

Lyon 2006 - Background papers and conclusions

EIN Summer University and European Ideas Fair

21 - 23 September 2006

EIN POLICY ROUNDTABLE

Foreign Policy Challenges: The Transatlantic Dimension

Background



Over the last four years, the EIN working group on Foreign Policy Challenges has explored the central role of the transatlantic relationship in defence and security, and in generating common prosperity more widely. Following the Iraq war and the rift in relations across the Atlantic, participants have stressed the importance of avoiding any similar divergence in the future. The United States and EU need to invest more political capital in developing a stronger common view and sense of joint purpose. The WG took the view that, as the transatlantic relationship goes through a number of important changes, a results-based strategy along the lines pioneered by the Transatlantic Policy Network - based on 'community of action' and common interests - can best reinforce common analysis, shared appreciation and joint action.

The GMF 'Transatlantic Trends' survey for 2006 shows that large majorities of the population - topping 70% in both the US and Europe - agree on the importance of certain international challenges in the next ten years, including the threat of international terrorism, the global spread of diseases such as avian flu, the rising power of China, and continued instability Middle Eastern countries. Equally, large-scale immigration is seen as a challenge on both sides of the Atlantic, with 79% of Americans and 76% of Europeans seeing it as a 'threat'.

The publication of the EU Security Strategy in 2003, in response to the earlier US Defense Doctrine, illustrated a growing preparedness in Europe to define and attempt to answer security threats. The EIN working group concluded that the EU had to bear more responsibility for its own security and make this a priority. The imbalance in roles between the US and Europe was excessive and potentially dangerous for transatlantic cohesion. There had to be intensified efforts to merge EU and US strategies in the war against terror, backed by an enhanced dialogue on the common values that unite us.

In the WG's view, the transatlantic relationship remains a core factor of European security and must be firmly anchored in all EU policies. The asymmetry of US-EU military power, while irreversible, should be reduced. EU 'soft power' and US 'hard power' approaches to international issues must be made to complement each other, rather than work at cross-purposes, as they might. American and European policy-makers should attempt to 'define the mission together', rather than let the 'mission define the coalition'.



At the 2005 EIN Summer University in Lisbon, the working group supported the

creation of the European Defence Agency in order to pool resources in armaments and considered the possible formation of an EU equivalent of the US National Guard. It argued that NATO should also assume a more political role, as a key means of underpinning and sustaining US cooperation and commitment in the defence and security field. In April 2006, the WG met in London to examine specific areas where the EU and the US could cooperate in the war on terror. The meeting discussed a future role for NATO in putting counter-terrorism at its core and in developing a stronger homeland security dimension.

Conclusions of Lyon discussion

Context of Transatlantic Relations

The Policy Roundtable concluded that there is a number of fields in which transatlantic relations operate that require continuous and sometimes strenuous effort on both sides:

- There should be no “look back in anger” at the last four years; Europe and America need to look forward.
- In the ongoing debate on the distribution of roles, EU “soft power” and US “hard power” approaches must be made to complement each other.
- Burden-sharing, especially in the question of reducing the gap in military capabilities, will be a continuous challenge.
- The new European anti-Americanism is not only reason for sober self-reflection in the US Administration, but should also be critically analysed in the context of some unhealthy European intellectual traditions

Current topics where cooperation should be enhanced



- Preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons: the EU should more coherently support the possible use of sanctions, in finance and trade. It should be equally unequivocal in insisting on such sanctions being decided in the U.N. context.
- Getting the Israeli-Palestinian peace process back on track: new diplomatic and economic incentives must be brought to bear by the US and the EU together, possibly in the framework of the EU’s New Neighbourhood Policy.
- Stabilising Iraq and Afghanistan: EU military efforts in Afghanistan and economic and diplomatic efforts in Iraq should be enhanced.
- More efforts are necessary in developing more coherent strategies towards China and Russia.

New fields of structured cooperation

- A Transatlantic Partnership Agreement should be envisaged for the German EU Presidency in 2007, with the maximal possible removal of trade barriers at its core, taking the Single European Act as an example, and in order to promote economic growth as well as reduce transatlantic friction. Fast action is crucial because of the ending trade negotiation mandate of the US President and upcoming elections in several EU member states.
- Structured cooperation is needed in the field of energy security (for the EU, gas from Russia, for the US, oil from the Middle East), which should include sharing reserves as well as jointly developing technologies like bio-fuels and ethanol.
- Global climate change should become an issue of transatlantic cooperation. US willingness to search for administrative and technological solutions together with the EU has increased recently, provided this can be done outside the Kyoto framework.
- The US should more constructively support the EU's New Neighbourhood Policy, with creative solutions that do not include short-term EU membership for countries like Ukraine.