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**STRATEGIC ASPECTS OF THE
GLOBAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST TERRORISM
AND SOME POLITICAL
MILITARY IMPLICATIONS:
A GERMAN VIEW**

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STRATEGIC ASPECTS OF THE GLOBAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST TERRORISM AND SOME POLITICAL MILITARY IMPLICATIONS - A GERMAN VIEW

Ulrich Weisser

I.

The ruthless attack by international terrorists on the United States of America September 11, 2001 has made it abundantly clear that the new strategic challenges are global in nature and need a collective response. No state alone can defend itself against those new threats.

The Bush Administration deserves enormous credit for wisely and decisively managing an existential crisis – both domestically and abroad. Secretary Powell described the first phase of the campaign against international terrorism in a very convincing phrase when he said: We must work on the case, we must build a global coalition against terrorism, and we must build up our forces for response. All this was done simultaneously and very skillfully before the first air strikes were carried out against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

Against this background, it was more than an unreasonable demand when, in certain German political quarters, there were appeals to our American friends to act level-headedly and cautiously. The gestures of sympathy and solidarity we have seen and continue to see in Germany were and are overwhelming. But there are reasons to believe that not everybody in Germany has understood: solidarity needs credibility.

Deterrence and solidarity were core elements of NATO's effort to preserve peace and stability in Europe over the last decades, and they have something important in common: If one is not ready to act when the chips are down he loses his credibility – once and for all. Chancellor Schröder obviously was aware of this danger when he declared unconditional support for America right from the outset.

But the fact that Germany has neglected its instruments for security in an almost irresponsible way—and that is true for the ruling coalition as well as for its predecessor—does not necessarily strengthen Germany's credibility, since the country now has rather limited capabilities to act. Even more far-reaching consequences result from the fact that the political leadership in Germany has made security an anathema for too long.

President Bush is absolutely right in preparing the American people and all of us for a **long-lasting campaign** against terrorism. The political leadership in Germany would be well advised to set their priorities accordingly. It begins with a change of mentality and it requires a drastic improvement of the German forces that provide internal and external security. What the country needs now – most likely in an approach similar to its allies – is a **system of integrated security** in which the forces for external and internal security complement each other in the most efficient way. In this context, territorial or home defense has to be newly defined. Permanent recourse to history cannot serve the Germans as an excuse or an alibi for not being innovative or doing nothing or just talking and being fainthearted.

Now is the defining moment to shape our response to international terrorism, not only in the context of transatlantic cooperation but also in reviewing the core elements of German foreign and security policy. One has to take note of the fact that Germany, even objectively speaking, is the central power in Europe, central in the broadest sense of the word: Germany is geographically positioned in the center of Europe. Germany also is central for the well-being and the development of Europe, because its economic potential and population outweigh all other European countries. And Germany is a central factor within the EU and NATO.

What does this mean in terms of responsibility and leadership? It goes without saying that a united Germany has more power and influence than before. The real challenge now is how

to handle this power and influence as wisely and responsibly as possible. First and foremost, any answer to this question must be placed in the necessary historical perspective. The Germany of the period of Bismarck and Emperor William II is most accurately portrayed as the unquiet, “nervous empire” due to its exaggerated ambitions. As a result of the historical events in the dark periods of the last century, Germany today defines itself as the “**quiet force**” that is committed to **stability**. **Stability** and **continuity** are core elements of German foreign policy; they represent the “*Leitmotiv*.” Now this *Leitmotiv* has to be enriched by taking on new responsibilities. And in fact, Gerhard Schröder, the Federal German Chancellor, in his historic speech to the German Bundestag on the 11th of October, said that the country’s post war role as a secondary player has irrevocably passed. He added: “Avoiding every risk cannot and must not be the guideline of German foreign and security policy.” In practical terms, this means that Germany’s willingness to provide security through the military is an important declaration for Germany’s allies.

When the two separated parts of Germany united in 1990, many political analysts believed nothing would remain as it was. But this view neglects the fact that basic conditions for German policy remained constant, even after unification: location, values, history, and interests are the same. Germany’s dependencies have not decreased. **But Germany’s responsibility in and for Europe is now increasing; the same is true for its bridging function towards the East.** At the same time, Germany continues to be fully committed to **European integration**, to the **deepening and widening of the European Union**, and to the **transatlantic partnership and the new NATO**.

II.

The **North Atlantic Alliance** remains central to European security. After the end of the cold war, NATO did not fall apart but, rather, adapted to new requirements. This adaptation can best be described by the formula of **double enlargement** – an **enlargement of geographical scope and mission**. NATO has enlarged by admitting the new members Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. This process will continue with the further admission of new members.

NATO’s mission has been enlarged beyond its core function of collective defense. Its structure and military capabilities are now challenged to match new tasks such as conflict-prevention, crisis management, partnership and cooperation. NATO’s new Strategic Concept as of April 24, 1999 explicitly reflects the fact that, “**Alliance security interests can be affected by risks of a wider nature, including acts of terrorism, sabotage and organized crime, and by the disruption of the flow of vital resources.**”

It took only two years to prove the relevance of this farsighted mission statement. In the decades of the cold war and of dangerous political as well as military confrontation, it was never necessary to invoke Article V of the Washington Treaty – an attack on one is an attack on all. But immediately after the attack on the United States on September 11, NATO was able to show that the keys to peace and security are decisiveness and solidarity, and that Europe is willing to fulfill its NATO commitments in supporting the United States. By invoking Article V, NATO has made it clear to the outside world that the Alliance is faced with a challenge of historic magnitude.

In order to meet this challenge, NATO may be well advised to pursue the following principles:

1. The Alliance must maintain a sound structure of nuclear forces. They will continue to fulfill an essential role by ensuring uncertainty about the nature of the Allies’

response to military aggression in the mind of any aggressor. But with a view to the new threat, it would be absurd to consider aborting any “first use” option. The contrary is true. The Alliance must keep all options open. NATO may even consider shifting the focus from deterrence to denial.

2. The Alliance strategy does not include a chemical or biological warfare capability. For good reasons, the Allies support universal adherence to the relevant disarmament regimes. But with a view to the unpredictable biological and chemical threat that faces the Alliance, NATO is well advised to bolster its defensive precautions.
3. Due to the rapidly growing threat by ballistic missiles armed with means of mass destruction, the need for a functioning theatre missile defense is increasingly urgent. Neither NATO as whole nor one of the Allies alone should be brought into a position to choose between unreasonable strategic options when an intervention with conventional forces becomes necessary – either doing nothing because the risk emanating from the ballistic missile threat is too big or anticipating this risk by choosing pre-emptive strikes.
4. NATO should shift its strategic focus and resources southward. The front-line states are now Turkey, Greece, Italy and Spain. That means in turn: the forces of the NATO allies, particularly in Central and Northern Europe, must be better prepared for operations far away from home and for operations in defense of common interests outside the NATO treaty area. The European NATO members need to make substantial investments in strategic air- and sea-lift capabilities, in communication, strategic and operational reconnaissance. Their logistic assets must make their forces more capable of rapid deployment and sustained operations over long distances. The foreseeable shift of the Alliance’s strategic focus to the south and southeast will also have an impact on the next round of NATO enlargement. NATO needs a land-bridge to Turkey and the geographically related possible fronts in the Near and Middle East. The earliest possible integration of Romania and Bulgaria, geostrategically speaking, is of utmost importance – for the countries concerned and for the Alliance as a whole. These two countries hold a significant advantage for NATO by securing a broader access to the Black Sea and its energy supply routes.
5. NATO must be prepared for a direct threat scenario in the Gulf region. It is easy to imagine the Alliance or one of its members being engaged in the Persian Gulf – and in response, the Alliance may be faced with a threat involving armed terrorism and possibly even weapons of mass destruction. In this case, NATO must be able to deter, to disregard such threats and not allow them to influence NATO’s resolve. This will require a prudent combination of deterrence, retaliation and defense.
6. Political violence, terrorism and political killings are and remain a serious threat and a destabilizing factor in the Middle East. It is particularly worrisome around the Persian Gulf because this region is key to Western energy supplies. It is therefore advisable to embark on a comprehensive strategy that bundles together all political, economic and strategic assets of NATO and the European Union. In this context, Iran can play an important role. Although there are some significant reservations against Iran due to its attempts to acquire WMD and to its dubious role in supporting radical or even terrorist groups in the Near East, the Alliance as whole may be ready for a trade-off. In principle, there are more common interests between Iran and the Euro-Atlantic community than divisive ones. This needs to be pursued in order to exploit the chance that Iran may gain regional stature and become a stabilizing factor in the region that is facing a serious threat by Iraq.
7. NATO should make a maximum effort to increase all mechanisms for cooperation with Russia – be it political or military. President Putin has offered to join the

Alliance in the fight against international terrorism with all possible resources – be it territorial or economic, be it human or even defense resources. Sooner or later, NATO may be in a situation where these additional capabilities are needed.

III.

The European Union is about to give substance to its complementary role for European security and stability by balancing the three basic dimensions of the Union: economic, political and security. The economic dimension gains significant weight with the introduction of a common currency to a market already determined by a free flow of capital, goods and labor; the political dimension is subject to an ambitious program of internal reforms; and the security dimension gains profile by creating a European Defense Identity – based on a Common Foreign and Security Policy.

The decision-making process and the military capabilities will be shaped in a way such that the EU becomes able to act on its own – in case NATO as a whole decides not be engaged. European crisis management will be placed in the hands of the European Union.

If everything goes according to the timetable as set by the heads of state and government of the European Union, Europe by the year 2003 will have a collective capability to rapidly deploy and sustain 60,000 soldiers in order to meet the tasks as defined in the EU treaty: humanitarian and rescue tasks, peace-keeping and peace-enforcing in the context of crisis management.

It is obvious that the European Union is becoming a **global player**, economically and politically speaking; the EU, however, will remain a **regional military power**. These far-reaching developments have a two-fold impact: The EU becomes an important pillar of the evolving multipolar world in which America, China, India and Russia may be other key players. At the same time, the EU becomes a more equal partner for the United States. But shaping a European Defense Identity cannot, by any means, be understood as a program to push the Americans out of Europe. The contrary is true. By taking on greater responsibilities and reducing the U.S. burden for European security, the EU aims at redefining the balance of burden sharing. Replacing American forces in Kosovo and Bosnia would be a typical compensation and a test for a new understanding of appropriate burden sharing.

Although the United States always has been in favor of European integration, Washington's view on the evolving European Defense Identity remains ambivalent, to say the least.

Washington is concerned that the EU's ability to act forcefully and independently may duplicate costly military structures and assets unless NATO remains the "primary forum for consultation" and reserves the "right of first refusal." America has agreed that the EU can use NATO structures and assets, but only under the condition of "separable, but not separate." The United States also seems concerned that the project of the European Defense Identity may, on the one hand, alienate those countries that are members of NATO but not members of the EU, such as Turkey, Norway, Iceland, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. There are, on the other hand, four countries that are members of the EU but not of NATO: Ireland, Austria, Sweden and Finland. So, indeed, incongruity of membership in the institutions concerned does increase the risk that decision-making in times of crisis becomes difficult.

Looking at the EU from the outside, its members often seem more interested in building security institutions than in using them. The greatest obstacle to an effective European security policy so far has not been the inability to decide but, rather, a lack of means to act. This also seems to be a matter of concern for U.S. policymakers. If America ever needs to pull most of its troops out of Europe in order to manage a crisis elsewhere, it would be glad to

have a strong European pillar not only able to ensure regional stability but also able to support American interventions elsewhere.

Today the European forces lack the means to conduct truly demanding modern military operations such as airlift, sealift, satellite reconnaissance, precision guided munitions and all weather and night strike capabilities. Europe has not yet implemented the imperatives of the “revolution in military affairs.”

These deficits became painfully obvious during the Kosovo crisis in the Balkans. Because of its overwhelming contribution, America could determine the strategy of employing air-power only. Europe’s feeling of marginalization due to its military dependence led to a historical conclusion: The European heads of state and government, the European Council, decided to create a rapid reaction capability and to build the institutions to manage it.

It now remains to be seen whether the members of the European Union live up to their commitment to create a pool of forces of 100,000 soldiers, 300 aircraft and about seventy-five ships that can assemble within sixty days a corps size force with all the necessary means of communication, intelligence, logistics and combat support. The assumption that such a force would have to be deployed for at least one year means nothing less than the fact that the contributing nations would have to provide adequate reserves for rotation.

It is now considered common sense in Europe that the emerging European Defense Identity needs a restructured, healthy European procurement base that bundles together the European industrial capabilities in the defense field, gets rid of redundancies and creates a system of mutual dependence on each other. It is a waste of resources to develop various types of fighter aircraft, main battle tanks or submarines in Europe. The integration of the European air and space industry into one company was the first and most decisive step. The European ship building industry is about to follow. The result will be that the EU can use its industrial capabilities more efficiently, will increase the competitiveness on the global market and will become an interesting partner for the American industry.

IV.

In summarizing the future relationship between the Euro-Atlantic security institutions, one can say there is a need to strike a threefold balance:

- **First**, a balance between preservation and innovation. There is a need to preserve NATO as a community of nations committed to collective defense. At the same time, the Alliance should be transformed into a community of nations willing and able to protect common interests on a global scale – common in a dramatically changed strategic context of new challenges and new opportunities. This change in NATO’s strategic and political role and understanding is overdue and will put all worries to a rest that are caused by the impression NATO might be marginalized in the present crisis.
- **Second**, a future oriented balance between the European and Atlantic dimension of the Alliance – in other words, a balance between a strengthened transatlantic link and a growing European responsibility and capacity to act within the Alliance.
- **And third**, the right balance between a new cohesion based on a new internal strategic consensus and the flexibility to pursue this approach together with partners, with Russia in particular.

V.

The relationship and **strategic partnership with Russia** is important for both European and global security issues. Europe and Russia do not necessarily have identical interests or identical solutions, but they are confronted with common challenges, such as:

- the fight against international terrorism;
- the containment of the crisis potential in the Balkans, the Caspian Sea area, in Central Asia or in the Middle East;
- the growing threat of ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction;
- the need for cooperation in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

In all these fields, Russia and Europe have interests and responsibilities. An intensified cooperation with Russia is therefore vital for all of us. North America, Europe and Russia, indeed, do represent the core alliance against international terrorism.

During his recent visit to Germany, President Putin unambiguously stated his support for the fight against international terrorism. It reflects our vital interests to work with Russia rather than leaving Russia aside and continue a relationship laden with latent mistrust. When consulting in Moscow on the November 16, 1996 to explore possibilities for a strategic partnership between NATO and Russia, the German delegation pointed out the following: "The future strategic challenges will be challenges for the Euro-Atlantic community and Russia. We should therefore create mechanisms and instruments to come to a common analysis, to common decisions, and to common action if the situation requires." Now more than ever before, we are well advised to lend credit to our commitment to strategic partnership with Russia. Germany can play an important role in anchoring Russia to the Euro-Atlantic structures.

In the context of this kind of strategic partnership, we must also come to terms with the strategic risks of globalization.

Globalization and interdependence are bringing enormous benefits to all of us, but they are also creating new strategic risks, such as:

- the vulnerability of the globally integrated information and communication structure;
- the diffusion of potentially dangerous technologies;
- the weakening or failure of states or the rise of non-states;
- the lack of democratic control in certain states or organizations;
- the future of big states in transition, like China, India or Indonesia; and finally,
- the combination of fundamentalism, political irresponsibility and access to weapons of mass destruction.

The strategic risks of globalization are collective in nature. This is particularly true for international terrorism. These risks need a collective answer by the international community of nations. The revolution in military affairs also is causing dramatic changes in the forms of warfare. We should, therefore, make an effort to have both a comprehensive but also a dialectical understanding of this revolution. In other words, we must come to a balanced approach, not duplicating the revolution at every step, but using new opportunities at the same time.

VI.

This is particularly true for adapting the German armed forces to the political and strategic environment of today and tomorrow.

The experience of World War II, of complete defeat and catastrophe, and of the cold war, defined more by deterrence and the horror scenario of complete annihilation than by fighting against aggressors, has led to a “culture of reticence” that has become subject to revision after German unification. Step by step, German security policy has tried to emancipate itself from this historical burden, as did the *Bundeswehr*, the German armed forces. The participation of German contingents in operations in Cambodia, in Somalia, in Bosnia, in Kosovo and in the Adriatic Sea marks the path to maturity.

The process of restructuring the *Bundeswehr* in order to make German forces fit for the future was initiated in 1994 but was not put on a fast track. Political leaders in all parties were too anxious and fearful to initiate and lead a substantial debate on the future role of Germany and its armed forces. During the 1990s, neither Chancellor Kohl nor his successor made a serious effort to explain to the people what would be at stake in the future. There was no attempt to analyze and present future strategic challenges in and for Europe, to define Europe’s needs in order to master these challenges in the framework of NATO and the EU, and to find public acceptance for an adequate German contribution. Instead of choosing to design by mission imperatives, the choice was made in favor of a design by budget imperatives.

Helmut Kohl did set priorities according to his political agenda, an attitude that was reflected in the under-budgeting of the armed forces. Priority was given to the costs of unification, to meet the criteria of the new European currency, the euro, and to fighting the risks of recession. The Schröder Government blamed the previous government for having neglected the armed forces. But when the Red-Green coalition decided on a new approach to reform the *Bundeswehr*, the government was not even willing to finance what it had decided to do. The financial gap between the sound military planning for implementation of the reform and the available financial resources in the federal budget adds up to DM 23 billion through 2006, unless the budget is significantly increased.

The far-reaching impact of the events that befell us on the September 11 may change the landscape in Germany dramatically. The center-left and center-right parties in Germany are very determined to give appropriate priority to internal and external security. The political will to act and to drop outdated historical limitations is obvious and is gaining practical relevance. The pacifistic attitude of the Green party in this rapidly changing environment shows that this political force is outdated, as is Germany’s post war attitudes toward the use of military force.

Germany has decided to deploy available military capabilities wherever common vital interests are endangered. Germany keeps all options open.

The country will probably accelerate the reform of the *Bundeswehr* in order to acquire the capabilities which are most needed: strategic mobility and deployability, effective engagement, survivability, sustainability and high performance, compatible communication and command and control facilities as well as intelligence, reconnaissance, and surveillance (C⁴IRS).

Conceptually, the restructuring efforts of the German army are on the right track in putting emphasis on light infantry brigades, on parachute brigades, on a mechanized airborne brigade, on an NBC protection brigade and on special forces. All in all, the German army, navy and air force will significantly enhance their readiness forces for combat.

This has to go hand in hand with the restructuring of the secret services. The country needs an integrated system of intelligence in which the Federal Intelligence Agency (BND) works very closely not only with its partner services abroad but also with the services which protect domestic security.

It is encouraging to see that the German people have begun to understand what has to be done now. Immediately after the September 11, more than 85 percent of the German public expressed their solidarity with the United States. But only 31 percent of the Germans were in favor of contributing militarily to the fight against terrorism. This number has increased significantly to 66 percent.

VII.

Germany is clearly at a crossroads with regard to its future role in and for Europe as well within the Atlantic Alliance. We are in a defining moment in terms of the future of a sound transatlantic partnership and cooperation.

The times are over in which Germany could afford to be viewed as a free rider. If Germany will not act in this moment as a reliable and decisive partner, the existing credibility gap with Washington, Paris and London would grow beyond all proportions. Now is the time to make choices. But even if those choices are difficult they cannot be avoided, since too much is at stake. The German Chancellor and an overwhelming part of the political spectrum in Germany deserve credit for being ready and able to make those choices.

Europe's capability to act strategically may be needed and used sooner rather than later. This capability remains more or less irrelevant unless Germany moves quickly to create the rapid reaction force that is required to give real teeth to a Common European Foreign and Defense Policy. It is foreseeable that America may define strategic priorities differently than in the past and may need to pull most of its troops out of Bosnia and Kosovo. Greece already has taken the initiative to give the United States more flexibility by offering to compensate for significant parts of the U.S. presence with Greek armed forces. This is a signal that will trigger a process in Europe that may well lead to very practical measures of solidarity that really count.

Solidarity, however, can and should not be limited to compensation. The Alliance as whole, as well as each and every ally, must stand the test to fight the terrorists and the countries that harbor them wherever we find them. It may be dangerous to act. But it will be much more dangerous not to act.