
Implications of the War in the Former Yugoslavia on the US – EU Relations

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Summary

The new European security structure is being created and has been emerging in the changed circumstances, marked by three developments: the weakening of Russia's power and influence, the bigger political, foreign-policy and strategic ambitions of the EU and the US desire to confirm itself in the new Europe in its role of the world leader. The sway of each of these factors on that process will depend on their relations, and their economic, political, and military power. The war in the former Yugoslavia and the American efforts to stop the war have confirmed the US geostrategic interests and its readiness to define a common security policy in the post-cold war Europe together with its European allies. US defined the peacekeeping policy of the international community, mediated in hammering out the peace accord, and with its political clout and military forces took over the leadership in the peacekeeping operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this pragmatic way, they have tried to fortify the transatlantic alliance and their presence in Europe. However, among the partners in that alliance there are different, even contradictory approaches, which makes the process of the creation of the European security system quite uncertain. The war on the territory of the former Yugoslavia was the best illustration of the disagreements among the Euro-Atlantic allies.

After the Cold War the relations between Europe and America entered a new phase. The Soviet threat, the most cohesive element of the western alliance, ceased to exist. The alliance and European security architecture as a whole has been evolving since then in changed circumstances. They are characterized by three important elements: first, the decline of the Soviet strength and influence; second, the increasing political, strategic and foreign policy ambitions of the EU; third, the desire of the US to confirm its 'leadership' in Europe. The collapse of one, the renaissance of the other and the global ambition of the third player determine the search for the new security order in Europe and the development of the US – EU relations. How will each of these three players influence the state of the European security will not depend so much on their military strength, but on their mutual relations, and economic and political potentials.¹

¹“...More broadly, the very meanings of national and international security have changed. They can no longer be equated with military strength. A military balance of power does nothing to check accelerating environmental degradation, rising ethnic and regional tensions or widening disparities between rich and poor...”, John Peterson, *Europe and America*, Roudtledge, 1996, p. 9

Due to its capability to act as a leading international player, the US will have a very important role to play in the reshaping of the European security system.² Strategic US interest to keep the Western alliance strong determines US administration desire to define and execute the *common* security policy in the post-Cold War period *together* with its allies in Europe. The softening of its Cold War assertive diplomacy through a new transatlantic dialogue, might only contribute to the US global leadership ambitions.

That dialogue, however, emerged partially as a result of bitter clashes between the US and some European governments after the fall of the Wall. Foreign policy making of the US and of the European governments do not always follow the same national interests. Two sides have different, sometimes even opposed approaches to specific international issues. The list of disagreements on the international stage is not only long, but substantial: The Gulf war, the Uruguay round of trade negotiations, Mexican peso crisis, Iraq, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the aid to Eastern Europe, the reunification of Germany and the war in the former Yugoslavia were among the most important and most controversial issues within the alliance. Unless adjusted, these and other differences might bring uncertainty in the US – EU relations.

Despite divergent approaches to the war in the former Yugoslavia, the EU and the US succeeded to work out a joint policy in the final stage of the conflict. However, the successful common implementation of the Dayton Peace Accord, does not necessarily confirm the strength of the alliance, but the importance of the leading American role in the alliance. It was the US which guided the Contact group, brokered the peace deal and contributed most to the Implementation Force (IFOR). The fact that a strong diplomatic and policy leadership was needed in order to achieve a common attitude testifies that the transatlantic alliance is still a process, not a fact.

The war in ex-Yugoslavia made the split within the alliance deeper than ever. Although complementary at the beginning and successful at the end, American and European policies in the former Yugoslavia were different and opposed most of the time during the conflict. On fundamental issues such as air strikes against Serbs in Bosnia, lifting the arms embargo and protection of safe-havens in Bosnia, American and European official policies were sharply opposed. These differences did not only repeatedly cause the stalemate in the peace process and help Russians to enter the crisis with a considerable diplomatic success, but they significantly damaged the credibility and the internal cohesion of the alliance. The analysis which follows reveals the nature, the content and the dynamics of the US – EU disagreements in the former Yugoslavia and the quality of their future co-operation.

How to *Save* Yugoslavia *Without* Ground Troops?

²“...Our real strength lies in our capability to bring new ideas and tools on the international stage, to resolve problems in an unpredictable way... We represent the combination of available energy and creative thinking of giant proportions. We are in a way a cohesive substance at the time of disintegrating processes in many European societies”, John Kornblum, US Undersecretary of State for Europe and Canada, US Embassy Press Release, Zagreb, October 18, 1996, No. 25

At the beginning of the conflict, the US said it had no national interest endangered in the region. "Yugoslavia no longer enjoyed the geopolitical importance that the United States had given it during the Cold War".³ The Bush administration left the European Union to deal with the crisis because it was "a European problem".⁴ Washington supported the EU initiative to seek mandate from the OSCE to negotiate ceasefire and monitor agreements. In that effort the US, as well as the EU, struggled to preserve Yugoslavia as a unified country. The first EU efforts were initially successful, especially because the Europeans managed to find a deal for a withdrawal of the Yugoslav army troops from Slovenia.⁵ Washington welcomed the deal as a proof of the EU's diplomatic maturity. However, that initial success was the beginning and the end of the EU's productive involvement in the crisis in the former Yugoslavia. The truce negotiated by the EU fell apart, as did many others after it. All European actions in the region, starting with the so called Brioni agreement in summer of 1991, suffered from the imbalance between the goals and the means of the diplomatic engagement.

The key issue for the Europeans at the beginning, as much as for the Bush administration for almost three years since the break up of Yugoslavia was the engagement without using the ground troops.⁶ The official policy of both sides was not to get involved directly with their military potentials. The peace talks, the diplomatic mediation of the international community, the UN peace mission and conflict resolution tactics in general were serving the policy of non-military engagement.⁷ But, on the policy level, the differences were considerable, too.

In 1991 the Europeans advocated territorial and constitutional integrity of the Yugoslav federation and insisted on a peaceful solution for the conflict. The attitude reflects the unwillingness of the EU to evaluate the development on the ground objec-

³Warren Zimmerman, "Origins of Catastrophe", *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 1995, No. 74, p. 2.

⁴"The Yugoslav war probably provided a more apt illustration of what the end of bipolarity means. The conflict involved a European country on the EU's doorstep, while America's interest was ambiguous. Particularly when the conflict became localized in Bosnia, it showed how geography matters in US-EU relations... Comparison of the Yugoslav and Gulf wars suggests a new division of labor based on different US and EU geopolitical interests", John Peterson, *Europe and America*, Routledge 1996, p. 72.

⁵"This is the hour of Europe, not the hour of Americans", Jacques Poos of Luxembourg, President of the EU Council of Ministers, quoted in *The Economist*, July, 6 1991.

⁶"Until late 1994, the United States policy toward the war in former Yugoslavia veered between distance and engagement without fully embracing either option. Although rhetorically and ideologically inclined to see the conflict as a war of aggression against the Bosnian state and its people, and to advocate a robust military intervention, Washington was even more reluctant to deploy its own ground troops. Indeed, the American military establishment was, as noted above, particularly unwilling to be dragged into another Vietnam. In contrast, many of the American intellectuals, journalists, and political figures who had opposed the war in Vietnam were vigorous advocates of a military intervention...". *Unfinished peace*", Report of the International Commission on the Balkans, Aspen Institute Berlin and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, 1996., p. 63."

⁷"In the Balkan crisis, European and American leaders wasted time and distracted public attention as they searched for a negotiated solution where none was available", Roy Gutman, *a Witness to Genocide*, Macmillan, 1993, p. 180.

tively. The EU largely ignored the fact that the Yugoslav army was out of control of the federal Presidency. That simple fact could have suggested that a peaceful solution was not likely. America followed the path traced by Europeans. “The Bush’s administration was conservative, reactive and obsessed with preserving Yugoslavia’s territorial integrity”.⁸ Although the administration saw the shortcomings of the EU engagement, it continued to back it up.⁹ That was a rare point of the US-EU political unanimity about the conflict.

To America’s great regret, the unanimity in the EU policy in the former Yugoslavia was challenged already in summer 1991. German chancellor Helmut Kohl demanded that foreign policy decisions in Brussels should not be made unanimously, but with a majority vote. In addition, Kohl announced that after the Maastricht summit Germany would propose to the EU to decide about the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia. John Major, the then UK prime minister and François Mitterrand, French President opposed Kohl. After a stalemate which lasted from September to December 1991, the government in Bonn finally decided to recognize the seceding Yugoslav republics.

The US was concerned by that decision primarily because it feared it would have been a negative example for the Soviet Union. The US considered the announced German recognition of Slovenia and Croatia as premature and damaging. Some of the allies in Europe (France, Spain, UK) shared that assessment. Others, mainly smaller countries, supported Germany. Europeans hardly even thought about wider security implications of the recognition of the two republics.¹⁰ France and Great Britain focused on two facts: first, that the disintegration of Yugoslavia would inevitably mean that ‘something is wrong with the Maastricht project of a united Europe’; second, that the

⁸John Peterson, *Europe and America*, Routledge 1996, p.71.

⁹“Indeed, in many ways the wars in former Yugoslavia represent a curious combination on the one hand of traditional *machtspolitik* (Serbia) and *realpolitik* (the West), as the Serbs have prosecuted their interests by superior force while the West, which sees no vital national interests involved, abstains from effective engagement; and on the other hand of what one can only call ‘*unrealpolitik*’, as the West has sought by the power of formal declarations to accomplish what can only be done through the use, or credible threat of the use of force”, A. Lynch/R. Lukic, “Europe from the Balkans to the Urals”, SIPRI/Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 246.

¹⁰“Observers were divided on the question of whether the independence of several of the republics was desirable and unavoidable, but the inclination to favor holding the country together was strong. There was, therefore, very little discussion about what a breakup of Yugoslavia might mean for Europe... The impact on the Balkans or on Europe as a whole was hardly considered. It is particularly unfortunate that the consequences of a war in Yugoslavia for Western Europe were ignored. There was no discussion of refugees streaming out of Yugoslavia into Germany or about the implications of the expansion of the war into Albania, and the revival of the barbaric practice of ethnic cleansing was not foreseen. No effort was made to reach collective judgment about what a war in Yugoslavia might mean for international peace and security, and consequently, the basis was not laid for collective diplomatic intervention. The case of Yugoslavia demonstrates that until an internal crisis reaches the stage where it presents a clear and present danger to states that are powerful enough to assume some responsibility for international peace and security, the international community is unlikely to intervene in a meaningful way.”, James Goodby, *Regional Conflicts*, SIPRI, Oxford, 1995, p. 181-2.

reunified Germany would enter the stage with a clear ambition to, as they saw it, challenge their political, geopolitical and historical achievements in the region.

German *Sins* and the *Split Within* the Alliance

The recognition of the breakaway republics in the former Yugoslavia is the beginning of the new stage of the relations between the US and its European allies. This is the event which helped the US to evaluate the new quality in the European strategic and diplomatic reality. Although it disagreed with the decision to recognize Slovenia and Croatia, Washington suddenly became aware of the diplomatic revival of Germany, and the weaknesses of French and British traditional diplomacy, the pillars of the EU policy in the former Yugoslavia so far.

From the moment of recognition, the US started to consider Germany as a new strategic partner in Europe. France under President Mitterrand did not like the shift of the American preference in Europe and, consequently, opposed American initiatives in the region. United Kingdom, whose former diplomats unsuccessfully tried to broker a peace deal in, what they saw as the 'unified Yugoslavia', remained at their former positions and followed the French. The international community policy toward former Yugoslavia started to have at least two different directions: Anglo-French and German-American. That breach was clear in almost all aspect of the crisis.

For example, one of the fundamental disagreement concerned the lifting of the arms embargo.¹¹ The then State Secretary Warren Christopher tried to turn Europeans around, but was instructed by the President 'not to threaten the end of the alliance if they didn't go along'. They did not. Neither did they go along with the air strikes option. President Clinton openly addressed European allies for 'the obstruction of the US plans to use force against Serbs in Bosnia'. Warren Christopher accused the Europeans that they can no longer pretend to be a 'dominant power in the world'.¹² The US Congress then asked the President to lift the embargo unilaterally. He refused, fearing a unilateral action would have had consequences for the alliance and for the relationships with Russia.

Obviously, the responsibility for the failure lies partly on the American side as well. Its policy in the region had for some years been defined on the basis of its implications in the region and on other international issues. To a great extent, it had been shaped on the impressions and media reports, instead on realistic strategic planning and foreign policy goals. The US inaction in the Balkans from 1991 to 1993 reflects the absence of internal US foreign policy consensus. There was no common vision whether the United States should play an activist role in guaranteeing security in Europe's eastern areas.¹³

¹¹ "The British and the French had quite specifically warned the administration not to come to them with fait accompli. One British diplomat said later, "We told them that until we were blue in the face. We said we won't do 'lift and strike', especially lift. Our troops were on the ground. We felt that it would inflame the situation and could cut off relief", Elisabeth Drew, "On the Edge", Simon & Schuster, 1994, p. 155.

¹²Economist, October 30, 1993.

¹³David Callaghan, "Between Two Worlds", Harper-Collins, 1994, p. 81.

The credibility of the US in the world and its mandate of the super-power to lead the diplomatic action and stop the violence in Bosnia were damaged immeasurably.¹⁴

The differences between American and Anglo-French policies in the former Yugoslavia were most frequently encountered in the UN. That did not make the peace mission easier. The dual keys system of command is a typical example of how the peace making efforts were obstructed by some Europeans. In the second half of 1994 there was a sharp conflict between the UN and the NATO, and within NATO itself on how and where to use force. Any action undertaken by NATO air forces needed the approval of the UN Security Council. That required a diplomatic procedure which took weeks when the action was needed within a few hours (Bihac, Srebrenica). It was again French and British diplomats who objected to the use of NATO force because 'they have their own troops on the ground'. These confrontations left the false impression at the time that the withdrawal of the UN peace keeping mission from Bosnia was inevitable.¹⁵

In the epicenter of these Euro-American differences during the war in Bosnia was not the policy toward the former Yugoslavia any more, but the policy toward Serbia and Bosnian Serbs. France and the United Kingdom, together with Russia, considered the crisis in the former Yugoslavia as a situation which could create favorable conditions for the revival of their foreign policy and political influence in the region. These sentiments were caused by the undesired German diplomatic success at the time of the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia. After that, the French and the British considered the two new states a part of the German zone of influence. But they did not want that influence to extend further in the former Yugoslavia. The best impediment to that were Serbs, a traditional anti-German element in the region.

Serbian Military Defeats – A Conciliating Factor

While France and Great Britain embraced traditional and anachronic geopolitical reasoning, the US were predominately lead by moral and geostrategic implications of the conflict. On the declarative and ethical level, the US foreign policy in the region was more consistent than the European although not more efficient. Clinton's administration considered the war in the former Yugoslavia as a war of aggression and rejected to accept the results of violence and ethnic cleansing. It refused to accept the Vance-Owen peace plan for Bosnia, advocated mainly by the Europeans and sponsored by the UN Secretary General Butros Butros Ghali. The plan was seen in the US as an

¹⁴Leadership does not consist of posing questions for international debate; leadership consists of proposing and achieving solutions. The American attempt in May 1993 to discuss lifting the Bosnian arms embargo with NATO allies, for example, was simply wrong: It was a discussion, not a US initiative, and was readily perceived by the Europeans as a half-hearted attempt lacking President Clinton's commitment. By comparison, if President Bush had followed a similar course after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, Saddam Hussein would still be in Kuwait today – if not in Saudi Arabia- and he would very possibly be armed with nuclear weapons", Bob Dole, "Shaping America's Global Future", Foreign Policy, spring 1995, p 36.

¹⁵ SIPRI Yearbook 1995, Oxford University Press, p. 211.

attempt to legitimize the results of the Serbian aggression and to split Bosnia. The Europeans, however, considered the US unwillingness to back up the plan a result of hesitation to deploy their troops in order to support the implementation of the plan.

The US spoke up for more resolute actions against the Serbs in Bosnia, considering them a tool to carry out Milosevic's Greater Serbia policy. These ideas were obstructed by their European allies. In fact, the US did not insist on the implementation of that policy since it feared that it would endanger the cohesiveness of the alliance.¹⁶ Key players of the US administration testified publicly that the concern about the NATO future was far more important than the implementation of an effective policy in Bosnia.¹⁷ As a result, the war in Bosnia was unnecessarily extended in terms of time, space and humanitarian consequences. The damage to the alliance was not, however, avoided.

Another big shift in the war and in the US – EU relations came in 1994 and 1995. The failure of the EU peace mission in the early stage of the conflict, the ambivalent UN operations in Bosnia combined with the gradual foreign policy maturation of Clinton's administration and the offensive actions of Croatian forces in the Croatian occupied territories and in Bosnia, brought a new perspective in the US-EU relations. If the recognition of Croatia and Slovenia caused the split within the Western alliance, the first signs of Serbian military defeat on the ground put them together.

In order to calm down the criticism addressed to it and, at the same time, to keep the allies (and Russia) involved, the US engaged itself profoundly in the diplomatic process through the so called Contact group. The US decided to take the lead in the peace process not only to capitalize on the American approved military build-up of Croatian army and bring the crisis to an end, but in order to avoid further damages for the Alliance.¹⁸ Europeans followed Americans, although they did not approve the American tacit approval for the Croatian blitzkrieg against Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia. Anyway, diplomatic community capitalized on the Croatian military successes under the American leadership. The American diplomatic offensive culminated only months later

¹⁶ "For understandable reason, given the history of the Balkans, the priority interest throughout was to prevent the conflict from becoming a source of division within the EU and NATO and a source of antagonism with Russia. By 1994, that concern had led to the formation of the Contact Group of France, Germany, Great Britain, Russia and the United States. The need for a common policy often overruled the requirements of an effective policy in terms of the proclaimed objectives", Lawrence Freedman, "Why the West Failed", Foreign policy No. 97, winter 1994/95, p.54.

¹⁷ On January 12, 1995, the then former US State Secretary James Baker said before the House of Representatives Committee for international relations that 'the Congress must avoid undertaking steps which destabilize Western alliance. He made clear that he was thinking of Bosnia which 'should not divide NATO, the most successful defense alliance in the history and the guarantor of American interests in Europe'. (James Baker, authorized statement)

¹⁸ "...After they said 'Yugoslavia is our problem', Europeans pulled us in the crisis again. This is a big event which will have long term historical implications for Europe and for America... Although it is clear that Europeans are important for the solution of the problems in their backyard, it is also clear that without America this solution can not be achieved", Richard Holbrook, "Europe Can't Shake Dependence on US", Boston Globe, The National Times, Vol.5, No. 4, 1996.

with the Dayton Peace Accord, again with all the allies involved. The split caused by the war, ended when the war stopped.

Four *Features* of the US-EU *Medium Term Co-Operation*

The vacuum created by the inefficient engagement of the EU and the UN was in fact the result of the end of bipolarity and unclear vision of the EU about the future security order in Europe. Richard Holbrooke, the US peace mediator qualifies the international involvement in Bosnia as ‘the biggest security failure since 1930’.¹⁹ Divergent approaches and confronted interests of individual states were present on all levels of the international peace mission. Although different authors use different arguments to explain that failure, it seems that the future role of individual states in the region and in the new European security order were central for the Euro-American disputes.

For example, Germany shared the American attitude about almost all political and military issues in the Balkans. France and Great Britain reacted to that ‘strategic partnership’ with caution and trepidation. But, from today’s perspective it would be unsound to interpret the German-American relationship as a plot against the British, the French or, in general, European interests. Germany is strongly anchored to the EU, the US are decisive to gather all European states within NATO and it is hard to believe that they would allow any policy other than the one which strengthens the cohesiveness of the alliance.

If the war in the former Yugoslavia caused a split between the transatlantic allies, the American peace mission in Bosnia brought the two sides on the same path again. Washington realized that the action is needed not only to calm down the conflict but even more to restore the credibility of the alliance and its central role in the security issues in Europe. The American involvement in the crisis had a huge impact on US – EU relations and the role of NATO in the European security order recast. Croatia and in particular, Bosnia were test-cases for NATO and the transatlantic alliance.²⁰

The diplomatic stalemate in the first and the US engagement in the final stage of the conflict confirm that there was a huge security and political vacuum in Europe after the fall of the Wall. European states were most of the time busy with themselves, with the ‘deeper and wider Union’, and were not able to articulate a sound security and foreign policy doctrine. Even if the EU have had clearly defined security objectives, it would have had no means available to implement them. The key shortcoming for the Europeans was the fact that they had no efficient common military security able to

¹⁹Richard Holbrooke, statement before the House of Representatives Committee for International Affairs, March 9, 1995.

²⁰“Experience from Bosnia will have deep impact on the future of the European security and the role of NATO... Something is happening in Bosnia which surpasses Bosnia itself. The wish and the possibility of so many countries to be involved in the implementation of the peace accord tells us that perhaps a decisive moment came for the post-Cold War security order in Europe”, Javier Solana, NATO Secretary General, “NATO’s Role in Bosnia: Charting a New Course for the Alliance”, NATO Review, March, No. 2, 1996.

support any policy, and, apart from the WEU, no common structure to implement it. The big words about the European political union were demystified. Through their involvement in the implementation of the peace deal sponsored by Washington, Europeans unanimously confirmed the leading role of the US in security issues on the continent. The divergent foreign policy aspirations of France, Great Britain and Germany were toned down. Instead of the 'security union' visions created along the same principles as the monetary and political integration, their security long term planning is again, just as at the time of the Cold War, linked to the US and the NATO.

In general, the war in the former Yugoslavia, considered by some as a laboratory for a new crisis management in Europe²¹, indicates four important features in the US-EU relations:

First, the EU is still not ready to assume the responsibility for the security order in Europe without American support. At the time of its mediation in the former Yugoslavia the EU had three powerful tools available: public opinion, diplomatic sanctions and economic sanctions. It used all three of them, but without significant success. The reasons for such inefficiency have been already identified – wrong timing, lack of political will and – lack of military support. One can speculate how the EU would have reacted had it had an operational military structure behind its diplomatic efforts? Keeping in mind a considerable degree of discord among member states, the result would have probably been the same. The EU dependence on the US diplomacy and the NATO military structure were pretty obvious in the later stage of the conflict. The EU, despite the foreign policy differences, followed the US peace diplomacy and participated in the implementation of the peace plan.

Second, although it is clear that the US can assume full responsibility for a successful conflict resolution engagement in Europe, it is not likely that Washington is prepared to act unilaterally. The US foreign policy makers are well aware that the strength of American diplomacy lies in the credibility which America enjoys as a leader of the West, not necessarily as the most powerful member of the alliance. The strength of NATO as a collective, mutual and interdependent structure is a dynamics of its own, unimaginable without the firm commitment and loyalty of all members. As a consequence, the EU cannot act in any conflict management in Europe without the US and the US cannot pretend to keep its influence in Europe without the EU. NATO represents the awareness of both sides of the alliance of their interdependency. That is what makes NATO a reliable player on the international stage. NATO is something far more important than a military alliance: it is a venue for a transatlantic dialogue and the key political institution of the Western world. NATO is, of course, the most reliable and the most efficient military structure ever created, but its strength is not in the amount of nuclear or conventional arsenals, but in the political consensus of its members. The Europeans might, depending on the perspective and historical experiences, object the binding strength of the alliance, they might prefer to build up their own military structure (WEU, Eurocorps units), they might want to act independently. Certainly, the former Yugoslavia is not necessarily the last such example. But they cannot run away

²¹Peter Tarnoff, Undersecretary of State for Policy, quoted in "Europe from the Balkans to the Urals, A. Lynch/R. Lukic, SIPRI/Oxford University Press, p.249, 1996.

from the fact that it is the NATO, not the Foreign Office or Quai d'Orsay, and certainly not the UN or the OSCE, that determine the success of their security and, to a great extent, foreign policy engagements. For Europeans NATO provides American assistance, leadership and military credibility. For Americans NATO provides a much needed image of a practical internationalist, a credible leader of the free, the powerful and the rich, and, perhaps most important, the tool for the implementation of the desired leadership policy in Europe.

Third, if there is a single most important role of an individual European state in the US-EU relationship development, it is the role of the reunified Germany. Germany emerged from the post-communist era as a reliable American partner. Its central geographic position on the continent, the firm and consequent interest in Central and Eastern Europe, its economic and monetary strength and political, economic and foreign policy commitment for a united Europe make Germany, as President Bush said, 'a partner in leadership'. German geopolitical ambitions match those of the United States: the creation of a large pan-European zone of stability, of economic and security order which would favor the interests of both countries. After the recognition of Croatia in 1991, Washington thought that Germans would be disappointed with 'a new international order in Europe'.²² But luckily, pragmatic as they are, Germans continued to co-operate in international efforts to calm down the conflict and display a constructive solidarity with the American foreign policy in the region.

Fourth, for economic, political and security reasons the future US-EU relations cannot be analyzed without Central and Eastern Europe. Some Western Europeans have different visions about the place of Easterners in the EU, while Germany sees that part of Europe as a fully integrated part of the EU.²³ Americans support the German approach. The German-American partnership can be seen therefore as the counterbalance to the somewhat closed and self-sufficient foreign policy objectives of France, for example. The conflict in the former Yugoslavia was the conflict of at least two, German and French, geopolitical visions and, consequently, diplomatic tactics in Europe. Motivated by its traditional fears of an expanding German influence in Europe and its inherited animosity against American political and military presence in Europe, France,

²²“Six major international security institutions have been discredited by Serbia’s military and diplomatic campaign... These are, in order of their involvement, the OSCE, the EU, the UN, the WEU, NATO and the US-European security bond more generally. These are precisely the institutions which have made it possible for Europe to integrate (West) Germany into the West as a stable, prosperous and democratic state. Were Germans to lose confidence in the credibility of these institutions..., the incentives for a more nationalist and unilateralist German domestic and foreign policy, and by reverberation among Germany’s neighbors as well, would increase significantly. The consequences for every state in Europe... would in that case be highly incalculable”, A. Lynch/ R. Lukic, “Europe from the Balkans to the Urals”, SIPRI/Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 241.

²³“The Europe France thinks of is Western Europe. Only western Europe can attain these qualities (political and defense identity, civilization values and status recognition by the world) and become coherent enough to act decisively. Thus it is unacceptable to the French to have Europe with an unclear border and unclear membership. The Germans, it is often feared, want a Europe which in a very unstatelike way, just fades out somewhere to the East, a Europe which would never be able to act in unity.”, Barry Buzan, “European Security Order Recast”, Pinter Publishers, 1991, p. 151.

as its involvement in the Balkans shows, does not hesitate to obstruct US attempts to play a more important role in European security and political affairs. France's dubious policy in Croatia and Bosnia during the early stage of conflict was partially motivated by its hidden but certain anti-German and anti-American sentiments. France, especially because of the old-fashioned foreign policy of President Mitterrand, considered Serbia as a counter-weight to the American and German influence in the Balkans. However, Germany is fully committed to enhance its presence in Eastern Europe, which is complimentary to the US vision of an 'enlarged and stable Europe'. The ultimate German and American interests are economic. As it is well known, trade and investment are the first casualties of conflicts. For Americans, as much for Germans, it would be dangerous if the process of the new European bargain should break down in any way and produce new conflicts and splits. In general, Europe as a whole in the future will most likely be an area of strong American presence. Central and Eastern Europe will probably become an area of German economic dominance. These two facts can be seen as guarantors for the gradual inclusion of Central and Eastern European countries in Western structures.

Resumé

The war in the former Yugoslavia and international peace efforts proved that some European states had divergent approaches to the post-communist Europe.²⁴ Their inability to assume common responsibility for peace on the continent slowed down the integration process of the EU and its reputation in the world, and enhanced American leadership of the Western alliance. Clinton's doctrine of '*leadership through engagement and enlargement*' defined by the end of 1994 (to a great extent under the pressure of events in the former Yugoslavia) can be seen as a consequence of the European failure to act appropriately in the conflict. Further analysis might indicate that that failure itself is a result of the ambition of some European powers to take the responsibility for Europe, to bring Europe to the Europeans and to push the US gradually on the margins of European affairs, anchoring at the same time Germany within the Union and reducing its space for unilateral foreign policy 'adventures'.²⁵

However, the events in the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere in the world (Middle East, the Gulf, Russia) show that the Europeans are bound up to follow the Americans

²⁴“Growing cohesion in the EC notwithstanding, Western Europe is still marked by internal patterns of conflict and co-operation. The most discussed axes of bilateral (and sometimes trilateral) co-operation are the Franco-German (sometimes Franco-German-Spanish or Franco-German-Italian axes) and the Franco-British nuclear 'axes'... In the run up to 1992 there seem to be two main conflict lines in the community (EU): The French versus the British approaches to integration/free trade, and the French versus the German visions of Europe”, Barry Buzan, “European Security Order Recast, Pinter Publishers, 1991, p. 149.

²⁵“France has long bridled at the US leadership in Europe... At the same time asking the US to leave Europe means accepting German predominance in any supranational structures. The malaise and confusion in France today arise over the dilemma of whether to place the country's future in a Europe led by Germany or an Atlantic community led by Americans. Most Europeans prefer the latter solution”, William Odom, “Yugoslavia: Quagmire or Strategic Challenge”, Hudson Briefing Paper, November 1992.

and to accept the US as a 'European' state simply because Americans still influence the security development on the continent far more than any other individual European country.²⁶ For Europeans the US are the guarantor of the security order and the pillar of the European defense. They understand that, looking back in history, the European integration itself would have not been possible without the American support. The fact that some Europeans are not entirely happy with their dependence on the US, that their diplomatic and foreign policy vanity does not allow them to stomach the strong American role in Europe silently, does not mean that it would weaken the NATO. It is possible, however, that the alliance undergoes some reforms in order to please those only half happy or unsatisfied.

Despite the mainly trade and economic strifes with the EU, America understands that the mainstream European integration has no alternative. As much as the Europeans see the States as a security guarantor, Americans perceive the EU as an important political and economic dynamics. Finally, both the EU, regardless of its internal clashes, and the Americans look to the East with an equal strategic interest. Both sides understand that this is the region which will be the engine of the economic growth in the third millennium. The enlargement of the EU and US foreign policy of 'engagement and enlargement' represent two axes of the same policy, two expansionist doctrines which are following the same geopolitical interest. The fact that even Easterners can see no integration with the Western structures without the simultaneous back-up by the US and the EU, proves that Europeans and Americans are 'condemned' to improve their relations, to strengthen the alliance and to search for common solutions for European problems. The US and the EU cannot abandon these responsibilities because of their commitments in the alliance, their individual interests and their future partners in the East who are still not immune against general failure in the painful process of economic and political transition.

Both partners, the EU and the US, each in its own way, influence the pace and the content of the economic and security integration in Europe as a whole. That interaction and the mutually assumed responsibility for the future of the continent testify to the strategic importance of the future Euro-American relations.²⁷ The 'Americanized' concept of the European security does not have to necessarily meet all the expectations of individual European states. At the same time it is impossible for them to set up a genuine European security concept without the US. This is not due to military potentials of the US. It is reasonable to expect that European countries would be able, in principle, to handle an occasional crisis on the continent with their own forces. But Europeans

²⁶“The US became a European state in a sense that they go farther from traditional understanding about American commitment to Europe. In the 21st century Europe will need active American partnership. On the other hand, unstable Europe would continue to be a threat to vital national interests of the US. If we want a peaceful, democratic and undivided Europe, then we have to work together with our European partners”, Richard Holbrooke, authorized statement before the Committee for International Affairs of the House of Representatives, March 9, 1995.

²⁷“The bilateral relationship between the US and the EU is the most important relationship between any two major international actors, that both sides are nearly always more powerful acting together than separately, and that a transatlantic partnership is well within the grasp of the US and EU.”, John Peterson, “Europe and America”, Routledge, 1996, p.2.

still lack the political will and the political unanimity to reach a consensus about certain international issues.

America understands the nature of that shortcoming and aims to act as a facilitator of a diplomatic and political dialogue with Europeans, at least about security issues. In addition, the US is prepared to contribute to the military dimension of the European integration. This implies intelligence co-operation, analysis, technical and strategic planning assistance etc. In addition, the US undergo a multiple internal policy reforms, mostly related to budgetary spending. Combined with the Congress questioning the US role in the world (isolationists vs. multilateralist), it is certain, at least for political and financial reasons, that America will have to reduce its conventional forces in Europe.²⁸ The partnership with Europeans is therefore important for America if it wants to be present in European affairs.

To which extent the Europeans and the Americans will be able to work out their projected security agenda, depends on numerous factors. It is not only the demise of bipolarity and the communist threat which favors the establishment of a single security system on the continent. The outdated concept of balance of powers, the decrease of the importance of military strength for security and an overall interdependence of international players speak in favor of such a system. Finally, the public opinion, both in the West and the East, feels that it would be far more productive to increase security through improvements in economy, environment protection and fight against organized crime, than through traditional military spending or institutional build-up.²⁹

But, despite a bunch of arguments which support the thesis of the creation of the single European security system, one must be aware that such plans might fail as a result of the traditional geopolitical mentality which still exists and sees nation-states as pillars of national security. That mentality is normally resistant to big declarations about peace and brotherhood in the united Europe and prefers to conceptualize the security agenda independently from others, within individual states, not only by government authorities, but a generous assistance of all those who pretend to be national political and intellectual elite which is 'a guarantor of national sovereignty'.

No European state is immune from those self-centered impulses. America might not like it, but tends to understand its historical, 'typically European' background. Washington accepts that it is vitally important not to hurt anybody's (national) pride and feelings. However, it is still unclear to which extent that understanding will be transformed into the wise, patient and gradual advancement toward an 'American sponsored, European performed' single European security system.³⁰ The weakest point

²⁸«The US interest is to secure a future political role in Europe which allows for some military and economic disengagement, while at the same time keeping good relations with Western Europe, and especially with the united Germany.”, Barry Buzan, “European Security Order Recast”, Pinter Publishers, 1991, p. 131.

²⁹«...Investment in Transportation, communication and environmental infrastructures in Eastern Europe would do far more to promote European security than reformulating NATO or empowering the WEU”, John Peterson, *Ibid*, p. 166.

³⁰«Of course, the 'new Atlantic community' cannot be based on historical models. We are only starting to define the relation between the common responsibility for European security and the distribution of roles in it

of the US-EU security co-operation is the political disunity within the EU and some anti-American feelings within some member states. The wars in the former Yugoslavia clearly showed both weaknesses and their dramatic security consequences.

On the other hand, neither is the US itself an ideal partner for the security joint venture. American policy toward the former Yugoslavia, and elsewhere in the world, too, was, according to some authors, inconsistent, volatile and vulnerable. America might change its opinion too easy.³¹ The risks involved are pretty high, too, as proved in Bosnia. The objectives of American engagement can be defined, means and tools to carry it out provided, international support assured, but that still does not mean that the engagement itself will be successful. The fact that occasional human casualties or other unpredictable accidents can sometimes cause major shifts in American foreign policy, is not a good sign for the American credibility in the world. But America is firmly committed to contribute to the European security, defence and strategic relations on a long term basis. Therefore it will be necessary that Europeans understand and accept American 'constraints', regardless of their own differences and clashes. The future relations in the new Atlantic community might suffer from traditional illnesses, but that can be only overcome through close transatlantic co-operation and dialogue. There is no better example of how such co-operation can work than the implementation of the Dayton Peace Accord.

An important moment in the process of the establishment of the long-term Euro-American strategic and security co-operation is the signature of a New Transatlantic Agenda on December 5, 1995. The document was signed in Madrid at the occasion of NATO summit by American and Spanish presidents (the latter in the capacity of the President of the European Council) and Jacques Santer, president of the European Commission. It speaks not only about a new security order in Europe, but sets up duties and firm commitments for concrete programs. The Agenda has put emphasis on four key directions: enhancement of peace, stability, democracy and prosperity in the world; joint response to global challenges; further liberalization and expansion of the international trade; building up the bridges for successful transatlantic co-operation.³²

between Europe and America. New Atlantic community cannot be created on the presumption that it will reflect the existent relationships within Western world. It has to be open to the contribution of all states in order to be a true synthesis. We have to use European differences, that source of its strength, which is at the same time its threat. New Europe must overpass divisions...", John Kornblum, US Undersecretary of State for Europe and Canada, article published in the US Embassy Press Release, No. 25., Zagreb, October 18, 1996.

³¹"Most Europeans, including most Germans, are unsure of American constancy in the post-Cold War era... Thus Yugoslavia stands as a test of the resilience of the Atlantic community", William Odom, "Yugoslavia: Quagmire or Strategic Challenge", Hudson Briefing Paper, November 1992.

³²EU-US Summit", Press Release, Council of the EU, 12296/95 (press 356). It is important to note that the Agenda speaks about the territory of the former Yugoslavia in the chapter about security co-operation. The Agenda sets up several tasks for the region: full respect of human and minority rights; right of refugees to return to their homes; respect of the functioning and decisions of the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague; elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina and assuring the full control of arms; confidence building measures among people and warring parties in the region.

Both sides are committed to stay together in the process of establishing a genuine post-Cold War security order in Europe. The EU is seen as an economic integration with political ambitions. In a medium term it will accept up to ten new members from Central and Eastern Europe. On the other side, NATO is not considered only as a defense alliance, but rather as a security pillar of a new Europe opened to post-communist countries, too. Although one cannot ignore sharp differences on many policy issues between the Europeans and Americans, as proved during the war in the former Yugoslavia, it would be inappropriate to interpret these differences as a strategic split between the two sides. As a matter of fact, they are both eager to contribute to the protection of free trade and democracy developments worldwide, but might have different methods, tactics and particular expectations.

Although there are authors on both sides of the Atlantic who are suspicious about the future transatlantic co-operation,³³ the events in the former Yugoslavia where the two partners demonstrated impressive efficiency once a peace making policy had been clearly defined, lead us to believe that a transatlantic partnership is vitally important not only for the EU or the US, but for Europe as a whole. It is hard to assume that transitional processes, minority and ethnic tensions, and other shaky political developments in Central and Eastern Europe would have proceeded in a more or less stable manner without an equal and simultaneous engagement from both sides. Transatlantic alliance is a core, the mainstream of a paneuropean security evolution which, despite occasional slowdowns, must be conducted in a gradual, democratic and non-discriminatory way. Its final objective is the creation of an integral security system for the entire continent, the system which would be the beginning of a new security philosophy for the post-Cold War era. Compared with the dramatic consequences of the traditional European *realpolitik*, such security order would hopefully provide more consistent and more efficient crisis prevention policies.

Translated by the author

³³“Unless the EU and NATO undertake fundamental reform, they risk coming apart just as they draw within reach of their historic mission to unite Europe under the banner of democracy and peace. The excessive ambition of the current policies will undermine the transatlantic community as member states attempt to escape unwanted responsibilities. To preserve and enlarge the West, leaders must scale back their vision and match institutional commitments to political realities... A looser but more comprehensive transatlantic union would ensure the bridge between North America and an enlarged Europe rests on solid economic and political trestles, not just increasingly weak strategic ones”, Charles Kupchan, “Reviving the West, Foreign Affairs, Vol. 75, May/June 1996, p. 93-4.