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The power of complex territorial governance

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US HEGEMONY AND THE NEW EUROPEAN DIVIDE:

THE POWER OF

COMPLEX TERRITORIAL GOVERNANCE

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ABSTRACT
The focus is on recent shifts in power relations within the Atlantic Community under US hegemonic conditions and the European multilateral endeavours. The hegemonic discourse which supposedly prevails over and dominates this community, can be accounted for by ‘groupthink’ which is going on in the George Bush Jr. administration. At the same time, the multilateral discourse appears to function as a ‘discursive exterior’. In short, Mars is heedless of Venus. The effect of the on-going power relations in the Atlantic community is that security affairs have priority over economic affairs, military power has priority above civic power, and nation-states are put back into the centre of decision-making throughout the world-system. In addition, different ways of re-territorialisation of governance can be observed. On the surface, these processes appear to be, in the long run, not in the interest of the USA or the EU-25 nor do they contribute to the sustainability of the Western community.

KEYWORDS:
Hegemony, power, unilateral and multilateral discourse, world-system, United States of America (USA), Europe, nation-state, sovereignty, territorial governance

Introduction

In his recent “State of the Art” chapter on ‘Power and International Relations’ David A. Baldwin (2002: 188) concludes that ‘Although power is an ancient focus in the study of international relations, there are many opportunities for further research. These include (1) the treatment of power as a dependent variable; (2) the forms of power; (3) institutions and power; (4) domestic politics and power; (5) strategic interaction; and (6) power distributions in different issue areas.’ In my opinion, any selection of a specific object of research always implies some overlap between these elements of the research agenda. This article focuses on the recent distribution of power in the Euro-American Atlantic Community (EAAC). The persistent pattern in this distribution of power is the European civic integration under military dominance of the US hegemony within a common western value system. However, the question of ‘how does power work?’ within this pattern cannot be answered any longer from a post-modern perspective concerning the decline of the modern state, but from a ‘re-modern’ view that recognises the constitutive power of different forms of territorial governance.

Analysis of power dynamics
Here it is assumed that this hypothesis can be made plausible by analysing power in a three-layered way. These layers include: power as a capacity (episodical: ‘power over’); power as a relational phenomenon (dispositional or intransitive: ‘power to’), and power as a structural / systemic
phenomenon (‘shifts in power balance’) (Goverde et alii 2000). Although in the past few sentences, a clash of vocabularies surrounding the concept of power appear to have been reflected (Haugaard, 1997: 21), the layers in the concept of power are only distinguished for analytical reasons. However, a conception of power is needed that allows us to acknowledge both the influence of actors on the development of policies in networks, configurations and so on, as well as the impact of the structural context in which the actors operate. As Clegg has stated (1989: 20) ‘…power is best approached through a view of more or less complex organised agents engaged in more or less complex organised games.’ That brings us to the concept of ‘power dynamics’. Although a pattern in the distribution of power can often be recognised, the persistence of this pattern is always relative. As Haugaard (1997: 144-145) has conceptualised, the continuity as well as the change of power can be characterised on the continuum consensus versus conflict by using specific combinations of goals (of agents) and structures i.e. specific social constructions. Then, in my view the idea of ‘power dynamics’ supposes the existence of different social constructions at the same time. Structures tend to make different actions seem similar and as such, legitimate actors take for granted certain practices for example acts of super-ordination or subordination. At the same time, actors can attempt to obtain their own goals by consensus or conflict. And by doing so, they can change the rules or even the structure of the game. That is why the concept of power implies also dynamism. Theoretically, power dynamics can be regarded in two ways. First, it reflects the power relations caused by the ever-changing forms of social construction for example social capital and political participation. Second, power dynamics is the process that produces and re-produces (the circuits of) power as a capacity, power as a relational phenomenon, and power as a structural / systemic phenomenon (Goverde et alii 2004: 16). However, the ultimate result of power dynamics is time-space related, in other words contingent. Of course, under hegemonic conditions the power dynamism may produce a rather predictable result in the short term. At the same time, however, the position of the hegemonic power can be eroded which will have a huge impact on the structure of power in the long term.

The main empirical claim of this paper is that the debate concerning the development of the US-European relations in the highlight of American hegemony has indirectly deepened and legitimated a New European Divide in the parallel process of the EU-enlargement and the EU-Constitutional decision-making. The European nation-states could not realise a general consensus concerning becoming involved in the Iraq War nor could they develop a feasible institutional structure for the EU-25. Of course, these two processes are not formally connected. From a European perspective, however, the practical impact of these parallel processes is two-fold. On the one hand, it has slowed down European integration as a civil power in the short term. On the other hand, it has enhanced the insight that a European military power has become unavoidable in the long run.
The main theoretical claim here is that the retardation in civil power as well as the renaissance of military power in Europe have both urged academics to reconsider the function of the nation-state as a sovereign power. In addition, the relevance of different types of new territorial governance needs to be re-examined in the European realm.

From an analytical perspective, the USA and the European nation-states seem to be involved in two different projects, i.e. a hegemonic and an internationalist project. However, the recognition of the mutual dependency of the territorial organised sovereign power of the USA as well as its non-hegemonic European significant allies, is still the starting point for rather efficient solutions (military, economically and institutionally), particularly in global security affairs. It seems that multilateral, supra-national, or cosmopolitan political organisations have neither the ‘dispositional’ power nor the ‘structural’ power to offer satisfying solutions for co-operation and co-ordination problems at stake today. However, the relevance of territorial organised sovereign powers seems not to be consistent with many of the globalisation studies conducted in the past few decades. These studies often emphasise the processes of de-territorialisation which enhance the decline of the sovereign power of the nation-state. Of course, there is no consensus at this point. In particular, historical institutionalism has underscored the sustainability of governmental institutions. In a wider contextual perspective, however, some authors – particularly those involved in world systems analysis - explain the new territorial governance as the result of changes in structural power, i.e. a systemic innovation in capitalism.

The structure of the paper is as follows. First, the plausibility of the two-fold impact of the parallel processes of the USA-EU relations and the internal New European Divide will be analysed. This has resulted in the claim that although the USA and Europe seem to be involved in different projects, both projects have underlined the on-going relevance of nation-states as units of sovereign powers, at least in affairs of security and institution building. Secondly, in the wider context of causes and consequences of the US hegemony and the New European Divide, it should be explained why and how specific discourses are woven together to dominate US foreign policy and how do nation-state agencies mediate this meaning resulting in the New European Divide. In this section, the assumptions necessary to construct a valid explanation, are also elucidated. Then, the current worldview of the George W. Bush Jr. administration as well as its ‘discursive exterior’ (multilateral discourse) will be described and explained by using Janis’ theory of ‘groupthink’. By introducing key ideas of the world-system approach, it can be explained how these phenomena have, in a way, paradoxically enhanced many new forms of territorial governance, particularly at the sub-national regional level. Fourthly, it will be argued that in the long term the key-issue is how to organise multi-level governance and that territorial governance has constitutive power in this. It seems that territorial governance implies a set of constraints and opportunities that structure both the hegemonic as well as the non-hegemonic actors. Then ‘...the latter can obtain some power from the hegemonic relationship, whilst the hegemon
gains not only power but additionally obtains the compliance of others in the reproduction of a particular set of structured relations which correspond to their desired vision of reality’ (Haugaard 2002). Theoretically, it is our aim to illuminate by this discursive approach the functioning of power in complex territorial governance and its impacts for the concept of hegemony.

1 USA-Europe relationship: hegemonic and internationalist projects

The first section concerns the plausibility of the two-fold impact of the parallel processes of the USA-EU relations and the internal New European Divide. This results in the claim that although the USA seems to be involved in a hegemonic project, whereas Europe has been involved in a (pragmatic) internationalist project, both parts of the western Atlantic community are still mutually dependent. On the other hand, whatever the difference, both projects have underscored the on-going relevance of nation-states as units of sovereign powers, at least concerning security and institution building.

This section will be based mostly on contributions of intellectual political commentators (Daalder and Lindsay 2003; Garton Ash 2003; Havel 2002; Kagan 2002, 2003, 2004; Moisi 2001; van Wolferen 2003). The subject of the public debate enhanced by these authors implies an Atlantic-bias. However, the term ‘western bias’ coins probably the situation better as has been demonstrated in the participation of countries like Australia and Japan in the western coalition in the war in Iraq.

It is a well-known fact that the Europeans, regardless of whether they migrated to America during the past two centuries or not, have often perceived the USA as ‘the promised land’, if not ‘paradise’. On the other hand, Americans have perceived Europe traditionally as ‘the old world’, ‘the ultimate source of American culture and civilization’: human rights, systemic values, and religion (Rietbergen 1998, 1994). However, besides representing another cultural dimension, the transatlantic relations have a power dimension (particularly military power - NATO - and civic power) as well as a political-economic dimension (Europe-USA competition in WTO and UN-conferences). Then, how do the mutual relations between the USA and Europe influence one another and what is the result in the world today?

In order to find tools to escape from antagonistic framing in the Western partnership, it is time to turn towards two specific lines of argumentation. Besides its analytical characteristic, they both have a normative dimension as well. An important but contested contribution to the ‘widening divide’ hypothesis has been delivered by Robert Kagan in Policy Review (2002), which was later published in a small book entitled ‘Paradise and Power. America and Europe in the New World Order’ (2003). In the second (paperback) edition of this book Kagan has added an afterword concerning ‘America’s Crisis of Legitimacy’ (2004) which is also relevant. Another approach can be found in Vaclav Havel’s
address to the NATO-conference in Prague (19 Nov. 2002). These contributors do not agree with one another. However, after offering a careful summary as well as providing a commentary, this section will conclude that:

1) In the short term, no consensus exists within the Atlantic community in regard to how the Islamic world and the configuration of nation-states in the Middle East in particular should be approached. The source of this conflict seems to reside in the divergence in domestic as well as foreign affairs in the nation-states concerned.

2) In terms of power as seen in a three-layered analytical concept (Goverde et alii 2000: 106-108; Clegg 1989: 211-218) the European members of the Atlantic community do not have the capacity to persuade the USA to behave according to the juridical principles of the UN-treaty (too less ‘episodical power’). However, the USA will probably recognise Europe as its most preferable ally in the long term, because Europe is the closest to the USA, both mentally and culturally as well as in political-economic and political-military terms. In other words, there is a lot of ‘dispositional power’ as well as ‘systemic / structural power’ in the relationship between the USA and the European nation-states. This is why these countries will continue to respect one another as mutual interdependent allies during the long term.

‘Power and Weakness’
Kagan (2002: 3-4): ‘On the all-important question of power (i.e. the author means here military power, HG) – the efficacy of power, the morality of power, the desirability of power – American and European perspectives are diverging. Europe is turning away from power, or to put it a little differently, it is moving beyond power into a self-contained world of laws and rules and transnational negotiation and co-operation. It is entering a post-historic paradise of peace and prosperity, the realisation of Kant’s ‘Perpetual Peace’. Meanwhile, the US remains mired in history, exercising power in the anarchic Hobbesian world where international laws and rules are unreliable and where true security and the defence and promotion of a liberal order still depend on the possession and use of military might. Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus: They agree on little and understand one another less and less. And this state of affairs is not transitory – in light of the product of one American election or one catastrophic event. The reasons for the transatlantic divide are deep, long in their making, and likely to endure. When it comes to setting national priorities, determining threats, defining challenges, and fashioning and implementing foreign and defence policies, the United States and Europe have parted ways’.

According to Kagan, the transatlantic divide cannot be explained, neither by the election results and the behaviour of the George W. Bush Jr. administration, nor by the September 11 catastrophe in New York. Two other factors are relevant:
1) *Differences in power*: Europe’s weakness presents no other alternative than to focus on multilateral institutions and rules. ‘Appeasement’ is not a dirty word for those who have no other choice.

2) *Ideological divide*: although the EU was founded for geo-political reasons, it is by this institution – i.e. a co-operation based on multilateral agreements as a result of deliberations and negotiations – that Europe has received the ethos of ‘civil power’. That is why Kagan was not surprised when he discovered that Europe prefers a world that is comparable with the EU and which implies that rules and laws have priority over military power. In this ‘postmodern’ world, concepts such as ‘raison d’état’ and the a-morality in Machiavelli’s theses have been replaced by ‘moral confidence’.

Prior to writing about Vaclav Havel’s rhetorical analysis of the American-European relationship, an investigation into the key comments made against Kagan’s line of argumentation appears to distinguish more clearly between an American and a European perspective. Of course, the media hype around this author’s provocative article has consequently provided much commentary. When selecting counter-arguments, a special issue of the Dutch well-documented and reputed magazine, ‘Internationale Spectator’ (IS 2002), was found to bear fruit. However, within this limited source, I can not claim to be exhaustive as well.

*Comments on Kagan’s thesis:*

First, Kagan uses a very limited concept of power (military power only). If a more comprehensive concept of power had been introduced (Haugaard 2002; Scott 2001; Poggi 2001, Goverde et alii 2000) then one would not have so easily concluded that Europe does in fact lack power. Power in contemporary politics is meant to be understood as a layered-concept (episodical, dispositional, systemic / structural) with transitive and intransitive dimensions. Of course, those who have a monopoly on the means of violence can create accomplished facts in a short span of time. However, this does not imply a non-contested unilateral hegemony in the end.

Secondly, it is amazing that Kagan – an American who has lived in Europe for a long time - sketches such a generalised picture depicting the politics of European countries. It was obvious from the beginning that France and the UK have different perspectives on issues of security in the Middle-East. Whereas the German-cabinet – besides its military presence in the Kosovo war, but engaged in a process of re-election - did not want to be involved in a war in Iraq at all. Kagan disregards also (the rather neo-functionalist argument) that the EU-members, which possess a growing economic power that generally precedes military power, have become incrementally but steadily conscious in regard to the urgency of a common policy in foreign and security affairs (‘second pillar’ in EU-policy-making).¹

¹ The world, particularly the USA, has experienced the economic power of the EU. For example the EU will be a consumers’ market of circa 380 million after its enlargement, May 2004; there were already trade-conflicts (WTO); perhaps the EU will begin to pay for oil in euros soon.
As a matter of course, more time is needed to translate economic capacity into political-military power. The structure of pluralistic, even chaotic decision-making within vague eastern borders in EU-governance, should be changed into a clearly defined territorial structure with political responsibility for military operations. However, there is no doubt that the EU-powers have more than only ‘postmodern ambitions’ (such as multilateral, preventive diplomacy, humanitarian missions, and aid for development). The concept of the EU-constitution provides the possibility of special military cooperation among EU-member states.

A third comment regards the pitfall that Europe will turn into itself (isolationism), particularly if the USA stops playing the role of ‘reluctant sheriff’ – as Kagan suggests – as well as if the Europeans continue to create new borders to the ‘otherness’. However, Kagan has misperceived the situation here. On the one hand, although the Americans are not looking for another military mission under common command such as in the case of Kosovo, it cannot be expected that the USA can permit to let the European legacy go ‘non-Atlantic’. That is why a common EU-army with its own headquarters separate from NATO is not in the interest of the USA. On the other hand, the US strategy towards Europe, ‘Europe whole and free’, developed by George H.W. Bush after the fall of the Berlin Wall, could turn Europe into itself, and this is also no longer operational. Indeed, it seems that George W. Bush Jr. has changed to another strategy concerning the ‘old world’ in 2003: ‘Divide et impera’ (compare 2003: benefits to Spain and Poland; punishments to France). This strategy is dividing the Europeans, even the EU-member states and as such it makes many European countries related to, if not dependent on the US security policies.

Furthermore, and in contrast to Kagans’ thesis, the USA was not free to choose the role of sheriff. The country became the world’s superpower after the collapse of the Soviet-Union. In particular, the US hegemony was already confronted by signs of its declining power preceding 1989. Therefore, it is also imaginable that the USA will no longer enhance effectively a united Europe. In fact, a united Europe is probably able to compete seriously with US civic power and as such it could deepen an USA-European divide. On the other hand, a united Europe is not easy to imagine as well. As Norman Davies (1996: 18, map 3) has argued extensively there are many ethnic, geographical, cultural, economic and political borders crossing the European continent. All of these borders have produced specific identities in various parts of Europe. These different identities seem to imply that Europeans themselves are often Eurocentric to ‘other’ people, nations and countries in the rest of the world. After the ‘German evil’ and ‘the ‘Soviet peril’, it seems that some Europeans (among others the Gaulistes in

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2 However, this was already part of the Treaty of the West-European Union (1954).
3 For example the OPEC oil crisis (1973), the defeat of the USA in Vietnam (1975) and the end of monetary hegemony of the US-dollar (Ecu 1986/Euro 2002)
4 Norman Davies has distinguished the following frontiers and divides in Europe: 1) Geographical divide (from North Cape to Matapan), 2) Roman limes (very similar to the Wine line – viticulture -), 3) Catholic-Orthodox divide, 4) Ottoman Line (very close to modern limits of Islam), 5) 19th Century Industrialisation, 6) Iron Curtain (1945-1989)
France and the Russian leadership) have developed an antagonistic attitude to ‘the Anglo-Saxons’. Indeed, there are some forces that emphasise that the USA and Europe can each go their ‘parted ways’ (Kagan: 2002: 4). However, we should not exaggerate this (de Wilde 2003). The US unilateralism (if any, see below) is not completely new. During the Cold War, the USA acted unilaterally on several occasions (Vietnam, Chile, Mid-America). In fact, neither Europe nor the individual European countries (particularly not Germany) were able to develop an autonomous foreign and security policy during the years between 1945-1989.

A fourth comment directed towards Kagans’ ideas is that it is difficult to explain why there is no relationship between USA domestic and foreign policies. If the war in Iraq was not the result of the ‘unilateral macho-politics of the Bush Jr. administration’ (van Rossum, 2003: 529), then how are we to understand why Saddam Hussein’s secular regime was not a world order threat before September 11 2001. On the contrary, it was a fact that the Iraq leader had already invaded Kuwait in the nineties.

Furthermore, the US military intervention in the Middle East fits in well with the characteristic preoccupations and obsessions of the neo-conservative political circuits, either ‘democratic imperialists’ or ‘assertive nationalists’. Democratic imperialists, a minority in the Bush campaign team (Perle, Wolfowitz), argued that the USA should use its overwhelming military, economic and political might to remake the world in its image. By doing so the USA would satisfy its own interests as well as those of other countries. Assertive nationalists (Cheney, Rumsfeld, Rice), however, ‘…were skeptical of nation-building, especially when it involved the US military (…) The US military “is not a civilian police force” Rice argued. “It is not a political referee. And it is certainly not designed to build a civilian society”. She (Rice, HG) wrote at another point, “There is nothing wrong with doing something that benefits all humanity, but that is, in a sense a second-order effect.” (Daalder and Lindsay, 2003: 46-47). However, being in office, it was, according to R.Clarke (2004) the Minister of Defence himself, Donald Rumsfeld, who had asked his advisors on the very day that an airliner crashed into the Pentagon (9.11) if and how this incident could be used ‘to take him (i.e. Saddam, HG) out there’. The US Under-secretary of Defence, Paul Wolfowitz, has also given a view behind the scenes (Vanity Fair, May 2003). He confirmed that one major goal of implementing a regime change in Iraq was not only to discover the presence of mass-destruction weapons, but also to create an opportunity in which American troops could be withdrawn from Saudi-Arabia.

A fifth comment to be made concerns Kagan’s limited view on international political relations. It is not only the US-EU relationship that matters as such. This relationship should be perceived in the wider perspective of the global power system (de Wilde, 2002: 532). There are four centres of powers

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5 The European powers were forced to de-colonise as quickly as possible. Furthermore, they had been confronted with many disagreements with the US (Suez Canal, New-Guinea, boycott of companies that produced oil and gas pipelines from East to West).
around the US superpower position: Japan, China, the Russian Federation, and the EU/F/BRD-system. It is the US-Japan-EU/F/BRD cluster that represents the West and dominates the UN-system. The other big powers, Russia and China, follow this cluster with craftiness, sometimes posing a potential threat. If one evaluates Kagan’s thesis from this world-wide power perspective (‘the 1 + 4 – formula’) then the conclusion is:

1) Do not exaggerate the growth of the US-European divide;
2) European ‘isolation’ could be a tragic pitfall, but it is not yet a serious threat;
3) The unilateral role of the USA is not unavoidable, but it can develop into a ‘self-fulfilling prophecy’ (de Wilde, 2002: 532).

Finally, Kagan underexposes the impact of ‘globalization as a process of Americanization’ (Baar, 2002: 537; Berndtson, 2000: 157-169; Ritzer, 2000). The American way of life dominates the everyday life of the average man in the street throughout Europe. There is no real mental divide on both sides of the Atlantic, rather a more dominant cultural similarity. This cultural resemblance implies that there is a relevant structural power which probably enhances the Western or at least ‘Atlantic community’.

Although some intellectuals criticise the quality of this culture, the ‘bearable lightness’ of the American way of life seems to produce cheerfulness and universality, whereas ‘weightiness’ creates exclusion and borderlines. According to Baar (2002: 537) it was Fukuyama (1992), who cried ‘victory’ of liberal democracy by reference to Hegel and Nietzsche. Although, viewed in American perspective, these authors are probably both too deterministic and too proto-fascist, respectively, Fukuyama – notwithstanding his false conclusion about the ‘end of history’ - seems to have better understood the political relevance of Americanisation than Kagan has done in his reference to Kant and Hobbes.

At this point the normative dimension comes in. If Kagan’s thesis does not hold water, several issues other than the suggested divide between the USA and Europe seem to be even more important. If the facts still show that there is US dominance throughout the world today (since 1989), how should Europe respond it? Is the US dominance the best guarantee for sustaining the Western community? Is the idea of a common Europe best treated as part of a pacified Atlantic political entity? In my opinion, we should listen to Vaclav Havel’s address to NATO in order to learn several values and sets of norms with which we can find an answer to these questions.

‘How to behave among friends?’: Vaclav Havel’s address to NATO (Prague: 19 Nov. 2002)

The main subjects in Havel’s speech were as follows: the common values of America and Europe, the enlargement of the ‘Euratlantic community’ towards the East up until all the new democracies of Europe are part of it, and the dilemma between fighting evil and the value of sovereignty (Garton Ash,
NRC, 31.1.03). Of course, Vaclav Havel, although he was President of the Czech Republic and he was a host of an international organisation, is a modest, but intellectual personality, who accepts the role of a moralist and even of a dissident when a situation requires a firm statement. Havel told his NATO-audience: We have to weigh very carefully whether the war will be a liberation of a nation from its criminal regime and protect mankind against its weapons, or whether it will serve as an example of ‘brotherhood’ in the style Brezjnev delivered to Tsjecho-Slovakia in 1968.

Furthermore, Havel referred to the experiences of his country (1938 and 1968) and he gave the members of NATO an early warning to never make hasty decisions. From his speech (translation NRC, 21.11.2002) several principles (values and norms) can be deduced in order to help decision-makers who are facing difficult dilemmas. First of all, Havel underlined that the USA, as an almost altruistic power, was a decisive force in solving two great wars on the European continent. He also emphasised that Europe could not have resisted communism effectively without the support of the USA in the era after these world wars, and – finally – that the USA was a driving force – although rather late and incomplete – in solving several European conflicts after 1989. On the other hand, the USA should realise, according to Havel, that it is conceivable that powers on other continents will be challenging its power within a decade or two (i.e. the 1+4-formula). Then, it is not only good to remember that your roots lay in the European civilisation, but it is also important that you can keep the power balance in sustainable order because you can trust on an active alliance consisting of 500 million Europeans. Then, the principles which Havel has developed in regard to how to behave among friends, can be summarised as follows:

- The lives of people as well as public values such as freedom and human dignity are more important than sovereignty;
- Friendship will never grow on lies;
- Before taking decisions and when enhancing friendship, create a public dialogue in mutual openness;
- Listen well to the arguments you are not familiar with;
- Mutual understanding of other peoples, cultures and traditions does imply derogation of your norms and criteria nor does it imply a denial of your convictions in order to keep a good (diplomatic) atmosphere;
- Decisions well made in the past are no guarantee for decisions well made in the future;
- Falsehood will never free us from accountability for our decisions, neither the good ones or the poor ones;
- All decisions produce responsibility inherent to all citizens, as well as to history;
- Nip the evil in the bud; that is why a general threat (of human lives, freedom and dignity) can justify a preventive intervention against a sovereign nation-state;
- Be aware of undesirable ‘brotherhood’.
Of course, these principles could be misinterpreted as a criticism against the recent strategy and policy of the USA. However, another conclusion is also possible: Havel has revealed that a widening divide between the US and Europe, as suggested by Kagan, is not an irreversible project. The antagonistic behaviour within the Atlantic community since 20 Jan. 2001 appears not to be in the interest of both Western partners. As Garton Ash has expressed: ‘it is time to dance for Europe and the USA’ (NRC, 30 May 2003). However, since the Ronald Reagan era, we all know that ‘it takes two to tango’.

The USA and the EU projects

Does Kagan’s analysis not have enough of a platform to stand on, then, what are probably the consequences of Havel’s line of argument for Europe? In order to answer these related questions, it would be wise to analyse the main character of the American and the EU projects. According to James Anderson (2003) these projects develop parallels between three dichotomies: unilateral / multilateral; military power / civic power; neo-conservatism / neo-liberal ideology. These three conceptual continuum are based respectively on the following distinct criteria: different strategies with respect to allies, different forms of power, and different ideologies of globalisation (Anderson, o.c.: 36).

Anderson emphasises that now unilateralism / multilateralism encapsulates the contrast between the Pentagon faction (Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz along with Bush’ national security adviser Condoleezza Rice) and the more cautious US State Department of Colin Power. However, it is also possible that both strategies may be used in tandem or working towards the same purpose, operating simultaneously and effectively in concert than contradiction (Anderson, o.c.: 37). Each strategy probably has its own advantages and disadvantages. Of course, ‘… multilateralism can mobilise allies … but allies, such as the European Union or Russia, are also major powers … in their own right (or wrong?), with their own particular interests in foreign interventions, which may constrain the freedom of manoeuvre of the United Sates. They are rivals capable of causing US hegemony substantial trouble or maybe, as in the case of the European Union or China, they are potential rivals for hegemony. Keeping such rivals subordinate while at the same time dealing with enemies is thus a major objective of US foreign policy, and here unilateralism has the advantage of excluding rivals/allies from key decision making, enabling the United States to set a global agenda that suits itself.’ (Anderson, o.c.: 37-38)

The unilateral strategy can be enhanced when solutions for problems like September 11 – which were attacks on the main symbols of global economic and military power located in the USA but which were almost immediately converted into a national event (Smith 2002) – are found in military reactions rather than civic ones. Because US military power is much more hegemonic, and therefore unrivalled than civic power which ‘…involves less tangible aspects involving transnational institutions, their ideological or normative foundations and limited democracy (…)’ here the moral

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6 However, after the self-claimed victory in Iraq (San Diego, 1.5.2003, Bush’ remarks aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln) the facts about mass destruction weapons as well as the actual resistance to USA-coalition occupation in Iraq seem to emphasise the relevance of the principles of ‘friendship and lies’ and ‘undesirable brotherhood’.
authority of the United States is even more open to challenge.’ (Anderson, o.c.: 38). In general, it can be expected that unilateralists are leery of the effectiveness of multilateral, even global institutions like the UN and WTO in creating world peace or the enhancement of US interests. This implies also that the ideological dimension of the strategy comes closer to neo-conservatism instead of neo-liberalism, which is generally positive-oriented to economic and cultural globalisation. On the other hand, the unilateral strategy is a high-risk strategy. Because it is easy to become involved in a war, it is difficult, however, to get disentangled without either having an explicit set of goals or providing a vision of how the international political fabric should look in the future.

The main disadvantage of the unilateral strategy is that it can easily de-stabilise or destroy the alliances formed with friends as well as the regimes of enemies. This can produce all types of shifts in power balances that can force the hegemonic state into unexpected and undesirable wars. Such a situation is described extensively, for example, by Niccolò Macchiavelli (Discorsi, II, 9) concerning the war between the Romans and the Samnites which were traditional allies. Of course, the hegemon – represented by either the Clintons and Powells or the Bushs and Rumsfelds – will attempt to avoid such risks. It will do everything necessary, even multilateral activities, to further its dominance. This analysis brings us to the following conclusion: US foreign policy in the first decade of the 21st century can be characterised as a typical case of ‘multilateral unilateralism’, rooted in military power with neo-conservative dimensions in a mostly neo-liberal political and economic polity. From this point of view, ‘multilateral behaviour’ in a hegemonic project appears to be mainly window-dressing: it is used to borrow time or to gain legitimacy for decisions which have been already made.

If according to Kagans’ thesis and in the terms of Anderson, the European approach is primarily multilateral based on civic power and on a neo-liberal ideology concerning globalisation, then what are the (dis-)advantages or risks of this policy? Indeed, the process of European integration seems to be based on multilateral behaviour rooted in interdependent civic power and institutionalisation founded in a dominant neo-liberal ideology. The nation-states as members of the EU (since 1.5.2004: 25) seem to be behaving, first of all, internationally. Of course, the EU includes a serious supranational legacy, but new agreements are all based on the well-perceived interests of the (majority of) member-states in an intergovernmental arena. The power balance between these member-states is funded on a system of checks and balances in the growing EU-polity. Although a much debated (neo-)functionalist argument, the EU is mostly based on a neo-liberal ideology with an emphasis on civil power in the market (van Schendelen 2003) and on playing down the role of the nation-state, state borders, security and military power. A tangible effect of the EU for European citizens is the

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7 Anderson (o.c. 48-51) illustrates this position as follows. While Powell constructed an alliance (with the EU, Russia and the UN) for Israel’s withdrawal from the West Bank (2002), a typical multilateral approach, this policy was pure ‘multilateral unilateralism’ as it bought time for Sharon to finish his military target around Arafats’ headquarters in Ramallah.
introduction of a common currency, the euro. However, the European barometer concerning the
functioning of liberal democracy in the EU-polity indicates a low level of legitimacy, although the
power of the European parliament has grown seriously, particularly since 1990 (introduction of the co-
decision making procedure, Nugent 1991: 165) and is foreseen to be strengthened in the New
European Constitution. Here we touch on a disadvantage of a multilateral approach: How to give a
‘liberal internationalist’ project with its emphasis on international law, transnational institutions and
the multilateral exercise of civil power enough democratic legitimacy? In order to make the European
international project an institutional alternative to an USA hegemonic project, it should be congruent
not only with its economic settings, but also with political values (Held and McGrew 2002, Held
2000). However, there are no European political parties yet. In addition, no president has been elected.
There is an internal market in the EU-15, but not yet in the EU-25. The EU-borders prohibit open
competition on the world-markets for many goods, particularly agricultural ones. On the one hand, this
illustrates that the EU is a project *sui generis*. On the other hand, the functioning of the EU-polity
gives political ammunition to globalists as well as anti-globalists. Furthermore, the multilateral civil
power has not yet been supported by a backdrop of a common army. Indeed, European
multilateralism is also reluctant and risky, based on anything but coercive power in everyday life,
whereas its value and belief system (about good and evil, about human rights, about capitalism, about
democracy, about the rule of international law) is often characterised as being western-biased. This
explains probably why all European nation-states, although members of the EU, are still completely
involved in military and security affairs. As a result of the USA unilateral decision making to go
headlong into the war on terror, these European nation-states are back in the centre of the political
arena. National politicians feel great now and, as a result, territorial governance at the national level
seems to have been revitalised.
Other critical comments on the European multilateral approach include that it is often legitimised by
referred to the opinion of the ‘international community’ (Rwanda, Congo, Liberia, Afghanistan).
However, does this community really exist otherwise than for pragmatic reasons? If the regime of the
Baath’ party in Iraq was that bad from a universally ethical perspective, what should be done with
regimes like those in Zimbabwe, North Korea, etcetera? However, European multilateral behaviour is
not a pure consensus on so-called universal values, but it is often linguistically used in combination
with the definition of the national (Haiti) or European (Afghanistan) interest.

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8 However, in March 2003 the EU has declared to create an EU-defence policy that would be able to mobilise
and employ 60,000 soldiers for peace keeping operations within two months. This quick intervention force lacks
until now a good system for transport, communication and intelligence. Nevertheless, EU troops are involved in
Macedonia, in the Congo, and also they want to take over NATO-command in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Of course,
its relation to NATO is a key political issue in the Atlantic community. Being cautious of the competition,
NATO itself has created an operational NATO-Response Force (according to NATO’s Chief-commander US
The real risk of the multilateral ‘internationalists’ European project is its dependency on the USA hegemony in cases of security. As soon as the USA take unilateral military decisions, the weakness of the multilateral internationalist project is at stake. The European powers, i.e. Germany and France, were not persuasive enough in convincing the USA that a clear UN-mandate was necessary before getting involved in the Iraq war. As a result, the Western Iraq coalition was joined only by a few of the EU member states and CEEC (UK, E, I, DK, NL, PL, BG), whereas a few others gave their somewhat concealed support (FIN, S). The hegemonic state responded with the classic mechanism of ‘divide et impera’ (contracts given to Poland; Secretary-General NATO awarded to a Dutch minister). This lack of consensus among the European nation-sates has been reflected in the pace of the European integration process. I argue that on the one hand the war in Iraq and the split in participation of the EU-nation states in the coalition has produced the real backdrop for the delay in legitimising the New European Constitution and has almost created an political obstacle for the EU-enlargement. On the other hand, the power of the EU internationalist project implies that there is a potential capacity to offer help (diplomacy, UN-support, peace keeping actions) if the US hegemon has to disentangle itself from unintended and undesirable wars (van Wolferen 2003, Havel 2002).

From this perspective, it can be concluded that the European integration can be positioned now in a two-fold way:

- Short term retardation: There is a New European Divide. Instead of the division by the Iron Curtain, there is now a divide between those who participate actively in the coalition initiated under American hegemony and those countries that keep out of it. As a result, in all European countries public debates concerning security affairs are dominated by national governmental agencies. Furthermore, each nation state appears to be deciding in a relatively autonomous way about its participation, militarily and/or politically, in the ‘war on terror’ and ‘the pre-emptive wars against rogue states’. This nation-state autonomy seems to be reflected as well in the debate of the EU-15 (+10 CEEC) concerning a new EU-constitution. Particularly nation-states that have reviewed their independence just a decade ago, for example Poland, are ready to mobilise their peripheral power in the double arena of the ‘European order’ as well as the ‘world order’. Consequently, neither the EU-presidency of Italy (2003/2) nor Ireland (2004/1) could produce an agreement on the EU constitutional structure before the day of CEEC enlargement – 1.5.04 -.

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9 On May, the 28th, 2003 the presidency of the EU-Convention has published 238 pages with proposals to adapt the EU-Constitutional treaties. Jean-Luc Dehaene (former Belgium Prime-Minister and vice-president of the Convention) wants to prevent that the European Council has to re-negotiate all issues. He has summarised the (dis-)agreements as follows: a majority agrees the extension of power of the European Parliament, the introduction of a EU-Secretary of State, the inclusion of the UN-Human Rights in the EU-constitution, and more power to the Ministers of Treasury in the euro-zone; there is no consensus yet about a permanent president of the European Council, the quantity of seats in the European Commission, the amount of seats for each member state in the EP, and the voting-rate for each member state in the Council of Ministers (NRC, 31.5.03)
Enhancement of integration in the long run: It is obvious that the New European Divide is neither in the interest of the EU nor of the Atlantic community. In fact, it weakens the common defence system organised in NATO. Furthermore, it will force the USA to remain involved in war and peace affairs on the European continent, whereas its resources are more urgently needed in other areas. On the other hand, it probably promotes the EU-integration, particularly in the second pillar (military and security) as well as in the third pillar (home office and court system) of the EU polity. Xavier Solana, the EU secretary for European Political Co-operation, has declared already that it is not a matter of if, but when will there be an EU-military force.

In summary, the USA and the European projects are different, but they are still mutually interdependent. The analysis in this section has emphasised that Robert Kagan’s original thesis needs more of a nuance. The suggested American-European divide is not quite as deep as formulated and it is also not unavoidable. However, the ‘how to behave among friends’ under circumstances of unexpected and undesirable wars has not yet been answered. Kagan recently (2004) accepted the idea that the USA is in a crisis of legitimacy. ‘Today’s debate about multilateralism and legitimacy is thus not only about principles of law, or even about the supreme authority of the UN; it is also about a transatlantic struggle for influence. It is Europe’s response to the unipolar predicament.’ And furthermore: ‘There can be no question (...) that the Bush administration has suffered, abroad and home, from its failure to win Europe’s full backing (...). There are indeed sound reasons for the United States to seek European approval. But they are unrelated to international law, the authority of the Security Council, and the as-yet non-existent fabric of the international order. Europe matters because it, and the United States, form the heart of the liberal, democratic world.’ (...) ‘The challenge for the USA will be to cede some power to Europe without putting US security, as well as the security of Europe and the entire liberal democratic world at risk.’ (...) ‘Nor will Europeans accord legitimacy to the United States when it seeks to address those challenges by itself, especially if it uses force, which it sometimes finds necessary.’ (Kagan 2004: 81-87).

In my view, Kagan takes a position of acceptance in regard to the criticism which states that military power is a relative resource. However, he resists the idea that ‘multilateral behaviour’ is not simply another word for ‘approval by Berlin and Paris’. Of course, from a hegemonic perspective it is probably difficult to imagine that the Westphalia model which includes nation-state sovereignty, and which is primarily characterised by the different layers of territorial governance, could become in competition with other forms of political organisation. In an interdependent global world many transnational problems require solutions beyond sovereignty or pooled sovereignty. That is why different multilateral facilities are requested, such as for example, a juridical corpus, effective multilateral agencies, procedures of assessment and control of universal human rights, as well as technological and administrative advanced control mechanisms, in order to prevent pandemic events.
and to build a new international world order (De Villepin 2004). Nevertheless, the remaining issue is still about power. However, whatever the character of a region’s project, hegemonic or internationalistic, the definition of the problem differs. Not only does the episodical use of military power has relevance, but the driving forces behind dispositional and structural power should also be taken into account.

2 Nation-states: locus of security and counter of ‘hegemonic projects’

How can the development of the relationship among the partners in the Atlantic community, as analysed in the former section, be explained? In fact, the concepts of ‘hegemonic’ and ‘internationalist’ projects have helped us to create a semblance of order in the on-going streams of data and information. The characteristics of these different projects reflect the role and position of the USA and the European countries in the configuration of the nation-states in the political world system. However, the various types of behaviour displayed by these nation-states can only attain significance after further discursive research.

Isn’t it surprising that the representatives of nation-state agencies are back in the centre of the daily headlines? Wasn’t it the hard core of political and economic discourse almost all over the world during the last two decades, that government should retreat and that more space should be left to the market? Wasn’t it promised that the market and the firms as main actors could solve all types of problems in society more effectively and efficiently than could ever be expected from governments? Then, why has this commonly shared worldview disappeared? Why do the global events seem to represent ‘clashes of civilisations’ (Huntington 1998/1996) instead of enhancing production and trade all over the globe? Why could the era of ‘the end of history’ (Fukuyama, 1992) exist for only a decade? Why are territories, borders, and geo-politics of nation-states back in the centre of power and politics, whereas de-territorialisation and de-construction of the state has been one of the key issues debated in political and social sciences during the past two decades?

Probably the September 11 catastrophe and the daily episodes taking place in the Middle East have prevented us from seeing the continuity of the power mechanisms and structures in the backdrop of macro-social (individualisation, localisation, networking, media as the space of politics) and political-economic (ICT, globalisation) processes. Perhaps, at the moment there is no congruency between the political and economic structures in the world-system. Another hypothesis might be: ‘in reality, the break-up of empires, the decline of a former great power, opens up more possibilities of misperceptions and thus of unintended conflicts than the usually slower and more gradual rise of new powers.’ (Strange 1988/1993:51). Are we confronted with the decline of American hegemony or is the war in Iraq a result of misperception and unintended conflict? Or have we entered already the ‘hybrid system’ of the ‘persistence of sovereign state system’ and ‘the development of plural authority
systems’ (Held 1991: 161). In terms of power and hegemony, we might ask ourselves whether more light on these questions could be shed if we were to focus on ‘dispositional power’ and ‘structural power’.

For obvious reasons of time and space these questions cannot be answered exhaustively. In the wider context of the causes and consequences of the American hegemony and the New European Divide, however, there is still one issue which must be explained. Which discourses are woven together to dominate or to structure the meaning of the USA foreign and military policy, and how do nation-state agencies, for example in Europe, mediate this dominant meaning resulting in the New European Divide?’ If this issue can be tackled, then it would give insight into the functioning of power under hegemonic conditions. Subsequently, the following can be assumed:

- Hegemony is part of a world-system and can be challenged;
- Nation-states are still the locus for decision-making concerning security in a specific territory;
- Globalisation can be interpreted as a ‘rescaling of political economy that moves the power of the state upwards to global arenas and downwards to local arenas’ (Swyngedouw 1997: 159);
- Nation-state agencies take the ideological role of representing and of defending ‘hegemonic projects’ against the resistance put up by a discursive ‘outside’ (Taylor and Flint 2000; Howarth 2000:103; Laclau and Mouffe 1985:110-11).

In the following these assumptions will be briefly elucidated. First, section 3 will summarise the current worldview of the George W Bush Jr. administration and secondly its significant ‘discursive exterior’. Finally in section 4, the insight concerning the functioning of power as well as the impacts for the concept of hegemony will be discussed.

**Hegemony and world-system**

‘The highest form of power emanating from a structural position is world hegemony. In world-system theory, a state is considered to be hegemonic when it has captured the majority of the world-economy’s financial-economic capabilities. Such a position has been achieved by the USA, which is why the twentieth century is sometimes called the ‘American Century’ (Taylor and Flint 2000: 34) These authors have also stated: ‘In world-systems analysis, hegemony in the inter-state system is a very rare phenomenon. It has occurred just three times – Dutch hegemony in the mid-seventeenth century, British hegemony in the mid-nineteenth century and US hegemony in the mid-twentieth century.’ (Taylor and Flint 2000: 67) ‘When production, commercial and financial activities in one state are more efficient than in all rival states, then the state is hegemonic. Such states have been able to dominate the inter-state system, not by threatening some imperium, but by balancing forces in such a way that they can prevent any rival coalition from forming and growing large enough to threaten the hegemonic state’s political leadership. Furthermore, the hegemonic states have propagated liberal
ideas that have been widely accepted throughout the world system. Hence, hegemonic states are much more than world political leaders’ (Taylor and Flint, o.c.: 67). In this perspective, America’s legitimacy crisis (Kagan 2004) as part of the hegemonist project versus the internationalist project, is a sign that the US leadership has not been very successful in ‘balancing the forces’. ‘In the world-system approach, power is a direct reflection of the ability of a state to operate within the system to its own material advantage.’ (Taylor and Flint o.c.: 37) Of course, ‘the power of a state to organise the market to its own ends is not just a property of that state’s resources. The fact that we are dealing with a world-economy and not with a world-empire (that is, there is a multiplicity of states) means that relative positions are more important than measures of absolute power’ (Taylor and Flint 2000: 70).

The relevance of the relative position of a state is very important in Gramsci’s chapter concerning ‘the relation of forces’ (1998/1971: 175-185). In this chapter he explains that ‘…the life of the State is conceived as a continuous process of formation and superseding of unstable equilibria … between the interests of the fundamental group and those of the subordinate groups. It is also necessary to take into account the fact that international relations intertwine with these internal relations of nation-states, creating new, unique and historically concrete combinations. (…) This relation between international forces and national forces is further complicated by the existence within each State of several structurally diverse territorial actors, with diverse relations of force at all levels’ (Gramsci: o.c.: 182).

Thus, the concept of the state according to Weber as a ‘human community that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory’ (Weber 1948: 78) should be considered not as a static but as a dynamic, living phenomenon.

Such a perception of state and hegemony has received a growing salience now in political geography and geopolitics. Then, hegemony refers to the ‘dominant representations and practices’ (Agnew 1998: 6) of elites and power blocs who maintain the ‘dominant story lines’ that help to consolidate existing relations of power. Thus, hegemony does not only include the ‘ideology’ of a dominant elite as well as the corresponding values and beliefs which it disseminates, but it also includes the sedimentation of these values and interests in everyday practices and institutional arrangements. It is, therefore, ‘a lived system of meanings and values – constitutive and constituting – which as they are experienced as practices, appear as reciprocally confirming’ (Williams 1977: 110). Consequently, in this line of argument, a hegemonic structure of world order is imaginable. Then, according to Robert W. Cox (1981: 153) ‘…power takes primarily consensual form, as distinguished from a non-hegemonic order in which there are manifest rival powers and no power has been able to establish the legitimacy of dominance’. According to Keohane (1984: 45-46), ‘the value of this conception of hegemony is that it helps us to understand the willingness of partners of a hegemon to defer to hegemonial leadership.’ (…) ‘Hegemony rests on the subjective awareness by elites in secondary states that they are benefiting, as well as on the willingness of the hegemon itself to sacrifice tangible short-term benefits for intangible long-term gains.’ This is a relevant statement, if we seek an explanation for why the CEEC defer to and co-operate with the unilaterally exercised US military power. Keohane’s remarks
are also relevant in answering why, for instance, France and Germany are challenging the legitimacy of the coercive use of the US military power in the Middle East. This perspective also sheds light in regard to the distinction the CEEC has made between hegemonic rules of the game set in security affairs and those rules set in the political-economic sphere. The consideration of such issues brings us closer to the world-system view again. Keohane, with reference to Wallerstein (1974: 15-17) wrote that a distinction is relevant between hegemonism and imperialism. The ‘…hegemon, unlike an empire, does not dominate societies through a cumbersome political superstructure, but rather supervises the relationship between politically independent societies through a combination of hierarchies of control and the operation of markets’. Thus, when the efficacy, morality, and desirability of models of unilateral or multilateral behaviour have to be judged, such an evaluation should be based on a multi-criteria analysis. Then the input by the hegemon of a powerful (military and / or civic) political superstructure seems to be less important then the hegemon’s capability of legitimately supervising different sovereign states as well as non-state actors in the context of a developing world-economy.

* Nation-states functions and Re-definition of Modernity

It is not our intention to enter the debate about the origin of the state here (van Creveld 1999; Spruyt 1994; Tilly 1990; Elias 1939/1969). However, when considering the state as a political phenomenon in a dynamic context we can follow the claim Taylor and Flint (o.c.: 364) has made. States, originally administering spaces through medieval legacies of power and tribute, with the addition of military power, have been transformed over the last 200 years into a place rather than a space. ‘The construction of the nation-state has merged the space of sovereign territory with the sacred place of homeland. This was a political struggle in that as state space became nation-state place, subjects became citizens. Citizens could put demands on states, resulting in the welfare state that cared for its citizens “from the cradle to the grave”. But in the process, it produced large anonymous bureaucracies that alienated the very people they were supposed to help. For many, the state became part of the problem rather than the solution.’ 10

But what is the state doing nowadays? Storey (2001: 39) wrote the state does the following:

1. ‘It regulates the economy (although currently dominant economic theories suggest that states should minimise the exercise of this function) (see Gilpin below).
2. It provides public goods such as health and transport services (although there is a contemporary trend in many countries to privatise such services).
3. It provides legal and other frameworks which guide its citizens’ behaviour.

10 This image of the history of the state has been contested. For example, Oakeshott (1975: 188) wrote the following. ‘A state … as it appeared in early modern Europe, was not one may guess from its human composition, very promising material from which to constitute anything properly to be called a community’. (…) ‘…no European state (let alone an imitation European state elsewhere in the world) has ever come with measurable distance of being a ‘nation-state’.
4. It defends its territory and its people against external aggression and internal threats.’

When the state is part of the problem, then for some authors it is time to ‘reinvent government’ (Osborne and Gaebler 1992). Based on Anne-Marie Slaughter (1997), according to Gilpin (2001: 379) there are three different positions to this question of adequate governance:

a. Neo-liberal institutionalism; assumption is that the state will continue to be important; because it stresses interstate co-operation, the belief is that formal international regimes and institutions are necessary. State-realism promotes the same belief, but it stems from interstate conflict and rivalry.

b. New medievalism; it is assumed that the state and the state-system have been undermined by economic, technological, and other developments and are being eclipsed by non-governmental actors and the emergence of an international civil society.

c. Transnationalism: here it is argued that ‘…international co-operation by domestic government agencies in specific functional areas is rapidly replacing the decision-making functions of centralized national governments in the management of the global economy.’

Indeed, the relevance and the targets of the state in the future are being contested. The neo-liberal institutionalism seems to be the only full supporter of the continuity of the relevance of state-institutions. To put it more precisely, according to Spruyt (2002: 145) ‘most arguments regarding the future of the state pertain to the capacity of states to act autonomously, or they pertain to state dissolution and secession. They do not have a direct bearing on whether territorial sovereignty as a constitutive principle of international relations is diminishing. (…) On the contrary, the very notion that governments are the primary contracting parties validates their supremacy as the key actors in international relations (over, say, non-governmental organisations or inter-societal networks). In this perspective, Giddens is right when he argues (1987) that international organisations in fact reaffirm territorial states as the key actors.

Of course, this does not imply that globalisation has completely lost its meaning. Globalisation is a parallel and relevant process if interpreted as ‘… re-scaling political economy that moves in two directions away from an institutional concentration of power on the state: upwards to global arenas and downwards to local arenas’ (Swyngedouw 1997: 159). On the one hand, the re-scaling of a political economy based on a global hierarchy of mobility (Bauman 1998: 69-76) requires ‘releasing the brakes’ (deregulation, liberalisation, flexibility, fluidity, easing the tax burden, facilitating the transactions on the financial estate and labour markets, etc). Consequently, nation-states become weaker in their political capacity which can effectively regulate the freedom of global companies.

Freedom. Some authors label this phenomenon as political fragmentation and particularly in the case of de-territorialisation. ‘De-territorialisation is the process of declining state sovereignty in the specific realm of its reduced ability to manage the flows of commodities, information and people across state borders (Hudson, 2000). It results in a new form of geopolitics, one that considers flows, ambiguity and a multitude of institutions rather than stasis, certainty and the permanence of the state. (…) De-territorialisation is the expression of a change from the “modern geopolitical imagination” with its
state-centric picture of the world to one of multiple actors and a confused distinction between the
domestic and the alien. (Flint 2001:2)

On the other hand, global finance, trade and the information industry need the ‘weak states’ as
‘remaining states’ but in another function: ‘local police precincts, securing a modicum of order
required for the conduct of business …’. Indeed, ‘… there seems to be an intimate kinship, mutual
conditioning and reciprocal reinforcement between the “globalisation” of all aspects of the economy
and the renewed emphasis on “the territorial principle”.’ (Bauman o.c.: 67-8). The territorial principle,
however, has been expressed in many forms. Although the national scale has been demoted for
organising economic, political and social relations, no other scale of economic and political
organisation has yet won a similar primacy, whether the ‘local’ or the ‘global’, the ‘urban’ or ‘triadic’,
the ‘regional’ or the ‘supra-regional’. Therefore, practises of governance show many experiments
based on the territorial principle. Recent forms of territorial governance are often strategies linking
different scales to the global, for instance triadisation, regional bloc formation, global city network-
building, cross-border region formation, international localisation, glocalisation, glurbanisation, and
transnationalisation. The emergence of cyberspace as a virtual arena of action that appears to be
everywhere and nowhere has further complicated these problems. Within this scale of relativism, the
nation-state seems to fill a new function. It is like a powerbroker between global and local scales. Thus
instead of regulating the economy, the nation-state becomes the ideological mediator of the ‘global
scale of reality’ (the scale that really matters, because the driving force of accumulation is operating
here) and the ‘local scale of experience’ (where we live our daily lives) (Taylor and Flint o.c.: 44). In
this way the nation-state can function as a political filter to enhance or to reduce the consequences of
the global processes for the communities subordinated to its authority. From this perspective new
forms of territorial governance should not be perceived simply as the revival of territorial
administrative capacity. Then this phenomenon could have been termed as re-territorialisation after
the post-modern turn. On the contrary, however, these new forms of governance represent, under world-
system conditions in a new phase in the capitalist economic order, the constitutive power of identity
politics that works bottom-up and is local anchored in places at ‘the scale of experience’. Thus, the
new forms of territorial governance are part of the mediated consequences of global processes and as
such, of the re-definition of modernity.

In summary, the projects of the USA and Europe cannot be separated, neither from processes in the
world-economy in general, nor from the new function of the nation-state as an ideological mediator
between the scales of reality and of experience. These insights can be used to judge the function of
power under the conditions of hegemony in the beginning of the 21st century (section 4).
3. The Worldview of Bush’s inner circle and the inaccessibility of the ‘discursive exterior’

According to Daalder and Lindsay (2003: 40-41) ‘the logic that underlay Bush’s foreign policy has its roots in the strain of realist political thinking best labeled hegemonist. At its most basic, the hegemonist argument contends that America’s immense power and the willingness to wield it, even over the objections of others, is the key to securing America’s interests in the world.’ What is the discursive background of the hegemonist political thinking? Which discourses are woven together in this belief system of the neo-conservative group that surrounds George Bush Jr.? Following the same authors, hegemonic thinking rests on five propositions, ‘…four of which are familiar to anyone steeped in the realist tradition of world politics championed until recently by generations of European leaders’:

1. The USA lives in a dangerous world, one closer to Thomas Hobbes’ state of nature, in which life is “war of all against all”, compared to Immanuel Kant’s perpetual peace, “in which the idea of law of world citizenship is no high-flown or exaggerated notion (Daalder and Lindsay o.c.: 41-2).

2. Self-interested nation-states are the key actors in world politics. Bush and his advisors do not believe in a fundamental reordering of the structure of world politics by trends of globalisation which undercut the authority of individual states, with power flowing to non-state actors (private corporations or transnational activist groups).

3. Power, especially military power is still the coin of the realm even in a globalized world. But power is more than capability. It is also about will. Leadership is in line with this, as Wolfowitz (1997: A22) once wrote: ‘leadership consists of demonstrating that your friends will be protected and taken care of, that your enemies will be punished, and that those who refuse to support you will live to regret having done so.’

4. Multilateral agreements and institutions are neither essential nor are they necessarily conducive to American interests. ‘With treaties unable to deliver real security to the United States, Washington would be better able to advance its interests by jettisoning constraints on its freedom of action. This policy of the free hand rested on an important assumption: the benefits of flexibility far outweigh the diplomatic costs of declining to participate in international agreements that are popular with friends and allies.’ (Daalder and Lindsay o.c.: 45)

5. The United States is a unique great power and others see it as such. ‘This is the one proposition alien to the realist worldview, which treats the internal make-up and character of states as irrelevant.’ (Daalder and Lindsay o.c.: 45)

Groupthink

Of course, we do recognise the position of Kagan in these five points conceiving the belief system of the key-actors in the Bush administration. In this key-group, however, the one exception is Colin
Powell, ‘a pragmatic internationalist who understood the importance of (military, HG) power, but also worried about the costs of alienating other countries.’ (Daalder and Lindsay o.c.: 45-6). In the first section of this paper we also saw the disagreement among the hegemonists in the Bush’ administration concerning to what extent the United States should use its power to promote America’s ideals.

Remember the distinction made between the ‘democratic imperialists’ (Wolfowitz and Perle) and the ‘assertive nationalists’ (Rice, Cheney, Rumsfeld). Of course, these differences are important, particularly if the US foreign policy is interpreted as being a result of almost pure ‘groupthink’ (Janis 19..). However, as Daalder and Lindsay have argued convincingly, Bush himself is not the voice of the groupthink endeavours only. On the contrary, he is the main believer, and as a consequence he takes the key decisions by himself as his doctrine of preemption unveiled (‘America’s sovereign right to attack potential foes before they could harm the United States’ (Daalder and Lindsay o.c.: 81).

During the past year from April 2003 until April 2004, many empirical data has confirmed and validated that the people in the inner circle of the Bush administration have functioned like almost pure hegemonists. Then, it is quite obvious that the points 3 and 4 in the hegemonist belief system can force, in extreme cases, a hegemon to a ‘Guantánamo’-regime and even to neglecting the Convention of Geneva and thus, to the scandals of the Abu-Ghraib-prison 11. In consequence, the US military power has lost credibility and legitimacy. How can we best explain this cataclysm? In my view, it is ‘groupthink’ developed during the Bush presidential campaign and the team-building period (between election and inauguration) that seems to be crucial for the decisions made after September 2001.

Indeed, as analysts of power, we should no longer underexpose the impact of small group behaviour. However, Janis’ theory of groupthink, implies that there are two sides to the coin:

- **Arrogance of power**: i.e. we are the task force, therefore we are supposed to know what is good and thus we do not need to accept counter-signs from the outside world.

- **Pressure to group confirmation**: all members of the task force are permanently pressing each other to keep on board and to confirm to the discourse of the majority of the team.

We argue that groupthink theory is a strong tool for explaining the decisions made by the Bush’s inner circle as well as to explain why, for example, the Secretary of State, Colin Powell is still on board. In other words dispositional power in the case studied here can be perceived as the result of ‘groupthink’. The arrogance of power can also explain why all warnings concerning the threat of Al-Qaeda (Urquhart 2004, Richard Clarke 2004, Daalder and Lindsay 2003) were rejected. Furthermore, a team with a strong coherent belief system in which a state is still the key-actor, is probably not responsive to advisors who claim that Al-Qaeda, a non-state actor, should receive more priority than the Iraq.

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11 For social psychologists the excesses in these prisons remind them of experiments concerning commanded obedience and moral behaviour (experiments designed by for example Philip Zimbardo, Stanley Milgram, Raaijmakers and Meeus: only very well-educated people with strict religious attitudes as well as principal pacifists could resist group-dynamics as well as demonising enemies)
dictatorship. Furthermore, all recommendations issuing that an attack on Iraq should be followed by a clear vision concerning ‘nation building’ were probably refused for the same reasons. On the other hand, this theory is not able to explain why the President himself can often take an autonomous but determining decision. For this argument an in-depth research concerning power and individual psychology appears to be necessary.

In fact, by interpreting the Bush’s decision-making machinery as a process of groupthink, it can be expected that ‘discursive exterior’ (Laclau and Mouffe 1985) represented in the multilateral approach is inaccessible to Bush’s inner circle, but for pragmatic reasons of time winning. Thus, groupthink is the mechanism that produces sufficiently internal ‘dispositional power’ as well as external ‘episodical’ power to implement decisions which are coherent with the principles of the belief-system of this specific small group. In short, Mars pays no heed to Venus.

Discursive exterior.

According to Laclau and Mouffe, a society can never be ‘closed’ and therefore it is not a unity of analysis. Each society is ‘overflowed’ by a surplus of meanings. This makes up the ‘social’. Therefore, Howarth (2000: 103) concludes ‘… no matter how successful a particular political project’s discourse might be in dominating a discursive field, it can never in principle completely articulate all elements, as there will always be forces against which it is defined. In fact, we shall see, a discourse always requires a discursive ‘outside’ to constitute itself.’

If we return to Kagan’s essay, we can see how the Mars and Venus metaphor he uses, shows that they both constitute each other. Without ‘unilateralism’ no ‘multilateralism’. The unilateral belief system has the ‘multilateral’ belief system as a ‘discursive exterior’ whereas for the ‘multilateral’ discourse, it is the reverse. In summary, the core of multilateralism is:

- Peace and prosperity can be produced by a system of laws and rules as a result of transnational negotiation and co-operation. However, Kant’s ‘Perpetual Peace’ cannot be guaranteed.
- Economic power precedes military power.
- There are no ambitions to have a monopoly by the means of violence, but military power is necessary in specific episodes in which (states or non-state) actors challenge the basic rules of the game, inter-nationally or intra-nationally.
- Nation-state actors with their monopoly of violence in a certain territory (Weber) are still the key-players in the internationalist project. However, these actors are willing to share and to pool sovereignty for the ‘res publica’ and the common good.
- The result is ‘civic power’. The main instruments are deliberations and negotiations, cultural dialogue, fair trade, investments in development, economic pressure (sanctions, boycot) when necessary, common foreign policy, humanitarian aid, and active protection against terrorism based on co-operation between police and intelligence services.
- The multilateral / internationalist project needs an adequate structure for its decision making. The basic rules of the game are the principles of a liberal democratic parliamentary polity. Because of the willingness of ‘pooled sovereignty’ (Keohane 2002), one nation-state actor cannot stop common action.

- Because multilateralism is also congruent with different identities in specific territorial spaces, concepts such as ‘raison d’État’ still have meaning 12. However, when nationalism results in a-moral interventions by states, it should be substituted by ‘moral confidence’.

- Although the processes of de-territorialisation which are the result of globalisation and ‘global hierarchy of mobility’ (Bauman 1998: 69-76) cannot be neglected, an awareness acquired by participating in the world-system requires also flexibility in finding new forms of territorialisation, particularly in cross-border regional and local (public-private) partnerships.

The hard core of this belief-system is that the multilateral approach includes the flexibility to encapsulate new demands from the world economic system. Indeed, Kagan seems to be right when he says that if the multilateral / internationalist project is an ideal typical construction, it is the EU and its member states which have realised this project so well. Recently a moral slogan launched by an important representative of the multilateral approach, Vaclav Havel (see above) i.e. “Friendship never goes on lies and beware for undesirable brotherhood”, received a true significance for the US ‘unilateralists’ and its (European) supporters.

**Western bias and the 1+4 formula**

The hegemonist and the internationalist discourses, as well as the military and civic power exercised by the ‘priests’ of these belief-systems, are part of the total world-system. According to the world-system theory there are core, semi-periphery and periphery processes. These terms do not refer to areas, regions or states. The so-called ‘territorial trap’ should be avoided. Core processes refer to economic activities adding great value to a product, paying high wages and, thus, allowing high levels of consumption. Peripheral processes refer to the opposite situation – low wages, low consumption and low value added to the product (Taylor and Flint 2000: 20). Wallerstein (1974) has coined the term ‘semi-periphery’. While core is related to ‘exploiting’ and periphery to ‘exploited’, semi-periphery is itself exploiting periphery and is exploited by the core. The semi-periphery processes are often more political than economic. Therefore, the semi-periphery displays processes with relatively more dynamism. Theoretically, core, semi-periphery and periphery processes can be imagined in all spaces. However, core processes are mostly urban while (semi-)periphery processes are mostly rural.

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12 For example, the sport championships in Europe are permanently based on representation from nation-state territories. A specific interesting case is the organization of the Eurovision Song contest. It is not only that the participation of many countries (including Israel, Turkey, Belarusia, Ukraine and Russia) enlarges the map of Europe, but also the voting system acts almost as a perfect mirror reflecting all national sentiments between the nation-states in Europe during the past 150 years.
Nevertheless, periphery processes occur in what Castells (1996-1998) has called the ‘Fourth world’, thus among the marginalised people in all mega-cities of the world.

Since World War II, the USA has been the greatest power in the world, both militarily and economically. However, its relative position has been changed in regard to Europe and Japan during the last three decades of the former century. The semi-periphery processes are significant in the rise of Eastern Europe as a region and the Cold War (arms race) as well as in the decline of the USSR in the late eighties of the former century and the rise of the debts to the core (Mexico, Latin-America). For several decades, we have seen also the rise of many ‘Japans’ in Asia as part of the semi-periphery. Nowadays, it seems that large sectors of China are starting to participate in the semi-periphery processes.

From the political and economic perspective of the second half of the twentieth century, US unilateralism and European multilateralism could be perceived as complementary in the core of the world system. However, under the ‘1+4’ formula, it is possible that the configuration of processes in the core, semi-periphery and periphery is changing in such a way that the US-Europe completary core connection is being challenged. The fast transfer of western technology in primary and secondary production sectors to China now gives evidence to this hypothesis. On the one hand, this economic transformation is probably a driving force for the US hegemon to enter the Middle East in order to safeguard its influence on the oil-production in the long run. In other words, the US unilateral behaviour is legitimised for reasons of ‘systemic power’. In this perspective, it is also necessary that the USA make an alliance not only with Japan and Australia but also with Russia, Pakistan and India to anticipate the ‘episodical’ regional power of China in the coming decades. Of course, China as a potential rival to US hegemony will appreciate that the US is exhausting itself militarily, while it receives economic knowledge and technology from the hegemon and its allies at the same time. On the other hand, the world-system perspective on this emerging economic transformation process can also explain that a divide which is perceived by Kagan, if real at all, will not be in the interest either of the USA or the European countries in the long run. Therefore, it can be expected that the problem situation of the USA(-coalition) in Iraq needs the mutual help of the ‘multilaterals’ among European powers. The Transatlantic partnership needs urgent renovation. It seems to be Europe’s turn now to prepare itself to help the USA (Bruckner 2004; van Wolferen 2003 13). According to François Heinsbourg (Brouwers 2004), Director of ‘Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique’ (Paris), none of the three theoretical military scenarios are adequate. First, to put in more American soldiers would require the re-introduction of a general conscription. Secondly, using the same amount of forces and hoping for a political solution requires the acceptance of all of the disadvantages to ‘counter insurgency warfare’. Thirdly, a step-by-step withdrawal and keeping one-third of the forces in North Iraq (the Kurdic area) is the most probable scenario, but only possible after the Presidential elections.

13 I suppose that van Wolferen, the author of the best-seller ‘The Enigma of Japanese Power’ (1989), imagines that Japan (after 1945) can be a model for Europe nowadays.
next November. Then, the USA will keep a serious military force in the area, thus prohibiting the Kurds from declaring themselves independent.

At the same time, according to Lagendijk and Wiersma (2004) Europe could become a super-civic power. Then several policy instruments can be developed and implemented. For example, co-operation between police- and intelligence services and a long run anti-terror approach. A secondly possibility is to focus on diminishing poverty and economic help as well as the reconstruction of failed states.

Thirdly, social justice could be empowered by the diminishing feelings of humiliation among religious antagonistic groups. Finally, such a civic-power requires a common military support-system which will enable Europe to control and to solve its own internal conflicts.

4. How power functions under hegemonic conditions?

What can be concluded after having made an analysis of and having provided an explanation for the suggested divide in the Atlantic community? Have these endeavours produced a deeper insight into the functioning of power under hegemonic conditions? Do we have now a better insight into the functioning of a hegemonic power? Are there any prescriptive propositions to be made concerning territorial governance? In this section we will discuss the results of our study concerning the US hegemony, the New European Divide and the consequences for territorial governance.

If one takes a look at the world political map, then the processes described above seem to reflect some conflict between states expressed as coloured territories. The map as such is quite misleading. It suggests these states to be as given. In practice the states on the map reflect ‘organizations of territories’. Following the dictum of Schattschneider that ‘all organizations are bias’, states can only be understood as an organisational ‘…response to the needs of certain social groups at the expense of other groups.’ (…) That is why ‘…the world political map provides only a snapshot of states at one point in time’. Our real concern is ‘how the world map became the pattern we see today. This is both an empirical-historical question and a conceptual-theoretical question’ (Taylor and Flint 2000: 152-153). Following both dimensions, this paper is an attempt to explain the state-centric political dominance under US hegemony and its consequences for territorial governance in the wider perspective of the global development of capitalism, or in short, the world-system.

When analysing the ground of an US-European divide and when making the discovery of the impacts of US hegemony for European governance, this paper has used the re-construction of the ‘unilateral’ and ‘multilateral’ discourses as an ordering principle. Then, it was suggested that the main story-lines in these discourses express very well the US ‘hegemonist’ and the European ‘internationalist’ belief-systems of policy-makers and politicians in both political systems.
Furthermore, different theoretical notions were used to explain why the US was ready to take unilateral steps in world politics. Janis’ theory of ‘groupthink’ helped to explain why the key-actors in the George Bush Jr. inner circle behave as a task force which excludes all ‘discursive exterior’, a concept borrowed from Laclau and Mouffe. The Bush Jr. inner circle can be characterised by ‘arrogance of power’ as well as by ‘pressure to conform to the group’.

Because all organisations are biased, we have introduced the perspective of the world-system in order to avoid that the US-European divide is based purely on western prejudice. It has been argued (section 1) that Robert Kagan has used not only a very narrow concept of power resources (military power) but also a very limited theoretical view on power (episodical power only). From the world-system perspective it could also be made plausible that it is not sensible to suggest that the US hegemony has been challenged by European allies or that the USA, as the world’s hegemon, has no other choice than to go unilateral. Both regions are engaged in the core processes of the world-system. Europe, in particular, as an institutionalised regional power, has no interest in rivalry with the US hegemon other than economic competition. However, if US performance will control in the long run the main oil-resources throughout the Middle East (in Saudi Arabia as well as in Iraq), European powers will probably perceive themselves semi-peripheral, even marginalised by their partner in the Atlantic community (Vidal 2002). Then, the suggested divide within this community could become a reality.

As a consequence, the Europeans could be forced to incorporate Russia in its polity. On the other hand, a paradoxical situation should be emphasised. After a bad unilateral performance by the US hegemonists, it seems that only a multilateral European endeavour can tackle the loss of credibility and authority of the Americans in the western alliance. This capacity to govern authoritatively will function only under the condition that the Europeans are able to solve their own violent wars and ethnic conflicts. The partners in the alliance should face each other on a more equal basis. Then, the creation of an effective EU military power resource (an army of 60,000 soldiers with up-to-date logistics and to be mobilised within two months if necessary) might to be a top priority. This will imply a shift in the balance of structural power between the western counterparts. Subsequently, it is expected that both regions influence each other better from the mutual understanding that they each have a common interest in the co-operative control of the world-system. This is very important from a western political and economic perspective. Because the next phase of capitalism requires core investments in knowledge-based economies (Jessop 2002), i.e. education, scientific research and infrastructural logistics, it is not a wise policy to continue to waste resources on wars which cannot achieve goals (deployment of mass destruction weapons, democracy in the Middle East).

According to Jessop (2002), what we are witnessing is a ‘re-scaling of the complexities of government and governance rather than the re-scaling of the sovereign state or the emergence of just one more arena in which national states can pursue national interests.’ Therefore, under the new economic conditions in the world-system, many different forms of territorial governance have been founded.
These forms of governance represent primarily the constitutive power of identity politics in places on ‘the scale of experience’.

While the role of governmental institutions seems to have been downplayed under the neo-liberal conditions (1980-2000), these institutions now are playing a key role in security matters of all nation-states. The national governmental institutions are also the centre of political debates concerning almost every European reform (Bologna-agreement, the conditions for the EU enlargement, the New European Constitution, etcetera). However, between the ‘global scale’ and the ‘scale of experience’ the national institutions are now functioning mainly as an ideological mediator. Their function is to make people more disposed towards accepting global conditions. Furthermore, the national institutions should facilitate the public space to deliberate the conditions for (cross-border) decentralised forms of territorial governance in more or less integrated policy fields. Nation-states do not have much choice here. Much sovereignty of nation-states has already been transmitted or pooled upwards to international and supra-national institutions as well as downwards to sub-national and local entities of (territorial) governance (= public and private partnerships). Kagan is right that these processes were realised most successfully in the European Union and therefore, the multilateral approach of the European allies of the US can be explained. It is not certain, however, whether Kagan has not got his toe caught in the territorial trap. Territorial governance under the new conditions set by the world-system does not imply the revival of territorial public-administrative capacity at the sub-national and / or de-central level. The emerging forms of territorial governance are different flexible responses to new global economic conditions by public as well as private actors at the local political level. From this perspective, it seems in the interest of associations in civil society as well as in the market to have different administrative options (supra-national, national, regional level) to influence according to their logic of action the functioning of structural power. It can be concluded that the multilateral European approach would seem still to be consistent with the neo-liberal economic ideology being promoted in the last decades of the twentieth century. As a result, the question arises whether the hegemonist discourse embraced in the Bush Jr. cabinet includes a counter-productive impetus to the next phase in capitalism. In other words, the war on terror and the possibility of starting pre-emptive wars against rogue states show probably more the practicalities of a clash of civilisations than a proper anticipation to new global capitalism. Keeping in line with this perspective, it would plausible to claim that the world has been confronted by a hegemonic transition (Arrighi 1994). All neo-liberal institutions such as the World-bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organisation, Organisation of Economic and Social Development as well as reflexive media such as The Wall Street Journal and The Economist have emphasised since 1994 the interest of well-functioning governmental institutions as a pre-condition for a well-functioning economy. As a consequence, it could be debated whether a hegemonist discourse should be used as a basis for foreign policy and whether unilateral behaviour is the right instrument to accomplish this task. Obviously, the dominant neo-liberal economic model has often questioned the relevance of the public sector. At the same time, however, it is remarkable to see
that nation-states all over the globe are in the centre of the political arena once again. This concerns not only matters of security but also issues of wealth and poverty, health and education, hunger and environmental pollution. These subjects are known to feed illegal migration, organised criminality, religious fundamentalism, and numerous border conflicts. To solve these questions of the risk society (Beck 2003, 1999, 1995; Latour 2003), the co-operation of nation-states is required and not just the unilateral behaviour expressed by one hegemon. From this perspective, it is obvious that the USA as well as any other western nation-state can use its military power and enter a war unilaterally. However, to get out of it, the nation-states in the European American Atlantic Community are interdependent when it comes to multilateral civic power.

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