



WG 2 – TENSIONS WITHIN THE “ATLANTIC ALLIANCE”

1. Introduction

It is widely considered that since the inauguration of President G.W. Bush in 2000, the relationship between the Trans-Atlantic powers has undergone a series of profound and dramatic changes. While previously, the so-called ‘Atlantic-Alliance’ had suffered set-backs and serious disputes, such as the Suez Crisis, the French withdrawal from NATO and the dispute over the placement of missiles in the 1980s, those disputes never challenged the essential premise that the ‘Atlantic Alliance’ was the cornerstone of security policy on both sides of the Atlantic.

However, since the collapse of the USSR, and even more so since the events of September 11th 2001, the Atlantic-Alliance has suffered a number of fissures and splits that have seriously threatened its survival as the centrepiece of European and North American security policy. Despite this, YEPP sees a positive future for the Atlantic Alliance both through political and military action in creating a safe and secure environment in which the peoples living on both sides of the Atlantic can live in relative security.

Those tensions have been exacerbated by a number of issues including conflict over the best manner in which to deal with the Middle East and Cuba and the relationship with the United Nations. YEPP believes the rifts across the Atlantic over these issues must be healed if the ‘Atlantic Alliance’ is to have a healthy, sustainable and pro-active future.

2. The Middle East

The Middle East has seen the greatest demonstration of tensions within the Atlantic Alliance. The invasion of Iraq has brought to the fore many of the tensions which exist within the Trans-Atlantic relationship. However, in the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq, the possibility of **bringing more democracy** to the Middle East exists, a possibility that should be embraced by the leadership on both sides of the North Atlantic. If this possibility is embraced, on the basis of partnership, then many of the tensions within the relationship will be eliminated.

The European Union must offer the US-led ‘coalition’ full support in developing a democratic Iraq. If a successful and democratic Iraq is to develop, it will need the full support of the international community and Europe must play a substantial role in this. Any democratically elected Iraqi

48 government must be granted preferential trading rights with the EU to
49 encourage the development of a diversified and prosperous economy. If
50 Europe does, and is seen to take a full role in the development of Iraq with the
51 USA as a partner, then many of the tensions over the Iraqi war can be
52 resolved.

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54 Furthermore, the United States, Canada, the European Union must coordinate
55 their activities in the Middle East. Recent successes in Iran and Libya in
56 encouraging those nations to end or reduce their weapons programmes
57 highlight the success of mixing 'soft' and 'hard' power in the Middle East.
58 Similar combinations of the threat of military action, and concerted diplomatic
59 efforts, between **the EU** and the United Nations, must be used in attempting
60 to re-cast the Middle East as a peaceful, democratic and economically
61 successful region.

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63 The co-operation between the EU, USA, Russia and the United Nations that
64 manifested itself in the 'Road-Map' as a proposed solution to the Palestine-
65 Israeli conflict should be continued and enhanced. Together, the nations on
66 both sides of the North Atlantic are the world's largest economic and military
67 powers. This influence should be used more effectively in dealing with
68 disputes such as those in Israel. The so-called 'Quartet' provides a useful
69 forum for such co-operation and a model for further co-operation in other
70 areas of conflict.

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72 **3. United Nations**

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74 Nowhere are the tensions deeper and more profound between the USA,
75 Europe and Canada, than in perceptions and uses of the United Nations.
76 Generally the USA has sought to minimise the role of the United Nations on
77 its freedom to act militarily and politically. In comparison Canada and Europe
78 have placed higher value on the decisions of the UN, in particular on the ideal
79 of multilateralism and the consent of the International Community.

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81 Without a common regard on both sides of the Atlantic for the United Nations,
82 it is difficult to imagine a vibrant or successful 'Atlantic Alliance'. Therefore, the
83 European nations should make a concerted effort to re-engage the USA with
84 the United Nations. **The UN and the Security Council in particular should
85 under go a process of change so that it reflects more the current
86 economical and political reality in the world.** The French and British
87 governments should in particular use their position on the United Security
88 Council to make the United Nations more amenable to the USA. *(deleted)*
89 **The creation of a common Foreign Security Policy should reflect itself in
90 how the EU countries act within the United Nations.**

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93 **4. Cuba**

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95 The issue of Cuba has dogged the relationship between the European Union
96 and the United States for many years. The issue of the current US blockade of

97 Cuba and more particularly the Helms-Burton Act, have meant that the EU
98 and the USA have approached the problem of Cuba with different
99 perspectives for many years. *(deleted)*

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101 At present, the current economic blockade of Cuba must be considered
102 counter-productive. The blockade allows the Cuban regime to garner
103 international sympathy for the economic backwardness of the nation and
104 allows the Cuban regime to repress all opponents of the Castro dictatorship.
105 However, the current policy of the European and Canadian governments, to
106 publicly oppose this blockade by a vote in the General Assembly of the United
107 Nations annually, must be discontinued as that vote gives a form of
108 undeserved legitimacy and sympathy to the Cuban regime and creates
109 confusion as to Europe's position on Cuba. Europe should focus its policy with
110 regards to Cuba, not on condemnation of US policy, as many in the USA
111 believe, but on condemnation of the Cuban regime.

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113 Europe should also actively propose and support a trans-Atlantic partnership
114 in opposing the Castro dictatorship. Europe should work towards the easing of
115 the current US embargo on Cuba, but only as part of a package that would
116 see increasing European financial and logistic support for the supporters of
117 change in Cuba. Currently democracy advocates in Cuba are dismissed in the
118 Cuban and International media as some form of 'US stooges' as they receive
119 aid from the USA. This allows the Cuban government to escape widespread
120 censure for its repression of those advocates, many of whom received
121 sentences as long as twenty years during the last crack-down on democracy
122 in 2003. If Europe were to fully and publicly support those advocates of Cuban
123 democracy, their credibility in Cuba and beyond would be greatly enhanced
124 and the ability of the Cuban regime to defame and imprison them would
125 diminish.

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127 Europe, the USA and Canada should furthermore co-ordinate all economic
128 transactions with regards to Cuba, linking all forms of trade with reduced
129 political repression, increased democratic and economic reforms and the
130 release of so-called "dissidents", i.e. advocates of democracy. If Europe, the
131 USA and Canada were to fully co-operate **on Cuba** with greater efforts by the
132 EU and Canada to punish the Cuban government for its repressive nature,
133 then the possibility of a democratic and free Cuba would be increased.

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135 **5. Conclusion**

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137 The Atlantic Alliance is under severe strain in a large number of areas.
138 However, through concerted efforts from both sides of the North Atlantic, **this**
139 **tensions should be overcome**. Previous disputes over Iraq, in particular,
140 should be placed to one side for the time being, and the European Union
141 should make a concerted effort to re-engage the USA with the United Nations.
142 Finally, the opportunity to re-build Iraq should not be ignored, Europe as a
143 whole should seek to be actively involved in the reconstruction and
144 development of a democratic Iraq. Also, the EU, and the USA should attempt

145 to co-ordinate their policies and actions in the Middle East and in Cuba more
146 closely together, in order to achieve the best possible results.