

Europe and India after the Iraq War

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THE IMPACT OF THE CONFLICT ON EUROPE AND ON INDIA

The Iraq War

The war of the United States and its allies comprising Great Britain, Spain, Poland and Australia against Iraq under Saddam Hussein was launched without a United Nations (UN) mandate or a simple majority in the UN Security Council. On the basis of the Blix Inspection reports of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and others, the war against Iraq had no justification whatsoever on the grounds of a perceived Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) threat. Nor would the war have been justified under the doctrine of freedom of action - if needed - against countries hosting international terrorist organisations in particular Al Qaeda, action of the kind undertaken on the basis of an UN Security Council Resolution against the Taliban controlled Afghanistan and broadly supported by a number of countries, among others by Germany.

The eventual justification for the military action was the demand for regime change on the grounds of gross human rights violations against the Iraqi population and alleged non-fulfilment of the UN Security Council resolution of the past. The conflict has split the alliance and the European Union (EU). It has distanced India from the USA in this important issue.

The War Against International Terrorism

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Permanent Council had declared the "casus foederis" according to Article 5 of the Washington Treaty of 1949, in support of the USA, which was targeted by Al Qaeda on 11 September 2001 and by other international terrorist organisations with the indirect assistance of Afghanistan (Taliban ruled).

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With a few exceptions (control of the US airspace) the USA did not ask NATO for support but invited countries from around the world to join in the coalition against the international terrorism. The European NATO members joined this coalition, so did India. The political and material reconstruction of Afghanistan is under UN control and as UN mandate. India is involved and so is NATO and the EU.

The Iraq War and the UN

The attempt of the USA and its allies failed to launch the planned war against Iraq under the UN authorised war against international terrorism. The majority of the world community would have considered seriously authorising military action in case of credible evidence established by the IAEA inspectors under the leadership of Mr. Blix of the existence of undeclared WMD and refusal of the Iraqi authorities to dismantle these weapons under UN control.

A number of countries had warned against a war because of the difficulties that the militarily victorious countries would face in the re-establishment of a functioning Iraq, hopefully, but not necessarily democratic and the waves of resistance to be expected in the country and by mercenaries and terrorist groups coming to the country battling the occupying powers, but also with regard to the non calculable consequences for the Near and Middle East.

At present the USA, the provisional Governing Council of Iraq and the UN Secretary General are negotiating a future role of the UN in the political and economic reconstruction of the country, notably about a positive response to the growing Shiite pressure for early elections. Because of the lack of sufficient security for the UN mission and their staff members the mission was withdrawn a couple of months ago. However, there are questions of principle involved. The UN cannot be subject to the US control in Iraq. India and Pakistan declined to send troops to Iraq without a UN mandate. On the Iraq issue North Atlantic Alliance and the EU were deeply divided and this divide continues to be so.

Is There a Future Role for the North Atlantic Alliance?

There is a public debate regarding the way the trans-Atlantic rifts could be mended. There is a strong resentment on the part of the USA about insufficient military preparedness and adequate forces. There is a great anxiety on the part of a number of European NATO members resentful of the US's unilaterally adopted policies and plans and the US's desire to draw on NATO capabilities according to operational needs of the US in a given military conflict without proper initial consultations about the situation, based on intelligence from all member states and a policy to be adopted. The EU has at their disposal limited military capabilities to meet contingencies in the transformation processes on the Balkans and elsewhere in Europe. Colin L Powell in his *Foreign Affairs* article (January/February 2004) under the heading "A Strategy of Partnerships" future military engagements has discussed this issue. He does not envisage giving the North Atlantic Alliance structure a pivotal role in determining a common policy in response to a threat to peace or stability in regions.

On both sides of the Atlantic there are forces at work aiming at uplifting the North Atlantic Alliance in order to deal with – in case of need in close consultation and cooperation with other countries concerned, and based on a legitimising UN Security Council resolution – international crises. I hold the view that the Alliance should play an important role for establishing policies in response to crises in other parts of the world. NATO should, therefore, be restructured to meet this task. Proposals should be worked out by a few "wise men and women" as a first preparatory step towards inter-governmental consultations and conclusions – possibly to be put into a protocol attached to the Washington Treaty of 1949.

The Alliance has unique experience in integrating intelligence from various sources and in preparing meaningful consultations on decisions to be taken in order to meet a crisis – with the inclusion of other countries concerned. NATO military operations are extremely professional in nature and can resist unwise political interventions into military planning.

The Crisis in Iraq: Win the War and Lose the Peace?

The war in Iraq also shows that it may be possible for the USA to win a war, however, the reconstruction of the state structure, the economic and social infrastructure as well as the time consuming process of nation building are costly and complicated affairs. The USA lacks financial means. Indeed, the USA is certainly the most powerful nation in military terms. However, economic and financial resources on a global level are divided among the leading economic centres – the USA; Europe and Japan.

Also, in a conflict situation there is a need for a politically strong alliance of partners who jointly prepare their common positions and plans as well as policies. As a logical consequence of such a situation it is wise and effective as well to have the alliance in place in the beginning and go through the whole process - from the very beginning until the accomplishment of the military, the political and the economic tasks. That is the major reason why the Alliance will be of importance also in the future and under the present conditions.

The EU Adopts a Security Strategy

In its first document on international security, the European Council adopted at the Council's meeting of Heads of States and Governments in December 2003 a European Security Strategy. It identified the key security challenges facing Europe – terrorism, proliferation of WMD, regional conflicts, state failure and organised crime. The EU adopted a holistic approach and, therefore, a broad definition of security and a broad spectrum of choice to respond to threats to their security. This arsenal includes military and civilian capabilities for crisis management, as well as diplomatic, trade and development activities. The document will be adapted to changed circumstances from time to time.

India and Europe

Is there common strategic ground – even a perspective for a strategic partnership between India and Europe? I presume India has mixed feelings about the Bush doctrine on pre-emptive strikes and of unilateral action. The Bush doctrine may establish a bad

precedent and make war more likely to be launched? India would have no great difficulties with the European Security Strategy but it has doubts about its effectiveness – given the loose structure of the EU in matters of defence and security, and in view of the major role that the North Atlantic Alliance continues to play for all European countries. But is there still an effective NATO and will there be a new NATO?

WHAT ARE THE LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM THE TWO CRISES THAT HAD TO BE MANAGED INTERNATIONALLY IN THE MOST RECENT PAST?

Afghanistan – The Pakistan Involvement

I refer in the first instance to the attack on the US Twin Trade Towers and the Pentagon and to the response of the international community on the basis of a UN resolution on Afghanistan (elimination of the Taliban regime and of Al Qaeda). Afghanistan has not been restored yet as a stable state and is under reconstruction. Funds do not come quickly enough for the reconstruction, and the UN protection force has not been deployed in all major cities and areas.

I also refer to the second crisis – the Iraq crisis - as a more complex issue, which turns into a major headache for many countries – notably for the USA after initial military victory and the eventual capture of Saddam Hussein.

Europe and India certainly were involved and affected in different ways, which is reflected in their policies adapted in these two major international crises. Developments in Afghanistan had a major impact on Pakistan, a country that endeavoured for a long time to have masterminded Taliban and had to adjust to the policy adopted by the UN Security Council, which was implemented by their major ally during the Cold War – the USA. The US insisted on strong Pakistani action against Taliban and Al Qaeda camps and facilities based on their territory or in the Afghan-Pakistan border area.

India had to be concerned – on a continued basis - about the details of the US policy in Afghanistan, with regard to Pakistan and

to the Pakistan supported insurrection in Kashmir. Tension rose on several occasions between Pakistan and India - up to military confrontation. Urgent messages were sent from the centres of power in the world and also from Europe to New Delhi and to Islamabad to move back from military brinkmanship.

Later the two sides agreed to defuse the danger of immediate military conflict and put renewed emphasis on the development of confidence building measures and crisis management procedures. The agreement to talk to each other on such matters was reached in Islamabad on 6 January 2004. According to international observers, these new talks look more promising than promises of this kind on earlier occasions. Why is that so? The reasons are :-

(a) Areas of common interest and concerns have been identified between the USA and India. After Pakistan's misadventure at Kargil in 1999 and during the ensuing visit of President Clinton, the joint US-Indian statement on threats from the Northwest – terrorism, drugs, organised crime implicated Pakistan.

(b) It appears that the US have shifted towards the Indian position on Kashmir - in particular after the conduct of internationally recognised free elections in Jammu and Kashmir in 2003. Talks may lead – in the view of American observers - at a given time to a compromise between India and Pakistan on the basis of the existing situation.

(c) There seems to be a growing interest of India and possibly of Pakistan to broaden the areas of contacts and exchanges for a number of reasons. In the past such initiatives were undertaken but did not lead to anything tangible – except for the commitment about mutual information on nuclear sites, engaged in non-military activities which were to be excluded from any targeting in case of war.

(d) It appears that a decline of internal stability in Pakistan would be undesirable from the point of view of India, and, therefore, there are additional incentives to seek more substantive exchanges and improve relations with Pakistan.

In this context the EU and India have shared interests. Europe could offer its own experience with confidence building measures and conflict management during the Cold War and afterwards during the difficult transition period in Eastern Europe and on the Balkans. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) continues to be the most important structure in Europe because of the following reasons:-

(a) It serves the nations in their efforts to transform the Soviet styled state structures and suppressed civil societies into societies in which the rule of law is respected, elections are conducted without manipulation and self government becomes the rule.

(b) After decade long futile negotiations on balanced force reductions in Central Europe, it was possible to conclude in November 1990 in Paris a comprehensive agreement, actually a treaty to be ratified on Force Ceilings all over Europe (CFE), that applies to personnel, aircraft, guns, tanks and track vehicles, involved as well restrictions on redeployment into critical areas.

(c) Actually the OSCE comprises two separate permanent consultative bodies – on general affairs (Permanent Council) and the forum for security cooperation” for disarmament, arms control verification.

While it is correct to say that India and the United States - for all practical purposes - maintain at this juncture a strategic partnership with some areas where more permanent security structures could develop, the EU and India maintain only a general partnership with a developed system of consultations, summit meetings and agreements on partnership and cooperation. These relations are supported by bilateral contacts with individual member states as seem desirable. Security matters are cooperative matters not integrated matters within the EU.

One of the leading members of Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) stated in a conversation with a foreign consultant: “The European Union does not exist as a cohesive and

credible state structure. We are not sure, what is on the mind of the Germans, and to what extent they are ready to engage themselves in India.” Perhaps it is also significant that Professor Raja Mohan, the author of the very important book on the Indian foreign policy, hardly mentions Europe in his book *Crossing the Rubicon*.

While Germany in general seeks to establish common European positions on matters of peace and war, security and stability, and seeks to advance and bring about NATO positions; such efforts were not really undertaken in due course with regard to the Iraq crisis, but only very late in the process of the unfolding crisis.

There were much more and productive consultations within the EU and within NATO on the coordination of efforts in Afghanistan and regarding combating international terrorism. Nowadays it is a NATO command that fulfils the task of guiding the “UN Protection Force for Afghanistan” on the basis of a UN Security Council resolution.

Not everything is in place in Afghanistan, but the right decisions have been taken. What is needed now is a stronger commitment of nations to give substance to the tasks before NATO and the West in Afghanistan. There should be more consultations between NATO, the EU structures and India.

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