Book reviews and Notes

The Strategic Cultures of "Old" and "New" Europe

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Old Europe, new Europe and the transatlantic security agenda / edited by Kerry Longhurst and Marcin Zaborowski. - London and New York : Routledge, 2005. - vii, 213 p. - ISBN 0-415-34820-X

In the introductory chapter, Jiri Sedivy and Marcin Zaborowski maintain that focusing the study of European defence integration and transatlantic relations exclusively on material factors provides an incomplete explanation. For them, the notion of "strategic culture" generates a more comprehensive analysis. They use, among others, the definition of Kerry Longhurst, who sees strategic culture as a "distinct body of beliefs, attitudes, and practices regarding the use of force" which is "persistent over time" (p. 7).

In examining European policies, Sedivy/Zaborowski state that "Europe is not a unitary actor in international relations" and does not have "a clearly defined single strategic culture" (p. 17). The Iraq crisis therefore resulted in an intra-European cleavage between Europeanists and Atlanticists, or as Donald Rumsfeld maintained "Old" and "New" Europe. The authors show that this dichotomy actually has a long tradition in Europe. How long will it last? According to Sedivy/Zaborowski, the Atlanticist predisposition is predominantly "historically and culturally motivated" and as such likely to endure in the longer term (p. 23). But the effect of "socializing" in the EU is likely to "become stronger" after the accession to the EU of the eight Central and Eastern European countries (p. 25).

Four contributions in the book deal with the strategic culture of Germany, France, Britain and Poland. According to Piotr Buras and Kerry Longhurst, the

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strategic culture of Germany is based mainly on an aversion to unilateralism, the promotion of stability, non-confrontational defence and the pursuit of compromise and consensus building (pp. 30/31). This "culture of restraint" was challenged by 11 September. The Red-Green coalition was not enthusiastic about sending troops to Afghanistan. Chancellor Schröder finally succeeded, with the help of the opposition, to commit troops to Operation Enduring Freedom, but he reaffirmed his opposition to a war with Iraq, even with a UN mandate. The Franco-German initiatives countering the US in the UN clearly raised the question of "who speaks for Europe?" (p. 51). The policies of Chancellor Schröder were probably not so much an "extreme presentation of the new foreign policy style of the Berlin Republic" (p. 58), as simply party politics to win the general elections of 2002 — which Schröder managed to do. Buras/Longhurst predicted in their text that it is "rather unlikely that Germany will go on this way" and the policies of Chancellor Angela Merkel clearly corroborate their assessment.

John Gaffney demonstrates by means of an analysis of the role of emotion (honor, outrage, affront, defiance, anger) that the mutual misunderstandings of France and the US "are actually based on mutual misperceptions and unfamiliarity" (p. 84). Gaffney sees a basic contradiction in French behavior: upholding a "nationalist approach" while making attempts in "transnationalism" and "discouraging nationalism in others (e.g. Germany)."

In Britain, the close relationship between the British and US defence establishments have been a "central pillar of the UK's strategic culture". Alister Miskommon, in his contribution, thinks that this relationship will "continue and act as a brake on wide ranging Europeanization" within the British Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces (p. 94). But Prime Minister Blair achieved a sweeping change of the British strategic culture with the St. Malo agreement opening the road to the development of autonomous European military capabilities. Central to the UK stand is, however, the conviction that "capabilities should drive co-operation" rather than "deepen integration" (p. 103). According to Miskommon, the 2004 enlargement has strengthened the British position inside the EU, but the balance the UK has sought to strike concerning Atlanticist and Europeanist visions of security policy "has come under increasing strain" (p. 113). What a post-Blair Britain will bring, both to its position inside the EU, but also for transatlantic relations, remains to be seen.

The analysis of Poland is a useful addition to a literature that is still mainly concentrated on the big states of Western Europe. Olaf Osica shows that the Polish strategic culture with its emphasis on Atlanticism "is essentially a product of Poland's traumatic national history" (p. 116). The reassurance provided by close ties with the US allows Poland to "enjoy security" and at the same time "beef up its influence in the region" and in the EU as well (p. 124). The European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) "must not challenge the

US presence and role" in Europe and "must be kept within a NATO framework" (p. 126). Again, the question here is how the immersion into the institutional culture of the EU will lead to adjustments of the Polish position. One thing, Osica maintains, will certainly persist: Poland will try to preserve the status of being "one of the staunchest allies of the US in Europe" (p. 136). Recent events in Poland seem to prove this point.

Two contributions in the book deal directly with European security culture. According to Adrian Hyde-Price, after World War II many European democracies developed a niche role for themselves as "civilian powers" and "trading states" wielding soft power to shape international society (p. 141). But a well-intentioned reliance on diplomacy and soft power "failed miserably" in the Balkans in the 1990s. Only when "diplomacy was backed by coercive military power" did a process of conflict resolution become possible (p. 153). Finally, Hyde-Price lists six key principles which should underpin a "revised European strategic culture" (pp. 154/155). Klaus Becher starts his contribution with the sweeping assertion that in foreign, security and defence policy "Europe is not a unified actor" and thus often "less calculable" than other major powers (p. 159). The European Security Strategy is not an answer or a counterweight to the US National Security Strategy (p. 169). Becher critically observes that many in Europe seem content to depict the US as a convenient "negative role model" in an effort to build "Europe's separate identity" (p. 170). Nevertheless, Becher imagines further convergence of views in Europe, based among other things on "common vulnerabilities to threats and disruptions", as well as "mounting external expectations" (p. 168). The European Security Strategy may prove to be helpful, but Europe also needs an "internationally oriented leadership" and better "economic growth" to allow it to dispose of more resources for promoting international peace and security (p. 173).

Jeffrey Lantis gives a rather critical account of the US strategic culture. In his opinion, the Bush administration consciously chose to interpret September 11 as a "transformative moment" for the US (p. 181). Lantis sees the American strategic culture as centred on three new core principles: (a) US dominance and priority for homeland security, (b) a doctrine of pre-emption and (c) a preference for unilateral action. These new orientations are packaged, according to Lantis, "rhetorically as American support for democracy and freedom" (p. 182). Lantis bases some of his arguments on problematic assumptions, for example, that the Bush administration "received little support from its allies" in the Iraq war.

In the final chapter, Kerry Longhurst and Marcin Zaborowski give just the opposite explanation. The support of Central and Eastern European states for American policy on Iraq "boosted Washington's position" and undermined the "Franco-German claim to speak on behalf of the whole of Europe" (p. 198). One can only fully agree with Longhurst/Zaborowski that many analysts of transatlantic security seem to have

missed the end of the Cold War and the significance of the "return to Europe" of Central and Eastern European states after 1989. The present book is a significant effort to correct that deficiency.

One final remark on the "socializing" effect of EU membership, an element of most articles in this book. The histories of Ireland, which has been an EU member since 1973, and Austria, member since 1995, do not bode well for the "socializing" theory. Both countries are now more "neutral" than when they became EU members. Learning processes and spillover effects do not seem to have the same strength in the intergovernmental cooperation of the EU's second pillar as in the supranational first pillar.