

# How the Bush Doctrine has reconfigured commitments and alliances within Europe

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*The present national security strategy of the US, which provides overall direction for the country's foreign and security policy agenda, has become known as the 'Bush Doctrine' (Hirsh 2002: 19). There are differing references to when it was first enunciated by the US Administration,<sup>1</sup> but agreement (for example Donnelly 2003: 1 and Heisbourg 2003: 75) that it was encapsulated in The National Security Strategy of the United States of America (USNSS), published on 17 September 2002. The Bush Doctrine's reception has been mixed, with European states reacting differently (Gordon 2003: 70). This paper will examine the consequences of those responses for commitments and alliances within Europe. It takes the premise that as Europe is not one entity,<sup>2</sup> it should not be counterpoised as a whole with the US. Although contrary to Kagan's (2002) implication in his *Power and Weakness* thesis, and while there are common institutions that do speak against the US with one voice,<sup>3</sup> 'Europe does not exist as a single foreign policy actor' (Garton Ash 2003b). This paper will therefore initially consider the first order consequences of differing responses to the Bush Doctrine by European states, showing divisions amongst them. It will then examine how this disharmony leads to second order consequences for the future effectiveness of the EU and NATO. These impinge on the potential role of those organisations, leading to wider third order consequences. The final conclusion is that compromise by the US and some European states would be of mutual benefit, with positive implications for the EU, NATO and the US.*

## The Bush Doctrine and European states

The Bush Doctrine is underpinned by martial potency.<sup>4</sup> In analysing it, Bacevich (2002) notes the US predilection for military power as its most effective instrument of statecraft. Ikenberry (2002: 49) agrees, positing that the Bush Doctrine, although advanced as a response to terrorism, is about a US approach to re-organise world order in its own image. It has 'a fundamental commitment to maintaining a unipolar world in which the US has no peer competitor'. Overwhelming military power will be used preventively, pre-emptively and, if necessary, unilaterally and without regard for international rules, treaties and security partnerships. Thus the key tenets of the Bush Doctrine are hegemony, unilateralism, prevention and pre-emption, overarched by an intent to export US values.

These fundamentals of the Bush Doctrine did not receive wholehearted support from European states. Indeed, there are suggestions that 'anger [amongst European allies of the US] at the Administration's style set in almost from the moment President George Bush took office' (*The Age* 2003). The practical application of the Bush Doctrine contrasted a unilateralist US, where the Bush Administration had rejected or diluted 'a wide range of international treaties and protocols'<sup>5</sup> (Gordon 2002: 90), with a Europe where states' 'foreign and security policy will continue to be based on multilateralism and world regulatory policy' (Voigt 2002). Kagan (2002) agrees.<sup>6</sup> The 'transatlantic values gap'<sup>7</sup> (Gordon 2002: 90) and 'different attitudes toward power, military force and sovereignty' (Gordon 2003: 74) complemented a military divide. The increasing might of the US emphasised a capability gap, driving home European states' collective status as a 'military pygmy' (Robertson 2001) and its hard power irrelevance in the eyes of the US (Richburg 2003).<sup>8</sup> Subsequent US action against Iraq sharpened its relationship with some European states and disharmony between those states.

### First order consequences

European states responded to the Bush Doctrine in different ways. France led the challenge to US plans over Iraq (Richburg 2003), driven by a desire to countervail against perceived US hegemony.<sup>9</sup> Its line was not only about Iraq, but ‘about the new world order’ and rejection of unipolarity (Howard 2003). Germany, closely aligned with France as the ‘axis on which the EU is built’ (*The Australian* 2003) and similarly keen to offset US hegemony (Kupchan 2002), supported France (Richburg 2003).<sup>10</sup> Some other European states opted to support the US-led action, witness the separate declarations of support by eight European NATO nations and the ten strong *Vilnius Group* of Eastern and Central European EU and NATO candidate or aspirant nations (BBC 2003b).

The first order consequences for European states of their responses to the Bush Doctrine will reflect the extent of their alignment, or otherwise, with the US. The US, noting that ‘France will suffer consequences’ for its opposition over the war with Iraq (BBC 2003a), is considering ‘industrial, military penalties’ against France (Muradian 2003). French and US business leaders have warned of ‘dire economic consequences—including recession—if the two nations’ differences spill over into trade’ (BBC 2003e). Recent G8 talks showed a continuing divide between the US and France (BBC 2003i). US–German relationships ‘fell to a post-World War II low in bitter exchanges of rhetoric over the invasion of Iraq’ (Finn 2003), with no improvement to them after a recent visit to Germany by Secretary Powell (BBC 2003h). There is suspicion in Berlin that decisions to move US military facilities further east in Europe will be taken to punish their opposition to the war, with significant economic impact on Germany (BBC 2003g).<sup>11</sup> By contrast, European states in the coalition of the willing may receive a dividend.<sup>12</sup> The decision by the US Senate to approve seven of the *Vilnius Group* for membership of NATO, (headlined ‘Bush hails new friends and omits some old ones’ (Sanger and Dao 2003)), is but one example.<sup>13</sup> Thus the European states of NATO and the EU, and those institutions’ candidate nations, have split into two foreign policy camps. Some are subject to US opprobrium and others a dividend.

### Second order consequences

Second order consequences of the division of European states over the Bush Doctrine will impact NATO and the EU. While they remain relevant (Talbot 2002: 51), there is a danger that they have been grievously wounded through political tensions brought to a head by Iraq (Fitchett 2003). Both NATO and the EU have already assisted with the spread of democratisation, stability, free market economies and reform,<sup>14</sup> outcomes that resonate with US aims (see Chapters VI and VII of the *USNSS*), but there is more ground to cover to the east (*Washington Post* 2003). The EU is preparing for enlargement through drafting a new constitution (Roxburgh 2003). NATO is seeking to retain relevance through enlargement and by nurturing an ‘out of area’ ethos and more mobile forces (BBC 2003f). Operations in the Balkans are becoming largely European states’ responsibility (Grabbe 2003). Military improvements under the EU’s ‘Headline Goal’ enhance NATO’s collective military capability, and vice versa (Jones Parry 2003).<sup>15</sup> Conversely, that ‘both organisations are in open crisis because of political disunity over Iraq’ (Fitchett 2003) threatens the harmony, cohesion and consensus needed to expand NATO and the EU yet further to achieve their full potential.

The differing responses of European states to the Bush Doctrine have exacerbated the already complex enlargement processes being undertaken by NATO and the EU. Joffe (2003) remarks on European states’ inability to speak with one voice within institutions. The EU, for example, failed to produce a cohesive approach towards Iraq (Horsley 2003). NATO could not achieve consensus

over the deployment of defensive aids to Turkey. The deadlock, created largely by France, was only broken after the decision was made in NATO's Defence Planning Committee (DPC), which excludes France, rather than the full North Atlantic Council (Vinocur 2003). Institutional disunity translated into animosity. Following the logjam in NATO, for example, the US threatened to exclude France from NATO decision making by seeking the use of the DPC in the future (BBC 2003c). Work on the EU constitution, deemed crucial for effective enlargement, has been hampered by deep divisions over Iraq (Roxburgh 2003). Belgium, France, Germany and Luxembourg announced the creation of a joint military organisation, which some saw as an anti-NATO and anti-US act that worsened the rift amongst European states (BBC 2003d). President Chirac publicly criticised European NATO and EU aspirant states for their support of the US, making a thinly veiled threat to block their accession into either institution (Vinocur 2003). Such disharmony threatens successful enlargement, integration and, in NATO's case, renewal. It limits the achievement of the synergy on offer.<sup>16</sup> Fractures also threaten the EU's ability to speak with one voice where it only has one seat at the table, such as in the 'Quartet'<sup>17</sup> and WTO.<sup>18</sup> These internal forces also threaten relations between NATO and the EU, thus impacting on their common goals in terms of military capability, collectively contributing to stability and engagement with Russia (Jones Parry 2003).<sup>19</sup> Moreover, there are yet wider impacts of divisions within NATO and the EU.

### **Third order consequences**

The third order consequences of limited progress towards enlargement, and achieving only partial synergy in NATO and the EU respectively, become apparent when set against Nye's (2002) depiction of the distribution of power: a three dimensional chessboard. The top level is military power: it is unipolar and the US pre-eminent. But there are concerns that this power is not limitless (for example see Bacevich 2002). More militarily capable European states would enhance the ability of NATO and the EU to conduct operations, such as in the Balkans or a post-conflict Iraq (Kaplan 2003), allowing the US to concentrate elsewhere.

Nye's middle chessboard is economic power. It remains multipolar, with the US, EU and Japan representing two thirds of world productivity (Nye 2002). The EU is the 'world's biggest trader' (European Commission 2002: 4). The present US\$2.5 trillion transatlantic economy is the most important trade and investment relationship in the world, and it will become bigger after the EU enlarges (Rossant 2003). Conversely, Kupchan (2002) notes that in an adversarial climate there is the potential for the US Federal Reserve and European Central bank to vie for control of the international monetary system, rather than cooperate. But Nye (2002: 24) is clear: 'international financial stability is vital to the prosperity of Americans, but the US needs the cooperation of others to ensure it'. An enlarged and integrated EU is therefore key to this middle chessboard, for the mutual benefit of the US and EU states.

Likewise, the US will need European states on the bottom chessboard, 'the realm of transnational relations that cross borders outside government control'. Power is widely dispersed, in a dimension of the chessboard least in US focus (Nye 2002). Hirsh (2002: 40) sees European states as an essential US ally 'in the strategy of institutional development'. Talbott (2002: 54) notes the benefit of the projection of soft power by European states to those that are further east. Such activity by European states, under the guise of an expanding NATO and the EU, can complement that element of the *USNSS* that seeks to build economic growth and democracy. A precursor for successful cooperation on each level of the chessboard in a cohesive, transatlantic manner is a common agenda at two levels. First, European states will need to achieve substantive consensus, for without it they cannot fully harness

their synergy (Arbuthnott 2002). Second, a common agenda must be forged between European states acting cohesively and the US. Presently, neither element is to hand.

### **Conclusion**

Responses to the Bush Doctrine by European states, and the concordant problems in finding a common transatlantic agenda, illustrate that the 'first casualties of this war [in Iraq]' were European unity and commitments to the western alliance (Garton Ash 2003a). Essentially, they have been reconfigured. First order consequences of French-led opposition to US hegemony sparked debilitating second order consequences for NATO and the EU, producing negative third order consequences on Nye's chessboard. Kissinger (cited in Hirsch 2002: 41) may offer a solution, noting 'the dominant trend in US foreign policy thinking must be to transform power into consensus so that international order is based on agreement rather than reluctant acquiescence'. But such consensus and agreement with the US does not exist within the institutions to which European states belong or aspire. Until it does, NATO and the EU, with roles on each of Nye's chessboards, will not harness their synergy.

Compromise is required. The 'reality is that despite their differences ... no two regions of the world have more in common nor have more to lose if they fail to stand together' (Gordon 2003: 83). The US should recognise that European states offer more when acting within NATO and the EU than when in a coalition of the willing. It should also accept that a multilateral framework can legitimise US power (Nye 2002) and work to bring the EU and the rest of NATO closer to it as organisations, not as individual states. France and Germany should accept that 'American power is the lynchpin of stability in every region' (Hirsch 2002: 39) and moderate their countervailing stance. Inter-state disharmony within Europe would thus be reduced, for the benefit of its states, the enlarging NATO and EU and the US. Regrettably, events and pronouncements at the Evian G8 summit in early June 2003 indicated that compromise was not yet on everyone's agenda (Watson 2003).

**Endnotes**

1. The day after President GW Bush's inauguration, the UK *Daily Telegraph* (2001) published an article entitled *The Bush Doctrine*. Some themes, for example, 'building defences beyond challenge' and 'the enemies of liberty', reappear in the *USNSS*. President Bush's speech to the US National Defence University on 1 May 2001 trailed the energising of the national missile defence program, action against the proliferation of WMD and offensive deterrence (Bush 2001). Heisbourg (2003: 75) suggests that it was President Bush's State of the Union address on 29 January 2002 that 'conveyed the gist of the new defence strategy'.
2. For this paper, 'Europe' will be taken as those states that are members of the EU and/or NATO and those that have been invited to join either organisation.
3. For example the EU's moratorium on the import of genetically modified food from the US and the US counter-claim against Europe in the WTO (Mortished 2003).
4. For a full analysis of the *USNSS*, see Daalder, Lindsay & Steinberg (2002) and Ikenberry (2002).
5. Such as the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change and the International Criminal Court (Gordon 2002: 90).
6. Kagan (2002) points to an enlarging and semi-integrating Europe adopting a Kantian approach centred on laws, rules, institutions and multilateralism, while the US looked to the essential nature and use of military power in an anarchic Hobbesian world.
7. Over matters such as the death penalty, the environment and religion (Gordon 2002: 90).
8. The US military budget equals the combined military budgets of the next 12 to 15 nations. The EU's member states collectively spend around US\$170 billion pa on defence, the US more than \$300 bn (Ferguson 2003: 18).
9. Hubert Védrine, the then French Foreign Minister, had already set the scene in the late 1990s, noting that 'France cannot accept a politically unipolar world ... nor the unilateralism of a single hyperpower' (cited in Blinken 2001: 41). Dominique de Villepin, the present French Foreign Minister, returned to this theme in March 2003: 'to be truly stable, this new world must be based on a number of regional poles' (cited in Grabbe 2003).
10. Indeed, Germany's Chancellor Schroeder took a strong anti-war and anti-American line in Autumn 2002 Federal elections in order to 'woo back disaffected left-wing voters' (*Daily Telegraph* 2002). He was re-elected.
11. Pentagon estimates suggest that US bases contribute as much as US\$4.5 billion per year to the local economy (Anderson, Bennis and Cavanagh, 2003: 7).
12. Howard (2003) identified this as what 'realists call bandwagoning. Smaller states support the US in hopes of currying favour in other areas'.
13. Another is the decision by the US to include *Batasuna*, a radical Basque nationalist party, on its list of international terrorist groups, seen as a reward to Spain by President Bush for 'one of his most loyal supporters in the Iraq war' (Bumiller 2003).
14. See Blinken (2001) for a full account of the positive achievements of the EU and NATO.
15. The EU's 'headline goal' is its capacity to deploy within 60 days, and sustain for at least one year, up to 60 000 persons. It includes a catalogue of required military capability, against which nations offer forces (Europa 2003).
16. This synergy has been recognised by the US Government. It noted, for example, that the enlargement of NATO would make it 'much stronger than the sum of the capabilities of individual members' (US State Dept 2002). Similarly, President Bush, in a speech to the Bundestag in August 2002 praising Europe's ever closer union, commented positively on the benefits of European unity for both Europe and America (Walker 2003).
17. A group put together by the US for the Middle East peace process, comprising of the US, EU, UN and Russia (Hirsch 2002: 21).
18. The European Union (EU) represents all its Member States on questions of trade policy and within the World Trade Organisation (European Commission 2002: 1).
19. For example through NATO's Partnership for Peace program and the EU's relations through the Stability Pact and, for Russia, through the NATO/Russia Council and the EU's Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (Jones Parry 2003).

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