“NEW VS. OLD EUROPE”: CONTESTED HEGEMONIES AND THE DUAL-GUARANTEE STRATEGY OF THE EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

ABSTRACT

The paper analyses the East European countries’ (EEC) security strategy in light of contesting US and Franco-German hegemonic projects. The EEC’s quest for a dual-guarantee strategy, which aims to get hard security from the US through NATO and soft security from the EU, is detailed as to show objectives of the EEC. It is concluded that although this strategy may succeed in times of crisis, it is untenable in the long run because the terms of relations between the EEC and both the US and EU are largely defined by the latter two, not by the EEC. Thus, rather than escaping from one-way dependency, the EEC’s dual-guarantee strategy may result in dual dependency on both the US and the EU.

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this paper is to analyse the strategy adopted by the East European states (EEC) in view of the dichotomy “New vs. Old Europe” introduced by US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. The EEC’s strategy may well be defined as a quest for a dual-guarantee formed in response to two competing hegemonic projects, namely, that of the US and that of the Franco-German axis within the EU.

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Having decided to attack Iraq for material reasons, to preserve its global supremacy and to restructure Iraq as well as the wider Middle East along neo-liberal lines, the Bush administration’s neo-conservatives went in search of legitimacy for this illegal act. As part of its series of struggles against the Franco-German axis, and in order to gain the EEC’s consent for the US hegemony, the US administration made certain deals with the EEC, in particular, promoting and advocating the general interests of the EEC by defining it as “New Europe”. At the same time, the Franco-German axis, which rested on a critique of US unilateralism, was trying to transform its hegemonic project of a common European foreign and security policy (CEFSP) into a historic bloc. In doing so, the Franco-German axis needed to prevent the EEC from creating a stumbling block in the construction and launching of the newly formulated “structured cooperation” for defense among militarily advanced EU member countries. But rather than compromising with the EEC on issues such as sharing of military technology and increased representation in EU structures, the Franco-German axis relied more on political coercion, even threatening to exclude the EEC from the EU integration process, in order to achieve its aims.

It may be argued that the EEC’s quest for a dual-guarantee strategy developed out of an atmosphere of crisis between the US and Franco-German axis. From 2002 onwards, the complex and dynamic process of struggle between the US and Franco-German hegemonic projects opened a window of opportunity that prompted the EEC to fashion a strategy that would allow it to avoid repeating the one-way dependency it had experienced with the Soviet Union in its relationship with the EU, and, for that matter, with the US. By adopting a “dual-guarantee strategy”, the EEC aimed to secure hard security, as well as military technology, from the US via NATO and soft security from the EU.

The subject in question can be analysed benefiting from the insight provided by the neo-Gramscian perspective, which emphasizes roles of

ideology, decisive involvement with leadership as well as consent and coercion in the construction of hegemony.3 Within this framework, it can be stated that the US sought more the consent of the EEC, holding out the tentative promise of a “New Europe” to be constructed as opposed to the “Old Europe”, whereas the Franco-German axis, perhaps overconfident, did not seek consent, but rather, applied coercion to the EEC.

Since the EEC lacked both economic and military means, it had to rely on diplomatic leverage to back up its strategy. Thus, the EEC countries, acting as a group, attempted to present themselves as crucial for both the US and the Franco-German axis to sustain their respective hegemonic projects. To do so, the EEC tried to make use of the US quest to obtain consent for its illegitimate attack on Iraq, and at the same time to show its potential capacity as an obstacle in the transformation of the Franco-German hegemonic project into an historic bloc. However, the extent to which these two factors provided the EEC with sufficient leverage for the development and sustainability of its strategy is questionable. Hence, this paper examines not only the evolution of the EEC’s dual-guarantee strategy within the context of two competing hegemonic projects, but also the limits of this strategy.

FRICTION ON MULTIPLE FRONTS

In a press conference held on 22 January 2003, US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, praised the EEC as the “New Europe”, arguing that the “centre of gravity is shifting to the East”.4 Soon after, on 30 January 2003, heads of states and governments of five NATO/EU member countries (José María Aznar, Spain; José Manuel Durão Barroso, Portugal; Silvio Berlusconi, Italy; Tony Blair, United Kingdom; Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Denmark and three NATO members and EU accession countries (Václav Havel, Czech Republic; Peter Medgyessy, Hungary; Leszek Miller, Poland) issued a statement indicating their clear support


for a US military intervention in Iraq. The following is an excerpt from this statement:

_The real bond between the United States and Europe is the values we share: democracy, individual freedom, human rights and the Rule of Law…Today they are under greater threat than ever. The attacks of 11 September showed just how far terrorists – the enemies of our common values – are prepared to go to destroy them. Those outrages were an attack on all of us. In standing firm in defence of these principles, the governments and people of the United States and Europe have amply demonstrated the strength of their convictions. Today more than ever, the transatlantic bond is a guarantee of our freedom.

We in Europe have a relationship with the United States which has stood the test of time. Thanks in large part to American bravery, generosity and far-sightedness, Europe was set free from the two forms of tyranny that devastated our continent in the 20th century: Nazism and Communism. Thanks, too, to the continued cooperation between Europe and the United States we have managed to guarantee peace and freedom on our continent. The transatlantic relationship must not become a casualty of the current Iraqi regime’s persistent attempts to threaten world security.

In today’s world, more than ever before, it is vital that we preserve that unity and cohesion. We know that success in the day-to-day battle against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction demands unwavering determination and firm international cohesion on the part of all countries for whom freedom is precious.

_The Iraqi regime and its weapons of mass destruction represent a clear threat to world security… We sent a clear, firm and unequivocal message that we would rid the world of the danger posed by Saddam Hussein’s weapons of mass destruction. We must remain united in insisting that his regime is disarmed… Our governments have a common responsibility to face this threat…_5

A week later, foreign ministers of the ten EEC countries known as the Vilnius Group (Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) reiterated this stance in the following statement:

…Our countries understand the dangers posed by tyranny and the special responsibility of democracies to defend our shared values. The

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5 For the full text of the statement see: “Europe and America must stand united”, _The Times_, 30 January 2003.
trans-Atlantic community, of which we are a part, must stand together to face the threat posed by the nexus of terrorism and dictators with weapons of mass destruction. We have actively supported the international efforts to achieve a peaceful disarmament of Iraq. However, it has now become clear that Iraq is in material breach of U.N. Security Council Resolutions, including U.N. Resolution 1441, passed unanimously, on November 8, 2002. As our governments said on the occasion of the NATO Summit in Prague: We support the goal of the international community for full disarmament of Iraq as stipulated in the UN Security Council Resolution 1441. In the event of non-compliance with the terms of this resolution, we are prepared to contribute to an international coalition to enforce its provisions and the disarmament of Iraq. The clear and present danger posed by the Saddam Hussein’s regime requires a united response from the community of democracies...

Shortly after these statements, French President Jacques Chirac, in the middle of an extraordinary European Council summit meeting in Brussels on 17 February 2003, described the CEE countries’ demarche as “childish”, and accused them of “missing a good opportunity to keep quiet”. Chirac went so far as to threaten the CEE countries – particularly Romania and Bulgaria – with losing the chance of joining the EU. “If they had tried to diminish their chances of participating in the European Union,” said the French president, “they could not have done a better job.” The EEC thus found themselves in the midst of a rift between the US on the one hand and the Franco-German axis on the other – a rift they would at times willingly dive into, head first.

TWO COMPETING HEGEMONIC PROJECTS:
THE US vs. THE FRANCO-GERMAN AXIS

A brief background of US-EU relations is necessary in order to explore the evolution of the two competing hegemonic projects, which came into conflict during the US military attack on Iraq.

The Western and Eastern blocs – two worlds, each with their own political, economic and military institutions – were the products of bi-polar international system, which, notwithstanding some minor revisions in the mid-1960s (Charles de Gaulle) and early 1970s (Willy Brandt period), lasted by-and-large from 1948 until the collapse of the Eastern bloc in 1989. During these years, European security and defence remained under the tutelage of two rival powers, the US in the Western bloc and the USSR in the Eastern bloc. At the time, the European Community was far from producing a common foreign, security and defence policy.

The slow, incremental development of European Political Cooperation (EPC), undertaken in the 1970s entered into a new phase as the Cold War ended. The post-Cold War debate over a European security architecture, as outlined by Stuart Croft, produced four competing proposals in the early 1990s; the German-Czech proposal, advocating a pan-European collective security structure based on the CSCE/OSCE; the Russian proposal, favouring the construction of a “European security council” within which major European powers would play leading roles, and which had as its goal the “decoupling” of the US from European security affairs; the French-Belgian proposal, promoting an independent Western European security structure; and the US-UK proposal, which was based on European security within NATO. Over the following years, it was the latter two proposals that were to survive and compete well until the St. Malo Declaration of December 1998. While the French-Belgian proposal (which had gained the support of Germany) aimed to develop a European security structure on a Western European basis that would then be expanded to include Eastern Europe, the US-British proposal prioritised the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) within NATO. The countries of Eastern Europe would find themselves in the middle of these two competing architectural projects, and they would build their own foreign policies accordingly.10

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In the mid-1990s, NATO and the EU came to an understanding by which the EU through WEU could make use of NATO assets, as stated in the Berlin Plus formula of 1996. But by the end of 1998, a turning point had been reached; the Franco-British St. Malo Declaration of December 1998 opened up a major avenue for the development of European “military capacity for autonomous action”. In many ways, the St. Malo Declaration geared up the EPC process, in particular by eliminating the likelihood of a UK veto on the formation of a European defence structure as a result of the British government’s fear of being pushed aside by a growing Franco-German axis in European affairs. The legally nonbinding provisions and promises of St. Malo were to be inserted into the texts of subsequent EU summits, as in the Headline Goal of the Helsinki Summit of 1999, a year after the St. Malo Declaration. Later EU summits would clearly indicate the EU was on its way to constructing a European defence structure “separate and separable” from NATO, in opposition to the US rhetoric of “separate but inseparable” from NATO. The Berlin Plus formula had already acknowledged an autonomous ESDI within NATO, designing multi-level modules for cooperation between the US and the EU that included allowing the EU through WEU to make use of NATO assets with the consent from the North Atlantic Council. In 1999, the Washington Summit would draw up the details of these EU-NATO cooperation modules and clarify that EU use of NATO assets would require approval on a case-by-case basis.\(^{11}\)

In 1999 the growing Franco-German advocacy of “separate and separable” security and defense led US Secretary of State Madeline Albright to announce her infamous “Three Ds: no decoupling, no duplication and no discrimination.” Perhaps meant to put the EU on notice, the “Three Ds” sent a clear message as to the political limits of a European defence structure. Considering the gap between European and US military capability, as well as technology,\(^{12}\) the three Ds had little to do with any US fear of European action on the military-security front, but everything to do with worries over starting off down the slippery slope of decoupling and duplication.

When George W. Bush won the 2000 US elections, certain shifts away from the Clinton administration’s strategies could be observed in US-

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EU relations. As they began to gain considerable ground within the US administration, especially after 11 September 2001, the neo-conservatives redefined US priorities in negotiations with the EU. Under the Bush presidency, the US administration entered into multi-level renegotiations, demanding its allies take a firm stance as to whether they were “with the US or against it”, thereby beginning a process of redefining both global and European aspects of the US hegemonic project in a way that did not necessarily include seeking consent of core EU members France and Germany. Rather, the US administration attempted to obtain consent of those who supported it in its endeavour to fight against global terrorism and what the administration referred to as “rogue states”.

From late 2002 onwards, the Franco-German-led EU hegemonic project also entered into a new phase with the so called “structured cooperation”. Advocated by France and Germany, “structured cooperation”, meant that “the EU’s more militarily advanced countries can choose to push ahead with defence co-operation”,13 i.e., the Franco-German axis, with the remainder of the EU countries expected to contribute to this strategy, but not to question it.

While “structured cooperation” was not of any real concern for the US – as long as any such endeavour remained within NATO- it became a significant cause for friction between the Franco-German axis and the EEC. The uneasiness on the part of the EEC, who, clearly, were not among the militarily advanced, offered patent leverage for the US administration to make use of in the promotion of its own hegemony. Thus, the EEC became politically significant to the US, which indulged in an attempt at reconfiguring alliances within the EU. By introducing the rhetoric of “New vs. Old Europe”, US Defense Secretary Rumsfeld hoped to interfere in Europe by promoting the periphery at the expense of the core in order to further the US hegemonic project. On 22 January 2003, when asked at a press conference about the European opposition to war with Iraq, Rumsfeld replied:

You are thinking of Europe as Germany and France. I do not. That is old Europe. If you look at the entire NATO and Europe today, the center of gravity is shifting to the East. Germany has been a problem, and France has been a problem. But you look at vast numbers of other countries in Europe. They are not with France and Germany on this; they are with the United States.  

US interference in EU affairs through the EEC increased the friction between the US and the Franco-German axis, as well as the friction between the Franco-German axis and the EEC, thereby widening the gap between the objectives of the two hegemonic projects. Thus, the EEC found themselves in the middle of multiple polemics, lauded by the US as “New Europe”, yet accused by the Franco-German axis of being a Trojan horse.

THE EEC’S QUEST FOR A DUAL-GUARANTEE STRATEGY

The open disagreement between the Franco-German axis and the EEC over a US-UK attack on Iraq was an indication of the EEC’s uneasiness with the EU over the larger issues of the CEFSP in general and the policy of “structured cooperation” in particular. This was reflected in the responses made by several EEC heads of states and governments to the above-noted warning from Chirac. In an equally strong tone, Czech President Vaclav Klaus underlined the lack of common EU foreign policy and cautioned Chirac, saying “efforts to counterweight to the United States must be avoided.” Latvian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sandra Kalniète argued that the European Union was a grouping of equal states in which everyone’s views should be respected, and thus there was a need for the equal treatment of all members. Romanian President Ion Iliescu considered Chirac’s statement to be an unfortunate warning that “separates the European countries as pro-American or anti-America,” and Polish President Aleksander Kwasnieski responded along similar lines, stressing that “Central and Eastern European countries should not have to select between the United States and Europe.”

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland Adam Rotfeld compared the situation to the historical position Poland held between Russia and Germany: “For centuries, our main dilemma was whether to be with Russia against

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15 Ibid., p. 2.
Germany, or with Germany against Russia. Now we are confronted with a new one – to be with the US against Europe, or with Europe against America. But that is a false dilemma.”

The situation was summed up neatly by another Polish politician, Bogdan Goralzyk, an adviser to Foreign Minister Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz. “Only America and NATO can give us external security;” stated Goralzyk. “But even more pressing is domestic security, which means modernization, and nobody but the EU can give us that.” Goralzyk’s analysis neatly illustrates the different values and roles the EEC attributes to the EU and NATO, with the EU considered to be the provider of soft security and NATO that of hard security. The EEC’s wish to have both was categorically expressed by Tadeusz Iwinski, foreign policy adviser to Polish Prime Minister Leszek Miller. “It is not either/or; it is both”, Iwinski declared in the press. “We do not see the need to choose between Europe and the United States. That is like having to choose between your mother and your father”.

Thus, it was not just the EU, but the US, too, that would be an object of EEC criticism, as in the following statement by Pavel Cyernoch of Charles University in Prague:

...despite a generally favourable attitude toward the United States, this ‘New Europe’ will be neither a simple-minded American groupie, nor an easy bed fellow. This is largely because, with its go-it-alone decision to attack Iraq, the U.S. administration is sending messages that sound to many of us ‘New Europeans’ much like the attitudes of the former Soviet Union, which understood its superpower status as a free ticket to use military force as it liked. Moscow coerced smaller countries into line, on the grounds that ‘he who is not with us is against us’ – a doctrine similar to that espoused by President George Bush after the terrorist attacks of September 11.

Still, it was the EU’s clear shift from “enhanced cooperation” to “structured cooperation” in defense that categorically alarmed the EEC in

16 Ibid., p. 3.
18 Ibid.
that it appeared to signal a move towards consolidating the “core” versus “periphery”. And whereas the so-called “core” Europe, the Franco-German axis, was adopting an exclusionary strategy, the US was offering military modernization, both through NATO and bilaterally. The military defence capacity of any one EU member, or a combination of members, was in no way comparable to that of the US; besides, in terms of military technology, the European powers were also dependent on US military technology. However, whether the US was willing to transfer military technology to the EEC was also questionable.

In this regard, it should be kept in mind that it is the dominant actors that determine the terms of relations between themselves and lesser powers. In introducing the idea of “New Europe”, the primary US objective was to undermine the Franco-German position vis-à-vis European affairs as well as Iraq issue. Although the Iraq crisis offered a certain amount of leverage for the EEC, expectations that closer cooperation with the US would provide the EEC with military technology transfer was wishful thinking. Apparently, the EEC political and military elite was confusing military technology transfer with modernization and standardization of armies within NATO; while the latter was possible, the former was out of the question. Similarly, while the EEC may rely on the EU for soft security, it will be able to do so only because areas of concern such as immigration, illegal trafficking and border controls are of benefit to the core EU as well.

The crisis over Iraq did eventually strike a blow to the US hegemonic project. When the Spanish socialist party came to power in March 2004, it made good on its election campaign promise of withdrawing Spanish troops from Iraq. This was followed by similarly defiant rhetoric from other political actors, including the Hungarian prime minister, and very recently (in February 2005) in Portugal, which led to further withering away of the US hegemonic project, but not total abandonment of it. It should nevertheless be kept in mind that, notwithstanding their competition, both of the hegemonic projects were and still are open-ended. The US administration has recently been trying to redefine its hegemony based on the provision of additional support for the military modernization of Poland, Romania and Bulgaria, including the construction of new air bases in these countries, in return for the continuing consent of their governments. For the Franco-German hegemonic project, the most significant challenge was and still is the process of redefining the EU’s place in global politics and of renegotiating vis-à-vis the US. Equally significant challenges are developing a “common” defense in
practice, as well as a functioning defence architecture within which all members may be satisfactorily accommodated.  

CONCLUSION

Despite its growing ties to the EU, the EEC has seen no point in putting all its eggs in only one security basket, thus contributing to the success of one hegemonic project. Rather, it has tried to develop a dual-guarantee strategy, with hard security obtained from the US through the NATO and soft security through the EU structures. With its rhetoric of “New vs. Old Europe” as representing a shift in the centre of gravity from the West to the East, the US appeared to be seeking EEC consent for its own hegemonic project. While being courted by the US, the EEC was alarmed by a potential exclusion from the “common” European defense structure, namely, the Franco-German axis’ hegemonic project of “structured cooperation” among militarily advanced EU members. Polemics over issues ranging from legal texts such as the European Convention, representation in EU structures and, particularly, the proposed “structured cooperation” among militarily advanced EU members revealed the extent of the friction between the Franco-German axis and the EEC. In view of this friction, and the atmosphere of crisis between the two competing hegemonic projects that came to the fore over the Iraq issue, the EEC attempted to achieve a dual-guarantee strategy, which, they hoped, would provide them with security without dependency. Thus, the EEC tried to make use of US readiness to support the EEC as a counter-balance to the growing dominant position and assertiveness of the Franco-German axis. However, while the EEC may succeed in playing off one against the other in times of crisis, it will not be able to benefit from this as part of a long-term, sustainable strategy.

Interestingly, the two hegemonic projects were initially successful in their short-term objectives, but neither the US nor the Franco-German hegemonic projects have yet to create a historic bloc. The US hegemonic project has, in fact, been undermined by the withering away of consent, particularly by the withdrawal of Spanish troops from Iraq, as well as by an unease felt by some of the EEC countries, and of course above all, by the real, unexpected challenges in Iraq. Thus, the prospects for sustaining the US hegemonic project remain rather daunting. As to the Franco-German hegemonic project, political coercion, including threats of exclusion from European integration, did not prevent the EEC from giving consent to the US-UK attack on Iraq; thus, this hegemonic project also failed to develop into a historic bloc.

It may be asserted that unless the EU as a structure properly addresses the problems of sharing political leadership, military-defense technology and intelligence, and finds a better institutional framework to accommodate national policy autonomy for each and every member, it may again feel the friction between core and periphery members in the coming years. At the same time, it is likely that the US administration under the second term of the Bush presidency may look to renegotiate with the EU. It remains to be seen whether a new, reconciliatory spirit like that of St. Malo, this time between the US and the EU, may lead to a convergence between the US and EU hegemonic projects, or whether the current division between the US and EU will widen.

And how would this affect EEC strategy? If the EU and US hegemonic projects converge, the EEC will lose any chance it might have of sustaining a dual-guarantee strategy. As a whole, rather than avoiding one-way dependency, the EEC’s dual-guarantee strategy may end in dual-dependency on both the EU and the US.

LITERATURE


U članku se analizira nova bezbednosna strategija zemalja Istočne Evrope u kontekstu postojanja suprotstavljenih hegemonističkih projekata SAD i francusko-nemačke osovine. Dihotomija “nova vs. stara Evropa”, čiji je tvorac američki sekretar za odbranu Donald Ramsfeld, omogućila je zemljama Istočne Evrope da razviju strategiju dvojne garancije u kojoj bi se tvrda bezbednost dobijala od SAD preko NATO-a, a meka bezbednost od Evropske unije. Ova njihova strategija je predstavljala odgovor na zajedničku evropsku spoljnu i bezbednosnu politiku EU i “strukturisanu saradnju” za koju se zalaže francusko-nemačka osovin.

Pošto zemlje Istočne Evrope ne poseduju odgovarajuća ekonomska i vojna sredstva one su morale da se oslone na diplomatsku veštinu kako bi dobile podršku za ovu svoju strategiju. Tako su ove zemlje, delujući kao grupa, nastojale da predstave sebe ključnim i za SAD i za francusko-nemačku osovinu u njihovim nastojanjima da ostvare svoje hegemonističke projekte. Da bi to postigle zemlje Istočne Evrope su pokušale da izvuku korist od zahteva SAD da od njih dobiju saglasnost za nelegitiman napad na Irak, i istovremeno da pokažu svoju potencijalnu

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“NOVA VS. STARA EVROPA”: SUPROSTAVLJENE HEGEMONIJE I DVOJNA GARANCIJA KAO STRATEGIJA ZEMALJA ISTOČNE EVROPE

REZIME

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moć kao prepreku u transformaciji francusko-nemačkog hegemonističkog projekta u istorijski blok. Autor ukazuje da je pod znakom pitanja u kojoj će meri ova dva značajna svetska faktora pružiti podršku zemljama Istočne Evrope da razviju i održe ovakvu svoju bezbednosnu strategiju.


Autor ukazuje da ukoliko Evropska unija kao struktura ne ostvari odgovarajući pristup rešavanju problema učešća u političkom vodstvu, u vojno-odbrambenoj tehnologiji i obaveštajnoj službi, i ne nađe bolji institucionalni okvir za prilagođavanje autonomnih nacionalnih politika za svaku svoju članicu, može u narednim godinama opet da dođe do trvenja između članica koje čine jezgro EU i njenih perifernih članica. Istovremeno, verovatno je da će američka administracija u drugom mandatu Bušovog predsednikovanja nastojati da prevazide razlike prema Evropskoj uniji. Ostaje da se vidi da li nov, pomirljivi duh koji je prevladao u Sent Malu između SAD i EU, može dovesti do konvergencije američkog hegemonističkog i hegemonističkog projekta EU, ili će sadašnja podela između SAD i EU postati još veća.

Autor zaključuje da će, ukoliko dođe do približavanja između sada suprotstavljenih hegemonističkih projekata, zemlje Istočne Evrope izgubiti svaku šansu da održe strategiju dvojne garancije. U tom slučaju izbegavanje jednosmerne zavisnosti putem strategije dvojne garancije zemlje Istočne Evrope može dovesti do dvojne zavisnosti i od EU i od SAD.