Understanding the 'Great Split' in the Iraq crisis. A Comparative Approach of the Member States' Foreign Policy

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Abstract

The 'great split' in the Iraq crisis despite common institutions has raised serious doubts about the effectiveness of CFSP. This paper seeks to shed light on that problem by systematically comparing the behaviour of eight EU member states in the crisis (D, DK, E, F, GR, I, NL, UK). It will be examined how substantial the split was and some hypotheses will be developed how this can be understood.
The method of structured and focused comparison will serve as analytical tool to examine member states' foreign policy behaviour in the Iraq case but also with a view to past crises (Gulf, Kosovo). Thereby, it can be revealed to what extent the outcome of the Iraq affair has really been a surprise. Preliminary reasoning suggests that most countries' positions were perfectly in line with their general patterns of foreign policy behaviour. An application of a combined identity-discourse approach can provide some insights why this was the case. Yet it can already be guessed that some member states' foreign policies largely deviated from their past behavioural pattern. This also deserves some explanation (Germany being an obvious case). Finally, some conclusions will be drawn regarding the future of CFSP.

Contents

Introduction

In the Iraq crisis between summer 2002 and summer 2003, European foreign policy experienced an agonizing *déjà vu*: It was twelve years ago in the wake of the break-up of Yugoslavia that the member states had bitterly quarrelled over the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia which had put a final blow to CFSP's front-runner, the European Political Co-operation. Yet this crisis also did some good since it served as a catalyst for the set-up of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and further institutionalisation in form of the ESDP which was triggered by the Kosovo crisis. In sum, the 1990s were somewhat promising, and a fallback was not expected to be a likely scenario. The more analysts, as well as the national publics, were shocked by the Iraq affair. The „*ever closer Union*" by no means agreed on a common position on a vital foreign policy issue – a bitter pill. The evident split of the EU raised serious doubts as to whether the CFSP was anything more than 'sunshine policy'. But again, some merits were borne out of the hangover when all member states – regardless of their Iraq policy – deplored the common disunity and agreed to propagate a „European Security Strategy" (ESS) still in 2003. Whether this will prevent the EU from such crises remains to be seen.[1] However, this article will call for prudence and patience. Not public statements which lack definite obligations but domestic discourses on foreign policy – thus the line of argumentation – frame the potential of foreign policy change and so make foreign policy convergence possible. And this takes some time since national identities tend to be sluggish.

Our puzzle can thus be defined as follows: Despite common institutions in the CFSP, despite twelve years of intergovernmental co-operation, and despite US inducements, the member states could not agree on a common position on Iraq. How could this happen? The subsequent questions are not far-fetched: Is it likely to happen again? And what does the Iraq crisis tell us about the future of the CFSP?

Regarding the future prospects of the CFSP, we share the assumption that consistency of national foreign policy positions is a necessary (but, of course, not a sufficient) precondition for EU actorness. As Duke (1999) has shown, consistency may apply to different levels between different actors in the CFSP. I will concentrate here on the consistency between member states which is a fairly under-researched domain of European foreign policy and yet of no minor importance (White 2004, 55, 60). The member states selected here are Denmark (DK), France (F), Germany (D), Greece

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[1] The head of the Council secretariat's Political Section explicitly stated that the ESS „increases the chances that such an internal row will not repeat itself." (Heusgen 2004).

(GR), Italy (I), the Netherlands (NL), Spain (E), and the United Kingdom (UK). Thus, this study is not a big member states case study only but comprises more than half of the EU-15. Selection criteria are:

- EU-membership since the TEU (1993)
- important players in the case
  - Security Council members (D, F, E, UK)
  - EU presidency (E, DK, GR, I)
- big member states (D, F, I, UK)
- small member states with prominent out-of-area engagement (DK, NL).

A prediction on foreign policy is a touchy enterprise and deserves a careful step-by-step approach. I will follow a classical four-step: At first, I will look back on the crisis in order to find out what happened. Second, I will attempt to identify patterns of behaviour beyond the event. Third – by application of identity theory – I will gain some preliminary insights on patterns of understanding. And last, this will lead me to some daring expectations about the future behaviour of the member states under study, the likelihood of convergence, and thus further consistency of the CFSP.

The study starts with a descriptive analysis of the Iraq crisis, taking stock of member states' behaviour in the crisis. In order to qualify their behaviour, a taxonomy is introduced. This horizontal comparison is then complemented by a dynamic one drawing on the member states' behaviour in the Kosovo and Gulf War crisis. Thereby, an answer to the applied research question whether the observed behaviour really came up as a surprise can be given. If so, then Iraq tends to be a deviant case and may not be relevant for future crises. But if not, the CFSP has got into a structural problem which is likely to produce similar outcomes in the future. The dynamic comparison is useful also in a second respect: It makes it possible to identify foreign policy continuity and change. A country whose behaviour falls into a similar category over three crises can be said to have a continuous foreign policy, whereas a country whose behaviour largely deviates in the Iraq case can reasonably be called a case of foreign policy change. A comparative look at three subsequent major out-of-area missions also allows for some conclusions regarding foreign policy convergence. The toolbox for this part of analysis is traditional and makes use of the structured and focused comparison method (George 1979).

I then address the more ambitious question how continuity and change in member states' foreign policies can be understood. In a plausibility probe,[2] I draw on identity

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[2] A plausibility probe is a kind of pilot study which applies theory in order to prepare a deeper or even

theory in order to better understand continuous foreign policy behaviour. Yet identity theory alone cannot account for policy change. Therefore, some insights from discourse analysis are added which is more suited to unveil potentials of change. At the very end, the country-specific results of the study are put together and linked to our overall research interest – the future of CFSP.

Table 1. Research questions and methodology

Research questions	Methodology	Findings
What does the Iraq case mean for the future of CFSP? (overall)	- as follows –	Conclusions, p. 31
What happened? (applied 1)	Descriptive analysis, case-specific observation criteria, structured and focussed (horizontal) comparison, use of taxonomy	Table 2, p. 16
Did it come as a surprise? (applied 2)	dynamic comparison, use of taxonomy	Table 3, p. 17
If it was not a surprise, how can continuous behaviour be understood? (applied 3a)	Application of identity theory	Table 4, p. 26
If it was a surprise, how can policy change be understood? (applied 3b)	Application of identity theory and discourse analysis	(empirically) Table 5, p. 31 (theoretically) Table 6, p. 33

1. Theory and Methodology

a. Methodology I – descriptive analysis and taxonomy

In a first section, this article seeks to describe member states' behaviour in the Iraq crisis. In this descriptive part, the nation-states are treated as actors. In addition, their behaviour is studied from an outside, phenomenological perspective which by and large renounces the identification of any motives and causes. A chronological analysis would have been too lengthy here so that some heuristic case-specific criteria are chosen to sub-divide the analysis. These heuristic criteria are content-based and refer to the special events of the Iraq crisis. They are suited to catch the activity of the member states in the crisis without prejudicing any behaviour. In order to simplify the analysis, the behaviour of the US is taken as given and serves as a reference point whereas the others' behaviour is regarded as relational, and insofar deviant.[3] The criteria are:

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theory-testing study (Eckstein 1975).

[3] This should by no means preclude a normative standpoint with regard to the legitimacy or the effects of the war. This relative approach is only chosen for analytical reasons due to the ambition to shed light on the differences in behaviour between member states.

Date of positioning

Rhetoric support for the US-led military attack on Iraq

Participation in the military intervention

Contribution to occupation troops

Furthermore, in order to condense and visualise the findings, I will introduce a taxonomy (promoter, supporter, complier, reluctant follower, obstructer) which has proven useful for qualifying differences and similarities in behaviour.[4]

- *Date of positioning*

Here, it is asked when the member states started to act, action meaning in this regard taking a position vis-à-vis the US government's view on Iraq. A positioning in spring or summer 2002 is classified as 'early', a positioning after 20 January 2003 is classified as 'late'.

- *Rhetoric support for the US-led military attack on Iraq*

US position (keywords only): Iraq has continuously failed to comply with SC Resolutions, possession of WMD most likely, possible links to Al-Qaida, dictatorship, regime change necessary

Observed behaviour	Classification
US argumentation enriched with new arguments	Promoter
US argumentation shared in principle	Supporter
US argumentation not entirely shared but use of force held necessary	Complier
US argumentation not shared but *in dubio pro* US	Reluctant follower
US argumentation not shared, other options presented	Obstructer

- *Participation in the military intervention*

US position: Full-scale war engagement

Observed behaviour	Classification
Full-scale war engagement including ground troops	Promoter
War engagement sending warships, submarines etc.	Supporter
Political and logistical support	Complier
No participation, no hindrance of US war efforts	Reluctant follower
No participation, active obstruction of war efforts	Obstructer

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[4] The taxonomy – inspired by Zartman (1994, 5) – has been developed and successfully applied in comparative foreign policy analysis. See Joerißen and Stahl (2003).

- *Contribution to occupation troops*

US position: occupation forces have to provide security and organise transition to democracy and economic recovery

Observed behaviour	Classification
Responsibility for an occupation sector	Promoter
Participation in occupation troops	Supporter
Activities in Iraq	Complier
Activities beyond Iraqi territory	Reluctant follower
No activities	Non-follower

After having identified the differences in behaviour with the help of some categorizations, the findings are summarised in table 2 (p.16). In the next part, I will look back at past behavioural patterns in similar situations. The member states' behaviour in the Gulf War (1990/1991) and the Kosovo crisis should help us to say something as to how „surprising" the respective behaviour in the Iraq case really was. Both were serious world crises which finally demanded military engagement and were solved by US leadership. My assessments of the countries' behaviour are based on secondary literature (Gnesotto and Roper 1992, Salmon 1992, Weymouth and Henig 2001, Clewing and Reuter 2000) on the conflicts as well as previous work in the PAFE research project (Joerissen and Stahl 2003). In lieu of Kosovo and the Gulf, another possibility would have been to pick engagements in the framework of the war against terrorism, as Menon and Lipkin (2003) have suggested. Yet we are interested here in analysing long-term patterns of behaviour and therefore prefer unrelated cases.

After having compared recent behaviour (Iraq) to the past (Gulf, Kosovo), the foreign policies can be assessed. The analysis will reveal how far member states' policies in the Iraq affair really came as a surprise. If this is so for most of the member states, Iraq may be seen as a special and deviant case which is hardly suitable for generalisations. If not, or in other words, if the member states behaved as could have been expected from previous cases, this calls for some explanation. In the following, country-specific plausibility probes are presented in order to shed some light on certain modes of understanding. In so doing, the argument draws on identity theory claiming that national identity accounts for the basic stance of a country's foreign policy – its scope and its limits. In the case of a 'change diagnosis', the argumentation will be complemented by discourse theory claiming that domestic discourses on

foreign policy enable and prevent change. The conclusions present some preliminary insights from the studies in the light of the empirical puzzle and – to a limited extent – of recent theoretical reasoning.

b. Methodology II – identity and discourse

Scientific interest in concepts which have so far been taken as given by both IR theory and foreign policy analysis has been a major thrust of the constructivist research programme (Risse 2001, Hansen and Wæver 2002). One of these concepts is 'identity', broadly defined as `images of individuality and distinctiveness ('selfhood') held and projected by an actor and formed (and modified over time) through relations with significant 'others' (Jepperson, Wendt and Katzenstein 1996, 59). In the following, national identity is understood as a relatively stable social construction which involves the self-image of a nationally constituted society. In a democratic society, it can be assumed that all past or future decisions accord with national identity because they must be legitimised vis-à-vis the population and thus accord to its interpretation of its self-image. Therefore, it can be assumed that foreign policy decision-makers in democracies usually do not exceed the range of behavioural options covered by the referential framework of national identity. However, if a government nevertheless does, it runs the risk of contestation, meaning that the decision is likely to be challenged in a public discourse. Depending on the domestic discourse structure – e.g. the possibility of referenda – the government might even be compelled to correct its decision and re-adjust its foreign policy according to the discourse's outcome.[5] Yet in most cases the government succeeds in convincing the public that its behaviour was legitimate by finding new ways of argumentatively linking policy U-turns with the country's national identity.[6]

The construction of identity, as well as its invocation in justifications of policies, is essentially a phenomenon which involves human communication, hence language. Many constructivists have therefore stressed the importance of discourse analysis for the study of identity and its impact on foreign policies (Milliken 1999, Wæver 2002). The discourse is the medium by which meaning is attached to identity in a specific situation. In a discourse, it is determined which elements of a society's collective identity become 'active', i.e. give meaning to a concrete situation (Westlind 1996, 116). A useful approach to the study of identity constructions by means of discourse

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[5] The Danish Maastricht (1992) case was a striking example for this. When the Danes rejected the TEU, the government had to re-open negotiations which ended up in the three Danish opt-outs as a result of the 1993 Edinburgh summit.

[6] Famous examples in security policy were Germany's re-armament debate in the 1950s, and Spain's referendum on NATO membership (1986).

analysis has been elaborated by the so-called Copenhagen School in a recent work on national identity and the European policies of the Nordic states (Hansen and Wæver 2002). As Lene Hansen (2002, 8) states, discourse analysis with a view to identity constructions is concerned with the justification of foreign policy rather than its causation. In the conceptualisation of the Copenhagen School, identity provides the deepest discursive layer on which argumentative legitimations of foreign policy are based. Thus, its effect on policy is that of a constitutive frame of reference for discourses about foreign policy, providing argumentative 'resources' for legitimations of foreign policy.

Our theoretical and methodological framework has been developed in depth elsewhere (Joerissen and Stahl 2003). Suffice it here to say that a nation holds only one `national´ identity but that this identity comprises a variety of different facets which, for convenience, we call '*identity elements*'. These identity elements are 'ultimate arguments' in the discourses – arguments which are not challenged any more since they are consensual. Since identity is a dynamic – at least *à la longue* – and idiosyncratic concept, it demands endogenisation (Cederman and Daase 2003). Here we can rely on the results of previous studies (Joerissen and Stahl 2003, Weick 2004, Stahl et al 2004) in which such identity elements could be identified in intense domestic debates on security issues.[7] Most interestingly, the subjects and occasions of such debates vary from country to country – in itself a strong argument in favour of identity theory.

Within a discourse, various groups seek to achieve *discourse hegemony*, i.e. they seek to assert themselves and their identity-related pattern of argumentation and thus to establish a dominant discourse pattern. Thereby, a group of discourse participants has gained superiority for interpreting future and past events – and an advantageous position for any securitization (Buzan et al 1998).

When identity elements and well-established argumentative patterns are discursively linked to recommendations for action and become stable over time, we – borrowing the term from Foucault and Larsen (1997) – speak of *discursive formations*. Different discursive formations compete with each other in a power struggle for discursive hegemony. In some societies, such permanent latent conflicts are fuelled by an élite-mass split, meaning that one discursive formation is most favoured by the political élite whereas another is supported by the people.

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[7] For instance, when examining British identity, Kathrin Weick (2004) selected the Suez crisis and the Falkland war as discourses on security policy which permit a depiction of the elements of British identity. Following her, identity elements are: the UK as Empire, the UK as member of the international community, the UK as balancer, the UK as special partner of the US, and the UK as advocate of liberalism.

National identity and discursive formations are primarily structural concepts which account well for understanding stability and non-change. Yet discourses usually entail seeds of change (Schmidt and Radielli 2004, 207) since they offer the opportunity to build up and establish new argumentations and link them with well-known ones. If this leads to different policy recommendations, a discursive formation may even split or fuse – as will be demonstrated for the German case later on. Policy changes can thus be prepared (*ante factum*) or confirmed (*post factum*).

2. Behavioural analysis

a. Date of positioning

After the successful intervention in Afghanistan, Iraq more and more became the primary target of Washington's think tanks. In Bush's State of the Union Address in January 2002, he named Iraq as part of the „axis of evil". The German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joschka Fischer, stated in his speech to the Bundestag in February 2002 that he doubted any connection between Al-Qaida and Baghdad (cf. Kaarbo/Lantis 2003, 156). As early as in April 2002, the British Prime Minister agreed in principle to an intervention after having met the US President in Crawford, Texas (Kampfner 2004, 168). Yet Blair publicly insisted that „war was not inevitable" and attempted to gain more domestic support as well as to secure legitimacy for military action. Bush's West Point speech in June and *NYT* and *Washington Post* reports in July on military plans against Iraq both indicated that Iraq was at the core of the US fight against terrorism. In July, the Blair government persuaded the Bush administration to go to the UN in order to secure legitimacy (Kampfner 2004, 191ff.).

On 5 August, the German Chancellor Schröder warned the US „not to play around with war or military action" (Economist, 10 August 2002). Much earlier, governmental statements had been negative on a possible inclusion of Iraq in the anti-terror war (Harnisch 2003, 177). By autumn 2002, it was clear that Bush had sided with the 'hawks' in his administration and strived for regime change in Iraq (Petersen/Pollack 2003, 135).

Despite the British and German positioning, most EU countries still avoided clear statements on the Iraq issue. The Danish EU Presidency tended to dissipate any split and formulated a prudent declaration on the problems in the Middle East (FTD, 29.8.2002). When meeting at Helsingør, the Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stig Møller, called the discussion of military action still „hypothetical" (FTD 2.9.02). De Villepin and his Spanish colleague Palacio claimed at Helsingør that the Security Council should keep all options on the table. Silvio Berlusconi (25 September 2002)

had avoided any clear commitment at the summit, but in his speech in Parliament on 25 September, he made it very clear that in times of crisis, Italy had always sided with the Americans.

Bush's speech before the UN did not change member states' reluctance to take a stance. The Netherlands and Denmark in particular avoided any early positioning. In fact, the common SC-Resolution in November created some breathing space. Due to its responsibility as EU President, Greece had also refrained from any early positioning on the Iraq issue. Notably, Greece was partly in charge of the EU Presidency in the second half of 2002 as well – due to the Danish opt-out in security and defence issues, it chaired the respective Council meetings in 2002. Early statements by the Minister of Defence Papantoniou and Premier Simitis nevertheless suggested that the government vividly opposed any invasion of Iraq (AthensNews, 27 September 2002). Any urges to make this more explicit were countered by Papandreou, claiming that there was no reason „*why Greece should rush to take a stance*" (cf. AthensNews, 4 October 2002). It was only after the 'letter of the 8' (30 January 2003) and the EU's informal meeting on the Iraq crisis that all positions became evident. France's resistance against US plans was ultimately clear on 20 January when the Minister of Foreign Affairs explicitly attacked the US policy in the Security Council (SC). As member of the SC at that time, Spain stood side by side with its Anglo-Saxon partners – as has been indicated by Aznar already in Helsingør and became highly visible with the 'letter of the 8' and at the Azores meeting with Blair and Bush just before the war began.

b. Rhetoric support for the US-led military attack on Iraq

As mentioned above, the United Kingdom had been a staunch promoter of military action against Iraq right from the start. Prime Minister Blair explained to the members of the House of Commons in January 2003 his unequivocal support for the Bush Administration. Remarkably, he argued that even if the US had taken a less tough stance, it would have been him who had urged to act (Daily Telegraph, 14 January 2003). When Aznar came up with the idea of an open letter demanding that „*Europe and America must stand united*", it was Blair who edited it (Die ZEIT, 6 February 2003, 3). Moreover, Blair objected to informing Solana and the Greek presidency (Kampfner 2004, 253). When it became obvious that France would reject any new resolution, British government members openly denounced the French representatives for their responsibility for the war (Frankfurter Rundschau, 15 March 2003).

Eventually, even the Foreign Office conceded that the UK, Spain, and the US did not succeed in achieving nine votes in the SC – a 'moral majority' so strongly desired by Britain.

When Aznar had stated in Helsingør that the UN should not become an obstacle to a necessary military intervention, his government's closeness to the US position had already been obvious (Le Monde 14.9.02). It launched the 'letter of the 8' initiative as well as co-drafted a second SC Resolution on 24 February. In addition to the British argumentation, the historic role of the US of helping out the Europeans in times of crisis was stressed, and Aznar pointed out that, given the alternative Bush v. Saddam, the choice should be an easy one (FAZ, 19 January 2003).

Italy also signed the pro-US letter, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Frattini confirmed Italy's support of a possible US intervention (Aliboni 2003, 86). He later admitted that Italy's participation was partly due to the early Franco-German positioning (FAZ, 28 April 2003). But the government's plain attitude was owed to a policy change in 2002 since in February, the Iraqi Minister of Culture had been highly welcomed in Rome and *„(t)he government also continue(d) to manifest serious reservations about the American plan to strike a final blow against Saddam Hussein's regime"* (Croci 2002, 93).

Denmark, as noted above, avoided any early clear positioning due to its moderator role as EU President in the second half of 2002. Yet when Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen on behalf of the EU stated in Helsingør that the UN Resolutions to date sufficed to legitimise a military intervention, this statement was met with bewilderment by most colleagues (Le Monde 14.9.02). Nevertheless, it revealed the pro-US stance of the Danish government which subsequently had no reservations against signing the letter of the 8 in January 2003, and entirely supported the US-argumentation in the SC.

The Netherlands were more reserved. Yet in Helsingør , Prime Minister Balkenende reckoned that military means might become an option (FAZ, 13 September 2002). But when requested to sign the 'letter of the 8', he refused to do so. On 2 February, the government declared that it appreciated military pressure in order to demonstrate the UN's willingness to act. Moreover, a second resolution was held to be desirable – but not necessary. If Iraq did not fully comply with the SCR – thus the government wrote in its letter to the Second Chamber and to the Greek Presidency – any extension of inspections would be pointless (government.nl, 12 February 2003). On the EU's infamous 'war summit' on 17 February, The Hague openly sided with the Atlanticist camp – Portugal, the UK, Denmark, Italy, and Spain (Economist, 22 February 2003).

In an interview in the German weekly *Stern* in early August 2002*,* Chancellor Schröder had reacted to Cheney's speech in Nashville and cautioned the US because of its policy turn from Iraq's disarmament to regime change. He stressed that Germany would not participate in any military mission no matter how the UN-SC decided (FTD, 2 September 2002)**.** At Helsingǿr, Fischer warned the US not to go it alone and argued that the region would be further destabilised in the case of war – an argument which was shared by the Greek government (AthensNews, 27 September 2002). As a member of the SC at that time, Germany had to experience that this early and extreme positioning left very little space of manoeuvre. It even subscribed to the ultimate use of force in the EU's common position on 17 February. But in fact, as Harnisch (2003, 185) notes, Germany never declared its 'no' to a SC Resolution legitimising military means and probably had considered to abstain in case of such a decision.

When Germany made up its mind rather early in 2002, France had remained reserved. Neither President Chirac at the Franco-German summit in Hannover in September nor the Minister of Foreign Affairs, de Villepin, committed themselves to any determined position (NZZ, 8 September 2002, Economist, 10 August 2002). France finally gave in when the US re-drafted Security Council resolution 1441. After having insisted that the text should not legitimise any violence, Paris is said to have convinced Syria not to vote against it and this way helped to achieve an unanimous decision (Handelsblatt, 8/9 November 2002). Chirac even assured Bush that France would participate in military action if Iraq did not comply (FAZ 19.3.03). In December, a French liaison officer talked with US Commander Tommy Franks about the possibility to include 15,000 troops into the Allied forces (Peterson 2004, 15 fn 5). Furthermore, Chirac told the French military to be aware of all situations. This was widely interpreted as a sign that France had not yet made up his mind (FTD 8.1.2003). But after a SC meeting on 20 January, de Villepin announced that France would oppose any SCR leading to war (cf. Petersen 2004, 15). And on the 40 years commemoration ceremony of the Elysée treaty two days later, Chirac and Schröder declared that they had identical views on Iraq. Yet completely taken by surprise by the 'letter of the 8', the French President lost his *contenance* when the 'Vilnius 10' sided with the eight one week later: „*They should have better remained silent*" he moaned and warned the „*badly brought-ups*" that their behaviour might diminish their chances for EU accession (Nouvel Observateur, 19 February 2003). Together with Germany and Russia, France presented some proposals for overcoming the deadlock in the SC in February and March. On 7 March, France could somewhat reap the harvest of its anti-war stance. In a SC debate, de Villepin succeeded in rhetorically out-performing his

US counterpart and yielded an unprecedented applause from the audience. When the UK, Spain and the US attempted to gain a majority in the SC in favour of a second resolution, France actively lobbied against it, and finally, French president Chirac publicly announced France's veto against any resolution legitimising war (Le Monde, 11 March 2003).

The Greek position is not easy to discern since Greece acted on behalf of the EU since 1 January 2003 and partly already since 1 July 2002. However, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Papandreou made it crystal clear that Greece would not support any unilateral action against Iraq, leaving the question unanswered whether it would comply after a respective SC decision (AthensNews, 4 October 2002). Premier Simitis took a cautious stance before the EP on 14 January, urging for a more vigorous geopolitical presence of the EU in general (cf. AthenNews, 17 January 2003). A Greek concern remained the implications of a possible war for the Middle East (Simitis' letter to EU, 13 February 2003). Greece succeeded in organising and formulating common EU positions – examples were the conclusions of 27 January and 17 February and the tough Démarche to Iraq on 4 February (even exceeding the Greek position). Athens held the informal meeting to have been successful as it would not otherwise have suggested to turn it into an official one afterwards (EU Joint position, 17 February 2003). The 'letter of the 8' took Greece by surprise, but as an initial reaction, the Foreign ministry claimed that it did not contradict prior EU decisions. Thereafter, Simitis strongly criticised the eight, arguing that the declaration was at odds with the EU's endeavour to reach a common position (AthensNews, 31 January 2003). Papandreou admitted that the EU experienced a serious crisis and stated that big member states did not really pay attention to the small ones (12 March 2003). In the debate in the SC, Greece sided with the Franco-German-Russian initiative of early March (AthensNews, 7 March 2003). Eventually on the eve of war, Simitis expressed his government's strict opposition to war in parliament emphasising the lack of legitimacy and US unilateralism (cf. AthensNews, 28 March 2003).

c. Participation in the military intervention

The UK mobilised reservists in early January which finally added up to 30.000 troops in the Gulf. They actively took part in the fighting and conquered the South of Iraq. Whether Demark would actively support a military intervention even without a clear UN mandate was left open until 18 March (CP 17.3.03). On that day, the government decided to go to war and deployed a submarine, a destroyer and 160 troops to join the 'coalition of the willing'. Backed by a 61 to 50 vote in the *Folketing,* the Danish

government officially declared war on Iraq – an unprecedented move since the war against Prussia in 1864. Denmark submitted its troops to US command, and its liaison officer Tidemand later admitted that even before the 'letter of the 8', Denmark had been prepared to actively support the USA (FAZ, 8 April 2003).

By contrast, the Dutch government decided to refrain from active participation in the war (Radio Netherlands Wereldomroep, 18 March 2003). As the Minister of Foreign Affairs, de Hoop Scheffer, emphasised on 4 April 2003, this was not seen as a problematic stance since the Netherlands would thereby join Spain and Italy. Given this position, it turned out to be an embarrassing moment for the government when on the first day of the attack, a Dutch Lieutenant-Colonel appeared on TV next to the Commander of the coalition forces, Tommy Franks (FAZ, 28 March 2003). The clear self-perception as part of the Atlanticist camp became also visible when the Netherlands actively compensated for the German denial to deliver Patriot missiles to Turkey.

Italy refrained from actively taking part in the war either with material or with troops but allowed the US to use bases and granted over-fly rights. After the Highest Defence Council, including President Ciampi, had stated that a direct participation in the war had to be excluded, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Frattini (29 March 2003) made it entirely clear that Italy was not a nation at war.

Aznar announced that Spain would not actively take part in the war but send three ships and 900 troops for medical support and anti-mine capabilities. The role of the 900 was characterised in Aznar's words by their „humanitarian mission" (El Mundo, 19 March 2003). Greece had tried hard to bring everybody together in the EU and to develop a common stance. When all its endeavours turned out to be fruitless, Simitis declared that Greece would not participate even if there was an approval by the UN-SC. In that case, Greece would support indirectly, logistically like in Afghanistan (FAZ, 19 January 2003). This was similar to the German position since Greece also rejected any active participation but allowed the US to use its bases on Greek territory due to respective bilateral treaties. In February 2003, Germany, together with Belgium and France, even blocked a decision in the NATO Council regarding defensive missiles for Turkey for some time which led to a severe crisis in the Alliance (FTD, 11 February 2003). France joined Germany and Greece in opposing any participation in the war.

d. Contribution to occupation troops

The UK withdrew some of its troops after having won the war but took charge of the

Southern sector in Iraq. By the end of 2004, it still held 8,700 troops (IHT, 4 February 2005). Denmark contributed 510 troops to the occupation forces. When the US made an official request to Copenhagen to take charge of a sector in Iraq, Rasmussen politely turned it down. A Polish offer to share the responsibility for administering one sector was also met with only lukewarm reception (CP, 11 September 2003, FAZ, 8 May 2003). In June 2003, The Hague took part in the stabilisation force with 1,300 troops. When one soldier died in a fighting, Prime Minister Balkenende announced a re-consideration of the Dutch mission and decided to withdraw the troops after the mandate's expiration in March 2005.

Italy took part in the occupation forces with around 3,000 troops. Several hostages affairs put the Italian decision under constant domestic pressure. When the security agent Calipari was shot by US friendly fire after having managed to release the journalist Guilia Sgreba from an Iraqi terrorist group, Berlusconi surprisingly projected an Italian withdrawal of its troops (EUobserver.co, 16 March 2005). But the next day, the decision was re-considered. Spain initially contributed the 900 troops sent to the occupation forces. On 24 June 2003, the Aznar government announced to send 1,100 additional troops to be deployed in the Polish sector (Lee 2003). Due to the terrorist attacks in Madrid on 11 March, the Spanish election of 14 March 2004 got an historic flavour. After the *Partido Popular* had surprisingly lost the general elections, the newly elected government decided an immediate withdrawal from Iraq (FAZ, 16 March 2004).

France, Greece, and Germany rejected any direct participation in the occupation of Iraq. Instead, they preferred to contribute to the EU's, NATO's and the UN's assistance to the reconstruction of the country. While Germany trained Iraqi personnel outside Iraqi territory, France urged for a UN Resolution providing the UN with a central role in the country's reconstruction (Handelsblatt, 21.7.03).

Let us now turn to the taxonomy for the analysed behaviour.

Table 2: Behaviour in the Iraq crisis (horizontal comparison)

Criteria *Country*	Date of 1st explicit positioning	Rhetoric support for US argumentation	Participation in military operations	Deployment of occupation troops	Overall behaviour
D (UN-SC)	August 2002	Obstructer	Obstructer	Reluctant follower	**Early obstructer**
F (UN-SC)	20 Jan. 2003	Obstructer	Obstructer	Reluctant follower	**Obstructer**
GR (EU-Pres.)	27 March 2003	Reluctant follower	Reluctant follower	Reluctant follower	**Moderator/ Late Reluctant follower**
NL	17 March 2003	Complier	Complier	Supporter	**Late Complier**
I	(24 Sept. 2002) 31 March 2003	Supporter	Complier	Supporter	**Supporter**
E (UN-SC)	(31 Aug. 2002) 30 Jan. 2003	Promoter	Complier	Supporter	**Supporter**
DK (EU-Pres.)	30 Jan 2003	Supporter	Supporter	Supporter	**Late supporter**
UK (UN-SC)	(April 2002) January 2003	Promoter	Promoter	Promoter	**Early promoter**

The table reveals the great split in the Iraq crisis. Not only did the countries behave differently regarding the timing of their positioning. Their behaviour largely differs with a view to all observation criteria. Only the UK provided full-scale support for the US policy on Iraq. Spain, Denmark, Italy, and the Netherlands form a supporter group which politically joined the 'coalition of the willing' but hardly contributed to the military operations. Greece, Germany, and France either reluctantly followed the US or actively objected to any military engagement. We have now proven the split. But was it really surprising?

Table 3: Dynamic comparison – the behaviour in the gulf and the Kosovo war

Criteria / *Country*	Overall behaviour in the Gulf War 1990/91 (Gnesotto/Roper 1992, Nuttall 1992, Salmon 1992)	Overall behaviour in the Kosovo war (Weymouth/Henig 2001, Clewing/Reuter 2000)	Overall behaviour in the Iraq crisis (s.a.)	Assessment of continuity/ change
Germany	Reluctant follower	Promoter	**Obstructer**	Change
France	Supporter	Promoter	**Obstructer**	Change
Greece	Reluctant follower/ Complier	Reluctant follower	**Reluctant follower**	Continuity
Netherlands	Complier	Supporter	**Complier**	Continuity (slight Europeanist tendency)
Italy	Complier	Complier	**Supporter**	Continuity (slight Atlanticist tendency)
Spain	Complier	Complier/ Supporter	**Supporter**	Continuity (slight Atlanticist tendency)
Denmark	Complier	Supporter	**Supporter**	Continuity (slight Atlanticist tendency)
UK	Promoter	Promoter	**Promoter**	Continuity

When comparing the respective behaviour of the member states under study with their previous behaviour in similar crises the insights are striking. In most of the cases it can be reasonably argued, the behaviour in the Iraq affair was not surprising. The UK and Greece demonstrated a behaviour which was perfectly in line with their behavioural pattern in former crises. For the Netherlands, Denmark, Spain, and Italy only slight deviations apply. Denmark's behaviour is not apt to stupefy considering its traditional Atlanticist stance in security policy. Yet its decisiveness was – recalling for instance its hesitant 'footnote policy' in NATO in the 1980s (Jóhannesdóttir 2003, 57). Like Denmark, Italy and Spain behaved slightly more 'Atlanticist' than could have been expected. They demonstrated more rhetoric and post-conflict support for the US yet eventually abided by military abstention. By contrast, the Netherlands moved somewhat in the Europeanist direction. Their engagement was less

determined especially if we compare it to the very active stance in the Kosovo war (de Wijk 2000, 19).

To sum up, for six out of eight countries under study its behaviour matches the pattern we know from previous crises. Only two countries fell short of the patterns: Germany and France. By no means their respective behaviour could have been anticipated by considering their previous behaviour. In the Kosovo conflict, France had co-led the negotiations in Rambouillet with Britain and actively took part in the bombing campaign against Yugoslavia (Fortman/Viau 2000). And in the gulf war against the former ally Iraq Paris eventually engaged with ground troops. Considering this, the obstructive behaviour in the Iraq crisis meant a real deviation and demands explanation. The second miracle applies to Germany since its behaviour in the three crises cited looks like a zig-zag-course. After having refrained from participating in the gulf war in 1990/91 – it contributed financially – its engagement in the Kosovo conflict was extraordinary in military as well as in diplomatic terms (Maull 2000). So the dogmatic obstructer-position in the Iraq case at first glance looks like a sheer relapse. The fact that Germany isolated itself, blocked NATO, irritated its EU-partners and – not at least – sacrificed its good relations to the US is remarkable. By so doing, Germany's behaviour even exceeded its biggest unilateral foreign policy disaster: the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia in 1991. The German case deserves attention.

But before we tackle France and Germany let us first look at the other six member states .

3. Some modes of understanding

a. Understanding continuity

Britain – continuity contested
Regarding the UK, its pro-US stance did not come as a surprise. After the Suez debacle in 1956, the security discourse in Britain had refrained from striving for an autonomous power house but defined security issues as being linked to the US. Consequently, from that time on, security was a transatlantic and therefore non-European issue. Indeed, as the debate about EC accession in the 1960s and 1970s revealed, 'Europe' was merely seen as an economic necessity, leaving Britain 'semi-detached' from Europe. Under the New Labour government,

some decent change took place. First, Blair opted for a leadership role of Britain in Europe, making security and defence the issues area where to demonstrate this (Kirchner 2002, 44). Thus, the mutually exclusive comprehension of 'security' and 'Europe' was transformed into an inclusive one – which did not, however, mean that the preferred partnership with the US was touched upon by this (Howorth 2000). This "U-turn" of British security policy found its expression in the French-British agreement of St. Malo (1998). Yet this new approach did not make the UK a pro-integrationist country since the preferred co-ordination instrument in the EU framework remained the *directoire* approach – as Menon and Lipkin (2003, 9) point out with regard to the *directoire* meetings in Ghent and London in 2001. The second aspect is crucial for the understanding of Blair's security policy: Great power policy based on the pursuit of interests has been replaced by an active intervention policy based on humanitarian reasoning. Evidently, this implies a certain reliance on the UN as the prime provider of legitimacy. In the Iraq affair, Blair was the first among European leaders to take a firm (pro-US) position. But this was not the government's preferred line of argumentation. Instead, Blair sought to acquire legitimacy for the war via the Security Council by pointing at Iraq's plans for regional hegemony, its threat to allied neighbours, and its violation of treaty obligations after the Gulf War in 1990/91 (Daily Telegraph, 14 January 2003). Remarkably, Blair's rhetoric was largely based on realist instead of idealist argumentations, which did not persuade the British public (Weick 2004, 150-153). The more the US demonstrated its (unilateral) will to attack Iraq and UN legitimation became uncertain, the more the political problems at the domestic front grew. The government twice conditioned its participation vis-à-vis the US to the search for legitimacy in the UN.[8] Blair's decision to go to war became heavily contested: Some ministers and civil servants resigned, most of the media turned the back to Labour, and the vast majority of the population objected to the war. Yet the huge number of renegades in his own party did not seriously jeopardise the decisive vote in the House of Commons due to the unequivocal support by the Tories. But the extensive media coverage regarding the reasons for war, the Kelly affair, and the heavy losses of the Labour Party in the 2005 elections – mostly due to the Iraq issue – signalled how embattled the issue indeed was. The Blair government was on the brink over Iraq – despite a behaviour which was perfectly in line with the country's previous one! This might indicate that the élite-mass split which emerged over the Iraq crisis may persevere and thus could limit the scope of

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[8] In September 2002, Blair persuaded Bush to go to the UN. In early 2003, it was again Blair who claimed a second resolution since otherwise domestic approval was expected to be unlikely. Even Jack Straw, the UK's Minister of Foreign Affairs, in secrecy raised serious doubts as to whether an attack without UN legitimation should be waged (Kampfner 2004, 301f.).

British military interventions for the future.[9]

Denmark – non-securitisation and confirmed Atlanticism

Let us now turn to Denmark – another staunch supporter of the US. A look at past discourses reveals its rather stable identity construction. Remarkably, when Denmark decided to accede to NATO in 1949, this was its least favoured security option – a Northern option or a UN guarantee had by far been the preferred alternatives. As the aforementioned footnote policy in the 1980s demonstrated, Denmark was not the enthusiastic Atlanticist as which it appears today (Johannesdottir 2003a, 57). Following Nikolaj Petersen (cf. CP, 6 March 2003), the desire to avoid any clear positioning reflects that Danish loyalty has been divided between the UN (Møller) and the US (Rasmussen).

Today's attraction of Atlanticism is hard to understand without addressing the European question. The scepticism vis-à-vis Brussels culminated in the voting down of the Maastricht treaty in 1992. The majority of the Danes rejected the idea of Europe as a political and security project which was at the time secured by the three opt-outs (only reversible by referenda). In the aftermath, the referenda on the Amsterdam treaty and the Euro confirmed the opt-outs and thus Denmark's identity construction. Consequently, the Iraq topic was simply not seen as a European one. Not only that the government followed a 'don't-mention-it' policy. The literature on the Danish presidency in this respect is revealing: Neither Rasmussen (15 January 2003) in his personal retrospective on the Danish presidency nor synopses on „*Wonderful Copenhagen*" (Laursen/Laursen 2003, Friis 2003) nor a Danish analysts' roundtable (Wehmueller 2003) found 'Iraq' worth even mentioning. This impressively demonstrates that the separation of 'Europe' and 'security' is widely accepted in the Danish élite. Rasmussen himself was outspoken on this: *"Who else could guarantee our security? Could France – could Germany? There is only one power on this earth that can: the USA"* (cf. CP, 25 March 2003). Yet there were some slight signs of contestation. When Denmark had to decide on going to war, support in the *Folketing* was far from overwhelming (61 against 50 votes) – Rasmussen's minority government relied on the support of the oppositional right-wing *Folkeparti*. This *de facto* put an end to Denmark's post-war foreign policy consensus which had been used to be highly esteemed. Furthermore, the Danish public was not really convinced and remained reserved with a view to Iraq, but the Iraq issue did not

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[9] In a similar (discursive) vein, it can be argued that the „humanitarian intervention" rhetoric demanding legitimacy and morale for foreign policy has been fallen back on its creator in the Iraq crisis – as a case of argumentative self-entanglement.

rank high enough to threaten Rasmussen's minority government in the general elections in 2004. The fact that the war issue and the government's difficulties to explain the non-existence of WMD did not suffice to jeopardise Rasmussen's victory in the elections must be interpreted as a kind of permissive consensus for his Iraq policy. To sum up, the opt-out in combination with the Presidency role might explain the non-securitisation policy of the Danish government. And the discursively still dominant separation of 'Europe' and 'security' helps us understand the very late and very tough Atlanticist stance.

The Netherlands – internal pre-occupation called for wait and see behaviour

At first glance, the Dutch case in many ways looks similar to the Danish one. The pro-US stance in the Iraq affair correlates with a traditional belonging to the Atlanticist camp in security policy. And similar to Denmark, the Netherlands was not always an easy partner in NATO in the past – considering the mass protests against the deployment of Cruise Missiles in the early 1980s and the subsequent postponement decisions of Dutch governments (Boekle and Loehr 2003). The Netherlands in principal have also clung to the idea that security was an Atlantic rather than a European matter, but this gradually changed in the 1990s when the government began to actively support ESDP (Soetendorp/de Wijk 2002). Another parallel to the Northern state is the outstanding Dutch support for the UN. Since the decolonisation debate after the Second World War, the Netherlands renounced power politics and subscribed to a pro-UN policy which stood out in comparison with most other countries. Yet it was the fatal behaviour of *Dutchbat* in Srebrenica (1995) which let the worst massacre since the Second World War in Europe happen. Not only did it further contribute to a critical reflection of the country's UN missions but also to the resignation of the Kok government which paved the way for the "long year of 2002" (Anderweg 2004, 568) in which the country suffered from the rise and (tragic) fall of Pim Fortuyn. In this situation, the country was mainly absorbed by domestic problems with an acting government for most of the time under study. Since the negotiating parties could not agree on a consistent Iraq policy, the Balkenende government refrained from taking a prominent stance on the issue. Balkenende explained in his speech to Parliament that the sceptical attitude of the population, weak support in the Parliament, and the lack of a SC mandate accounted for the government's decision (Radio Netherlands Wereldomroep, 18 March 2003). Furthermore, a certain élite-mass split became evident in the crisis since most of the political élite favoured a pro-Atlanticist positioning. As the Atlanticist-minded Minister of Foreign Affairs put it, there was no doubt that the

Netherlands politically supported the US (de Hoop Scheffer, 4 April 2003). The disappointment about the dogmatic German position and the blockade of the alliance strengthened this attitude. The problem was that the majority of the people did not follow suit. Prime Minister Balkenende clearly expressed this dilemma when he argued that any military contribution would put the country beyond (UN- as well as people-based) legitimacy. This ambivalent government stance was not contested – 'Iraq' was a rather marginal issue in the election campaign in January 2003 (Van Holsteyn and Irwin 2004). In sum, the internal crisis of the political system largely explains the non-securitisation of the Iraq-issue in the Netherlands. The principal Atlanticist security identity accounts for the political support for the US. And the acting government, the élite-mass split, as well as the doubts about international legitimacy, made the hesitant, non-military behaviour comprehensible.

Italy – rhetoric Atlanticism hedged by a persevering élite-mass split

The Dutch hesitation resembles the Italian behaviour. To foreign policy analysts, this will not come as a real surprise since Italy's reputation as a 'laggard' in international politics is well-known (Missiroli 2000, 87). In the First Republic, this was due to a permanent élite-mass split – the elite's and the people's foreign policy convictions used to anchor in different identity elements. The political élite tended to stress Italy's aspiration not to be excluded from the European great powers whereas the population referred to 'peace-loving Italy' (Leisenheimer 2003, 299f.). This tension resulted in a hesitant military engagement as the Gulf War had demonstrated (Guazzone 1992). In addition, since the debate about NATO accession by the end of the 1940s, there is a widespread belief that Italy is a part of Europe and – at the same time – belongs to the West (Leisenheimer 2003). In the following decades, Italy combined a pro-integration policy in the EC/EU with a pro-Atlanticist stance in security issues. This only gradually changed in the Second Republic. The reservations concerning military engagement are still embedded in the Italian constitution. The marginalisation of the Christian Democrats and the Socialists, combined with the emergence of new or modified political forces – the *Forza Italia*, *Lega Nord*, and the *Allianza Nazionale* – led to an up-grading of great power aspirations and the orientation towards the West whereas the peace-loving and the European identity elements became weaker (Joerissen and Stahl 2003b, 394f.). Analytically speaking, the domestic ditch between the '*House of Liberties*' and the '*Olive*' alliance increasingly represents a divide in foreign policy as well. Insofar the 'weakening pull of integration' under Berlusconi as well as a more Atlanticist stance could have been expected. Therefore, the

political and rhetoric support for the US did not come as a surprise. Neither did the massive engagement in Iraq after military actions were over since this was perfectly in line with constitutional constraints. Somewhat surprising, though, was Italy's strict non-participation in military operations which particularly contrasted with Denmarks's explicit declaration of war. This demonstrated that the peace-loving element still had persuasive power in the 'House of Liberties' to some extent. For instance, the Catholic Church used to take an anti-war position, and Berlusconi had difficulties in explaining why he did not endeavour to build a European position (Kritzinger 2003, 34). In addition, President Ciampi did not side up with the government and had opposed Berlusconi's signing of the letter of the 8. Thus, the élite-mass split is still alive and the Italian Atlanticist swing is hence moderate.

Greece – staunch Europeanist in the moderator role

As the dynamic comparison reveals, Greece has never been a staunch supporter of military intervention. The discourse on the Macedonian question (1991-95) – the by far biggest foreign policy crisis since the transformation to democracy – had demonstrated that Greek identity is characterised by its belonging to Europe, its self-perception as a *Kulturnation*, and its (vulnerable) outsider role (Katsioulis 2003b). In the concrete Macedonian case, Greece had withstood international pressure from the US, the EU, and the UN, all of which perceived Greece's behaviour as "Vendetta policy" based on profound self-isolation and anti-westernism (Kassimeris 2004, 944). A recognition of 'Macedonia' under its proper name was perceived in Greece as an existential threat to Greek sovereignty (Stearns 1995, 65). Such threat perceptions make the status quo look valuable as such. No wonder, though, that 'regional stability' served as the main argument against intervention in Iraq. In identity terms, Greek security is not linked to the US or NATO. By contrast, the withdrawal of the first democratic government Karamanlis from NATO's military structures in 1974 was a visible expression of a critical posture vis-à-vis the alliance which became a constant factor in Greek foreign policy. When the bombing of Iraq began, 100,000 Greek showed off in front of the US Embassy in order to protest against the war (AthensNews, 21 March 2003). Premier Simitis made it clear in Parliament that he perceived a multi-polar world as desirable (cf. AthensNews, 28 March 2003) – a position which is only shared in Europe by France. His critique put an emphasis on the lack of legitimacy and US unilateralism, noting that a war *"(...) means catastrophes, denial of human values, the establishment of blind violence and arbitrary behaviour"* (cf. AthensNews, 28 March 2003). Yet the government had done its

very best to conceal its proper attitude in order to be able to act as an 'honest broker' as EU President (Zervakis 2002/03, 356). This ambition was owed to the partly dark chapters of Greek Presidencies and the aforementioned Macedonian episode. In its moderator role, the government had to depart from its own position and received vivid criticism for this from the left (Communist Party and Leftist Coalition) as well as from the right (New Democracy) (AthensNews, 28 March 2003). Simitis and Papandreou were "walking tightrope" (AthensNews, 4 October 2002) but were nevertheless bypassed by events – the letter of the 8 in particular. To sum up, the moderator role of the Presidency explains the late positioning, and the marking off the West and the US respectively as well as the threat perceptions make the basic Europeanist attitude comprehensible.

Spain – Atlanticism contested, behaviour re-aligned

The definite behaviour of Spain in the Iraq case was the remarkable result of a foreign policy activation after the end of the transformation period. The 'democratic and modern Spain' was at that time intrinsically linked to Europe and served as the anti-model with regard to the economic and political backwardness of the 19th century and the Franco period (Jaúregui 1999, 273-81). The competing discursive formation was 'the other Spain', comprising its great power ambition and Western orientation. Among the people, however, the Western orientation had always suffered from US military co-operation with the Franco regime (Bueno 2001, 41), as the huge protests against NATO accession (1982) had demonstrated. The NATO referendum discourse (1986) brought about a significant change in foreign policy since from that time, 'Europe' and the 'West' became argumentatively linked. This change was personified by the PSOE leader Gonzáles who made 'Europe' a *référentiel* for Spanish foreign policy. With the take-over of the *Partido Popular,* things changed. In contrast to most other European countries, discursive formations and party lines in Spain largely overlap – so that government change usually means foreign policy change. The consolidated integration into Europe enabled Aznar to change style and accent as has become apparent at the Nice summit and the Agenda 2000 negotiations (Closa and Heywood 2004, 130, 199). Aznar thereby stressed 'Spain as part of the West' and 'Spain as a Great Power' and revealed a rather instrumental understanding of European integration (Heywood 2003, 39-40). Therefore, his pro-US stance in the Iraq crisis did not come as a surprise – even though the decisiveness and style did. The government's rhetoric stressed that Spain owed the US support since the Americans would then join in the fight against ETA. Moreover, the minister of Foreign

Affairs, Ana Palacio, emphasised the level of non-cooperation of Iraq, and the Ambassador to the UN, Arias, mentioned the role of the US which had always helped the Europeans out of the mess like in Kosovo (FAZ 19.1.03). When the difficulties in the Security Council became obvious, Aznar made it crystal clear that the war did neither mean a legal nor a moral problem since Saddam's regime resembled Hitler's, Stalin's, Pol-Pot's, and Milosevic's (El Mundo 15 March 2003).

Aznar's decision to join the Anglo-American go-to-war policy was not at all popular in Spain –it was indeed highly contested. In a poll at that time, 60 per cent of the Spaniards objected to to attack Iraq – the Spanish were the most critical on the issue in Europe (Noya 2003, 65). On 15 March, hundred thousands of Spaniards showed their discontent with the war in the streets (El Mundo, 15 March 2003). Due to his unequivocal standing in the *Partido Popular,* however, criticism within party ranks remained slim whereas the Socialists and Communists in opposition promised to immediately withdraw Spanish troops from Iraq should they win the elections. Furthermore, among intellectuals, opposition to Aznar's foreign policy was grim precisely because he had positioned Spain as a stumbling block for further European integration. This staunch opposition made Aznar's surprising turn not to participate in any military actions plausible.

Most surprisingly, the *Partido Popular* lost the national elections of 14 March 2004, and one of the first foreign policy actions of the newly elected Prime Minister Zapatero was to fulfil his promise by calling the Spanish troops home. Admittedly, the change in government cannot entirely be attributed to the Iraq issue since the government's information policy on the Madrid bombing – which had occurred only three days earlier – was the crucial factor for the election's outcome (Gordon 2004, 2). Yet the analysis of the voters' motives clearly revealed that the war issue was one of the counting topics, in particular regarding first-time voters (Chari 2004, 961). Thus, the Spanish case can be interpreted as an example for a government which acted aloof of the permissive consensus provided by national identity. The government's decision was highly contested, and finally, the decision was 'corrected' by a new government.

Table 4: Understanding continuity – some findings

	Overall behaviour	Reasons for continuity Hypotheses generated from plausibility probes	Prognosis on future behaviour
GR	Moderator Late reluctant follower	The moderator role largely accounts for the late positioning. The separation of ‚security' and ‚the West' makes the basic anti-war attitude comprehensible.	Europeanist attitude and scepticism concerning out-of-area missions is stable.
NL	Late complier	The internal political crisis accounts for the non-securitisation of the Iraq question. The traditional Atlanticist security identity helps understand the basic governmental stance. The weak government, the elite-mass split. and the lack of legitimacy makes the hesitant and non-military engagement comprehensible.	Further weakening of foreign policy probable. Yet medium position in EU valuable for transatlantic relations and overcoming of intra-EU split.
I	Supporter	The *élite-mass split* remains a major characteristic of Italy's foreign policy. The Atlanticist tendency is moderate since the identity element ‚peace-loving Italy' is firmly embedded in the population, and institutionally secured by the constitution.	Atlanticism will endure under the current government, as will the pressure on its Iraq policy. In case of government change, withdrawal and slight Europeanist tendency probable.
E	Supporter	Iraq policy was heavily contested and was ‚corrected' in the elections. This was due to the Spanish particularity that the discursive formations concerning foreign policy correspond with party lines (government change means foreign policy change).	New orientation towards Europe, more multilateralist approach under Zapatero (PSOE).
DK	Moderator/ Late supporter	The Danish *opt-out* and the EU presidency could account for the non-securitisation in 2002 and therefore the late positioning. The persevering, uncontested separation of 'security' and 'Europe' helps to understand the determined government stance (despite minority government).	Due to the EU's constitutional crisis, the *opt-out* in security issues tends to be stable. In case of government change, only a slight weakening of Atlanticism can be expected in favour of a more internationalist (not European) stance.
UK	Early Promoter	Iraq policy was contested although it was in line with previous behaviour. Elite-mass split is growing which indicates identity change. A possible reason for this could be the rather successful Blair rhetoric in the past regarding humanitarian intervention which the government could not live up to in the Iraq case (argumentative self-entanglement).	*Special relationship* under pressure if deviating from UN. Weakening permissive consensus for *out-of-area* missions.

b. Understanding change

With the help of identity theory and discourse analysis, we will now introduce a plausibility probe for the two countries under study whose behaviour meant a real surprise: Germany and France.

France – obstruction uncontested

France's foreign policy seems comprehensible only when its "obsessions" and "myths" are addressed – as Kessler and Charillon (2001, 131) put it well. A national identity approach makes it possible to grasp those 'obsessions' and 'myths'. Important elements of France's identity construction are its Great Power ambition, its self-perception as *état-nation-patrie,* and its perception of Europe as a third force in world politics (Stahl 2003b). This identity construction opens up a broad spectre of foreign policy actions and is therefore also susceptible to "tactical adaptations" (Treacher 2002, 2) which are the result of a narrow decision-making structure comprising the President of the State and his entourage.

At first sight, as stressed above, it was the first time since the Suez debacle that France let the US down in a serious security crisis. Be it the Cuban missile crisis, the deployment debate in the early 1980s, the Gulf War in 1990/91, the Kosovo War, or the fight against terrorism: France had stood side by side with the American ally. Having this record in mind, there was a widespread bet that France would bow in concerning Iraq when push comes to shove (Economist, 1 February 2003). Indeed, French diplomacy had kept all options open until January 2003, and France had co-drafted Security Council resolution 1441 – a successful foreign policy at that time as analyst Dominique Moïsi has argued (Le Monde 16.6.03).

But the hope for French compliance ignored that French support had neither been unequivocal nor unconditional. When President Chirac had decided to go to war against the historical ally Serbia in 1999, he had come under pressure on the domestic front and a fierce debate broke loose. Chirac argued on the one hand that French participation secured some influence on the war – the example of the bombing campaign was striking when Paris urged the coalition to refrain from hitting civilian targets. On the other hand, Chirac and Jospin reminded the war opponents of the humanitarian mission which compelled the French nation to side up with the people against their oppressor Milosevic (Stahl 2004, 226-234). This argumentation could hardly be revived. Following the US against Saddam would have seriously challenged the government's as well as the President's position. When Chirac justified his decision to even use France's veto, he pointed out that the inspectors' work had been rather successful and was

worth to be extended (cf. Le Monde, 10 March 2003 and 11 March 2003). In his opinion, war was not the only remedy left to cope with the situation. Furthermore, he stressed that France never carelessly used its veto power and rejected any anti-American motive. Not at least, he argued that a war against Iraq would be apt to weaken the common fight against terrorism. The French élite and the population widely shared this argumentation.[10] The French change of position in January 2003 was met with nearly entire approval: In the National Assembly, it even turned out to be difficult to generate any debate since politicians from all parties gathered behind Chirac's decision. It was only the Atlanticist wing in the Gaullist UMP which raised some doubts as to whether the price to pay for the obstructive French stance would be too high considering the looming degeneration of Franco-American relations (FAZ, 1 March 2003, Frankfurter Rundschau, 28 February 2003). Moreover, some *nouveaux philosophes* deplored the lack of humanitarian thinking in the French position (Le Monde, 20 March 2003). Yet the population objected to any military engagement without a UN mandate, and 70 per cent approved of France's veto (Economist, 22 February 2003). President Chirac harvested applause from all political sides, including the leader of the socialist party Hollande, right-wing Le Pen, and communist leader Buffet (Economist, 15 March 2003). In terms of French identity, France acted as a Great Power against a unilateral US, it acted on behalf of the majority of the Europeans, it acted in the tradition of civilisation and international law represented by the UN. The French foreign policy change might be called extreme in comparative perspective, yet it was consensual and thus a perfect expression of France's national identity.

Germany – uncontested obstruction policy as new option

German identity is strongly influenced by the experiences of the Second World War. Elements of this identity – which came to the fore, for instance, in the German re-armament debate in the 1950s – were 'European Germany', 'Germany as part of the West', 'the responsible Germany', and the systemic element which reflects the outside perceptions on Germany: 'the German question' (Nadoll 2003). In the following, the security discourse varied and facetted, and the debate intensified what the German past meant for its foreign policy – from '*Westbindung*' to '*Ostpolitik*'. Analytically speaking, two discursive formations took shape: 'Restraint' and 'Normalisation' (Katsioulis and Nadoll 2003, 354ff., Baumann and

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[10] Analytically speaking, three discursive formations can be identified in France: the realist-autonomous, the realist-European, and the weaker idealist discursive formation (Stahl 2004, 138-143). The three discursive formations basically merged in recommending resistance to war on Iraq, with the notable exceptions of some human rights activists (of the idealist formation), and the Atlanticist wing (of the realist-European formation).

Hellmann 2001). While the first recommended restraint in principle regarding foreign policy style and military engagement beyond its borders, respectively, normalists are used to claiming that restraint only served as a temporary strategy and should be overcome after unification. An important further step in the development of the discourse was the out-of-area debate in the early 1990s which enabled an extension of Germany's military engagement abroad. The debate resulted in the split of the restraint formation which had dominated before. While anti-war protagonists and traditionalists (PDS, left-wing Greens/Social-democrats) stuck to their recommendation of unconditional restraint ('*nie wieder Krieg!*'), a bigger sub-formation – spear-headed by the later Minister of Foreign Affairs Fischer – claimed that when genocide occurred abroad, it demanded German action ('*nie wieder Auschwitz!*'). By arguing this way, their recommendation for action met with those nomalists who advocated a firmer German role on the international scene (Dalgaard-Nielsen 2003, 105). This newly established discursive hegemony had its practice test as early as in 1998/99 in the Kosovo conflict. The freshmen Schröder/Fischer made use of this discursive hegemony and induced the most dramatic policy shift after the Second World War by actively participating in the bombing campaign against Yugoslavia. The military engagement was legitimised by a massive humanitarian intervention and genocide rhetoric which remained largely uncontested. It is important to note that this discursive hegemony did not follow party lines: It included large parts of the opposition but excluded left-wingers of the red-green coalition.[11] Yet the new discursive hegemony remained on the testing bench due to the engagements in the Balkans and the anti-terror fight in Afghanistan. For the government, problems of justification grew with every test since it hardly seemed possible to link all of these international crises with genocide. But exactly this was the argumentative basis of the sub-formation of conditional restraint! As a consequence, Chancellor Schröder even felt compelled to ask for a vote of confidence in the *Bundestag* in order to discipline the left-wingers in his coalition. Their rise was largely due to the behaviour of the Bush administration which was widely perceived by the German public as unilateralist, egocentric, and profit-oriented. The upcoming election campaign was deemed to become a struggle Right v. Left. Yet for a more prudent stance concerning Iraq, it was impossible to unite the Left, and the government would thus have relied on the opposition's constructive behaviour (Harnisch 2004, 174). Facing this situation, Schröder and Fischer made up their mind and swapped sides by re-uniting the supporters of

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[11] The battle between the the discursive formations 'restraint' and 'normalcy' did not dissipate but shifted from security policy to related societal debates (Bubis-Walser, Holocaust memorial, Goldhagen's publication, exhibition on the role of the Wehrmacht in WW II).

conditional restraint with the pacifists (the sub-formation of unconditional restraint). Main arguments comprised status quo-oriented, pacifist, anti-American and normalist ('a normal conflict among democracies') elements. Since the rhetoric largely missed out idealist reasoning (human rights, rule of law, democracy in the Middle East) but instead stressed realist argumentative patterns ('new German *Sonderweg*', 'a Germany which can say No', stability in the Middle East), it successfully borrowed from normalist arguments (Hellmann 2004). So much so that the normalists split over the issue. Even the opposition candidate Stoiber could not but joining Germany's anti-war stance (Harnisch 2004, 184). The remaining fractions of the Atlanticists (Merkel) and 'Europeans'/multilaterals (Schäuble, Gerhardt) who all lamented on the international isolation of Germany found themselves marginalized in the discourse since the population was highly satisfied with the government's course: 80 per cent had objected to any military engagement in summer 2002, and still 80 per cent disapproved of the coalition's attack on Iraq in March 2003 (Collmer 2004, 212). The firm anti-war positioning carried the day in the election campaign: The coalition managed to catch up in the polls and eventually secured a bare majority in the national elections in September 2002. When the government then decided to retain its position unaltered, Germany's international isolation became more and more obvious. Criticism in the media and among analysts grew[12] and a heated discussion on the terms of the bystander position broke loose: mine sweepers and patriot missiles for Israel, special tanks for Kuwait, German pilots in AWACS planes, and patriots for Turkey were the topics. Counter-factually, I would argue that the course of the government would have been contested had the rest of the EU and the Security Council agreed on intervention. From an identity-based point of view, the government's argumentation rested on only one identity element: the responsible Germany – and thus looked fragile. Yet the government was lucky: The French turn in January and the mass protests all over Europe on 15 February ended German isolation, and the identity element of 'European Germany' could be rhetorically activated in addition. Moreover, when it became apparent that the US and the UK would not find a 'moral majority' in the Security Council, Germany could demonstrate its belonging to the multilateralist camp – concealing its disregard of the UN. The deterioration of the situation in Iraq and the ex post dismantlement of American justifications for the war played for the German government. No contestation occurred, the discursive hegemony turned out to be stable, and the scope of German foreign policy thus was

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[12] See, for instance, reports and comments in the Financial Times Deutschland, e.g.: „Deutschland in Irak-Frage isoliert", FTD headline, 2 September 2002, „Rot-grüne Kritik an Schröders Irak-Kurs wächst", FTD, 13 September 2002, p. 11, „Amoklauf eines Bundeskanzlers", FTD, 11 February 2003, or in Germany's weekly Die ZEIT, e.g. „Stunde der Dilettanten", Die ZEIT headline, 13 February 2003.

extended once more – unilateral action in major international crises has become a viable option.

Table 5: Understanding change – some findings

Criteria Country	Overall behaviour	Reasons for change Hypotheses based on identity/discourse theory	Prognosis on future behaviour
F	Obstructer	If the President had decided to follow the US, this would have left the scope defined by national identity. By objecting to the US policy, France could success-fully rely on the identity elements 'Great power', 'état-nation', and 'Europe as a third force'. This behaviour was not only uncontested but met with entire approval among the élite as well as the public (no élite-mass split). Thus, in comparison, the behaviour was extreme but a perfect expression of France's national identity.	*Europe puissance* remains an important policy goal. Tactical co-operation with US possible depending on behaviour of other big EU member states (UK, D).
D	Early obstructer	The early positioning/securitisation was due to the election campaign. The discursive hegemony comprising normalists and advocates of conditional restraint which had been established in the out-of-area debate became weaker and weaker in the war against terrorism since parts of the coalition parties did not share its assumptions. Schröder and Fischer succeeded in establishing a new discursive hegemony by uniting the pacifists and the conditional restraint fraction again while splitting the nomalists. Due to favourable international circumstances, this fragile consensus remained uncontested: Foreign policy change was secured by an identity change.	New discursive hegemony allows for unilateral behaviour in international crises. Weaker solidarity in the EU and even more internationally looks more likely. New government change would improve transatlantic relations and stabilise out-of-area engagements but would 'defect' in other issue areas (e.g. enlargement).

Conclusion

This article started from the puzzle of the 'great split' in the Iraq crisis. As the descriptive analysis revealed, the split was as obvious as substantial (table 2). The subsequent logical research question was whether this split was surprising. The findings suggest that it was not (table 3): Six out of eight countries under study by and large behaved as they had done in the Gulf War 1990/91 and the Kosovo conflict. This demonstrates that the Iraq case was not that special as it appeared to many at first glance. The activation of European foreign policy in the 1990s resulted in different pathways: The UK and Greece marked the spectre – the UK as a staunch promoter of humanitarian intervention, Greece as a persistent critic. The Netherlands remains in the centre, its behaviour is still characterised by the 'weakening pull of

Atlanticism' (Pijpers). Three countries (E, I, DK) showed a slight Atlanticist tendency which casts some doubts on the widespread belief that the Iraq policy of the Bush Administration was met with disdain in Europe in general. This Atlanticist trend is stable only for Denmark. In Spain, it was re-aligned by the new government, Italy will most probably follow in case of government change (see table 4). But differences among the middle group are not that significant, the unpredictable behaviour of France and Germany seems more alarming. While France and Germany joined Greece in the Europeanist camp, three other countries rather moved slightly in the Atlanticist direction – no signs of convergence but of divergence. The EU in the Iraq crisis looked less consistent than ever. What has been analysed for the war against terror – that already existing differences between the member states tended to sharpen (Hill 2004, 161; Duke 2002, 16) – has found its culmination point in the Iraq crisis.

How can the proven foreign policy continuity of six out of eight countries be understood? Identity theory and discourse analysis have provided some insights (table 4). The basic positioning of four countries (GR, DK, NL, I) was well in line with their national identity. In the case of Greece and Denmark, their moderator role as EU Presidency prevented them from any early positioning but did not alter their final stance. Italy and the Netherlands suffered from a considerable élite-mass split which let the governments refrain from participating in any military engagement despite the Atlanticist attitude of the political élite's majority. In the UK, the Blair government came under fire from the public and party dissenters, although the country's behaviour was perfectly in line with performances in previous crises. In a discursive perspective, this might be explained by the government's 'argumentative self-entanglement' and its failure to succeed in matching its own humanitarian rhetoric. For the UK, a growing élite-mass split is under way and may limit the scope for future out-of-area engagements. In Spain, the firm Atlanticist rhetoric of the Aznar government (despite the fact that its overall behaviour was not far away from the Gonzales governments' behaviour!) was strongly contested and led – other factors notwithstanding – to a re-alignment of Spain's foreign policy after the national elections.

Continuity in foreign policy thus prevailed in the Iraq crisis, but there were two notable exceptions from that rule: Germany and France (table 5). France for the first time let the US down in a serious security crisis. To follow the US – thus the counter-factual argument for France would run here – would have gone beyond the limits of French national identity. On the contrary, Chirac's decision to obstruct the US policy has been met with nearly entire approval by the political élite as well as the public. The German case can be understood by

looking at splits and changes in the country's two dominant discursive formations concerning foreign policy: 'restraint' and 'normalisation'. In order to keep the argument brief, I argue that Schröder's decision to object to any participation in war put an end to the former (cross-party) discursive hegemony which had remained intact from the Kosovo war to the war against terrorism (but in fact had excluded the pacifist wing). The 're-unification' with the pacifists – ironically realised by resort to realist arguments – was so successful that it even helped split the opposition. Thus, the new discursive hegemony proved stable and enables Germany to display unilateral behaviour in the future. Some desiderata for theory-building and further research are summarised in the following table:

Table 6: Desiderata for theory-building

Criteria *Country*	**Continuity/ change in behaviour**	**Behaviour contested?**	**Behaviour re-aligned?**	**Core elements for understanding**
D (UN-SC)	change	no	no	securitisation due to elections, discursive hegemony beyond government's majority, change of argumentation, split of discursive formation of the normalists
F (UN-SC)	change	no	no	discursive formations back change, continuity would have been beyond national identity, continuity would have caused contestation
GR (EU-Pres.)	continuity	no	no	discursive formations back continuity, delayed securitisation (due to EU Presidency)
NL	continuity (Europeanist tendency)	no	no	élite-mass split, acting government, no securitisation (due to political crisis)
I	continuity (Atlanticist tendency)	moderately	no (but decision not to go to war)	élite-mass split lasting, House of liberties relies on identity elements such as 'Great power' and 'belonging to the West', opposition/mass prefers 'peace-loving Italy', constitutional constraints
E (UN-SC)	continuity (Atlanticist tendency)	yes	yes	gov't rhetoric beyond national identity, discursive formations along party lines, policy change after elections
DK (EU-Pres.)	continuity (Atlanticist tendency)	no	no	stable discursive hegemony (separating 'security' from 'Europe'), delayed securitisation (due to EU Presidency)
UK (UN-SC)	continuity	yes	no	gov't rhetoric not consistent (self-entanglement), élite-mass split, discursive formations across party lines helped government

What do the findings of table 4 and 5 mean for the future of European foreign policy in general and CFSP in particular? Despite the common endeavour of the ESS, it remains a long way before Europe can truly speak with one voice. As the Iraq affair has demonstrated, the incentives and constraints to induce common positions or even consultations are still weak. In the Iraq crisis, the preferred fora for member states' foreign policies were the Security Council and newspapers – not the European institutions. Even a consensus that the Iraq crisis was a European matter was largely missing (Peterson 2004, 11). This could be an example of "negative collective intentionality" as Jørgensen (2004, 47) had put it alluding to common taboos.

Indeed, the CFSP positions have been prudent in contents and scarce in number. Although this was not the main focus of this paper, it can be stated that the CFSP statements were more than sheer lowest-common-denominator positions since there were examples where member states complied with a common position which exceeded the limits of their proper national decision (D, GR). Furthermore, the EU Presidency role did make a difference – but did not alter the basic position, even though it definitely influenced the timing when the position was taken (GR, DK).

The national differences in behaviour seem to be stable over time and to be hardly affected by socialisation processes, considering that all of the countries under study have been members of CFSP right from its inauguration. Not only have the big member states taken the most radical positions, but the lack of co-operation also applies more to the bigger member states than to the small. The outspoken non-interest of the Blair, Chirac, and Schröder governments in their smaller partners, the Presidency, Solana, and the European Commission sheds some gloomy light on the perspectives of future foreign policy convergence. Indeed, „the fiasco was an accident waiting to happen" (Cameron 2003, 1). Yet when considering the findings of this study, one is tempted to say: „*Au revoir!*"

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