EU as becoming a fully fledged future security policy actor. If such an EU is desired or feasible, the EU-US dialogue should be the prime future channel of Atlantic communication. If not, NATO should have priority.

As seldom before, these different views on the place of the EU came out into the open in connection with the failed ratification of the EU Constitutional Treaty.<sup>8</sup> The conservative US think tanks feared that a strengthened EU (with a ratified Treaty) would weaken US influence in Europe, and cheered discretely when the Treaty failed to be ratified. Conversely, other think tanks stressed that the ratification failure was also an American failure. With the many new Atlanticist EU members, this latter interpretation currently seems to be the soundest.

<sup>6</sup> The Heritage Foundation (editorial), 'Where we Stand: Our Principles on a Policy for Europe that Reinforces National Sovereignty', 23 March 2005. It is said directly that 'a Europe exercising supranational imperatives regarding foreign and security policy [the EU] could hamstring American efforts to form politico-military coalitions'. Cf. also John Hulsman and Nile Gardiner, 'A Conservative Vision for US Policy Toward Europe', *Backgrounder* no. 1803, 4 October 2004 (published by the Heritage Foundation).

<sup>7</sup> For instance *The German Marshall Fund* (Asmus 2005), *The CSIS* (Serfaty 2003), *The Transatlantic Policy Network* (TPN, 'A Strategy to Strengthen Transatlantic Partnership', 4 December 2003, Brussels & Washington), *Centre for European Reform* (Grant 2004; Grant and Leonard 2005), *The EU Institute for Security Studies* (Zaborowski 2005a), or *The Cicero Foundation* (Marcel van Herpen in *Financial Times*, 16 February 2005). Cf. also 'A Compact between the United States and Europe' at [www.cer.org.uk](http://www.cer.org.uk). The initiative for the compact was taken by the *Centre for European Reform* in London and the *Brookings Institution* in Washington.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. 'The EU Constitution and its Impact on the US and Transatlantic Relations', report of a workshop held 9<sup>th</sup> February in Berlin (The German Marshall Fund of the United States); Gordon 2005; also Zaborowski 2005b.

Atlantic institutional reform has also become an issue for official state representatives. On 12 February 2005, German Defence Minister Peter Struck delivered a speech on behalf of Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder (who was ill with influenza) to the traditional Munich Conference on Security Policy.<sup>9</sup> The Chancellor asserted that NATO

is no longer the primary venue where transatlantic partners discuss and coordinate strategies. The same applies to the dialogue between the European Union and the United States which in its current form does justice neither to the Union's growing importance nor to the new demands on transatlantic cooperation.

To improve Atlantic cooperation, it was suggested that a high-ranking panel of independent figures from both sides of the Atlantic be established 'to help us find a solution' to Atlantic institutional problems. The panel was to submit a report to the Heads of State and Government of NATO and the European Union by the beginning of 2006.

The speech engendered a great deal of publicity and a variety of reactions from governments and commentators. Some saw it as a step towards abolishing NATO. The Chancellor himself stood by his comments the following day, underscoring the importance of the transatlantic partnership. His Foreign Minister, Joschka Fischer, felt a need to stress that Schroeder's goal was a revitalized NATO rather than its dismantling.

Predictably, President Chirac supported Schroeder's call for reform, emphasising the new and growing role of the EU. Actually, the panel proposal had been made in similar form by the French foreign minister some months earlier.<sup>10</sup> The US administration, not briefed in advance about the Chancellor's proposal, reacted instinctively by describing NATO as the 'cornerstone' of Atlantic relations. 'NATO has a great deal of energy and vitality', remarked US defence minister Donald Rumsfeld.<sup>11</sup> Paradoxically, however, this was precisely the time when the

<sup>9</sup> Speech by Federal Chancellor Gerhard Schröder at the opening of the *41st Munich Conference on Security Policy* (12 February 2005).

<sup>10</sup> In an article in *Wall Street Journal*, 8 November 2004, by foreign minister Michel Barnier, it was suggested that a 'high-level group, consisting of independent, respected figures from both sides of the Atlantic, [should] explore ways in which we can deepen our political cooperation'.

<sup>11</sup> 'An outdated alliance', [www.salon.com](http://www.salon.com) (14 February 2005).

US President had decided to upgrade the EU in his Europe policy, as illustrated by his visit to EU institutions in Brussels about a week later. It seems that his administration had been thinking of specific reform proposals, to be discussed when the EU had ratified its Constitutional Treaty.

NATO Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer rejected the Chancellor's call for an advisory board of experts. Still, internal discussions for NATO reform were already under way, on the basis that 'NATO must become a more political forum'.<sup>12</sup> Chancellor Schröder's call for broader reform has not been followed up. It seems that the EU-US aspect of Atlantic reform has presently come to a standstill, waiting for the EU's paralysis over ratification to be overcome. The new German Chancellor, Angela Merkel has stated, in agreement with Hoop Scheffer, that NATO should become more visible as a political alliance.<sup>13</sup>

### **Security Institutions as 'Twining Plants'**

International institutions are typically ascribed a modest or negligible role in realist or geopolitical theories of international politics, the implication being that they are often neglected in practice. The view here is that their role is modest, but in a rather intriguing way. The theoretical view adopted here is that international governmental organisations (IGOs) are 'twining plants' (Mou-ritzen 1998, Ch. 8). First they are *weak* (cannot keep upright without support), secondly they are *beautiful* (allegedly serving decorative purposes), and thirdly they are virtually *impossible to get rid of*. Their weakness is most pronounced in high politics, typically security policy. How can these weak creatures be so difficult to get rid of? This is simply because the most powerful actors in international politics, the nation states, wish IGOs to survive, even when they appear redundant or inefficient in relation to fulfilling their official purposes. The reason is that IGOs typically serve

<sup>12</sup> 'Schroeder Stands by Controversial NATO Revamp', Reuters, Brussels 16 February 2005. An American proposal regarding a 'strengthened political dialogue' had already been discussed at the NATO foreign ministers' meeting in December 2004. Partly as a development of this, the NATO Secretary General launched an internal NATO reform led by Danish ambassador Jesper Vahr. His recommendations are expected to be discussed by NATO foreign ministers at their meeting in the spring of 2006.

<sup>13</sup> For instance, 'Europe must be able to act in security-policy terms. This does not replace but enhances NATO. We want to strengthen the Alliance's European pillar and thus the Alliance as a whole. For NATO is and remains the strongest anchor of our common security' (Chancellor Angela Merkel, policy statement in the German *Bundestag*, 30 November 2005). A similar statement was made in her opening speech at the *42nd Munich Conference on Security Policy* (5 February 2006). What this means from a reform perspective remains to be seen.

certain national vested interests, including beneficial but unintended consequences flowing from their sheer existence. This is analogous to beautiful twining plants being used to hide ugly walls, for instance. On the one hand, nation states do not allow IGOs to become too influential, especially when it comes to high politics; on the other hand, they do not allow them to disappear.

Examples of national vested interests include the use of IGOs as *face-saving* devices, depositories of *legitimacy* (the UN most of all), tools for *binding* potentially threatening states, *norm articulators*, *emergency exits* (if the usual IGOs happen to be blocked), or tools for *spreading dependence* (this list is in no way exhaustive). Just to provide a single illustration, NATO was established to counter and deter a Soviet military attack on Western Europe. However, the smaller member states soon found out that it was also an excellent device for safeguarding the spread of dependence in Western Europe itself, that is, for avoiding them becoming over-dependent on one or other European great power. They could now spread their dependence among several great powers, including the US superpower. This in its turn improved their influence-capability.

In other words, IGOs can be useful in less straightforward and more tricky ways than those that come from their official purposes, those that are emphasised in their charters or official rhetoric. Such vested interests have seldom been principle aims of the IGO in question at its very birth: they have either been side-issues or were hardly envisaged at all. Through the turmoil of events, however, they have been uncovered as unintended consequences of the IGO's existence. Being beneficial to one or more powerful national actors, the maintenance of these vested interests has *subsequently* been safeguarded for long periods of time. This 'inertia benefit' is consciously maintained by nation states – it is hardly the result of IGO bureaucratic inertia at all. As already noted, IGOs dominated by high politics are so weak as institutions ('twining plants') that there is little bureaucratic inertia involved. For instance, NATO bureaucracies (the civilian 'International Staff' and the seconded military staffs) were not strong enough to safeguard their own institutional interests, such as task expansion, after the Cold War, as their original tasks tended to disappear with the Soviet Union. Only *national* authorities – the US and the Atlanticist states in Europe – were strong enough to do that, and they actually succeeded.

It is in accordance with this state-centric perspective that the lights of international institutions go out almost simultaneously whenever a symbiosis breaks down.

In connection with the Iraq war, for instance, NATO, the EU (CFSP), the UN Security Council and even Nordic foreign-policy cooperation were all more or less paralysed (but not, of course, abolished). There was no reserve electricity unit anywhere.

Given this conception of security IGOs, individual nation states are each likely to have their favourite institution. This does not mean that rival powers choose to leave such institutions – they just play down their profiles. Leaving would be too strong a signal, leading to possible retaliation by others and thus eventually a dismantling of the whole IGO system. Even when France withdrew from NATO's military structure, for instance, it continued its military cooperation with the United States and with NATO, codified in a series of agreements minimizing the practical importance of the withdrawal (Laursen et al. 2005:47-8).

What appear like institutional turf wars at first sight typically turn out to have national rivalries at their roots. For instance, the recent rivalry between NATO and the EU (ESDP) on who should assist the African Union with an airlift and other support to Darfur (Sudan) in fact turned out to be based essentially on the Washington-Paris disagreement over Europe's defence ambitions (the relationship between NATO and the ESDP).<sup>14</sup> Which tasks should be carried out by NATO, and which by the ESDP? Involved in this question are possibly also the question of different spheres of influence. Should Africa be regarded as a European/French rather than Anglo-Saxon sphere of influence? According to a French diplomat, 'The EU has been in Darfur a long time, well before NATO' (ibid.; *Reuters*, Brussels, 8 June, 2005).

Given the above assumptions about the role of international institutions, it is clear that they are first and foremost state instruments.<sup>15</sup> Whether a Euro-

<sup>14</sup> 'Turf Wars Snag: US, Europe on Darfur Mission', *Reuters*, Brussels, 8 June 2005. 'This is a sad discussion. The poor Africans must be looking at this in bewilderment. If we do not get out of this competitive mindset, we cannot exclude there being a delay', as an anonymous NATO diplomat expressed it. On NATO vs. the ESDP, see, for instance, Kristin Archick and Paul Gallis, 'NATO and the European Union', CRS Report for Congress, January 2005.

<sup>15</sup> Using a different metaphor, Lopata (2005) seems to support a view of international security institutions corresponding to the one being advocated here: 'On a geostrategic level, NATO and the EU as institutions do not "play" at all. Different great powers have different "visions of the world order", and the destiny of the EU and NATO depends exactly on the directions of the formulation and the practical implementations of these "visions". Even at the geopolitical level these institutions are more like chessboards providing limits for the interplay between the states rather than being independent figures'.



Atlantic symbiosis is established or not depends on the available amount of *political will*. No institutional set-up can replace political will, which in its turn conditioned not least by national geopolitical fundamentals. However, the *maintenance* of a symbiosis, once established, is facilitated by international institutions.

## **New Euro-Atlantic Institutions?**

The institutions that provide channels for Atlantic security dialogue are manifold: mainly NATO, the US-EU/CFSP/ESDP (the ‘New Transatlantic Agenda’, NTA, of 1995<sup>16</sup>), the OSCE, the G8 (the annual informal gathering of the world’s leading industrialized countries) and the UN Security Council. The two first mentioned are directly tailored for this purpose, whereas the rest have other main purposes or memberships. Apart from the NTA, all these institutions were established during the Cold War, i.e. under very different circumstances (Laursen et al. 2005:47). Given the above assumptions, however, this is not a problem. The attachment of new aims to these institutions has actually been the rule rather than the exception. Whereas the G7 was originally devoted to matters involving the world economy, today it is tackling all manner of major challenges (terrorism, Iraq, etc.).

With so many institutions with closely related Atlantic goals, there should be rich opportunities for Atlantic officials, including government leaders, to meet in informal settings and discuss questions of strategic significance. To this should be added the opportunities for bilateral meetings, of course, which are often arranged in the shadow of multilateral meetings. In June 2004 alone, for instance, top leaders participated in a ‘travelling summit road show’ by meeting in Georgia, US (G8), in Ireland (US-EU summit), and in Turkey (NATO), with no small overlap of issues.<sup>17</sup> During this hectic month, there were also Bush’s visit to Berlusconi and the Pope in Rome, his visit to Chirac in Paris, and the meetings of several leaders at Ronald Reagan’s funeral and at the celebrations in Normandy of the 60th anniversary of D-Day.

<sup>16</sup> *New Transatlantic Agenda*, Online. HTTP: [www.eurunion.org/partner/agenda.htm].

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *House Subcommittee Hearing on Transatlantic Relations: A Post-Summit Assessment*, 15 July 2004.

In this light, new institutions or treaties do not seem urgently required.<sup>18</sup> It might be objected, of course, that a ‘fresh start’ is desirable after Iraq, not least psychologically. However, this underestimates the difficulties inherent in international cooperation – it is easy to destroy, but very difficult to build something anew. It would be a luxury to discard the habits of cooperation developed within existing institutions, as well as their core competences (provided these are still needed, of course). A counter-reply might be that one could get rid of some institutional ‘deadwood’ by starting afresh with new institutions and new international civil servants. However, this problem can be dealt with in other ways.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, states wish to cling to existing successes like Cold War ‘winning’ institutions, illustrated also by the many new and would-be members. Not least for prestige reasons, memberships of such institutions co-determine states’ positions in the international ‘pecking order’. Also, as van Heuven has suggested (2005), ‘any attempt to try for a new grand design ... will ... turn into a fruitless search for the Holy Grail, or worse, split the alliance on peripheral issues’. Last but not least, no US president or European state leader is ever likely, with the US ‘at war’ and the EU in a constitutional crisis, to possess the necessary surplus energy to embark on such an enterprise.

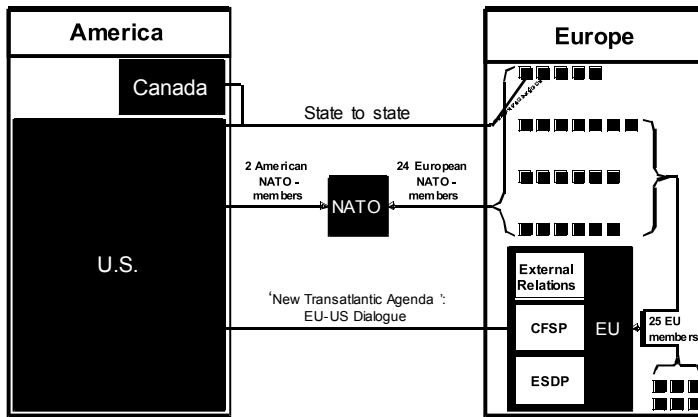
## **A Euro-Atlantic Reform Perspective**

Whereas new institutions are hardly justified, the *reform* of existing ones may be necessary. Even though most of them have adapted to the initial post-Cold War era, reform seems to be required again to deal with the new set of challenges presented above. Given the ‘twining plant’ conception of international security institutions, significant institutional reform must take the form of a *package deal* between the major national actors. The intricate balance between favourite national institutions must be maintained for such a reform to win general and whole-hearted state support.

<sup>18</sup> For instance, Robert Hunter (RAND) has suggested a US-Canada-EU strategic partnership, allegedly bringing the wall between the EU and NATO ‘crashing down’. Cf. Robert Hunter, ‘A Good Time to Bridge the Atlantic Gap’, in *Globe and Mail*, 20 June 2005. The ‘Transatlantic Policy Network’ (TPN) suggests a ‘Transatlantic Partnership Agreement’ between the EU and the US to be implemented from 2007, updating the 1995 ‘New Transatlantic Agenda’. Cf. TPN, ‘A Strategy to Strengthen Transatlantic Partnership’, Washington/Brussels, 4 December 2003.

<sup>19</sup> See the section below on ‘Institutional Cooperation and Bureaucratic Reform’.

Fig. 2. Main Channels of Atlantic Cooperation



In the Euro-Atlantic context, the major national actors are France on the one hand and the UK-US on the other. As already indicated, NATO is the favourite organization of the latter, since it is seen as safeguarding US influence in Europe and is a forum where the US can deal with its European partners individually rather than as a caucus.<sup>20</sup> EU foreign, security and defence cooperation (CFSP, ESDP), on the other hand, are seen as carrying the seeds of French ambitions for an ‘independent Europe’. EU-US bilateralism, where the EU speaks with one voice, is consequently the ‘natural’ channel for Atlantic dialogue. NATO is too much a ‘tool of the US’ as seen from Paris.<sup>21</sup> Other European countries can, with varying degrees of clarity, be classified as ‘Atlanticists’, prioritizing the NATO channel, or as ‘Continentalists’, prioritizing the EU-US channel (Mouritzen 2005).

As Lopata remarks (2005), ‘The feeling is that at least the Central and East European countries would prefer the domination of the US within NATO to that of France and Germany within a new US-EU bilateral arrangement’. Figure 2 indicates the two major institutional channels of Atlantic cooperation as well as the ‘state to state’ channel.

<sup>20</sup> ‘The formation of a European caucus within NATO will be “the death” of the organization’, according to a senior American diplomat in Europe (‘Let’s talk – but where?’, *Economist*, 24 February 2005). This thinly veiled threat has appeared in various versions. A slightly more friendly formulation says that ‘America does not accept any European pre-cooking’ (in NATO, presumably).

<sup>21</sup> See, for instance, Boyer 2004.

In order to be ‘balanced’, therefore, significant reform must simultaneously strengthen and improve *both* the EU-US channel *and* NATO; they are connected vessels. G8 reform would also be a possibility, of course, since it is rather ‘neutral’ in relation to French-US competition. Although it has developed from a purely economic focus originally to high politics in general, its drawback is that it excludes so many non-great powers that its legitimacy is somewhat circumscribed. The OSCE, traditionally Russia’s favourite organization, could also be reformed, but for present purposes it is too much focused on the ex-Soviet territories. Like the G8, it does not specialize in Atlantic relations. The UN Security Council is preoccupied with responding to urgent crises around the world in general, again not Atlantic issues *per se*. During the Iraq crisis it provided an embarrassing showcase of intra-EU and Atlantic disagreements to world opinion, rather than an organization for finding solutions to them. What remains, therefore, is to safeguard ‘balanced’ reforms of NATO and the EU-US channel. Still, there is every reason to applaud, evidently, if confidential talks in the other forums can produce Atlantic achievements.

### **NATO Reform**

NATO’s core competence is its command of multinational contingents within integrated military structures. This has produced, and relies on, for example, military know-how, inter-operability between national forces, shared procedures and the standardization of equipment. This core competence is also capable of being extended into different ‘markets’ (Borchert 2001), such as the defence of a member state, crisis management, peace-keeping and peace enforcement. Commanding troops effectively is necessary for these markets to function. Moreover, there is no other European ‘school’ in which this competence can be learnt (Gyarmati 2005). Even further, it is a competence that is almost impossible to copy because of the enormous amount of money that would be required to build a military organization comparable to NATO in Europe.

As the challenge facing NATO members has shifted from the Soviet threat to ‘instability and chaos’ in the Euro-Atlantic area, and increasingly with terrorism as an ingredient, this core competence remains crucial, although the specific types of military operation required have changed. The ability to deploy and sustain troops in distant places, not least through airlift capability, is now more important than the deployment of large armies. Moreover, the projection of stability and democracy has become an important competence in

its own right, carried out with great success in relation to would-be members in particular.<sup>22</sup>

NATO has grown from 16 to 26 members through the enlargements of 1999 and 2004, and further enlargements can be expected. Given the way NATO takes its decisions, at least formally, this also meant adding new potential veto powers. Moreover, these enlargements imply a greater range of assessments of security threats (each member focuses on its own region, with the result that 'incentives wane with distance'). Adding to this members' past geopolitics, their historic memories, diversity is likely to increase even further (Mouritzen and Wivel 2005b). As Bertram vividly illustrates (2005), 'For Norway or the Baltic States, events in North Africa or the Balkans are beyond their screen of security concerns; for Canada or Spain the Baltic fears of a re-emerging Russia border on hysteria'.

To retain NATO cohesion and manoeuvrability under these new conditions, Bertram (2005) and others have suggested setting up a kind of 'steering committee'. Referring to the discrete 'Quad' of the 1990s (sort of preparatory 'tea parties' of US, German, British and French ambassadors – admitted, even if publicly denied), Bertram suggests a formalisation of such meetings, but adding also Italy, Poland, Spain, and the EU High Representative (!). To these permanent members should be added a handful of rotating ones, while the General Secretary should chair the meetings. This steering committee should in no way replace the North Atlantic Council consisting of *all* members, this still being the locus of formal decisions, but it should prepare its meetings. To this structure should be added some regional tables dealing with 'secondary regions', such as Africa, Latin America or the Far East. The US as the only superpower should be present at all regional tables, whereas remaining members should be restricted to those who declare an interest and a willingness to be involved. Members of a regional table should then – provided they can agree the necessary action among themselves – try to lobby in the steering committee for general support and thus for a NATO blueprint. A proposal like the present one, which has certain resemblances to a great power *directoire*, would probably face some scepticism among the non-great powers. However, the status quo will lead to similar informal groupings if

<sup>22</sup> The EU has a corresponding competence (Mouritzen and Wivel 2005a), although functioning at slower pace (because hopes of EU membership for many countries are rather long-term projects, if they are realistic at all).

NATO shall remain manageable in the first place. The transparency of formal groupings would be preferable to such a development as the latter.

A related question is whether to retain decisions by consensus in the North Atlantic Council, with all members having the power of veto.<sup>23</sup> It might be argued that the effect of ten new potential veto powers can only be countered by simply abolishing veto power, in whole or in part.<sup>24</sup> However, it is hardly possible to combine the above steering committee with such a symbolically important step – that would be a ‘double blow’ to the non-great powers. For the same reason, to abolish the power of veto would raise problems with public opinion in some of member countries, problems that would be disproportionate with the possible gains. In any case, during a symbiosis with its relative convergence of political wills, reluctant or dissatisfied member states are likely to use ‘constructive abstention’ rather than veto, which provides the required flexibility without leading to institutional paralysis. Allowing vetoes is in principle a cheap symbolic concession to ‘national sovereignty’.

Proposals to strengthen the Secretary General and his secretariat have been made periodically throughout NATO’s existence. The Secretary General has both an administrative function (leading the secretariat; see section below) and a political one. Included in the latter is bridge-building between member states, including both Atlantic bridge-building and between a Council majority and a potential absentee or veto state. A classic recipe for improving this function is to elect Secretary Generals with a priori a high status among members, which in practice means among former foreign or defence ministers. However, many other considerations tend to intervene at this point (Mouritzen 1990:110-12).

Except for infrastructure costs and International Staff salaries, NATO does not have a common budget. A common budget for national forces has always been a sensitive question, because it seen as infringing on national sovereignty. Gyarmati (2005) suggests that NATO defence planning, instead of trying to cover all the

<sup>23</sup> Lopata (2005), for instance, advocates majority voting in the ‘least sensitive policy fields’.

<sup>24</sup> For instance, Hamilton argues that the veto power regarding specific key missions should only be granted to those nations contributing substantial resources and effort to such missions. Veto power should be retained, however, for overarching decisions on such issues as NATO’s strategic concept, admitting new members, core goals or standards (‘House Subcommittee Hearing on Transatlantic Relations’, 15 July 2004, p. 14).

forces of the member countries, should concentrate on those that are likely to be used in joint operations, and virtually ignore the rest. A common budget for such forces (troops, equipment) might be realistic. With a common budget, abstentions – which will multiply in the future anyway – will be much more acceptable to those taking action, because the abstainers will be contributing financially. This would facilitate burden-sharing and hopefully remove the ‘free-rider’ accusations that have traditionally plagued Atlantic dialogue.

Task expansion has proved to be a remedy in previous NATO crises, both when the Cold War ended and previously. It can be conceived in either geographical or functional terms, or both. Whereas NATO has increasingly gone ‘out-of-area’, the issue today is rather whether to ‘go global’. This is supported by practically all US think tanks and also some European ones;<sup>25</sup> they share an obvious underestimation of the principle that ‘power and incentive wane with distance’,<sup>26</sup> and the fact that only a superpower can, at least to some extent, transcend this principle. Admittedly, the rhetoric of many European state leaders speaks to the contrary, as Chirac, Blair, or even the leaders of minor powers emphasise global military challenges. However, the actual *deeds* and capabilities of European states bear witness to the opposite. In spite of some lip-service, European leaders are not as engaged as the US by, for instance, the North Korean nuclear issue, China’s rising great-power status in Asia (in contrast to its economic potential), or South American politics (with the exception of Spain and Portugal). Going global would therefore only create false expectations that would soon be bitterly disappointed and thus perhaps put NATO’s future existence at risk.

Functional task expansion could incorporate general foreign policy where, for instance, this is unrelated to specific military action. This involves, most importantly, strategic relations with Russia, the Middle East, how to deal with Iran, etc. Coupled with geographical expansion, it would also involve strategic relations with China, for instance. However, in order not to interfere with (or undermine) the EU CFSP, this latter coordination of viewpoints would have to be carried out first. In turn, a bilateral US-EU discussion would follow within the confines of NATO. As previously indicated, however, such a European caucus runs contrary

<sup>25</sup> See, for instance, Simon Serfaty of the CSIS (Serfaty 2005) or Christophe Bertram of the *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik*, SWP (Bertram 2005).

<sup>26</sup> Adapted from Boulding 1962.

to basic US thinking and interests regarding NATO. Taken together, therefore, the incorporation of general foreign policy into NATO can hardly avoid conflicting with either Continental or Atlanticist sensitivities.

Functional task expansion might also incorporate post-conflict tasks such as civil society development, police training, economic reconstruction or political reform. This is an obvious possibility, involving fewer sensitivities. However, having poured so much effort into building up the EU's capacity in this sphere, EU states are unlikely to invest in a similar effort in NATO (Dobbins 2005a,b). As a counterpart to Berlin+,<sup>27</sup> NATO could instead borrow such 'soft power' from the EU (see section below). Taken together, the types of task expansion considered here do not seem to be the way ahead for NATO and its Atlantic relations.

### **EU-US Summit Reform**

As we recall, the twin institutional enlargements, terrorism and the need for specific strategic dialogues should be the main incentives behind Atlantic institutional reform. These incentives also apply to the EU-US dialogue. Culminating in annual summits, this dialogue is bound by treaty (NTA, 1995), but it lacks an organizational infrastructure. The relationship between the EU and the US is a strange one, simply because the EU is a unique entity, something in between a federation and an IGO. It can be considered a reasonably coherent actor in issues such as trade or the environment, but hardly so in foreign and security policy. The more high politics are at stake, the less the EU is a coherent actor.

There seems to be some dissatisfaction with the EU-US summits. According to the French ambassador to the US, they are 'miserable'. 'Each time we meet for this supposed summit, we discuss bananas and steel, we have a long experience of bananas and steel. We should discuss strategic issues'.<sup>28</sup> The Danish ambassador to the US, also wishing a 'strategic dialogue', talks diplomatically about a 'cumbersome way of conducting a dialogue'.<sup>29</sup> The meetings are dominated by a bureaucrat-driven agenda. Even if declarations are signed on economic issues,

<sup>27</sup> See, for instance, Cornish 2004.

<sup>28</sup> Jean-David Levitte, speech at the Brookings Institution, Washington D.C., 12 May 2003.

<sup>29</sup> Ulrik Federspiel, speech at the 'World Affairs Council of Northern California', San Francisco, 23 June 2004.



HIV-Aids, the Middle East, Iraq, Sudan, counter-terrorism, weapons of mass destruction or UN reform, no substantive discussions on such themes take place at the summits (which last for about three hours).

Comparing the lists of 2004 and 2005 summit participants from Europe is instructive in more than one way. The participants in June 2004 in Dublin were Romano Prodi (Commission President), Bertie Ahern (Council President and Irish Prime Minister), Loyola de Palacio (Commission Vice President), Chris Patten (Commissioner for External Relations), Pascal Lamy (Commissioner for Trade), Ján Figel (Commissioner for Enterprise Policy), Javier Solana (High Representative for CFSP), Brian Cowen (Irish foreign minister), and Mary Harney (Irish deputy foreign minister). European participants in the June 2005 summit in Washington were José Manuel Barroso (Commission President), Jean-Claude Juncker (Council President and Luxembourg Prime Minister), Günter Verheugen (Commission Vice-President), Benita Ferrero-Waldner (Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy), Peter Mandelson (Trade Commissioner), Jean Asselborn (Luxembourg Foreign Minister), and Javier Solana (High Representative for CFSP). Whereas the American side was represented at both occasions by roughly the same team, headed by President Bush, discontinuity prevailed on the European side, to say the least. As should appear from the above listings, only Solana was present on both occasions. In other words, cultivating Atlantic personal relationships is not really a strength of these summits (even though the appointment of a new Commission between the two summits makes this example a little unfair). Another noteworthy feature is the absence of the big three (Germany, France, and the UK). Technically, of course, any Presidency is able to represent EU views by reading prefabricated statements and signing the relevant documents. However, when it comes to strategic foreign-policy issues, and in particular the informal discussions about them, the EU's lack of coherence and credibility is a serious problem. In other words, the problem is not one of the incompetence of Irish, Luxembourgian, or other non-great power representatives – instead, it resides in the nature of the EU itself.

In order to further Atlantic strategic dialogue, Grant (2004)<sup>30</sup> proposes a summit reform. The European side should always include the leaders of Germany,

<sup>30</sup> See also Grant and Leonard 2005; Marcel van Herpen (the Cicero Foundation) in *Financial Times*, 16 February 2005.

France, the UK, a few rotating non-great powers, and the Commission plus the High Representative for foreign policy. 'Fireside chats' or similar informal settings should be preferred, with no ensuing press conference. Moreover, 'contact groups' should discuss specific issues, in which the countries directly concerned (be they great or non-great powers) should participate. One may assume the Commission to take the European lead in discussions of trade, environment or other matters of low politics, whereas the states, notably the big ones, would raise their voices in foreign and security issues, assisted by the High Representative.

Grant's proposal responds to the enlargement challenge (the many new CFSP and ESDP members, creating a more heterogeneous EU security agenda), as well as providing a realistic forum for the necessary strategic debate. It recognizes that the EU is (much) less than a federation, and also that member states are unequal in terms of power and influence. Although not stated explicitly, the proposed restructuring of EU-US summitry probably presupposes that the CFSP and ESDP themselves would be organized along the same lines. Formal decisions, however, should still be taken by the full CFSP or ESDP Councils. For the same reason as in the NATO context – fear of a great power *directoire*<sup>31</sup> – the veto option of individual members should be retained, as should the weapon of 'constructive abstention' (Laursen et al.: 55). Grant's proposal is roughly analogous to the NATO reform suggested above (although he regards NATO as a less important forum that should *not* be affected by this reform). In addition to Grant's proposal, the frequency of summits could be doubled, so they may be held biannually (like EU-Russia summits). Among other advantages, this would increase personal continuities.

The proposals inherent in the frozen EU Treaty providing for a permanent Presidency and the merging of the posts of External Commissioner and High Representative for foreign policy into the single post of 'EU foreign minister' could preferably be added (acknowledging the necessity of Treaty reform, of course).<sup>32</sup> The foreign minister would not only be a 'salesman' of EU foreign policy (like the High Representative today), but also a co-producer of it, with

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Wivel 2005:400-7.

<sup>32</sup> According to Algieri et al. (2005), it should be legally possible to establish a Union foreign minister and a foreign ministry (an 'External Action Service') on the basis of the Nice Treaty, i.e. without a ratification of the Constitutional Treaty. Such a foreign minister would have more modest powers than those envisaged in the Constitutional Treaty, but would still represent progress in relation to the current situation.

agenda-setting competence. Moreover, the establishment of an EU diplomatic service would contribute to the eventual emergence of an EU foreign policy 'memory'. These proposals do not conflict with Grant's, but are in step with it. They would certainly simplify EU-US dialogue (like dialogue with other states) by increasing EU continuity and credibility somewhat.

Grant's proposal, together with those envisaged by the frozen Treaty, in no way repair the EU's built-in deficiencies in matters of foreign and security policy in terms of its conservatism (the lowest common denominator approach), its inertia and its circumscribed credibility.<sup>33</sup> However, they obviously make external dialogue with the peculiar EU entity more manageable and realistic by their acceptance of its deficiencies and their making the best out of them.

It was argued in the above section that possible NATO task expansion should keep away from general foreign policy, that is, unrelated to specific military action. The grand strategic questions of how the Atlantic community should seek to influence Russia, China, Iran, Africa, or the Middle East peace process, for instance, should be dealt with first, in the EU CFSP, and subsequently at EU-US summits. This is also the view enshrined in the so-called 'compact' agreed between fifty foreign-policy experts from both sides of the Atlantic in early 2005: 'Summits will in the future be focused not only on trade issues but become a genuine forum for strategic dialogue on the full range of issues of concern to transatlantic relations, including in the area of foreign and security policy.'<sup>34</sup>

Given a geographically unlimited agenda, however, the risk of US disappointments with its European counterpart is obvious. And given the widespread US neglect of the principle that 'power and incentives wane with distance',<sup>35</sup> among both academics and practitioners, the practice of over-estimating the EU's and its member states' geographic reach and engagement will continue. If not globally

<sup>33</sup> Consider, for instance, the EU's increasingly reluctant attitude to the possibility of Turkish membership, in spite of previous promises, or individual EU members' different relations to the US or Russia, which make aggregate EU positions in these regards less credible.

<sup>34</sup> *A Compact between the United States and Europe*, [www.cer.org.uk](http://www.cer.org.uk) (2005).

<sup>35</sup> 'As a power in the world, the countries of Europe and their Union show interests that are global in scope and vital in significance as the EU expands its sphere of influence and values ... beyond the realm of its members' former empires' (statement by Simon Serfaty, 15 July 2004, House Subcommittee Hearing on Transatlantic Relations). Cf. also 'The EU Constitution and its Impact on the US and Transatlantic Relations', report of a workshop on 9 February 2005 in Berlin (The German Marshall Fund of the United States).

oriented, Europe is often said to be ‘inward-looking’ or ‘navel-gazing’. Through this invalid dichotomy, Europe’s vast neighbourhood as a legitimate locus of orientation is being neglected.

The different geographic reach and commitment of different member states will probably remain a source of discord, probably reaching their peak with and being illuminated by China’s rise to great power status. For instance, it has been asserted that the Atlantic frictions over the EU’s potential lifting of its arms embargo on China could have been avoided with a restructured dialogue. This optimism is not shared here, since, being based on different geographical spheres of concern, the disagreement is genuine.<sup>36</sup> At any rate, persuasion alone would not have solved anything. Only if the EU had been offered a significant *quid pro quo* – which, of course, is one of a summit’s key aims – could this issue have been solved.

## **Institutional Cooperation and Bureaucratic Reform**

In order to function adequately, the EU and NATO need to ‘exchange powers’: the EU should borrow hard power from NATO in accordance with Berlin+, while NATO should borrow soft power from the EU (Dobbins 2005a,b); ‘neither NATO nor the EU is a full-service institution’.<sup>37</sup> This, of course, expresses a functional division of labour not only between NATO and the EU, but ultimately between the US and the EU (‘Mars’ and ‘Venus’ in Kagan’s terms).

In the name of transparency, it is crucial that the two major Atlantic channels and their institutions have mutual observation posts. The EU Foreign Minister should have such a post in the proposed NATO Steering Committee, while the NATO Secretary General should be invited to the EU-US ‘fireside chats’. Moreover, given the membership incongruities between NATO and the EU (with many states being members of one but not the other), occasional combined EU-NATO ministerial meetings are likely to be useful.

As to bureaucratic underpinning, reform of NATO’s International Staff has already been mentioned. Career service opportunities for NATO’s international

<sup>36</sup> Cf. also Minc 2004: 120: ‘The US has worldwide concerns; we will have egoist concerns: immigration, demography and borders. It is clear that we do not think of ourselves as a world power’.

<sup>37</sup> As expressed in the CSIS Joint Declaration (14 May 2003).

civil servants would be likely to attract a more highly qualified staff (Mouritzen 1990) and also enhance the prestige of the international civil service. Moreover, abolishing the national quota system (in staff hirings and firings) should create the potential, in a longer term perspective, to get rid of institutional deadwood. Regarding the EU-US channel, it has been suggested that the US should appoint an Assistant Secretary for EU Affairs within the State Department (currently, there is only an Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs).<sup>38</sup> Heisbourg (2004) and others have suggested a permanent secretariat for EU-US summitry, entrusted with the substantive preparation of the meetings and the monitoring of the implementation of decisions made.<sup>39</sup> This would surely do no harm, but the question is, of course, whether this is the right medicine if the very problem is a bureaucrat-driven agenda.

## **Reform Proposals: A Brief Summary**

The proposals in the present report, from a Euro-Atlantic perspective, can be briefly summarized as follows. The two major channels of Atlantic cooperation, NATO and the EU-US dialogue, both need reform. A steering committee, consisting of the US, the UK, France, Germany, Spain, Poland, a handful of rotating members and the EU High Representative, should be established in NATO to prepare the meetings of the North Atlantic Council. The decision procedure in the Council should still be consensus-based (retaining states' powers of veto). The NATO Secretary General and the secretariat should be strengthened through a career civil service and the abolition of the quota hiring system. A common budget should be extended to finance national forces that are used in joint operations. NATO task expansion should be avoided, both functionally and geographically.

EU-US summits should provide an opportunity for strategic informal dialogue, instead of following a bureaucrat-driven agenda. The grand strategic questions concerning relations with Russia, China, the Middle East, Africa, etc. should be dealt with here. The EU side should always include the leaders of the UK, France, Germany, a few rotating non-great powers, the Commission and the High

<sup>38</sup> Speech by Jim Cloos at the *2004 Transatlantic Conference* organized by the EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris, 4 June.

<sup>39</sup> See also *A Compact between the United States and Europe*, www.cer.org.uk (2005).

Representative (or EU Foreign Minister, if this post can be established without an EU Treaty reform). The frequency of summits should be doubled to be held biannually. Moreover, whereas the EU should continue to borrow 'hard power' from NATO (Berlin+), NATO should borrow 'soft power' from the EU.

These suggestions regarding Atlantic institutional reform have been made from an overall Euro-Atlantic perspective. In other words, they do not necessarily fit the particular interests of each and every state in the European geopolitical patchwork. We should now briefly consider how the interests of one particular state, Denmark, would be affected by the above suggestions.

## **A Danish Reform Perspective**

### **Geopolitical fundamentals**

Denmark's geopolitical orientation is obviously Atlanticist. As Kissinger suggested even during the Cold War:

The smaller countries in particular fear that European integration will result in the hegemony of powerful neighbours. They see no advantage in European autonomy [from the US, HM]. Since they must follow the lead of a dominant country in any event, they prefer the hegemony of an ally 3000 miles away and with a tradition of using its power with restraint. (Kissinger 1965:241).

He could have mentioned states like Denmark or the Netherlands as illustrations.

The general trend since the Cold War has been twofold: with the demise of the Soviet threat, European states are less dependent on US 'protection' and have more action space. Simultaneously, their military-strategic interest to the US has been drastically reduced, making them less influential. In sum, while European states have increased their action spaces, they have at the same time been threatened by influence marginalisation.

To this general trend should be added the recruitment of many new EU and NATO members. As seen from the perspective of an established and 'privileged' Western state like Denmark, this obviously increases the risk of marginalisation, due to the many new voices that wish to be heard. On the other hand, the EU

and NATO have grown larger and should be more powerful in the world around them. Denmark should have arithmetically less influence, but over larger units (Mouritzen 2006). There is therefore an extra premium to be placed on coalition-building with other member states.<sup>40</sup> This should not be too difficult for Denmark, since the EU and NATO newcomers all happen to be more or less Atlanticist and thus share Denmark's geopolitical orientation.

To this should be added the fact that, as a result of popular referendums in 1992 and 1993, Denmark is not taking part in any military cooperation within the EU. This policy, which can only change after a new Danish referendum, has become increasingly important since the British-French St. Malo agreement to launch the ESDP (1998).

As a strategy to pre-empt marginalisation, Danish Atlanticism has been channelled into an even closer relationship to the US in the post-Cold War era by Danish governments of whatever party. In controversial issues too, like going to war without a clear UN mandate (which would traditionally have been a grave sin in Danish foreign policy), the US lead has been followed. Denmark seems to specialize in anticipating palatable US policy initiatives and subsequently entering into their further development and implementation as a close cooperation partner.<sup>41</sup> It is debatable, of course, how much influence over the superpower this policy provides. At any rate, it entails an 'information surplus' and a status in relation to most European powers that seems to be valuable.

Since it is not only Denmark among European states that desires this 'most favoured' status, we may – or may not – be witnessing a 'goodwill competition' between Denmark and especially the Netherlands, Poland and Portugal (the UK being in a class of its own).

The cost of this 'most favoured' status might be, of course, that Danish initiatives, at least in high politics, are regarded as coming from or to have been

<sup>40</sup> It is therefore natural for the Permanent Secretary in the Danish Foreign Ministry to invoke 'active bilateralism' as a precondition for having influence in the EU. For Denmark there is a greater emphasis on 'active and effective targeted bilateral relations with all EU partners in order to pursue national interests' (Petersen 2005:7).

<sup>41</sup> Like the 'Wider Middle East Initiative', for instance. A 'reward' was possibly the invitation of the Danish foreign minister to the G8 meeting in Bahrain, November 2005.

inspired by Washington. Even worse, being seen as a puppet regime would reduce Danish influence in general terms, notably in continental Europe. However, no such losses of influence can be reported for the post-Iraq period (in the Constitutional Treaty negotiations, for instance). It is in fact more likely that some of the new East European EU or NATO members may suffer from this image. On the other hand, Denmark has lost much of its good reputation from the recent Muslim 'winter storm' that has blown against Danish society over the cartoons issue.

### **Reform and Danish Interests**

At any rate, given Denmark's own favourable position in relation to the US and its voice in NATO, from a narrowly selfish angle its interest in reform should not prove overwhelming. The status quo in this regard is probably as favourable as it can be (despite the winter storm). Moreover, there are always uncertainties linked to any reform process, of course. In view of Denmark's Atlanticist orientation, coupled with its reservations over EU defence cooperation, a *strengthening of the EU-US channel at the expense of the NATO channel would be dangerous*. As long as this balance is maintained (and the US and the UK will probably ensure this), no significant loss of Danish influence will be risked.

The specific reform package advocated above will probably be acceptable, rather than prove totally satisfactory. Even though it is neutral in relation to the two channels, it entails, after all, a certain strengthening of the great powers in both of them. It is not altogether obvious whether the collective Euro-Atlantic benefits – which will also be Danish benefits – can outweigh the costs that Denmark is likely to suffer from a narrowly national perspective.

The specific proposals pertaining to NATO, namely a strengthening of the Secretary General and his staff, the introduction of a career service and a common (but limited) defence budget (covering a certain segment of the defence forces), have not traditionally been Danish policy any more than of most other member governments. Quite the reverse, such measures have been seen traditionally as threatening the organisation's intergovernmental character. Apart from the budget issue, however (admittedly a big step in itself), the remaining proposals should not appear revolutionary.



## Why is Denmark so Reform Pro-Active?

It is not surprising that Denmark supports the current 'real world' NATO reform process.<sup>42</sup> It is more remarkable, at least at first sight, that Denmark actively supports reform of the EU-US channel – and even takes the lead in this regard.<sup>43</sup> Denmark, famous for its pragmatic and piecemeal approach to the EU, favours a *strategic* approach at the Atlantic arena (within the framework of the present NTA, or perhaps a new Charter). However, as long as this does not threaten the overall institutional balance (the NATO channel), there should be no risks involved in this approach. Apart from the collective benefits that might be reaped from strategic Atlantic debate, the incentive here is probably to pre-empt some less favourable proposals. In other words, instead of sitting on its hands and jealously guarding a status quo that is favourable to her, Denmark is choosing to take the lead regarding the reform of both Atlantic channels. Instead of obtaining an 'acceptable' reform, it may be possible to obtain something better, in close cooperation with the US.<sup>44</sup> Obviously, there are many specific reform possibilities other than those advocated above.<sup>45</sup> The 'US connection' is, as with other issues, probably the key to understanding the Danish posture, since it permits a more offensive and pro-active course than would otherwise be possible.

It is remarkable how unintended (and unexpected) consequences may prove significant to Denmark's position, especially the failure of the EU Constitutional Treaty and the postponed Atlantic reform. Even though Denmark has supported

<sup>42</sup> Denmark supported the US proposal regarding a 'strengthened political dialogue' in NATO that was part of the background for the current reform process. As previously mentioned, this work is headed by a Danish diplomat (seconded to NATO).

<sup>43</sup> Anders Fogh Rasmussen, 'Working Together Post 9/11: New Global Challenges for America and Europe', speech at Rice University, USA, 22 April 2004 (printed in Carlsen and Mouritzen 2005: 119-27); Ulrik Federspiel, speech at the 'World Affairs Council of Northern California', San Francisco, 23 June 2004. Cf. also 'Catalogue of Proposals for Concrete EU-US Actions in Strategic Areas' (Danish Foreign Ministry, 27 December 2004), <http://www.um.dk/NR/rdonlyres/207E0D6D-3804-418C-9548-488601157314/0/DanishproposalsmergetudenDKmanchet2712.pdf>, (no other government has apparently formulated such a catalogue), or foreign minister Per Stig Møller's speech to the 'American Club Copenhagen', 6 June 2005. In the latter speech, there is an emphasis both on the classical Danish virtue of 'concreteness' and on *strategy*, a 'truly strategic dialogue'.

<sup>44</sup> The Bush administration was not keen on a ten-year celebration of Clinton's NTA (as suggested by Denmark); instead, a new Charter might be the way forward. This possibility was advocated officially by Denmark (cf. the previous note) until the EU Constitutional Treaty was frozen.

<sup>45</sup> For instance, one might imagine 'Europe' being represented in the EU-US summits every other time by its institutions (the Foreign Minister/High Representative, the Presidency, the Commission) and every other time by its member states (all of them). This would probably require the meetings to be held biannually instead of annually. Such a proposal would overcome the great power strengthening inherent in the proposal presented above, but it would have other drawbacks.

both, its influence may actually, from a narrow national point of view, be greater in the contemporary transition phase because of its close relation to the US. Since power and influence are to a large extent relative, this in particular is suggested by a comparison with other European countries that have staked their influence in foreign policy on both the Constitutional Treaty and the subsequent Atlantic reform. More importantly, however, the US may also lose interest in future close cooperation with Denmark as a result of the current Muslim winter storm against her, which is more or less ruining the reputation of Danish society.

### **Schröder was Right**

Chancellor Schröder's critical focus was directed at both major Atlantic channels of dialogue, NATO and EU-US summitry, although only the NATO channel was discussed subsequently. He was definitely right in pointing out that the big strategic questions are being overlooked in the current Atlantic structure. It is disappointing, therefore, that the reform that is currently under way (it was planned before Schröder's speech) is only an internal NATO reform. It was explicitly the Chancellor's intention that his independent expert panel should report to the Heads of State and Government of NATO *and* the European Union. In terms of the assumptions of the present report this was a sound idea, since it provides the best guarantee that the 'channel balance' will be upheld. An this is, in turn, the precondition for any significant reform proposal to be agreed upon and implemented.

The present report suggests that politically balanced reforms of both major Atlantic channels should be made. In both cases, reform will imply a certain great power strengthening. This should combined with the implementation of those frozen Constitutional Treaty provisions that can be implemented without Treaty reform.<sup>46</sup> In NATO a strengthening of the Secretary General and his staff (through the introduction of a career service) should be carried out. More ambitiously, a common but limited defence budget should be created.

What is rational from an overall Euro-Atlantic perspective, however, is not necessarily rational from the viewpoint of an individual state like Denmark. The above proposals may be acceptable to Denmark, but hardly anything more.

<sup>46</sup> See Algieri et al. 2005.

Denmark is active, in close cooperation with the US, regarding the reform of both major channels, in which she is striving to obtain more favourable outcomes for herself.

In any case, any American expectations that the EU will become a global power in the future are likely to be disappointed. Being led astray by ambitious European rhetoric, the US wants to see the EU as a global but junior partner. However, instead of spreading its influence thinly all over the globe, the real European interest, in turning from words to things, seems to be to concentrate its efforts on its own neighbourhood (from Northern Africa via the Middle East to the Caucasus and the Ukraine). In this salient environment, the EU has good prospects of becoming a *senior* partner to the US.

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