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The National Security Strategy and the Evolving European Security Strategy: Consequences for the Transatlantic Relationship

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Faced with the now commonly accepted new threats of the 21st century (that is the combination of International Terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and failing states), the need for transatlantic cooperation and consultation is not only still relevant, but has in fact increased. The new challenges to our security do not question the transatlantic partnership and NATO, but, rather, give them a new *raison d'être*. After all, both sides of the Atlantic share the common interest of countering these threats.

The Iraq-crisis has shown that no rock-solid basis for a common transatlantic approach towards the new security challenges of the 21st century exists. The non-existence of a common transatlantic strategic approach was, in my eyes, responsible for the transatlantic irritations during the crisis.

Our task must therefore be to mould a renewed strategic partnership between the United States and the EU, in league with the transatlantic partnership as embodied in NATO, which reflects a wide range of shared goals, similar threats and challenges, and complementary means to meet them. I therefore welcome that the final version of the European Security Strategy, judging from what we know today, intends to establish a strategic partnership between the EU and NATO.

This, however, makes a strategic redefinition of the transatlantic alliance imperative, which, again, presupposes a common transatlantic security strategy.

However, at the moment we have two separate strategic approaches, embodied in the National Security Strategy and the Solana-Paper that is currently being redrafted. Now, I

do not want to go into too much detail concerning the American strategy as you will certainly be very familiar with it.

It is suffice to say that the National Security Strategy is still often being misread in Europe and being reduced to the alleged goal of American military dominance and the term preemption. It is often ignored that the National Security Strategy covers other aspects such as Global Economic Growth and Development Policies or Building an Infrastructure for Democracy.

However, without a doubt, some critics in Europe find good reasons for criticizing the National Security Strategy. For them, one weak point is, for example, that it thinks too much in terms of state-sponsored terrorism when talking about preemptive action against rogue states to prevent hostile acts by terrorists. According to this opinion, it can be argued that preemptive action against non-state sponsored terror is not an appropriate means to counter the type of Al Qaeda's terrorism. Iraq is seen as proof that preemptive action against a state only sparks off further terrorist activities. Furthermore, the NSS endorses preemptive action to „act against ... emerging threats before they are fully formed“. Here, some critics maintain, the simple existence of conditions from which a threat, however unlikely, might emerge, appears to be sufficient. They conclude that the litmus test was the plausible allegation of a potential threat rather than the convincing proof of the existence of the very same.

But to come to the European equivalent: The June-version of the Solana-Paper was, to the surprise of many, a very forceful document. It expressed the willingness to develop a more robust and muscular EU foreign policy. It was praised as a success by all EU foreign ministers and those of the candidate countries. US officials too welcomed the „new realism“ of the document.

Indeed, the strategy's crucial political message was that it repudiated what had become the traditional view, that is that the EU believes only in deploying „soft power“ instruments such as economic aid, trade or diplomatic pressure and enticements. Rather, Solana maintained that the EU must use all its available tools in a politically

targeted and conditional way. Moreover, the paper acknowledged that dealing with terrorism may require „a mixture of means“, which could include such of a military kind.

Given this progress, the task would have been in the past few months to further sharpen the European tools. It is imperative that the EU outlines in advance how it might respond to certain types of behaviour and that it can furthermore give mandates to implement pre-identified responses. In other words: A more substantiated security strategy would identify what kinds of developments would initiate what sort of responses by the EU.

Moreover, it is crucial that the EU defines precise formulations concerning the principles governing the use of force. There is an urgent need for a debate among Europeans to see whether, in the light of the new security threats, the rules governing legitimacy of military action need re-examination. Even more so since the final draft of the Solana-paper has been watered down on the issue of „preemptive engagement“.

Finally, the EU needs to show that it can not only reach consensus on a more robust approach on paper, but that it is also willing to put it into practice. Here, the case of Iran might become crucial. Indeed, Iran has turned into a test case for EU foreign policy and especially for European attempts to bring pressure to bear by means of conditional engagement. The preliminary climax of this development was the visit of the three foreign ministers to Tehran last month.

The background to these European diplomatic activities is that as the strategic center of gravity has moved outside Europe to the Middle East and beyond and Europeans shoulder strategic responsibility for dealing with these problems, they can no longer, as in the past, determine their approaches toward international problems merely as a function to their relations with the United States. I welcome this development and agree that the merits of the issue in question as well as European interests should define their respective policy.

However, given the American drive towards possibly sanctioning Iran for non-compliance with its obligations under the NPT and thus in order to avoid another

transatlantic wrangle, the EU needs to arrive at an affirmative policy and to implement it decisively. Fortunately, it appears that the EU's current approach is based on a more sober assessment of Iran's nuclear programme than a few months ago.

This brings me back to the title of my talk: If the aim, as I think it should be, is to renew our strategic partnership, the American and the European Security Strategy need to be matched in order to tackle such threats as the one emanating from Iran. In other words: Our task must be to mesh Washington's National Security Strategy with the final version of the EU Security Strategy to therewith establish a common transatlantic strategic approach to counter future and indeed current threats to our security. This will then allow us to direct complementary (American) military and (European) civilian instruments toward common ends and new security threats in a way that will shield from further transatlantic irritations.