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## TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS AND ‘NEW EUROPE’: GO-IN-BETWEEN IN ORDER SURVIVE

*“States can have shared interests, but not shared identities.”<sup>1</sup>*

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Europe and United States (still) together: Reflections**

In the bipolar world during the days of the Cold War the border between the West and the East was clearly defined and marked by the barbed wire. Borders in Europe were sharp and exclusive running through its eastern flank, while in the West it just melted into a broader American-led *West*. The end of the Cold War has brought dramatic geopolitical changes. One amongst many was that it blurred the East-West division and the East itself. Even if the West was celebrated as the ultimate winner of the Cold War, the disappearance of an omnipresent opponent also meant that the dominant vision of the West has come under pressure. Diverging views over how to best respond to the challenges presented by the falling Soviet Empire in the East, with the re-emergence of the new nation states is just one among numerous other examples indicating that transatlantic bonds have weakened and that Europe and America lacked a common strategy and vision to lead the ‘brave new world’.<sup>2</sup> The West, as it has become clear, no longer had the same uniform community of values that it allegedly possessed during the Cold War. Numerous statements and scholarly works have been presented since then in which it is argued that the West has been broken,

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<sup>1</sup> **Cronin, Bruce**, (1998) quoted in *Community under Anarchy* (Columbia University Press, New York).

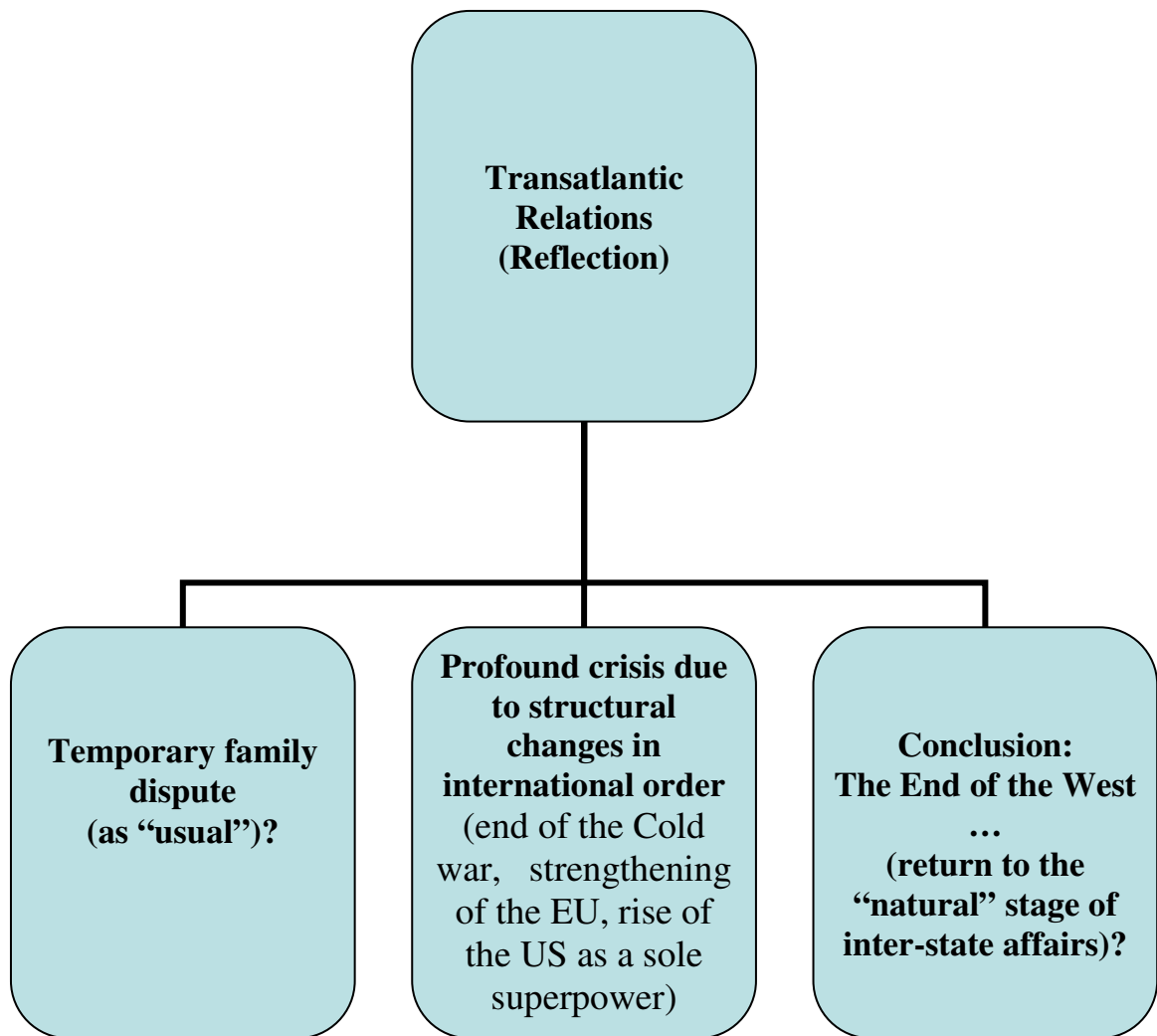
<sup>2</sup> For the discussion about the transatlantic divide over Eastern Europe and democracy promotion see a useful contribution by **Kopstein, Jeff** (2006) ‘*The Transatlantic Divide over Democracy Promotion*’, *The Washington Quarterly* 29, 85-98.

divided and even corrupted.<sup>3</sup> As Charles A. Kupchan in one of the most recent articles which clearly falls into the same category argues, foundational principles of the whole transatlantic relations and thus of the Atlantic security order that emerged after WW II have been comprised. Furthermore, according to C. A. Kupchan, mutual trust has eroded, institutional cooperation can no longer be taken for granted, and a shared Western identity has attenuated.<sup>4</sup> Examining the real reasons of the transatlantic tensions between Western Europe and the US is beyond the scope of this paper. What the review of articles above reveals is that there are basically two different interpretations of the nature of the transatlantic crisis. Both suggest that there is a significant level of divergence which eventually might lead towards the end of the Western alliance. (*See table below*).

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<sup>3</sup> See, for example, **Fukuyama, F.** (2002) '*The West May be cracking*', International Herald Tribune, August 9<sup>th</sup> issue and **Ash, Garton Timothy** (2007) '*The Crisis in the West*', Newsweek International, December 12<sup>th</sup>, available at: <http://www.newsweek.com/id/77069/output/print>, accessed 16 March 2008. Also, **Calleo, D. P.** (2004) '*The Broken West*', Survival, IISS Quarterly, 3, 46, 59-82. and **Moisi, D.** (2003) '*Reinventing the West*', Foreign Affairs, November/December issue.

<sup>4</sup> **Kupchan, A. Charles** (2006) '*The Unravelling of the Atlantic Order: Historical Breakpoints in U.S.-European Relations*', Institute of European Studies, University of California, Berkeley, Paper 060414, available at: <http://repositories.cdlib.org/ies/060414>, accessed 5 February 2008.



To discuss whether or not Iraq war could be seen and thus interpreted as a decisive and crucial factor in European-American relations is also not the main concern of this paper. However, it has to be said that the Iraq war definitely opened up a rift between the US and Europe and highlighted a diverging comprehension of how to respond to the threat of terrorism and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism.

The fierce transatlantic rift over the justifiability of the invasion of Iraq in 2003 has further illuminated deep divisions within the West. The mantra of the mainstream Western European countries siding with the United States in a major international crisis has been revised. Here it was a case of two of the major powers in the Western defence community taking up arms against Saddam Hussein and the two other major players openly opposing and refusing to. The old West-West consensus has broken

apart.<sup>5</sup> As a result, four aspects in particular have gained sudden importance and prominence:

1. The proclivity to use force
2. The degree of emphasis on the pursuit of security and the defence of key values
3. Attitudes toward the significance of multilateralism and international law
4. And, last but not least, the health and mood of transatlantic relationship between Europe and the United States.<sup>6</sup>

More importantly, the debacle of the West has also opened a significant intra-European rift with European unity being another victim of the debate over Iraq. At least 'two Europes' emerged following the debate, what former US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld bluntly referred to as 'old Europe' or countries resistant to join US leadership or interests and 'new Europe' formed of countries well-disposed to the United States. The former, was represented only by France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg and Greece. At first sight, these small numbers may be deceiving, however France and Germany are the largest and the most influential countries in Europe. It is also important to not forget the fact that these countries are also the two founding members of the European Community. Furthermore, the public opinion in two other significant European countries was out of step with their right-wing governments at the time: Spain under the government of José Maria Aznar and Italy led by the prime minister at a time Silvio Berlusconi. 'New Europe' was represented by then the incoming members to the European Union, mostly from former Soviet dominated Eastern part of the continent and therefore being in thrall to the United States as their ultimate advocate and protector. Most importantly, for the issue of European unity, Britain under the leadership of Tony Blair came down on the side of

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<sup>5</sup> Some scholars have argued that transatlantic rift has in fact occurred much earlier. For that matter, among others see, for example, **Lundestad, Geir** (2005) *The United States and Western Europe since 1945 : from "empire" by invitation to transatlantic drift*, (Toronto : Oxford University Press) and **Kupchan, A. Charles** (2002) *The End of the American Era: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Geopolitics of the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Knopf).

Also, on the early history of the formation of the transatlantic relations and the birth of the concept of Atlanticism, see a useful historical contribution by **Fry, Michael G.** (1972) *Illusions of security: North Atlantic diplomacy 1918-22* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press).

<sup>6</sup> **Mälksoo, Maria**, (2005) *'Shifting the Balance? The US, the EU and 'New Europe'*, Cambridge Review of International Affairs, Vol. 18, Number 2.

its long-standing American ally. ‘The American factor, as some scholars have argued, once a unifying force, has ... become a divisive factor in Europe’.<sup>7</sup>

After a brief review of the context it is time to turn to the ‘New Europe’ and examine their attitudes and stance in the light of transatlantic relations. It is important, not only because of the fact that naming CEEC as ‘New Europe’ was obviously part of the all Iraq debacle, but also because their open rallying behind the US (and against the core founding members of the EU) making the case for the Iraq invasion has become a harsh reminder of the persistence of diverse national strategic cultures in Europe despite the enthusiastic predictions of the emergence of a common European outlook. What motives then lay behind the CEEC decision to join American-led “coalition of the willing”? What are the defining features of the CEEC national strategic cultures and how and why they differ from the Western part of Europe? To what extent is this newly formed alliance inside the alliance is going to survive given the real and indeed formidable challenges to the transatlantic unity? These are just few amongst many other questions this paper is concerned with. To answer all of them is not an easy task. In fact, the aim of this paper is not about finding the ‘right’ answers, as these questions certainly, as one could guess, will be subjected to different interpretations for a very long time. Rather, it is an invitation to look at America-friendly attitudes as found in CEEC from the perspective of the small states and their efforts in a search of security aside from the dominant view which prescribes their loyalty to American leadership as something natural and given. Although the argument of history and especially the theme of historical CEEC ‘debt of gratitude’ to the US is widely shared as the best explanation among elites and the public, this paper nevertheless takes the position that this view is too simplistic. Therefore, without downplaying the importance of history, a theoretical framework of small states and an analysis of their foreign policy behaviour are introduced as an alternative way to understand the strong pro-American stance of CEEC. In doing so, this paper will first define the concept of the small state. Secondly it will look at the certain foreign policy behaviour patterns as traditionally exhibited by the small states and then try to apply and compare them with CEEC. Finally it will draw conclusions based on the findings.

## **PUTTING ‘SMALLNESS’ IN THE TRANSATLANTIC CONTEXT**

### **CEEC or ‘New Europe’ as an example of small states**

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<sup>7</sup> See **Dassu, M. & Menotti, R.** (2005) ‘*Europe and America in the Age of Bush*’, *Survival*, 47, 1, 10-21.

Although, a universal definition on what constitutes a small state hardly exists, the simplest way of defining small states is to see them in contrast to large ones or what is also often called great powers. The formalization of these categories (small versus large states) stems from the historical development of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries when the number of small states increased dramatically as a consequence of the break up of the empires. Thus, it could be argued that the categorization of states according to size has long been an integral and inseparable part of world politics.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, in the literature of international relations size has generally been perceived as directly connected to state's capabilities and influence. Whilst being big is correlated with power, being small has been viewed as a handicap to adequate actions, and even state survival. According to R. Rothstein, 'a small power is a state which recognizes that it cannot obtain security primarily by the use of its own capabilities, and that it must rely fundamentally on the aid of other states, institutions, processes, or developments to do so'.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, D. Vital contends that weakness is 'the most common, natural and pervasive view of self in the small state'.<sup>10</sup> For this reason, small states are often ignored because the large states are focused on as the main actors of international politics.

In the context of transatlantic relations, the majority of the states in the Atlantic alliance are either small or medium size powers. In the case of CEEC, all states with the exception of Poland are referred to as small states.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the most common perception is that the visibility and importance of the small states are recognized only when a certain geopolitical situation develops which for the most part results from interaction among larger states. This reality confirms the dominant view that small

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<sup>8</sup> For the classical account on small states, see, **Rothstein, Robert L.** (1968) *Alliances and Small Powers* (New York: Columbia University Press).

<sup>9</sup> **Rothstein, Robert L.**, *ibid*, p. 29.

<sup>10</sup> See **Vital, David** (1967) *The Inequality of States* (New York: Oxford University Press), p. 33-35., and *The Survival of Small States* by the same author, (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).

<sup>11</sup> In an attempt to formulate 'objective' markers of smallness references is frequently made to the absolute size of a state's resources, whether in terms of the size of territory, population, military capacity, size of gross domestic product, etc. Thus, comparative power of a state is a combination of political, economic and social factors. The distinction of small and large states in the European and Atlantic context is often set referring to the population of the Netherlands (16 million) as a benchmark to define 'smallness'. According to B. Thorhallsson, all states with a population above 38 million and above are considered as large states, and all states with a population below 16 million are treated as small states. For that matter, see, **Thorhallsson, Baldur** (2006) *The Size of States in the European Union: Theoretical and Conceptual Perspectives*, *European Integration*, 28, 7-31.

states ultimately have no other choice but to go along with the frames dictated by larger and more powerful states. The focus on the positions of the US, Great Britain, France and Germany in the recent transatlantic dispute over Iraq is an indicative point of this. In the context of the Iraq war, the positions of Europe's smaller states (Western and Eastern alike) have for the most part been ignored. The example of the treatment of CEEC by larger and more powerful states is in particular telling. This point is perhaps best captured by Jacques Chirac's, the French President at the time, infamous remark about Central and Eastern Europeans immaturity and hence inability to understand how to keep a low profile when the more powerful and experienced 'adults' are debating important foreign policy issues. Instead of being understood to have a constitutive power to also impact on the evolution of transatlantic relations, Europe's smaller states have frequently been depicted as if their available freedom was to choose between membership in either 'new' or 'old' Europe.<sup>12</sup> The implications following this kind of logic are twofold. First, this pattern of thinking suggests that there is a certain behaviour attributed to small states and, secondly, larger states expect that smaller states will practice and follow the role applied to them. So are there certain patterns of behaviour which are different from those that are exhibited by the large states? If so, how can one locate and explain them? More precisely, is 'New Europe's' behaviour vis-à-vis the United States and Europe unique when compared to other small states in the alliance?

### **And 'New Europe' as a breach of the behavioural rules ...**

The focus of this paper is to investigate the behaviour of the 'New Europe' in the context of the transatlantic relations. More precisely, it aims to locate the stance of CEEC in the wider Atlantic community. Although NATO is regarded as a key forum where the most important transatlantic issues are discussed and where American and European perspectives ultimately are being shaped, it is not limited just to that. Therefore, the consideration of 'Atlanticist' perspectives within Europe receives close attention in this paper as well. Before going into a more detailed discussion that addresses Euro-Atlanticist perspectives, general foreign policy behaviour patterns of small states are examined.

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<sup>12</sup> For the critical perspective on the generally negative view in mainstream understanding of the power of small states see, **Browning, S. Christopher** (2006) '*Small, Smart and Salient? Rethinking Identity in the Small States Literature*', Cambridge Review of International Affairs, Vol. 19, Number 4.

As discussed above, small states are usually characterized by one or more defining features. Based on these defining characteristics, small states are traditionally depicted as exhibiting the following foreign policy behaviour patterns when compared to large states:

- a) low levels of overall participation in world affairs;
- b) avoidance to use force as a technique of statecraft;
- c) avoidance of behaviour and policies which tend to alienate the more powerful states in the international system;
- d) frequent utilization of moral and normative positions on international issues;
- e) high levels of support for international legal norms and institutions;
- f) a narrow functional and geographical range of concern in foreign policy actions.<sup>13</sup>

In virtually every pattern indicated above, small states exhibit a low-profile course of action, minimizing their perceived risks. In terms of risks, Stanley Hoffmann has summarized this point well: ‘At all times, the line separating smaller from larger powers has corresponded to two different attitudes toward risk. Small powers are forced by their resources, their location, and the system, to be satisfied with establishing a hierarchy of risks and with attempting to minimize the risks they consider to be most serious.’<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, small states are likely to include a tendency to employ ambiguity as a strategy to enhance their bargaining position when large scale international crisis similar to the one in Iraq will occur. ‘New Europe’s’ behaviour in this regard is a clear breach of the rules representing a departure from theoretical conventional model of small-state foreign policy behaviour.<sup>15</sup> With this in mind, perhaps one should not be surprised by the reaction of the larger states as illustrated by the French President’s comments.

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<sup>13</sup> The brief abstraction of foreign policy behaviour patterns as attributed to the small states is based on the extensive reading in the literature of international relations. Among the revealing sources are the following: **Keohane, Robert** (1969) ‘Lilliputians Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics’, *International Organization*, 23-2, 291-310; **Evera, V. Stephen** (1992) ‘The Hard Realities of International Politics’, *Boston Review*, vol. 17; **Katzenstein, J. Peter** (1985) ‘Small States in World Markets’ (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press);

<sup>14</sup> See, **Hoffmann, Stanley** (1965) ‘The State of War’ (New York), p. 138.

<sup>15</sup> For a useful theoretical discussion and in-depth analysis on small-states foreign policy behaviour see, for example, **East, A. Maurice** (1973) ‘Size and Foreign Policy Behaviour: A Test of two Models’, *World Politics*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 556-576.

A number of different motives since 2003 when Iraq conflict broke out have been posited by ruling elites and scholars to explain why 'New Europe' reacted the way it did during a major transatlantic crisis. To stress what has already been said in the introduction, this paper contends that the popular and dominant approach which attributes CEEC support to the US is a sort of 'debt of gratitude' which is rooted in history.<sup>16</sup> Instead, it holds that the best way to understand CEEC foreign policy behaviour in the context of transatlantic relations is not to distant it from the mainstream theory of international relations but try to connect it. Among those few scholars who tried to look beyond the conventional explanations examining CEEC behaviour in the transatlantic context, Matthew Rhodes analysis stands out as a valuable contribution filling this gap. Rhodes divides the reasons behind CEEC behaviour in the Iraq crisis into three broad categories: first, band-wagoning for profit (security, hard/soft currency and material gain), secondly, balancing against threats to their 'voice opportunities' within Europe (primarily, Franco-German axis, plus Russia) and, third, bridging divisions among other countries in order to preserve the viability of their membership in NATO and the broader community of the West that these countries have worked so hard to join over the path of the history and in particular over the past decade.<sup>17</sup> What makes M. Rhodes' analysis interesting and important is that it emphasizes national strategic interests as the main driving force behind 'New Europe's' behaviour as opposed to more philosophical intellectualizing focused on historical experiences or identity. Furthermore, it opens a window of

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<sup>16</sup> Toomas Hendrik Ilves, current Estonian president, among others has popularized the view that a strong pro-American sentiment in Central and Eastern Europe stems primarily from historical experience, although it is different than the one experienced by Western Europeans.

See, **Hendrik, Ilves Toomas** (2005) *'The Pleiades Join the Stars: Transatlanticism and Eastern Enlargement'*, Cambridge Review of International Affairs, Vol. 18, No. 2, 203-216 and **Asmus, Ronald. D and Vondra Alexandr** (2005) *'The Origins of Atlanticism in Central and Eastern Europe'*, Cambridge Review of International Affairs, Vol. 18, No. 2, 203-216. Also, **Sikorski, R.** (2003) *'East is Best: America's Best Friend in Europe, and What They Understand'*, National Review, 7<sup>th</sup> April.

Others, like a prominent Norwegian historian Geir Lundestad, have argued that the CEEC 'debt of gratitude' to the US is not unique and could be easily explained if one draws a comparative perspective with Western Europe during early Cold War years. **Lundestad, Geir**, *ibid.* p. 249-268.

Although appreciating the arguments put forward by leading scholars who tend to portray CEEC foreign policy behaviour through the prism of history, this paper contends this approach as too simplistic and not very comprehensive. Moreover, the authors stated above tend to generalize greatly as if it CEE were a monolithic region pursuing common foreign policy vis-à-vis Europe, Russia and United States and thus ignoring the fact that national interest of these states differ and vary significantly. Most importantly, many scholars have so far ignored or failed to address the mood of the general public opinion in CEEC towards United States which could be described as a big disillusionment and disappointment especially when it comes to strict US visa policy towards CEEC.

<sup>17</sup> **Rhodes, Matthew** (2004) *'Central Europe and Iraq: Balance, Bandwagon, or Bridge?'*, Orbis, Volume 48, Issue 3, 423-436.

opportunity to interpret and compare foreign policy behaviour in a wider European context.

### **‘Atlanticist’ perspectives within Europe**

Finally, it is time to consider ‘New Europe’s’ foreign policy behaviour in the context of the broader transatlantic community and in comparison with other small states in the alliance. Many scholars have argued that CEEC’s America-friendly attitudes and hence their behaviour towards the United States is exceptional when compared to other European states.<sup>18</sup> This paper holds that this view is short-sighted. To support this argument, the foreign policy tendencies of other small states in the North Atlantic Alliance are taken into consideration.

In short, as presented above, the tendencies of foreign policy of the majority of the small states often depend on their relations with large states (especially with large neighbouring states) and the extent to which the small states would like to develop, transform or preserve these relations. For the most part, it depends if and what threat larger states pose for the interests of the small states (perception of the threat is also included) or vice versa – how large states can defend them. Thus, small states will be forced to set priorities and consider the best available option to guarantee their short-term interests.<sup>19</sup> Membership in both Euro-Atlantic institutions (the EU and NATO), with their fundamental institutional differences, inevitably brings the dilemma of the so-called ‘dual loyalty’. Given the fact that majority of the countries within the Euro-Atlantic community (they are members of both the EU and NATO) are considered as small states this dilemma is, however, unavoidable even if most European countries (and this is especially true in the case of CEEC despite putting them into a category of supposedly pro-American camp versus European one) would prefer not to take sides between Europe and United States. Nevertheless, membership includes not only benefits and privileges of status, material gain and security but also responsibilities.

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<sup>18</sup> Among many, see, for example, **Szamuely, Helen (2003)** *‘The myth of a single European view: Old Europe and New’*, The Bruges Group, Comments, available at:

<http://www.brugesgroup.com/mediacentre/comment.live?article=145>, accessed March 12, 2008.

<sup>19</sup> Long-term strategies are often of less relevance from the small states perspective. Top priority is given to safeguarding the small state’s survival and core values in the short run; otherwise, there may be no long run to bother about, especially given the fact international system is anarchic comprised of independent and sovereign states each pursuing their own national interests. From the realist perspective, small states can hardly and rarely afford the luxury of trying to safeguard its long-term interests in a more balanced world. For further discussion, see, **Handel, Michael I.** (1990) *‘Weak States in the International System’* (London: Taylor and Francis).

The problem, however, is that given scarce resource base and especially limited military capabilities small states typically possess their contribution to meet and contribute in addressing transatlantic and European security challenges is further complicated. As many security and military experts observe, today, however, there is almost no possibility for any of the EU states, especially small one, to contribute equally to international operations led by NATO (read the US) and the EU (read large member states like France) simultaneously.<sup>20</sup>

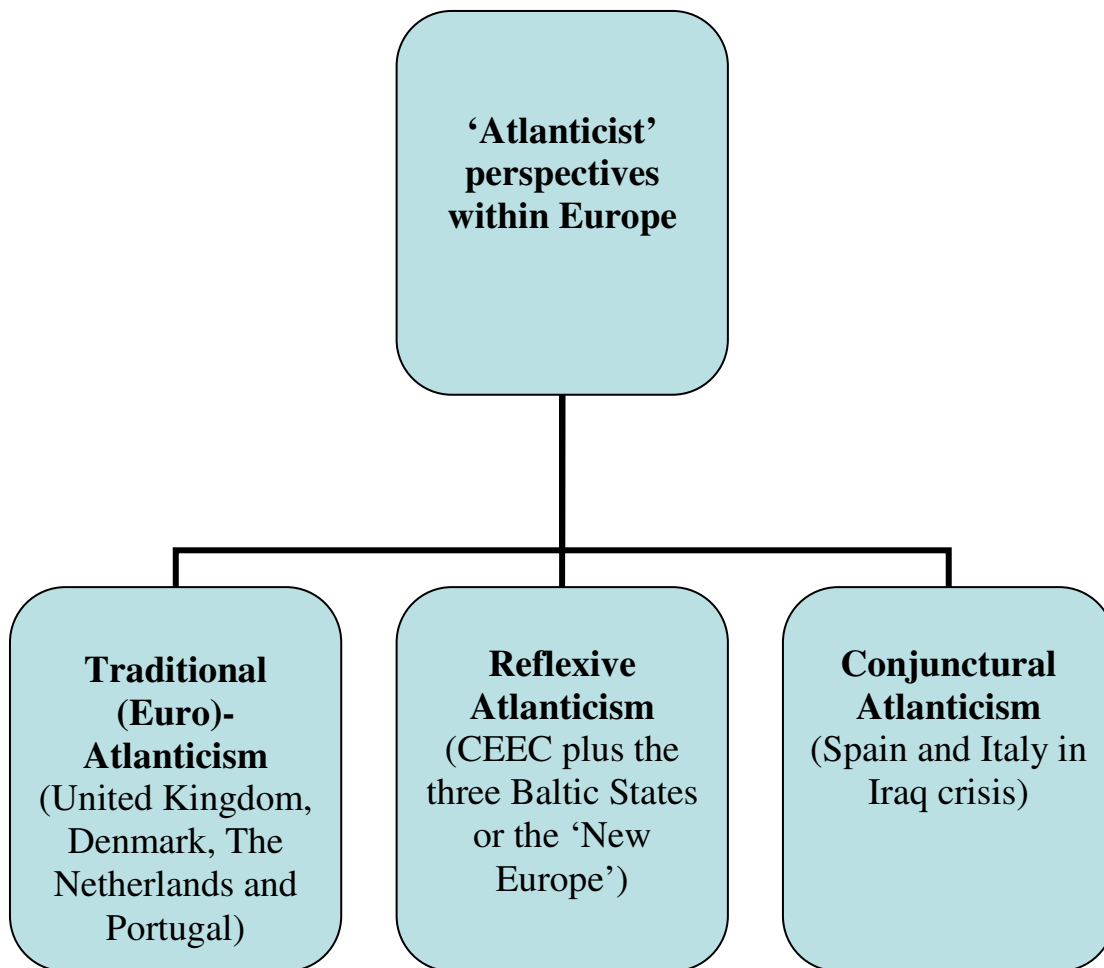
Given the dilemma of ‘dual loyalty’ which is inescapable and hence faced by virtually all small European states whether in the ‘old’ West or the ‘New’ East, the national security priorities will ultimately determine which group or coalition will be formed. Furthermore, the nature of the particular group will largely depend on the issue and will be crucially based on different relations and the overall perception of the EU, the US and Russia.

In the context of transatlantic relations, three main ‘coalitions’ formed by mostly small states within Europe (the EU) could be identified:<sup>21</sup> (see table below)

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<sup>20</sup> For that matter, see **Molis, Arūnas** (2006) ‘*The Role and Interests of Small States in Developing European Security and Defence Policy*’, *Baltic Security and Defence Review*, Vol. 8, 81-100.

<sup>21</sup> The table above is made based on the further and close reading of the following article: **Menon, Anand and Lipkin, Jonathan** (2003) ‘European Attitudes towards transatlantic Relations 2002-2003: An Analytical Survey’, paper prepared for the informal meeting of EU Foreign Ministers, available at: [http://www.eu2003.gr/multimedia/pdf/2003\\_5/917.pdf](http://www.eu2003.gr/multimedia/pdf/2003_5/917.pdf), accessed on March 10<sup>th</sup> 2008.



As one can see from the table above, 'New Europe' does not stand alone with their pro-Atlantic (and thus, America-friendlier) attitudes in a wider European context. The position of Denmark, the Netherlands and Portugal within the EU is of great importance as these countries represent both 'old' and 'small' Europe.

## CONCLUSIONS

**'New/Small Europe' caught in between Europeanist-Atlanticist divisions over the nature of the transatlantic security**

The intense debates over the war in Iraq have demonstrated that divisions in the enlarged Euro-Atlantic community are not simply two-dimensional with the United States on one side and the European Union on the other. The old Europeanist-Atlanticist dichotomy also does not hold currency any longer in today's context as epitomised by the contrast between French and British approaches to the European security and defence architecture in the past. Instead, transatlantic community (and

especially within Europe) is deeply divided over numerous major issues in international politics, including attitudes towards American leadership.

In the so-called 'New Europe' of Central and Eastern European countries, the previously held paradisiacal vision of the unified West lost its sheen once they became full members of the core Euro-Atlantic institutions. As these countries have discovered, Western Europe and United States are in fact very divergent entities and the effort or at least the hope to bridge their differences is a formidable task beyond their strength and capacities. In the aftermath of the major transatlantic crisis over Iraq, these countries have also come to realize that in the Western part of Europe which has been divided into pro and anti American camps itself political elites and public would still continue debate whether or not Eastern part of Europe is enough 'European' given their unambiguous support to the American leadership. The transatlantic community which 'New Europe' has finally joined has indeed become much more fragile and complex beyond anyone's imaginations to foresee the changes in the past which are taking place today.

The focus of this paper was thus to look at the transatlantic relations through the perspective of the small states. This kind of approach offers an alternative way to grasp the position of CEEC which on the surface holds much stronger pro-American views than those found in Western Europe. Furthermore, the central argument of this paper that America-friendly views are not found solely in the 'New Europe' has been reinforced by looking at the atlanticist perspectives in a wider European context. While these nations across Europe have divergent historical experiences and cultural perceptions they are similar in one but very important aspect – they are small states forced to handle the constant 'abandonment/entrapment' dilemma.<sup>22</sup> Since small

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<sup>22</sup> The so-called 'abandonment/entrapment' dilemma as presented by Snyder, G. H (1984) means, that small states joining the alliances might find themselves obligated to participate in a conflict in which they have no direct interest; this risk has been called 'entrapment', the logic opposite of 'abandonment'. The military involvement of CEEC and other small Western European states in the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq is a good illustrative example of this theoretical concept.

With regards to 'abandonment' from the perspective of CEEC, and especially from the perspective of the Baltic States and to lesser extent Poland and Finland which all border Russia and thus can not escape realities of geopolitics, it could be argued that since these countries are 'entrapped' anyways bordering such a power, abandonment is an evil that should be avoided at any price. With this perception, quick band-wagoning to the opposite side towards the EU and NATO (an approach summarized as 'leave every Eastern institution, join every Western ones') is a sensible strategy.

See, **Snyder, Glenn. Herald** (1984) *The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics*, World Politics, Vol. 36, No. 4, 461-495. Also, for a useful contribution on the Baltic States, Poland and Finland on that matter, see, **Mouritzen, Hans** (1998) *Bordering Russia: theory and prospects for Europe's Baltic rim* (Aldershot: Ashgate).

states can not afford being left outside, which in terms of political or economic exclusion would eventually only lead to further isolation especially in increasingly global world, they need to take all possible measures to be included into the strategies of the chosen large states. This is the only way for them to get an opportunity to develop and pursue their own foreign policy agenda. Thus, especially with respect to the 'New Europe', support from both Brussels and Washington (not to mention Paris, London and Berlin), is vital for the successful development and promotion of their national interests. Above all, none of these states wish to be marginalized by the larger entities in the international environment whether it is formed of larger states or supranational institutions; the fact that they are small and in most cases located in the periphery or at the crossroads of Europe is challenging enough.

The main underlying conclusion that could be draw from the above presented analysis of small-state behaviour is that transatlantic disputes first and foremost hurt small states. Therefore, European ambitions to turn the EU into a sort of counterweight power soft-balancing unconstrained or US unilateralism as well as American turn into isolation is seen as dangerous. If history has taught small European states anything, it is that keeping America and Europe close together is their best hope for survival.

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