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## **AN ESSAY ON NEW GLOBAL GEOPOLITICS**

### **Some Geopolitical and Geostrategic Reflections on the Effects of the Return of Geopolitics to Central Asia on European Security**

#### **1. Introduction**

If one asks what is really new after the end of the so-called Cold War, one has to accept that instead of new, modern order concepts in security policy theories there is much inertia, which extends the life of old order concepts, and still also a prevailing thinking in categories of East-West and North-South confrontation. Today, this certainly happens in categories which are rather free from ideologies, but still according to geopolitical perceptions of balances and counter-balances. And one must not forget that the main opponents in the Cold War, the U.S.A. and Russia, still maintain their strategic nuclear arsenals and, therefore, an antagonistic base component in their relations.

Beyond that it is also necessary to develop courage for new scenarios, for new thinking, indeed perhaps for something like 'mind games' - in an essay - based, of course, on perceptions from the past and the present. Extrapolations are indeed permitted when dealing with future scenarios. Also, potential constellations have to be aimed at which guide beyond historic reflections or so-called current analyses. Therefore, the reader will occasionally also come across subjunctives in this essay. The future is open; occasionally, we may also encircle it with 'unbrushed thinking'.

Is the East-West conflict really over? Or has it only declined in importance because of a much weaker Russia - compared with the Soviet Union - , her concentration in a limited area compared with its former global dimension, and the change from a comprehensive confrontation (ideological, political, economic and military) to a competition for zones of influence. If this is so - and there is no reason to deny the fact that there still exists a confrontational situation between the 'West' and Russia - , then the basis for it must be geopolitical thinking, particularly on the part of Russia.

This handed down, still somehow existing, reduced East-West conflict, of course, only applies to Eastern Europe and the region of Central Asia/ Caspian Sea. The old East-West confrontation has experienced a replenishment in a greater scope of confrontation by the competition between China and the U.S.A. in East Asia (and also in South-East Asia).

It is a matter of fact that security policy relations are influenced to a great deal by geographical factors. All the warnings in respect to NATO enlargement, that it would deepen the confrontation, at least attest to the fact that there is such a confrontation. Any attempt by a particular state to establish hegemony will be reacted to by power politics. This is the actual nature of Russian attempts to make the CIS countries her hegemonial area or, respectively, to keep these countries in her hegemonial area, and this will become more and more evident as counter-balance against the strong will on the part of the Americans to achieve some kind of world leadership. The question is *how* the more or less great powers will react to this (in a more antagonistic or a more cooperative way) - in order to maintain a multipolar world, which has

existed since China shook off Russia's supremacy in the 1960s, since Japan became a great economic power and since the common market made the European Union an economic world power. A bipolar system after the 60s existed only in a military-political sense and in respect to the situation in Europe. And a unipolar world with clear U.S. leadership existed probably only for a very short time after the breakdown of the Soviet Union with the U.S. directorship in the Gulf war against Iraq.

## **2. De-colonization as the Basis of the Future World Order**

With respect to fundamental prerequisites for the development of new geopolitics, the principal change is the progress of de-colonization during the period of the so-called Cold War. Since the end of the Second World War the number of sovereign states has increased from 68 (including the few tiny states in Europe) to 183 (according to varying interpretation, to 193). But the new states could not become real players in international relations, because of the global domination of the two military super-powers who - as well as China - influenced their policies and politics, their ideological, social and economic orientation in different ways. Partially, these new sovereign states were integrated in coalitions or spheres of interest of the great powers; partially, they tried to play their own roles. However: they lacked a common strategic goal within the - large in terms of numbers - organization of unaligned states. Therefore, they were not very successful in shaping a world order conforming to their respective interests or in global or regional execution of power.

Although its importance was not so obvious in the beginning - as it was concealed by the Cold War - and, as in most cases it brought about changes without big wars, it was not acknowledged in the same way as big military clashes were, de-colonization brought about the major change in the world in this century and it will be even of greater importance for the future than the consequences of the Second World War. The developing countries, with less than 20 per cent of the world's total GNP, represent four fifths of the world's population, and - different as they may be - they have one thing in common: they are against a world dominated by the U.S.A..

After the disintegration of this particular constellation of a 'bipolar' hegemony of the former super-powers, who each integrated or forced a part of the world into its zones of dominance and who were in the leading field in the competition for spheres of influence in the rest of the world, thus jointly maintaining a kind of bipolar, political-military system of predominance, the importance of a series of regional powers increased. These regional powers have become self-reliant players whose relations to the United States, or their strategic triangle relations to each other, shape the regional political structures from which in turn the global situation results.

The large number of countries today and their newly found ability for action make a unipolar world - striven for by the United States - practically impossible. Thereby, and owing to the increase in the number of nuclear powers, the world has become less calculable and the potential for escalation into regional conflicts unpredictable.

The last step in de-colonization was the disintegration of the Soviet Union, resulting in a more or less comprehensive independence of the former Soviet Republics - a still continuing, openended process -, and in actual independence of its former satellite states.

### **3. Western Interests in the Central Asian and Caspian Sea Region**

The fact that the emergence of new independent countries leads to completely new conditions for geopolitics, or enables geopolitics that would otherwise not exist, is demonstrated in the geographic area of Central Asia and around the Caspian Sea. Some Americans have called the situation in this area the 'wiederkehr', or the return, of geopolitics.

Of course, this is a consequence of the breakdown of the former Soviet Union and the emergence of new independent states. Quite a few important economic and strategic considerations focus on this geographic region. Oil and gas resources, in which both U.S. and European enterprises are interested - the estimates differ from 10 to 30 per cent of the resources in the Gulf - as well as control over the pipelines transporting them, are highly political, because this area is at the moment a power vacuum and is in the process of new political and cultural orientation, but also because this area borders - apart from Russia and China - on Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan. These countries are of strategic importance to the U.S.A. and to Europe and are, in fact, potential or actual (Afghanistan) sources of crisis.

Although the oil and gas resources may have been over-estimated initially and the cost of production would be relatively high, while especially the construction of pipelines is very cost-intensive and oil prices fluctuate and the investment in extracting and transporting the oil becomes questionable at low prices, the region of Central Asia/Caspian Sea (consisting of the former Soviet Republics in Central Asia and south of the Caucasus) offers in any case a strategic reserve for these raw materials. Therefore, measures were taken for later exploitation, including, apart from licenses to prospect, extraction licenses, founding of companies and joint ventures, also the planning and construction of new pipelines. Thus, in November 1999, an agreement on the construction of an oil pipeline was actually signed, completely according to the wishes of the U.S.A. and Turkey, by the presidents of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey and the U.S.A. (in connection with this, further agreements on trans-Caucasus energy routes have included also Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan). Under the consortium leadership of British BP-Amoco, oil is to be transported on the Baku-Ceyhan route from Azerbaijan via Georgia to the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan, starting in 2004. After construction of a pipeline through the Caspian Sea, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan could also be connected later on. The establishment of a Euro-Asian transportation corridor from Kazakhstan to Turkey would decisively reduce the dependency of the producing countries on Russia. This assistance in escaping Russian influence occurs in parallel to the expansion of Western influence in the east of Europe. Russia's defense against growing Western influence in Central Asia is relatively weak, because the big Russian companies are above all concerned with selling Russian oil, and, therefore, their stronger engagement in the Central Asia/Caspian Sea region in order to increase production would at the same time bring about competition for their own production. So the Russian companies are in a wait state and Russia tries to offer her own pipelines for expansion.

Strategic and economic interests are not always in line with each other; e.g., some Western companies thought that one should include Russia to a higher degree in the exploitation of oil and gas resources, because in the long term stabilization and peacemaking of this conflict-prone region is not possible without Russia. The strategic interest of the U.S.A., however, aims exactly at pushing back Russian influence. And due to their financial strength and technical expertise, the U.S. companies have advantages. U.S. politics therefore support U.S. investments by trying to provide the preliminary political work for private investments. It is necessary to determine the priorities in the balancing of interests vis-à-vis Turkey, Russia and Iran. Turkey has a certain

presence in the region but does not dominate it, and, as a threshold country, it is not able by itself to shape economic development there persistently. It is therefore the natural partner for the U.S.A. and offers itself as the country for the pipeline routes.

Up to now one of the priorities of U.S. policy has been to exclude Iran as much as possible from the oil and gas business in this region. Numerous Western, especially European companies, however, would like to include Iran for reasons of economic advantages - amongst other things, for possible, shorter transportation routes - and are ready to invest. The policies of several important EU member states are strongly influenced by that and they pursue a policy vis-à-vis Iran which is different from that of the U.S.A..

#### **4. Remember "Traditional" Geopolitical Ideas and Concepts**

Looking at geopolitics from a historic point of view, this area is also of strategic importance, as it is the center of the Euro-Asian continent.

Remember: the great British geopolitical thinker Sir Harold Mackinder argued that the eastern maritime coalition should underline the importance of the Eurasian 'heartland' (including both, Central Asia and the Caspian Sea region) and predicted that Moscow's victory in World War II would make the USSR the greatest land power on the globe which could dominate Eurasia (and the world). After World War II, U.S. security planners (based on Mackinder's theories) saw the Soviet Union - as the 'heartland' power - as the fundamental threat to U.S. security interests; this led to the containment policy directed against Soviet geographic and ideological expansion during the so-called Cold War era. The Central Asia/Caspian Sea region belongs to Mackinder's 'heartland', but according to him, the basic element for global domination was the control over eastern Europe. (Whoever controls eastern Europe rules the 'heartland', whoever rules the 'heartland', rules the 'world island'; and whoever rules the 'world island', rules the world.) Central Asia is an important, but not the essential, part of the heartland, according to Mackinder.

However, this was surely only valid with respect to Russia, or rather, the former Soviet Union, and maybe former Germany; to a sea-power, the 'heartland' was invulnerable according to Mackinder. These are theories, and Spykman, for instance, who carried Mackinder's analysis further, formulated that whoever controls the (Eurasian) 'rimland', rules Eurasia and whoever rules Eurasia, controls the destinies of the world. For that reason U.S. foreign policy had to make it impossible for the Eurasian land mass to contain an overwhelmingly dominant power in Europe and the Far East; especially, it should prevent a hostile, totalitarian nation from establishing political or military control over central Eurasia plus any substantial parts of the Eurasian 'rimlands'. The Soviet engagement in Afghanistan in supporting the pro-Soviet regime against the different rebel factions can be seen as an attempt for control over a substantial part of the 'rimland'. The geographic base for that attempt was, of course, Central Asia. Control over Central Asia is still to a certain extent of geopolitical importance although the need for continued Western emphasis on the Eurasian 'heartland' has decreased because of the (re)gained independence of many countries from Russia, so that the 'heartland' is no longer under the domination of one hegemony. In the longer run, the geopolitical importance of this area could increase because the Eurasian 'rimland' still abounds in potential threats to world order.

In addition, there is a new situation due to the possibilities of gaining influence in the area of Central Asia and the Caspian Sea, which geographically is the center of the 'world island'. In any case, it needs to be taken into account that Central Asia can not be disregarded also with respect

to current geopolitical situations. The strategic triangles probably decisive for global balance of power today are the one in the relations between the U.S.A., China and Japan in the Far East and the Euro-Atlantic one between the U.S.A., the EU and Russia. The critical connection between both is the long Russian-Chinese land border and Central Asia. Therefore, Central Asia is a region for Russia because of which she will try to build counterweights against the U.S.A., which in any case may concern also China and India and may thus influence the relations in the triangles. Without wanting to over-emphasize geopolitical theories, the potential geopolitical importance of this region has to be taken into account, and the power structures in this area will have effects reaching beyond the region.

## **5. The New Situation May Change Some Policies**

The new situation in the Central Asian and Caspian Sea region may change some policies, because national interests are today both of economic and strategic nature. National policy often supports economic interests as represented by leading companies, as in the case of Congo/Zaire, where one could watch the rivalry between the U.S.A. and France in their pursuance of economic interests. U.S. policies and politics are backing economic goals in respect to the Central Asia/Caspian Sea region. This has already brought and will continue to bring the U.S.A. and Western Europe in conflict with the interests of Russia and other bordering countries.

### **5.1 Relations with Iran**

In order to take care of economic interests of U.S. companies, for example, the dual containment policy of the U.S.A. versus both Iraq and Iran may be changed in the course of time with respect to Iran; there are some indications that at least some groups in the U.S. will want some cooperation with Iran, and there are also some indications that important parts of Iran's society are ready for that. (After all, there were and are preliminary talks regarding a normalization of the U.S.-Iranian relations). Because of the new situation and with some cooperation with the U.S. and Europe, Iran may challenge Russia's old but still current position with respect to the control of oil and gas resources and their means of transportation. (Also the agreements concluded in Istanbul in 1999 on the Baku-Ceyhan route for the planned elimination of both Russia and Iran do not change anything in this fundamental statement.) And it is indeed the longer-term elimination of Russia as a power factor in this area what the U.S.A. really wants. Therefore there is no guarantee, although many Russians would like to see it that way, that Russia and Iran, on their part, will become stable partners in the future. It is more likely that, if political pressure on Iran diminishes and it becomes more integrated into the international political structures, which some European countries are already trying to do, it will be a potential rival of Russia. (For Iran to become also a partner for the West, especially for the U.S.A., some obstacles of central importance must be overcome; in particular, a comprehensive peace process in the Middle East, including also Syria as a central factor in this process, - as has now apparently started anew - would have to be concluded successfully.) The Western economic interests are combined with strategic interest, in order not only to weaken Russia and to gain both Western and Iranian influence in the region but also to have better control over the shipping lanes in the Persian Gulf.

In addition, Russia is trying to contain Islamic influence in this region, and Iran is the promoter of this influence. Even after the conclusion of its fundamentalistic phase, to be expected some time in the future, Iran will remain an important factor of cultural influence on the Islamic

world of Central Asia. Apart from its cooperation with Islamic countries, like Pakistan and Iraq, it is also in China's interest to contain Islamic influence. In addition, Russia's and China's common interests are to balance, apart from the leading role of the U.S.A (in the Far East and in Europe), also the American influence in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

## **5.2 Russian-Chinese Relations**

All of this constitutes a basis for strategic cooperation between Russia and China. One could argue against that, stating that the fundamental contrasts and the distrust between these nations are too big and that there are too many political, economic, and strategic obstacles for substantial improvement of their long-time strategic cooperation. But there is also enough ground for at least interim strategic cooperation against specific American interests. Therefore, one could say that American engagement in the Central Asia/Caspian Sea region is creating a new basis for Chinese-Russian common political goals. Also not to be overlooked, however, is the Chinese interest in cooperation with the country occupying the largest geographic area in Central Asia, Kazakhstan, for supply of oil and gas.

But this need not ensue in a confrontation with Russia in the short or medium term, because China is at present not directly interested in a zone of influence in this area; it will be much more interested in Russia fulfilling the function of an order power in Central Asia. (In a longterm perspective, China could become a rival to Russian interests in Central Asia because it does not like Russian hegemony in general and Central Asian countries could find it comfortable to lean towards China which in their minds has no intentions for singular hegemony there - in order to avoid more Russian influence.)

It is a fact that the normalization of Chinese-Russian relations works well, that they are deepening their relations and that Russia is supporting the Chinese armed forces in a substantial modernization of their equipment. Realizing that both China and Russia are seen as problems by the U.S.A., why shouldn't they merge into a common problem for the U.S.A., especially, since China and Russia consider NATO enlargement, extension of the security agreements with Japan, and the activities in Central Asia, as a planned pincer movement on the Euro-Asian land, directed against Russian (and Chinese) interests? This does not have to lead to a long-term strategic partnership but it can lead to medium-term tactical concepts against Western interests.

## **5.3 Turkey - Iran**

It is hard to predict the internal development in Iran and Turkey, but one can imagine that the differences in their social and cultural self-understanding will diminish - due to increasing Islamic influence in Turkey and because of Iran gradually becoming more liberal. Iran is, of course, also using the dwindling credibility of the U.S. policy in respect to the Gulf for normalizing its relations with some Arabic countries, especially with Saudi-Arabia but also with the smaller Gulf neighbors (see, e.g., the agreement on military cooperation with Oman).

Turkey itself is not really a decisive player in the Caspian/Central Asian region, although Azerbaijan and all Central Asian countries except Tajikistan are ethnically and linguistically predominantly 'Turkish' (Turkic-speaking). However, because of its economic situation, Turkey does not qualify for generous and large scale investments in this region. The Turkic-speaking countries themselves tend towards differentiated politics; they are open minded to all potential investors, to the U.S. and the West as much as to Japan or South Korea, to Pakistan, Iran or Russia, believing that that would support their independence most successfully. Turkish attempts of gaining influence in this area are in competition especially with Russia and Iran.

The continuation of the present Turkish cooperation with the U.S.A. and Israel will depend on the internal development in Turkey. One cannot be totally sure that this development will continue to be Western oriented. Turkey has not only already become very sceptical in respect to the European Union but also very general anti-Western trends can be noticed. The perspective of admission into the EU since the end of 1999 has, in the short term, revised the already existing sceptical position vis-à-vis the EU in Turkey. The membership perspective is, however, only a theoretical one; there will be no membership negotiations for some time to come and, if so, it turns out that Turkey will not be able to fulfill the membership criteria in the foreseeable future. In the course of admission of other membership candidates, therefore, a sceptical position vis-à-vis Europe will presumably arise again over time. This in turn will promote the possibilities for better relations with Iran. A basis for strategic cooperation does not exist yet but moving closer could trigger a process. Both countries, and especially Turkey itself, are in a phase of new orientation. Why should these two relatively important regional powers not one day decide to cooperate closely, with the result that both would play a more important role in the Middle East, reducing U.S. and Russian influence there? This would then affect both transatlantic as well as U.S.-Russian relations.

#### **5.4 India's Role in Central Asia**

The influence of India in this area is limited by Pakistan which (in respect to its geographic position, and, if the political situation would be consolidated) could offer new routes for oil transportation via Afghanistan, and by China, especially because of its strategic cooperation with Pakistan.

Cooperation with Russia in respect to Central Asia is more difficult since the disintegration of the Soviet Union because of the now far distances and will in the future also depend to a certain degree on the Russian interest in strategic cooperation with China. Therefore, India - in spite of the new situation in Central Asia - is not a potentially important player outside the South-Asian subcontinent.

It is still absolutely undecided whether the new situation of two new nuclear powers, India and Pakistan, existing in South Asia will also lead to a new orientation of these powers or of the great powers to them. With a view to the hate-filled relation between India and Pakistan, the possession of nuclear weapons and the unresolved problems (especially Kashmir) do bring the danger of a nuclear war, but on the other hand, the 'official' nuclear powers can be more easily integrated in a control mechanism for nuclear weapons and tests. This would put U.S. problems with regard to India in perspective, while at the same time Islamic and anti-American tendencies in Pakistan make its relations with the U.S.A. more difficult. It would be too early to predict a course change in this case; but the situation can change by all means, because it is a given factor that India experiences a political-military increase in power.

For the stabilization of the Indian subcontinent there will be no way around India. And since this stabilization has now reached high priority also for China with regard to the independence aspirations in the Chinese province of Xinjiang, a stronger willingness to move closer to India on the part of China can be noticed. The future development of international relations can therefore not be assessed yet. In any case, India will in the future influence the relations of the great powers to each other more than it has done up to now. In the future, one will have to take into account the strategic triangles China-India-Russia and U.S.A.-India-China, possibly also U.S.A.-India-Russia. A bigger Indian power projection in the direction of Central Asia can, however, not be concluded from that.

## 5.5 Blocks of Interest

Based on present international relations, two big blocks of interest can be detected with regard to their interests vis-à-vis Central Asia: first, the U.S.A., Western Europe, Turkey and Pakistan, vis-à-vis second, Russia, Iran, India. China could not belong to the second block of interest because up to now its relations with India were hostile and characterized by rivalry.

Will the situation of interests with respect to Central Asia bring about a change in this case? Many things seem possible, not only a future higher interest of the U.S.A. in India but also a development for the better in Chinese-Indian relations.

Of course this has to be seen in context with the development in Europe, because a decisive new order of the security policy situation arose there through NATO enlargement.

## 6. NATO Enlargement and Central Asia

With NATO enlargement by Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, there is for the first time a component of 'Western' order in the so-called crisis belt from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. It means an extended engagement of the U.S.A. in European security policy and a further extension of its scope of influence for the U.S.A..

According to Russian geopolitical and imperial thinking, NATO enlargement is a reason for taking measures to safeguard Russia's influence at least in the former Soviet Republics, in the south, Russia's so-called 'soft belly'. A second step towards NATO enlargement must also be evaluated under this aspect, and the limitation of a further NATO enlargement (or the end of it) as a consequence of a U.S. requirement for strategic cooperation with Russia, will also depend on the situation in the Central Asia/Caspian Sea region. Of course, Russia's future zone of influence will be determined as well by her geostrategic possibilities, that is, by the space for power projection left to her by the West; this will, on the one hand, depend on NATO enlargement (and also on how the process of integrating the first ex-Warsaw Pact countries into NATO will work), and on the other hand on the internal development in Russia, whether it will become a democratic country or not. If not, then – as many people assume – it will be a hegemonistic and imperialistic country at least vis-à-vis the countries of the CIS and the Baltic states.

Does development in Russia depend on, or, is it determined by Western policies and politics, in particular, the extent and speed of NATO enlargement? Not necessarily, because NATO enlargement is not a real threat for Russia, however, such a perception does exist in Russia and it is very suitable for political instrumentation by Russian nationalists. The conjured danger does not lie in aggressive actions by NATO against Russia but in statements that NATO might expand up to the Russian border ( - which formally is the case already now with regard to the Russian enclave Kaliningrad/Northeastern Prussia) and this would unsparingly demonstrate Russia's present weakness.

Thus the West would only have the possibility to put these anxieties to rest by 'good behavior' which would in the end mean to comply with Russian ideas in eastern, southeastern and northern Europe. A positive influence on internal Russian development by Western politics is extremely difficult; only marginal influence is possible (as, e.g., by the activities of Western foundations and the branches of the academies of Western political parties). An essential contribution to the creation of the internal order of Russia by the West, however, seems an unrealistic objective. Attempts of positive influence taking by Western fiscal policy vis-à-vis Russia even proved

counter-productive because the financial aid is in fact supporting the anarchic economic system – instead of serving as assistance for the transition to an open market economy. A realistic observation certainly comes to the conclusion that a positive influence of the Russian development is hardly possible from the outside; one can only possibly reduce the basis for negative developments by Western politics taking adequate consideration of Russia's perception of her role as a great power. This will be acceptable when it concerns the inclusion of Russia in political processes; it is, however, very problematic with regard to the Russian sphere of influence. In this context, consider the following: in the end, the Russian development is decided upon within Russia herself; Western policies and politics are not decisive. If Russia becomes a 'normal' state, a democracy in the Western meaning of the word, then she will also behave normally, namely peacefully. If, however, she becomes authoritarian and imperialistic again, then it is good if she does not find a large sphere of influence any more and is limited in her imperialistic ambitions by facts already established.

NATO itself is without doubt the first ranking factor of order for Europe. A second enlargement, possibly including Romania, would reposition the south flanks of NATO and result in a stronger scope of influence in the Black Sea area which up to now - with the exception of the Turkish coast areas - has practically been controlled by Russia. This would be a serious challenge for Russia's thinking in geopolitical terms.

The political arrangements resulting from the first round of NATO enlargement mean that Russia has practically - if still in a limited way - been integrated into NATO's stability and security net. In any case, the first step of NATO enlargement did not strain U.S.-Russian relations as much as some critics had expected. Looking at it from this point of view it becomes more difficult to envisage what counter-measures Russia could take against its gradual encircling in terms of security politics. There are actually very few concrete possibilities, even after a resurgence of strength for Russia. Possible Russian reactions will not necessarily consist of traditional rearming and reducing cooperation with the West but will be - and already are - forming of new alliances, even with more obscure countries like Iraq, or e.g. the – indeed unrealistic seeming – proposition of Yeltsin for a strategic triangle Russia-India-China. The obstruction of Western policies is and will continue to be one core element of Russian politics in the sense of portraying the importance and great power role of Russia.

Opportunities for this were also provided by the NATO air strikes against Yugoslavia in which Russia took a mediator position and in doing so tried to influence Western measures; however, Russian influence on Serbian leadership proved too weak in the course of the negotiations before the Kosovo war; it is, however, disputed whether Russia was able to exert decisive influence with regard to the acceptance of NATO's peace conditions by Yugoslavia. The relations with the West have in any case deteriorated due to the Kosovo war because it exposed Russia's relative lack of influence, as it could not prevent the air war.

In any case, for the U.S.A., Central Asia is a new power vacuum, the attraction of which neither U.S. politics nor U.S. business and its entrepreneurs will be able to resist (completely).

The question is how U.S. interests in this area can be balanced with Western security interests in Eastern Europe, and whether U.S. engagement in Central Asia will be counter-productive to NATO enlargement - e.g., no second round of enlargement - to avoid a more severe confrontation with Russia that may run counter to U.S. long-term global interests. Intense pursuit of U.S. interests with parallel elimination of Russia from business in this region, plus a second enlargement of NATO, especially with sensitive countries on the ticket (like Romania), could

prepare the ground for more internal radicalism and could increase the tendency towards imperialistic and aggressive politics in Russia. The result could be that Russia seeks and will seek long-term strategic cooperation with China, that it will try to put pressure on countries within the CIS (including the Ukraine) and the Baltic states, will indeed refuse further cooperation on strategic arms control and reduction, and will try to form anti-Western coalitions in Asia and Africa. (Russia would do the same, should the democratic experiment fail, without further steps of NATO enlargement; it would then have more possibilities for a larger zone of influence than in the case of a second NATO enlargement to the east.)

## **7. The European Security Situation**

The perspectives of European security and of the European security architecture are also influenced by constellations outside of Europe; they depend heavily on the evolution of Russian-Chinese and U.S.-Chinese relations, but especially on U.S.-Russian relations. Russia sees herself in a struggle for influence with the U.S.A..

Japan will possibly in the future become a global player but it is not at the moment. To include Japan here seems too early although there are indications of a higher self-confidence in Japan, including also military aspects. A possible decision by Japan - not anticipated today, however - for armament and build-up of nuclear armed forces would in fact bring about a totally new situation in East Asia, with global effects.

### **7.1 U.S. Policy Towards Russia**

What would be more helpful from a European point of view for the development of security – if the U.S.A. tries to contain Russian influence in Central Asia or if it tries to contain it in Eastern Europe?

If the U.S.A. really aims at a unipolar strategy of global hegemony by strengthening its leading role in NATO, tightening its control over Europe, and dominating the Western Pacific region, it also aims at a policy of enclosing, containing and weakening of Russia. To be successful in the latter, NATO enlargement, support for Ukrainian sovereign independence, and attempts to economically and politically ‘invade’ the ‘forbidden zone’ of countries of the former Soviet Union, e.g., the Baltic countries and Central Asia, are all measures to make Russia’s space for strategic survival shrink to the minimum. The fundamental strategic contradiction of containment and anti-containment is hard to overcome, which is bound to become a long-term factor in limiting relations between Russia and the U.S.A.. And why should the Americans not weaken Russia - step by step, of course, in a non-confrontational, slice by slice way? For the time being, Russia has neither the intention nor the capability for confrontation with the U.S.A.. And in a later period, after a possible Russian recovery, in her restrained form, she does not have sufficient potential to seriously challenge the U.S.A..

There is one important difference between Russian and Chinese attempts at balance of power politics. Moscow, as the main opponent of the U.S. in the Cold War, tries to obtain – although not necessarily a total strategic equivalency, - at least the formal recognition of the status of a great power; this is based on its still existing nuclear arsenals. It tries to hold counter-positions in some parts of the world (especially in the Middle East) in order to play again a dominant role; its goal is to create counter-balances against the U.S.A.. In the case of China, such policies are not necessarily antagonistic but can be seen as a cooperative form of balance of power - not against,

but vis-à-vis - the U.S.A.. By a certain extent of cooperation China is practically granted the status of a regional great power and given a sphere of influence by the U.S.A., without China giving up its ambitions with regard to the role of a global great power because of that.

## **7.2 American Interests and Europe**

One would be better able to judge possible or probable developments, if one would know more precisely what the Americans really want. Are there general, definite U.S. objectives or do they depend on the respective administration, or even on the actual situation of the government at a specific point, on internal political trends and moods?

But it is relatively simple to search for American global goals compared to searching for those of the Europeans. Do they have any at all? Does Europe long for its old role during the Cold War as the junior partner of the U.S.A.? Americans and Europeans still view Russia as a potential adversary and Europe cannot, for the time being, separate from the U.S.A. in security affairs; both are very deeply interwoven, interdependent to a certain extent in their prosperity. Therefore, cooperation is very important for both. But the cohesive force that linked the U.S.A. and Europe in the time of the East-West confrontation has weakened and one can detect slow but increasing disagreement. On the one hand, the U.S.A. is demanding more international engagement by the Europeans to maintain the transatlantic link that includes U.S. support in European affairs; the U.S.A. in particular wants more readiness (and willingness) also for potential military engagement of the Europeans in the Middle East region and, also, at least some symbolic contributions to potential military clashes in the Far East. Europeans at the moment want American support (and leadership) in essential European conflicts which they are not able to (or at least not willing to) handle alone. On the one hand an almost complete lack of any feeling for global responsibility on the part of most Europeans can be noted; Europe, therefore does not seem to be a reliable partner for the U.S.A.. On the other hand, the U.S. has no real alternatives to the more important European countries as allies in global engagement.

But also, if common strategic interest will be strong enough for a close, global cooperation - in a time of a more mature European self-confidence - this cooperation on the part of the Europeans will not be as the Americans envisage it, namely as participation in actions determined by the U.S.A..

It is not yet in sight when a Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU, deserving this designation, will emerge; in any case, it will still take some time, because the most recent measures and objectives of the EU for a stronger political and military action capability were indeed praised by politicians and the media but do not constitute any qualitative progress towards 'commonness'. The realization of the Europeans in the Kosovo war that they would not have been able to take these measures without the U.S.A. has certainly livened the debate on the further development of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. How cumbersome the way to a European Security and Defense Identity must be, can be envisaged when observing which difficulties the EU encounters with the - in comparison relatively easy - reform of its institutions.

Nevertheless, it will be relatively simple to arrive at a Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU compared to fitting America into a coordinated transatlantic foreign and security policy, because such a policy would be something new according to present U.S. understanding. Common policy for the U.S.A. at present means U.S. leadership with the others following, who do not have part in the decision making but only in the execution.

However, European integration is - in principle - the opposite of hegemony and balance of power; on the one hand it is directed against hegemony of a European power, and on the other hand it serves the purpose of avoiding U.S. hegemony over Europe. European integration is a contrary development to de-colonization, a process of reducing players, and it will completely change geopolitics in the Eurasian-African world.

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