CHAPTER 6

WESTERN COOPERATION
BEYOND CONTAINMENT

The collapse of the Soviet system and of the Soviet Union itself in 1989-1991 caught the West unprepared and fully surprised. Since the erection of the Berlin Wall in August 1961 and the peaceful resolution of the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962, the West had learnt to acquiesce in "bipolar stability" as Europe's present and presumably lasting condition. The West European governments in particular practised policies of détente with the Soviet Union, in which they perceived themselves as caught between two morally equivalent superpowers. They had come to deal with the perpetrators of post-Stalinist totalitarian repression as if the politburo's were the legitimate governments of "really existing socialist" states. Many politicians and intellectuals in the West had learnt to live with the absurd condition of a divided Europe and thus had helped to perpetuate it. Hence, the successful civil resistance in East and Central Europe caught them unprepared for grasping the unique opportunity to devise a coherent policy for shaping a new European order.

West European acquiescence in the absurd condition of a divided Europe nevertheless had become increasingly problematic during the last decade of détente. Bipolar stability in Europe had been challenged by Soviet expansion in the third world and Soviet efforts to attain nuclear superiority in Europe. Western unity had been weakened by American-West European disagreements over the response to Soviet third world expansion, Soviet nuclear weapons policies, and Western nuclear pacifism. The state of Western cooperation prior to 1989 hardly supported the later claim that the West had prevailed in the Cold War.

Successful containment of Soviet expansion was the outcome primarily of America's unprecedented and enduring commitment to the defence of Western Europe. In the 1980's the efforts of the Reagan administration to restore American self-confidence and traditional American ideals in foreign policy also restored the meaning of America's commitment. As John Lewis Gaddis wrote:

> "By 1989, there was a closer correspondence between traditional American ideals and the actual conduct of American diplomacy than at any point since the Marshall Plan."

Reagan rejected the moral compromises that had dominated détente policy and proposed to negotiate on the reduction and not merely the limitation of strategic nuclear weapons.

> "Like most of his predecessors, Reagan endorsed the principle – dating back to the Truman and Eisenhower administrations – of 'negotiating from strength.' He differed from previous presidents, though, in that he took the principle literally: once one had achieved strength, one negotiated. Even while indulging in the strident Cold War rhetoric that characterised his first two and a half years in office, Reagan was careful never to rule out negotiations; the emphasis during that period, though, had been on rebuilding American military strength, and also – equally important – American self-confidence. But from 1983 on, the President made it clear that he was absolutely serious about negotiations and in 1985 he found a willing partner in Mikhail Gorbachev. It was no longer necessary to claim to be eager for negotiations while actually trying to avoid them; negotiations were taking place, and producing significant results."[1]

Bipolar stability in Europe was also challenged from within the Soviet system. The Prague Spring in 1968 and the crushing of "socialism with a human face" by Soviet tanks in August 1968, inaugurated an era of disbelief and peaceful civil resistance in

---

[1]   *The United States and the End of the Cold War*, Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 60-64.

East and Central Europe. The creation of the Polish Trade Union *Solidarnosc* was the turning point in the dynamics of totalitarian repression. It would be the beginning of the end of Soviet rule that came in 1989.[2]

The deepening moral, economic, social and political crisis in the Soviet system, however, was mostly underestimated, if not ignored. Where civil resistance in East and Central Europe was concerned, it received no more than muted official support or encouragement. When Gorbachev came to power in Moscow, his policies of reform and *glasnost* were greatly admired as a contribution to more friendly bipolar stability, but hardly as the beginning of the end of that condition.

The Western response to the collapse of the Soviet system, thus can best be characterised by confused and incremental adaptation of existing arrangements and organisations, and by the re-affirmation of American leadership in the transitional era.

POLITICAL CHANGE

The most immediate and lasting change occurred with the crumbling of the Berlin Wall. It led, unavoidably, to the rapid re-unification of Germany, forcing the Soviet Union to give up the very foundation upon which its post-war foreign policy in Europe had been built.[3]

Within weeks, the Soviet staunchest ally – the so-called German Democratic Republic – crumbled.

---

[2] See my *Beyond Containment and Division. Western Cooperation from a Post-Totalitarian Perspective*, Kluwer Academic Publisher 1992, Chapter 2; and my *Cultural Diplomacy: Waging War With Other Means?*, WLP 2009, Volume 1, in the series Footprints of the Twentieth Century, Chapter 8, "The Spirit of 1989".

[3] The Chronology of German Unity is reprinted as document I.6.1.

German re-unification

On 28 November 1989, West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl presented his Ten Point Plan for German re-unification during the debates on the budget in the Bundestag. As he then saw it, German unity was to be achieved in several stages.

The first stage would consist of concrete assistance to the GDR and free movement of persons between the two states. In the second stage, cooperation was to be intensified. In the third stage, cooperation could be comprehensively expanded, provided the GDR committed itself to fundamental reforms in its political and economic system: constitutional revision, free and secret elections, an end to the power monopoly of the SED, and abolition of the bureaucratic centrally planned economy. In the fourth stage, a treaty-community (*Vertragsgemeinschaft*) could be created providing for common institutions. As a fifth step, confederal structures could be developed between the two German states with the purpose of creating a federal order in Germany. In his sixth point, Chancellor Kohl emphasised that the intra-German relations must remain embedded in the all-European process of building a new European architecture. Point seven underlined the force of attraction of the European Community and the need for closer association of the GDR to the Community. The process of German re-unification is a European affair. The heart of the all-European architecture, according to point eight, is and remains the CSCE process. To overcome the division of Europe and Germany, he said in point nine, far-reaching and accelerated efforts must be made toward disarmament and arms-control. With such a comprehensive policy, said Kohl in his tenth and last point, we are working towards a condition of peace in Europe where the German people, in free self-determination, can restore their unity.

Chancellor Kohl after this Address was criticised in Moscow, Paris and London for moving too rapidly. At the time the three gov-

ernments considered the continued existence of two German states to be the best guarantee for European stability.

In fact, Kohl's plan was soon overtaken by events in Eastern Germany. In January 1990, Kohl asked for early elections in the GDR and committed the East German government to the objective of German unity. In February 1990, Gorbachev conceded on both points – free elections and German unification. The day thereafter, the Big Four and Germany agreed in Ottawa to begin negotiations on German re-unification. The Treaty on the Final Settlement of the German question was concluded on 12 September 1990. During the intervening period, Moscow had to concede on every major issue. Germany would not be united by a treaty between two states but on the basis of free elections. It would not be a confederation between two states, but the GDR would disappear and its *Länder* would be added to the German Federal Republic. It would not be a neutral power, but remain a member of NATO, from which only Soviet forces would withdraw.[4]

Once the East German population could no longer be imprisoned behind the Berlin Wall and the electronic fences built through the heart of Germany, the absurdity of two states could no longer be maintained and their rush to join West Germany could no longer be stopped.

On the broader European level, the credit for the peaceful transition from division to unity should go to American strength and consistent support for German re-unification, and to Gorbachev's realistic assessment of Soviet weakness. The pain of major concessions for Gorbachev was somewhat alleviated by good Soviet-American relations and the American initiative to transform the North Atlantic Alliance.[5]

The successful and peaceful re-unification of Germany on Western terms marked a fundamental political change in the balance of power on the European continent. Bipolar stability

---

[4]   The text of the Treaty and Chronology of German re-unification can be found in document I.6.1.

[5]   See: The London Declaration on a transformed Atlantic Alliance of 6 July 1990. Reproduced as document I.6.4.

had been based on American containment of Soviet expansion and a divided Germany. The Soviet Union was too strong a power in Europe to be contained without the power of America; a united Germany was considered (by many) to contain the danger of German predominance. As the saying went: the Atlantic Alliance kept America in, Russia out and Germany down.

The London Declaration on a transformed Alliance offered two assurances for stability during transition to a new security order in Europe: a lasting American commitment to leadership and a clear German commitment to the West. As the Declaration states:

> "A united Germany in the Atlantic Alliance of free democracies and part of the growing political and economic integration of the European Community will be an indispensable factor of stability, which is needed in the heart of Europe."

Russia

The transformed Alliance with its (self-proclaimed) "full range of capabilities to enhance security and stability for countries in the Euro-Atlantic area" had still to face the challenges of transition from totalitarian rule to democracy in East and Central Europe and, more urgently, the challenge of instability in the "failed states", the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. These challenges require more than the capabilities of the Alliance. Before recording the Western responses to these broader challenges, we must briefly examine the new problem of Russia.

The collapse of the Soviet Union created an area of turbulent instability in a political and cultural vacuum. The area is made up of successor-state Russia, the three Baltic Republics and eleven hastily formed states without a political programme or a clear national identity and with disputed borders. Within this area, Russia was, no doubt, the dominant power. Russia inherited most of the structures, bad habits and un-repentant leaders of the Soviet empire. Its foreign policy towards the other republics in its self-declared "near-abroad" was and is still characterised by

interference, political pressure and conspiracy. Ever since Vladimir Putin, trained as a KGB Officer, came to power – as President in 2000 and continuing as Prime Minister in 2008 – the country has steadily been moving away from democracy towards autocracy and state-capitalism.[6] In its internal development, Russia is far from overcoming the heritage of its Soviet past. Political murders have returned to the scene and none of them have been solved. Corruption is rampant and the rule of law far away. In its foreign policy the guiding principles appear to be *realpolitik* from a position of relative weakness and resentment of the defeat of the Soviet Union. The first guiding principle is manifest in Putin's "divide and rule" policy as a major exporter of energy (gas). Examples are the interruption of deliveries through Ukraine in 2006 and 2009 and the conclusion of bilateral deals with member states of the European Union. The second is best captured in his remark made in 2005 that the collapse of the Soviet Union must be seen to be the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the twentieth century – dutifully repeated by others, typical for a former *apparatchik* but nevertheless untrue. The "near-abroad" is seen as the area to be recovered for Russian control. Georgia and Ukraine are the primary targets as Western oriented republics seeking membership of NATO and the European Union. First objectives are to destabilise the republics and replace their elected leaders by obedient successors. Unsolved border problems – like South-Ossetia, Abchasia, Transnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh and Crimea – are deliberately left unsolved to be used for these objectives. It led to direct war with Georgia in August 2008.

Russia no longer poses a direct military threat to the security of the North Atlantic Alliance. Its current policies, however, raise at least three problems the West has so far failed to address properly. The first one concerns the enlargement of NATO to countries in Russia's "near-abroad": as the war with Georgia made clear, NATO members are in no position to honour their

---

6   Compare Chapter 9 in this author's *The Illusions of Détente*, WLP 2009, Volume 2 in Footprints of the Twentieth Century.

commitment under article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty towards (prospective) members in the area. The second one is Russia's fundamental weakness manifested again by the economic crisis of 2008-2009. Due to its dependence on oil and gas and the mismanagement of investments by Gazprom, Russia will be hit hardest by the crisis. The third one is the persistence of "the illusions of détente" towards Putin's Russia today. As long as Russian leaders fail to recognise Lenin's *coup d'état* and Stalin's rule of terror as the greatest catastrophe of the twentieth century, Russia is bound to be a serious problem rather than a reliable partner for the West.

STRATEGIES BEYOND CONTAINMENT

From an American perspective, the peaceful end of the Cold War appeared as a threefold success of containment. The Western democracies had prevailed; Soviet influence in East and Central Europe had been substantially reduced; and Soviet behaviour at the time of Michael Gorbachev had become reasonable and cooperative. Gorbachev had proven to be a more than willing partner in arms-control negotiations. In 1987 Reagan and Gorbachev signed the INF Treaty, the first ever treaty providing for the elimination and destruction of a whole category of nuclear weapons. In 1990 the Soviet Union and the United States agreed in the UN Security Council to resist Iraqi aggression against Kuwait.

A new world order

The American Administration, initially, responded with an effort to revive the traditional Wilsonian ideals for a new world order to be built together with the "new" Soviet Union. In a speech before a joint session of both houses of Congress on 11 September 1990 President George Bush sr. defined his broader, fifth objective of a new world order in a new era:

"Out of these troubled times, our fifth objective – a new world order – can emerge; a new era – freer from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice, and more secure in the quest for peace, an era in which the nations of the world, East and West, North and South, can prosper and live in harmony. A hundred generations have searched for this elusive path to peace, while a thousand wars raged across the span of human endeavour. Today, that new world is struggling to be born, a world quite different from the one we have known, a world where the rule of law supplants the rule of the jungle, a world in which nations recognize the shared responsibility for freedom and justice, a world where the strong respect the rights of the weak."

This fifth objective, he explained to Congress, was a vision that he had shared with Soviet President Gorbachev. Two months later, they signed the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, opening with the following dream of the future:

"A new era of Democracy, Peace and Unity
We, the Heads of State or Government of the States participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, have assembled in Paris at a time of profound change and historic expectations. The era of confrontation and division of Europe has ended. We declare that henceforth our relations will be founded on respect and co-operation. Europe is liberating itself from the legacy of the past. The courage of men and women, the strength of the will of the peoples and the power of the ideas of the Helsinki Final Act have opened a new era of democracy, peace and unity in Europe. Ours is a time for fulfilling the hopes and expectations our peoples have cherished for decades: steadfast commitment to democracy based on human rights and fundamental freedoms; prosperity through economic liberty and social justice; and equal security for all our countries.
The Ten Principles of the Final Act will guide us towards this ambitious future, just as they have lighted our way towards better relations for the past fifteen years. Full implementation of all CSCE commitments must form the basis for the initiatives we are now

taking to enable our nations to live in accordance with their aspi-rations."[7]

This text, taken from the full document, is a good example of the illusions following the peaceful collapse of the Soviet system. What to every knowledgeable observer looked as a fundamental break with the past of Europe's absurd division, was presented as a planned continuation.[8]

The American Administration pursued these ideals, after the end of the Soviet Union and the resignation of Gorbachev, with Boris Yeltsin, the new Russian President. In January 1992 a special meeting of the United Nations Security Council at the level of Heads of State and Government was convened. According to the Statement of the President of the Security Council of 31 January 1992 the members considered

"that there are new favourable international circumstances under which the Security Council has begun to fulfil more effectively its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security."[9]

In order to strengthen the effectiveness of their commitment to collective security, the members invited:

"the Secretary-General to prepare (...) his analysis and recommendations on ways of strengthening and making more efficient within the framework and provisions of the Charter the capacity of the United Nations for preventive diplomacy, for peacemaking and for peace-keeping."

The Secretary-General submitted his report in June 1992. At that time, the United Nations had become involved in a number of

---

[7]   Excerpts from the Speech of President Bush and the Charter of Paris can be found in document I.6.2.

[8]   See Chapter 8 in this author's *The Illusions of Détente. Op.cit.* The text of the Charter of Paris can be found in document I.6.2.

[9]   See the Statement of the President of the Security Council, document I.6.8.

complex peace-keeping operations, including the use of United Nations forces to protect humanitarian operations. The way in which the Security Council dealt with these new crises, however, raised serious doubts about the effectiveness with which the Council could fulfil its primary responsibility.

The UN Charter gives primary responsibility to the Security Council for dealing with threats to international peace and security, that is to say with armed conflicts between states and not with civil war or break-down of law and order within states. Most of the situations submitted to the Council after 1990 were internal conflicts. In such situations, peace-keeping was an unsuitable instrument. Enforcement action either failed to be agreed upon in the Council, or – where the Council adopted mandatory resolutions under chapter VII of the Charter – member states proved unwilling to give the required support.

Democratic enlargement

In the United States itself, the Clinton Administration had come under attack from House Republicans and conservative Democrats for its over-reliance on the inefficient and wastefully expensive United Nations. In this climate of criticism, President Clinton instructed his staff to work on a new strategic vision with an accompanying catch word that would embrace the foreign policy priorities of his administration.

In his Address of 27 September 1993 to the United Nations General Assembly, President Clinton said:

> "During the Cold War we sought to contain a threat to the survival of free institutions. Now we seek to enlarge the circle of nations that live under those free institutions."

As his national security advisor Anthony Lake had explained a few days before, the successor to containment "must be a strategy of enlargement (...) of the world's free community of market democracies." The new strategy emphasised four points:

1) to "strengthen the community of market democracies;"
2) to "foster and consolidate new democracies and market economies where possible;"
3) to "counter the aggression and support the liberalization of states hostile to democracy;" and
4) to "help democracy and market economies take root in regions of greatest humanitarian concern."[10]

Clinton's new strategy of democratic enlargement received little public interest at the time. Still, the strategy marked a significant change in America's policy beyond containment. It signalled a marked shift of emphasis from reliance on the United Nations to enlargement of Western organisations under American leadership.

The Bush Doctrine of 2002

Within a year after taking office President George W. Bush was faced with the terrorist attack on America, already described at some length in the Prologue. A year thereafter, he presented the document "The National Security Strategy of the United States."[11]

The new strategy offered two striking new features.[12] The first one was that the U.S. Military must be "strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing, or equalling, the power of the United States." The second one was that the United States "can no longer solely rely on a reactive posture as we have in the past." The overlap between states "that sponsor terror and those that pursue WMD, compels us to action." That is to say that "we must adapt the concept of imminent threat to the capabilities and objectives to today's adversaries." In other words, "to forestall or

---

[10] Text of his remarks in document I.6.9.
[11] See document I.6.11; quotations from p. 30 and 15.
[12] Compare: *War with Iraq. Costs, consequences and alternatives*, An Occasional Paper of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, November 2002.

prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act pre-emptively." The two striking new features thus are the need for overall military preponderance and for preventive war. Re-reading the document after the termination of his presidency, one can hardly escape the conclusion that it was drafted as an advance justification for the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. Under the heading of the war on terror another objective was added, once the initial military operations against Iraq appeared to be successful. The forceful removal of Saddam Hussein was to inaugurate a new era of democracy for Iraq and the Middle East, according to President Bush on 7 September 2003:

> "This work continues. In Iraq, we are helping the long-suffering people of that country to build a decent and democratic society at the center of the Middle East. Together we are transforming a place of torture chambers and mass graves into a nation of laws and free institutions. This undertaking is difficult and costly, yet worthy of our country and critical to our security."[13]

The new strategy would turn out to be a threefold failure. Despite the claim for military preponderance, the United States were incapable of prevailing in Iraq and Afghanistan at the same time. The strategy of preventive war was rejected by the majority of America's Allies. The United Nations Security Council refused to authorise the invasion of Iraq. No WMD were found in Iraq so far. As appears to be clear in both Afghanistan and Iraq, democracy cannot be imposed by outside force, if at all, in the Islamic world. The pretensions of the new strategy are in sharp contrast to this threefold failure and the diminished power of the United States in the world.

The underlying cause is the unfortunate decision to present the planned invasion of Iraq for removing Saddam Hussein as part of the war on terror declared after 9/11. This decision di-

---

[13] See document I.6.13. See also document I.6.12 giving the text of President Bush's premature declaration of victory on the U.S.S. Lincoln.

verted the attention from the war on terror in Afghanistan and manifested a shocking and irresponsible ignorance on Iraq, on the way to conduct operations and the duration of war against one of the heartland Islamic countries. The war was poorly prepared. Saddam Hussein was a dreadful totalitarian dictator, but had no WMD's and no links to al-Qaida. It was no war of self-defence, it was not authorised by the UN Security Council and it was not a humanitarian intervention.

The result was a major financial, economic, political and humanitarian disaster. The Bush Administration completely miscalculated the length and the costs of the war.[14] The military were completely unprepared and thus incapable to occupy and control the country (larger than France) after initial victory. The direct costs were driven up by the consequent additional needs and the resulting stress to the military and the needs for resetting equipment and armaments. The hiring of private military security firms further drove up costs and resulted in rising corruption and excessive profits to these firms at the expense of the government. The sharp rise in oil prices (until late 2008) was, according to Stiglitz, a consequence of the Iraq war. It added to the rising costs of the war, but also weakened the economy.

The macro-economic effects were several. The rising oil prices shifted income to a relatively small number of non-democratic energy-producing countries that all did the wrong investments with the earned profits. The U.S. deficit grew very large and U.S. borrowing abroad soared. Fiscal irresponsibility and low initial interest rates produced the mortgage crisis that would lead to the 2008 credit crisis.

The real disaster, however, of diverting attention from the war on terror to the war in Iraq, was the failure of the proclaimed war on terror itself. Iraq descended into civil war and became a new base for terrorism. Whatever the "surge" may have achieved in terms of improved security, the war so far has been a humanitarian disaster. There are more than two million civilian

---

[14]   Joseph Stiglitz & Linda Bilmes, *The Three Trillion War. The True Costs of the Iraq Conflict*, Penguin Books 2008.

casualties. Close to five million Iraqi's have been uprooted from their homes; half of them have fled the country, others are internally displaced persons or have been ethnically and religiously separated. The majority of the Iraqi Chaldean Christians have fled persecution. Against this price paid by the people of Iraq any justification for the invasion cannot but fade away.

In Afghanistan – primary target for the war on terror – the resulting lack of sufficient forces resulted in the inability to stabilise the country. The al-Qaida leadership is still free, the Taliban are returning and corruption is rampant. Despite the promise of the NATO Allies to act in accordance with article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, the so called "coalition of the willing" is composed for 94% by U.S. troops. Unlike past experience, the Bush doctrine did not have a follow-up in a revised joint NATO strategic concept.

ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND COOPERATION

Economic assistance to the newly emerging democracies in East and Central Europe was offered to Poland and Hungary as early as 1989. Within the group of 24 industrialised countries of the OECD, the aid programme PHARE – Poland-Hungary Assistance for the Restructuring of the Economy – was created in the summer of 1989. The G-7 Economic Summit of Paris on 15 July 1989 charged the Commission of the European Economic Community with its implementation and coordination. The programme was gradually extended to other East and Central European states and had the objective to support economic and political reform, especially by strengthening the private sector in the economy and modernising industry, agriculture, the infrastructure and banking.[15] It was to be a coordinated programme of the 24, within the framework of the OECD, the IMF, the World Bank, the European Community and its (later) European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

---

[15] Text in document I.6.3.

In fact, the programme lacked clear leadership or vision of the kind presented by the Marshall Plan of 1947. PHARE would turn out to be little more than the umbrella term for a wide variety of aid and advice programmes conducted separately by governments, international or European institutions and non-governmental organisations.

Thereafter attention shifted to the "blessings" of globalisation and those of the enlargement of the European Union, on the assumption that they would take care of the economic problems of the new democracies. The mixture of the Communist heritage with the Western dictatorship of economic values and the permissive society may well be a poisonous one.

AN ARCHITECTURE FOR CONTINUED PEACEFUL CHANGE

"The task before us is to consolidate the fruits of this peaceful revolution and provide the architecture for continued peaceful change."

These words of President Bush sr. of the United States were quoted by his Secretary of State James A. Baker in a speech to the Berlin Press Club on 12 December 1989. The theme of Baker's Address was a new architecture for a new era. What he spoke about, were the restoration of free governments in East and Central Europe, the adaptation of the instruments of Western cooperation, an end to the division of Germany and Berlin, and the maintenance of the American security link to Europe. Among the old foundations and structures to have a place in the new architecture, he mentioned NATO, the European Community and CSCE. In the Rome Declaration on Peace and Cooperation of the North Atlantic Council issued on 8 November 1991 it was stated, that:

> "We are working toward a new European security architecture in which NATO, the CSCE, the European Community, the WEU and the Council of Europe complement each other."[16]

In reality, there was no deliberate and cohesive policy for designing and putting into place such a new architecture, as Baker had called for. In each of the organisations mentioned, member states opted for incremental adaptation rather than new designs. CSCE was transformed and renamed OSCE, but maintained its character as a framework built on political agreements rather than on legally binding international treaties. In the organisations, member states opted for – often competitive – policies of Eastern enlargement. The Council of Europe opted for quick and maximum enlargement (to 47 member states at present) without paying much attention to the democratic character of the new members. The European Union opted for a slower process of enlargement.

When President Clinton took office in the United States, the emphasis began to shift from a new European security architecture based on complementarity among the organisations of the West to an architecture based on NATO predominance. During his first term in office, Clinton formulated his new strategy of democratic enlargement. In 1995, Richard Holbrooke successfully imposed the Dayton Peace Accord on the warring parties in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which provided for the NATO led Implementation Force (IFOR, renamed SFOR). During his second term in office, the enlargement of NATO became one of President Clinton's highest priorities for American foreign policy. NATO enlargement became the central American objective in Europe's new security architecture. NATO's IFOR/SFOR was considered to be the model or precedent for NATO's new mission to respond to non-article 5 crises outside the North Atlantic area in Europe at least until the terrorist attack of 11 September 2001.

---

16   See document I.6.6.

PEACEFUL CHANGE AND THE NEW NATIONALISM

In the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, the fruits of peaceful revolution would prove to be extremely bitter. The end of communist rule not only required transition from centralised, totalitarian one-party rule to democracy and market-economy. It also required managing the violent break-up of fake federal states into independent republics. As "failed states" and failed regimes, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia were unable to meet this double requirement of peaceful transition. Both "federal" states were based on the communist contradiction between constituent republics separated along ethnic lines, and party-rule according to the principle of "democratic centralism." When one-party rule collapsed, "the nation state structures of the region also collapsed, leaving hundreds of ethnic groups at the mercy of each other," writes Michael Ignatief. According to him, a new age of violence has succeeded the last age of empire:

> "The key narrative of the new world order is the disintegration of nation states into ethnic civil war; the key architects of that order are warlords; and the key language of our age is ethnic nationalism."[17]

The report of the International Commission on the Balkans reaches the same conclusion:

> "The main causes of war have to be sought (...) in the sparks of aggressive nationalism fanned into roaring flames by some of the political leaders of the dissolving Yugoslav federation."[18]

A Western response in three stages

The West was caught fully surprised and the Western instruments of cooperation fully unprepared to cope with the outbreak of

---

[17] *Blood and Belonging. Journeys into the new nationalism*, BBC Books, Chatto & Windus, 1993, p. 3.
[18] Its summary overview is reprinted as document I.6.10.

this new nationalism. Western politicians and intellectuals had neither knowledge nor understanding of the intricate national and minority problems, now re-emerging with a vengeance from under the rubble of the "socialist" systems.

Initially, Western governments reacted by a policy of non-recognition of the newly declared independent states. Thereafter, both the United States and the European Community tried to delay recognition by the issuing of certain principles and policies, these new states had to observe in order to obtain recognition as an independent state. These guidelines are strange and curious documents. First the principles deviated from established practice for the recognition of new states in customary international law. Second, neither the U.S. nor the European Community observed their own principles when they proceeded to recognition of these new states. None of these states were in effective control of their territory – the customary criterion for recognition – nor did they come even close to observing the other principles stated in these documents.[19]

In a *second phase*, the West began to understand and Western policies began to differentiate. The disintegration of nation states proved not to be a general problem in East and Central Europe but a specific problem of the failed Soviet and Yugoslav federations.

For the Baltic republics, Poland, peacefully separating Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria, communist rule had been imposed from outside and peaceful transition could be assisted by the promise, preparation and accession to the organisations of Western cooperation.

Respect for successor state and great power Russia induced the West to deal prudently and distantly with the problems of the break-up of the Soviet Union. Assistance, partnership and cooperation were extended, but violence in civil wars – Chechnya,

---

[19]   Documents I.6.4 and I.6.7 reprint the U.S. principles for the recognition of former Soviet Republics and the joint European and American principles for the recognition of the former Yugoslav Republics.

Nagorno-Kharabak, Georgia or Tajikistan – at best received expression of concern or muted condemnation.

From 1991 onwards Western attention focussed on the break-up of Yugoslavia – a process already underway since the death of Tito, but studiously ignored until it was too late to prevent the outbreak of civil war. Until 1995, the United Nations and the European Union functioned as the principal organisations involved in the search for peaceful solutions, but failed. NATO gradually moved in by its offers to enforce the resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council.

In a *third phase*, the United States reluctantly took the lead in dealing with the Yugoslav crisis and imposed the Dayton Peace Accord of 1995 to end the civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Again the United States took the lead in the Operation Allied Force in 1999 to end ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. NATO moved to centre stage as the primary Western instrument for enforcing peace, in the implementation of its self-defined new mission to build stability and security in the Euro-Atlantic area and the (new) strategy of democratic enlargement.

The vicissitudes of democratic enlargement and the war on terror

After Kosovo, the successful pursuance of the West's strategy and NATO's new missions appeared to have become more uncertain. Kosovo reached independence despite rather than due to NATO. Ten years later no new joint strategy has been adopted to replace the one agreed upon in 1999. In reality NATO's missions appeared to have been reduced to support for a limited number of coalitions of the willing in Afghanistan, Iraq and Kosovo. The reasons are to be found in the serious differences of perception and policy following the American invasion of Iraq.

The new strategy and the war divided America and its principal European Allies; it sharpened the divisions between neo-conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats in the United States; and it created tension between the new and the old member states of the European Union. In the Middle-East it

helped feed Islamic extremism, animosity and resentment against the United States and the West.

When the terrorists struck on 11 September 2001, America was at the pinnacle of its position as the first world power. In the immediate aftermath, Washington received support from the United Nations and the NATO Allies in its war of self-defence on terror.

Still, America and Europe lived in two different worlds. For America, mostly strong and invulnerable throughout the twentieth century, 9/11 was a turning point towards a new perception of vulnerability and a new threat to its national security. For Europeans, 1989 (the end of Europe's division) had been a turning point in the opposite sense. It ended the perception of a direct threat to their security. The perception of a Russian threat was only felt by the new member states of NATO and it was different from the perceived Soviet threat before 1989. For most Europeans, the terrorist threat continued to be perceived as a threat to internal safety rather than a threat to external security. For them President Bush's "war on terror" did not make much sense and, in so far as it did, the understanding disappeared with the diversion of the war on terror to the invasion of Iraq.

Washington's unilateralism – in the decision to go to war and in the conduct of the war – was in sharp contrast to the institutionalism of the Europeans. The reduction of NATO from an integrated Alliance to no more than a coalition-generator and a toolbox for coalitions of the willing was seen as an arrogant slap in the face to America's long-term friends. What was left of understanding and confidence disappeared as the Iraq war went on: World Power number one spending more on defence than the rest of the world together had not done its homework before going to war and could not impose its will on a poor country.

The unilateral diversion of the war on terror has severely affected the reputation of the United States of America. It may have contributed to the serious financial and economic crisis.

In a deeper sense it has deprived America and the West of the required moral purpose to respond to the challenge of Islamic terrorism.

In his farewell Address on 15 January 2009 former President George W. Bush defended his dismal record as just and successful:

"Over the past seven years, a new Department of Homeland Security has been created. The military, the intelligence community, and the FBI have been transformed. Our nation is equipped with new tools to monitor the terrorists' movements, freeze their finances, and break up their plots. And with strong allies at our side, we have taken the fight to the terrorists and those who support them. Afghanistan has gone from a nation where the Taliban harboured al-Qaida and stoned women in the streets to a young democracy that is fighting terror and encouraging girls to go to school. Iraq has gone from a brutal dictatorship and a sworn enemy of America to an Arab democracy at the heart of the Middle East and a friend of the United States."[20]

Apparently, it needs a change of government – also in America – to see the reality of failure in strategy and policy.

At the same time, the European Union has been less than successful in deepening integration before further enlargement. Between the Summits of Maastricht (1991) and Nice (2000), agreement on institutional reforms has been difficult to achieve and limited in scope. Progress has been made towards a cumbersome, intergovernmental structure for a common European crisis-management policy (excluding defence), but so far mainly on paper. The European Union after Nice is neither more united in purpose nor more democratic in structure. Efforts in the early years of the twenty-first century to give the European Union its own and more democratic basic law have so far been unsuccessful. The Constitution for Europe was rejected by the French and the Dutch in a referendum and the subsequent Treaty of Lisbon got stuck after its rejection by the Irish. French-German leadership in the European Union is giving way to tension and rivalry. Still, enlargement of the European Union is continuing.

---

[20]   Document I.6.13.

With the addition of Romania and Bulgaria in 2007, Union membership now stands at twenty seven.

Transition to democracy has failed in Russia, Byelorussia and the former Soviet Republics in Asia. It is problematic in Ukraine and Georgia and difficult in the republics of former Yugoslavia. It is a complex process in the new member states of NATO and the European Union.

ENTERING THE POST-AMERICAN ERA?

In his Inaugural Address as 44th President of the United States of America, President Barack Hussein Obama affirmed that America is ready to lead once more:

> "And so, to all the other peoples and governments who are watching today, from the grandest capitals to the small village where my father was born, know that America is a friend of each nation, and every man, woman and child who seeks a future of peace and dignity. And we are ready to lead once more."

In foreign policy, the new administration is promising a break with the foreign policy in the Bush era.[21] Among its intentions are: to withdraw from Iraq and to refocus American resources on dealing with the terrorist threats from Afghanistan and Pakistan; to emphasise diplomacy in dealing with Iran; to give renewed emphasis to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; to renew America's alliances; and to restore bipartisanship and openness in the conduct of American foreign policy.

This second edition deliberately updates the history of Western cooperation to the end of the Bush era in American foreign policy. During the first eight years of the twenty-first century, the position of the United States as the first world power surely has been weakened. Part of it is due primarily to the Iraq war and

---

[21] In document I.6.14.

the financial crisis and could be restored by the new administration. Part of it may be structural in character: the relative decline in American power by the "rise of the rest."[22] The question above this paragraph remains open.

---

[22] See: Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World*, Norton & Company 2008.