The ultimate test case: can Europe and America forge a joint strategy for the wider Middle East?

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The United States and the countries of the European Union have to succeed in an exceptionally difficult undertaking. They have to meet not just a single or double challenge but a triple one.

First, they need to prove, to each other and the rest of the world, the oft-stated claim that the principal rationale of the partnership between the United States and Europe is no longer the bilateral relationship and the broader European agenda, but their ability to tackle, together, the growing problems of a troubled world. Terms such as ‘global partnership’ are easy to trot out at summits and in prime ministerial speeches. But both elements—the partnership and the global—are fiendishly hard to put into practice. After all, the transatlantic ‘circuit’ has witnessed in recent years a soul-searching debate on the extent of, and suspected reasons for, a growing divergence in strategic perspectives.

Second, the EU and the US need to forge an alliance for action on the one region that has historically most divided them: the wider Middle East. The unspoken assumptions and the formative experiences, along with the interests and reflexes guiding European and American policies on the wider Middle East, are—for historical, political and other reasons—sharply different, and likely to remain so for years to come. If the problems of the Middle East were not so urgent, one would be inclined to say: let us try to apply this partnership elsewhere first, for example in South-East Asia or Africa.

Finally, they must forge this common strategy towards the challenges of the Middle East against a background of the worst transatlantic bagarre extraordinaire. As the BBC’s political correspondent Andrew Marr put it in March 2003, the events leading up to the Iraq war were ‘the diplomatic equivalent of The Perfect Storm’. Since then, the enormous difficulties which the US-led coalition has experienced in Iraq—from the chaos and looting via the growing insurrection to the prisoner abuse scandal—have meant that there has been no ‘closure’ on the transatlantic divisions over the conflict itself. While in public the atmosphere among leaders has improved, there can be no doubting the deep disdain and resentment felt by each side towards the other’s behaviour and motives, coupled with a firm conviction about the righteousness of its own strategy.
Accordingly, the prospects for a genuinely common transatlantic strategy on the Middle East are poor.

The argument of this article is that, notwithstanding these challenges, a robust yet innovative transatlantic strategy for the wider Middle East is both possible and necessary. To achieve that outcome, both sides will need to take risks, make concessions, rethink existing approaches, confront domestic constituencies and commit significant resources. Even then success is uncertain. Lasting achievements in foreign policy are often elusive, and especially so in the Middle East. But the risks and opportunities thrown up by the wider Middle East cry out for a US–European strategy which is comprehensive and jointly agreed but also flexible enough to allow for autonomy and complementarities.

The strategy advocated here consists of four elements—listed roughly in order of urgency and crisis potential:

- Iraq: a new bargain for international involvement;
- Israel–Palestine: keeping the two-state solution alive;
- Iran: avoiding the next transatlantic breakdown;
- the crisis of governance: how to promote peaceful democratic change.

**Iraq: a new bargain for international involvement**

By mid-April 2003 the US, together with the UK, had waged a remarkably successful war ending the regime of Saddam Hussein. But, as so often in recent years with international interventions, ‘military efficiency has been followed by a civilian chaos.’ Ever since, the ability of the US-led coalition to manage the transition towards a more inclusive and tolerant form of Iraqi politics has been called into serious question—even by many who supported the war. The risk of political and geographical fragmentation, and a slide into violent clashes among competing groups and armed militias, has been growing. In March 2004, as an insurrection against the occupation spread, the number of coalition casualties reached a total higher than that reached during the war itself. April 2004 saw the death toll, also among Iraqis civilians, rise even further. And in May the coalition was rocked by graphic evidence of widespread abuse of Iraqi prisoners, damaging not just the transition effort in Iraq, but America’s and Britain’s reputations throughout the region.

A lot is at stake in Iraq. As Marta Dassù has pointed out: ‘By choosing to go to war against Iraq with few supporters and on a false rationale, the Bush administration took a big gamble—effectively making the success of Iraq a test for its entire foreign policy … Saddam Hussein has been defeated, which is obviously good. However, turning a rogue state into a failed state would be equal to failure.’

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1 This apt phrase, which predates the Iraq debacle, was formulated by Javier Solana, the EU’s High Representative for the CFSP. It can be found in the EU Security Strategy adopted by the European Council in Brussels on 12 December 2003: *A secure Europe in a better world: European security strategy*, available on http://www.iss-eu.org/solana/solana.pdf.

By mid-2004 it was only too clear that creating the ‘new Iraq’ was turning out to be radically different from, and much more difficult than, the predictions of the war proponents. It had become increasingly evident that the United States, and especially the Pentagon’s civilian leadership, saw Iraq through ideologically shaped prisms, with all the (negative) impact this was having on postwar planning. In May 2004, Michael Getter of the Washington Post wrote: ‘Almost everything we were told before the war, other than that Saddam Hussein is bad, has turned out, so far, not to be the case: the weapons of mass destruction, the imagery of nuclear mushroom clouds, the links between al Qa’eda and Hussein, the welcome, the resistance, the costs, the number of troops needed.’

Even more damning is Christoph Bertram’s assessment of the war’s unintended and negative consequences: ‘Apart from the fall of Saddam Hussein, America’s war against Iraq and the subsequent occupation produced none of the results in the region promised by those who waged it—and the opposite of what they wanted in America’s relations to allies, alliances and international institutions.’

Iraq will be a defining experience for US foreign policy and US–European relations. If Americans stay for a long time, set up permanent military bases and embark on a deep transformation project to act as beacon for the rest of the region—as the neo-conservatives demanded from the start—then accusations that ‘imperial America’ is overstaying its welcome will grow further. Already, ‘occupation fatigue’ has set in, and anti-US sentiment has been on the rise. But if the ‘other America’ prevails—that with a short attention span, with demands that ‘our boys are brought back home’ and with a habit of offloading the complex and thankless task of post-conflict reconstruction to others—then the complaint will surely be that Washington has, yet again, carried out an irresponsible hit-and-run operation. In Afghanistan today, despite all the promises that US leaders made in 2001 and in the face of the endemic weakness of Hamid Karzai’s government and growing warlord activity, the United States is reducing its troop numbers to below 15,000 and its annual aid to $400 million in 2004/2005. Similarly, some Americans would like to put in place in Baghdad some semblance of sovereign Iraqi government which, like Karzai’s, would not have effective control over the country, but which Washington could abandon soon after elections were held in January 2005.

The central question is how much effective power the coalition should transfer to the interim Iraqi government, and whether the UN can realistically fill the political legitimacy deficit from which the US-led coalition has been suffering. For the vast majority of European policy-makers, including the British and other coalition members, the mantra has been: transfer genuine sovereignty, including all security issues, to the new Iraqi government and put the UN in charge of helping the Iraqis define their own political future. That

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4 See Christoph Bertram (untitled) in Lindstrom and Schmitt, eds, One year on, pp. 13–19.
reflex is understandable. But one does not have to be a UN-hating member of the neo-conservative right to acknowledge that the UN system and its track record in managing post-conflict transitions have flaws. In Iraq especially, the UN is sometimes more associated with the period of sanctions and the hardship and corruption they brought, than with the humanitarian values it symbolizes in other countries around the world.

But in the absence of the legitimacy—in the eyes of both Iraqis and the wider world—that only the UN can provide, plans for the political future of the new Iraq will fail. Sunni and Shi'i groups are divided in many respects but united in their distrust of the United States and in wanting coalition troops to leave. Privately, senior British officials were admitting as early as the autumn of 2003 that the coalition was living on ‘borrowed time’. The growing numbers of attacks ever since firmly suggest that that period of grace is over. The message from opinion polls and Iraqi leaders is clear: Iraqis want to run their own affairs. To the extent that they want outside involvement, it has to come from the UN, not the US, whose motives and modus operandi people increasingly resent.\footnote{See the poll commissioned one year after the start of the conflict by, inter alia, the BBC. Results are available on: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3514504.stm.} A seemingly reliable opinion poll conducted in May 2004 suggested that nine out of ten Iraqis see US troops as occupiers and not liberators or peacekeepers.\footnote{Financial Times, 19 May 2004.}

Moreover, the many countries that opposed the war, in Europe and elsewhere, will not stump up significant resources if the UN is not in charge. Understandably, war sceptics want to avoid Tony Blair’s predicament: contributing to an operation over which they have no influence and which is in trouble because of US dominance of it. True, many European countries have troops in Iraq, mainly to signal their loyalty to the United States. But unease has been growing about the wisdom of Washington’s strategy, and especially its unwillingness to heed advice from allies about how to deal with the insurgency. The call for a leading role for the UN after 30 June 2004 has reached a deafening pitch.

By mid-May 2004 it seemed that the Bush administration was, somewhat reluctantly, coming around to the same conclusion. The latest Security Council resolution that the US and Britain proposed went a long way in giving extensive powers to the Iraqi government. This change in attitude is welcome, if long overdue. Given the delay in reaching this point, the risk is that the country will get the right policy at the wrong time. Had the hard-liners in the US realized immediately in spring 2003 that managing postwar Iraq was not a prize to keep but a burden to share, a lot of valuable time would not have been lost.

After the transfer of power to the interim Iraqi government on 30 June 2004, Iraq will continue to need massive international assistance. The period immediately afterwards will be critical: a chance to start anew. To succeed this time, a new international bargain is needed, ensuring that the transition is...
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de-Americanized politically; supported by war sceptics economically; and assisted by NATO militarily.

As a first step, the US-led coalition must acknowledge publicly that the Iraqi effort is in serious trouble. Rather than seek refuge in mantra-like assertions about 'standing firm with freedom-loving people in Iraq', President Bush will have to adopt a different tone and strategy. In particular, the US should make clear that it fully accepts that the UN will guide Iraqis towards their own decisions with respect to the timing of elections, the details of a permanent constitution, the nature of the country's economic and education system, its relations with neighbours, whether or not to grant permanent bases and so on. Washington should state openly that it accepts that a sovereign Iraqi government can and will take decisions that go against US ideas and perceived interests, including how US forces operate, and that it will undo some of the decisions taken by Paul Bremer, the US administrator.

The Americans are keen to reduce troop numbers, and Iraqis will welcome a withdrawal too. The proper goal is for Iraqis to prepare to take over security and other functions. But in the short term at least, the risk of Iraq sliding into chaos and civil war is high. That is why the UN should, together with the new Iraqi government, decide when and at what pace coalition troops can and should withdraw. The motto should be: Iraqis to the front, Americans to the back and the UN liaising between the two.

If the US-led coalition changes tack, so too must the opponents of the war. They also have a stake in preventing Iraq from becoming a failed state. Many war sceptics are inclined to say: 'You are responsible for this mess, now you clear it up.' But a slide into anarchy and even more violence in Iraq would harm their interests too. Terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda would claim a huge victory while moderate forces in the region would suffer. An America that felt wronged and deserted by its allies would be harder to deal with. That is why, provided clear conditions are met, those countries opposed to the war will have to make a greater contribution and act accordingly in the relevant international fora (NATO, UN and EU). For example, the EU has not used its experience in post-conflict transitions. Its financial aid stands at a derisory €200 million a year. The EU should become more involved in aspects of building a new Iraq where its expertise could make a difference—and devote far greater resources to the effort.

Iraqis must prepare to run their own affairs, but the country is likely to require thousands of international troops for years to come. The creation of an effective and legitimate Iraqi army is taking much longer than anticipated, while armed militias are becoming stronger and bolder. With every passing week, the US army is seen more as an instrument of occupation. A broader, international force would have more legitimacy. This could be a mission for NATO, the world's most experienced peacekeeping organization, with many additional troops from other, non-western countries to reduce the image of NATO as a US tool. Even France has indicated that it is open to the idea of NATO taking
on a greater role in Iraq, for instance by commanding a sector, provided there
were an invitation from the interim Iraqi government and a proper UN
mandate. As Philip Gordon observed as early as June 2003: ‘Just as the West
overcame its divisions in the Balkans only once NATO deployed on the
ground, in Iraq we shall remain divided until we have a collective interest in
stability and success.’

The point of this bargain is not to deny the legitimate differences of opinion
that manifested themselves in the approach to the Iraq war and have persisted
ever since. Nor is to argue that with a new deal Iraq is bound to develop into a
beacon of democracy in the Arab world, as President Bush and others are fond
of claiming. Rather, it is to ensure that Iraq makes the most of the chance it still
has to become a more stable, prosperous and successful country. While the US-
led coalition has thus far badly mismanaged the transition, it is equally impor-
tant to remember that Iraq under Saddam Hussein never had a chance at all.

**Israel–Palestine: keeping the two-state solution alive**

Few international issues are more frustrating to deal with than Israel–Palestine.
 Barely two years ago the mantra among Middle East watchers was: ‘Things are
dreadful on the ground, but we all agree what a final settlement will look like.’
The question was ‘merely’ how to get from here to there. There was wide-
spread agreement that this would involve political negotiations among the
parties with a heavy dose of international pressure leading, step by step, to a
negotiated settlement and a two-state solution. The much-maligned ‘road map
for peace’ embodied that line of thinking.

But at present there is no optimism whatsoever on any side, nor any peace
process to speak of; and the international consensus on what a final settlement
would look like is under serious strain. In April 2004 President Bush apparently
broke with decades of US policy when he endorsed Israeli positions about hold-
ing on to settlements in parts of the West Bank and the ‘right of return’, in the
context of Ariel Sharon’s plans for disengagement from the Gaza strip. European
governments were quick to welcome any withdrawal from occupied territory;
but they were deeply critical of the other elements of the Bush–Sharon deal.
‘No number of unilateral initiatives on their own can bring about a permanent
peace in the Middle East. Everybody knows that,’ Irish Foreign Minister Brian
Cowen said, speaking for the EU foreign ministers at a news conference on 16
April. ‘In particular, the question of the borders cannot be prejudged and there
must be a fair, just and realistic solution to the question of refugees.’

The key developments since the outbreak of the second *intifada* are familiar:
the cycle of violence; the steady flow of suicide bombings; the targeted
assassinations of suspected militants; the building of the wall or ‘security fence’
on Palestinian land; the collapse of the Palestinian Authority (PA); the

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8 See e.g. *Irish Times*, 17 April 2004.
continuing expansion of settlements and supporting infrastructure; the growing humanitarian crisis; the latest machinations of Yasser Arafat; and so on.

The consequence of all these developments is that time is fast running out for what has been the stated policy of both the US and the EU for decades: a negotiated two-state solution, whereby a Palestinian state based roughly on the 1967 borders would emerge, with tough security guarantees for Israel. Very soon there will be no contiguous, viable Palestinian state left to carve out on the West Bank. The PA has been so weak and has become so discredited, partly as a result of deliberate Israeli actions, that it is now neither a viable partner for peace with Israel nor a government-in-waiting for the Palestinians. The PA is in danger of becoming a failed state before becoming an independent one.

Thinking the unthinkable: a NATO-led force in the Middle East

Many in Europe and the United States are already arguing that peacemaking in the Middle East is doomed to fail; that the outside world can only ‘manage’ what is, essentially, an insoluble problem. This view is tempting but mistaken. If the US, EU and others want to secure their stated objective of a negotiated, two-state settlement, they will have to move urgently and make a greater investment—politically and militarily—in getting there. Martin Indyk and others have rightly remarked that sticking to the failed method of incremental negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians will not work, and that the outside world must step in and halt the process of reciprocal suicide.9

In their efforts, the United States and Europe have to think and act both big and small. One big idea they must consider is moving a NATO-led security force first into Gaza and later on the West Bank.10 It is important to stress that a NATO-led force could operate only with the explicit consent of both parties, after a ceasefire by extremist groups and on the basis of a UN mandate. But provided these conditions were met, it could play a critical role. The point of such a force would be, first, to help the Palestinians manage security in Gaza, and second to create a climate in which further substantive Israeli withdrawals can follow.

Many Israelis say, understandably, that they will not pull out from major West Bank cities unless their security interests are guaranteed. By common agreement, the Palestinian security services are currently too weak and fragmented to do the job. But it is equally clear that unless the Israelis withdraw completely, the Palestinian leadership—already accused of doing the Israelis’ bidding—will not be able to crack down on extremist groups. Hence the question becomes: should an outside force take over positions from the Israeli army and make up for the clear lack of trust between the parties?

Dismissed earlier as ludicrously ambitious, the idea of a NATO-led force in Gaza and the West Bank is slowly gathering support. In the United States Senator John Warner, chairman of the Congressional Armed Services Committee, is a

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leading advocate. Senior US officials, including some at the National Security Council, are known to be supportive, if only to deflect European criticism that ‘Gaza first’ effectively means ‘Gaza only’. (Palestinians and many Europeans feel that Sharon will use a withdrawal from Gaza to avert US/international pressure to end Israeli control over the West Bank.) NATO defence ministers have discussed the proposals informally. Some in the Dutch government are in favour, as are top NATO officials.

Among European defence ministers there is some interest, but also deep reluctance, given the risks involved. Some worry that a NATO force would be a prime target for suicide bombers. But of course a NATO-led force would move in only if a ceasefire by groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad were firmly in place. Moreover, the West should make clear that a NATO-led force would be a means for Palestinians to realize their dream of a state, not a mechanism to perpetuate foreign occupation. For that reason Palestinians, including those who have been radicalized by the Israeli occupation, are bound to support a security force. This will be especially true if a security force also helps to train Palestinian security forces—as it must. During previous periods when the peace process made headway, levels of violence declined markedly.

Constant European pleas for a more active and equitable US stance on Israel–Palestine are justified. But such arguments could carry greater weight in Washington if European governments showed they were prepared to support a settlement, not just with extra money for a post-peace context, but also with troops for a NATO-led peacekeeping force.

Some Europeans, including the former French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin, have argued that the EU should send peacekeepers to the Middle East. But Israel would never accept a European-only force. To be credible, it has to be a NATO-led force to which other countries, especially Arab and Muslim states, would make contributions. At the same time, getting NATO involved in peace support efforts in the Middle East would be a triumph for Europe. It would prove that the alliance can balance European and American priorities, and that NATO is as good at promoting peace accords as it is at cleaning up after US-led interventions.

Israelis want security but do not trust the Palestinians to deliver it. Palestinians want an end to occupation but lack, at present, the capacity and credibility to run their own affairs. The outside world laments the cycle of violence and is desperate to keep a two-state solution alive. A NATO–led force may be the only way forward.

What Europe can do on its own

For the vast majority of European policy-makers, the US attitude on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is a source of endless frustration. They know that the United States is indispensable to obtain even modest adjustments in Israel’s stance. But the United States, especially under George W. Bush, has been
unwilling to use its leverage. If anything, America under Bush has been willing
to support increasingly hard-line Israeli positions.

It is understandable, then, that some in Europe argue that the EU must draw
its conclusions from America’s posture and opt for a more audacious, distinctly
European approach. For example, European governments could signal that they
would recognize a Palestinian state if by the end of 2005 (the date originally
envisioned under the road map) negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians
had not been successful. But there is no consensus in the EU for such an initi-
avative. Moreover, it is unlikely to produce a diplomatic breakthrough, because
Israel would reject it and could do so with virtual impunity.

In sum, on the diplomatic track the Europeans must stick with pushing and
cajoling the United States to play a more constructive role. But the EU and the
member states can do a lot more on their own than they do at present. While
the United States is indispensable to any peace talks, the EU does not need to
wait for Washington before it decides how it wants to spend its money.

To be successful, the EU’s efforts need to be balanced in two respects: be-
tween Israelis and Palestinians; and between incentives and coercive measures.
With Israel, the EU is right to say that extra-judicial killings, as well as the
constant expansion of settlements, need to stop. The Europeans must continue
to make the case for a negotiated settlement between the parties, not a settle-
ment imposed by Israel. And the EU should state categorically that those who
equate criticism of certain types of Israeli actions with anti-Semitism debase
what should be a careful dialogue based on facts, not insults.

But the EU also needs to improve its image with the constituency in Israel
that shares its basic objectives. A growing number of Israelis worry about the
nature of their democracy if Israel decided to create apartheid-style Bantustans
on the West Bank. A majority of Israelis still favour removing most settlements
in the context of a peace deal.11 The EU needs to reach out to centrist, liberal
Israelis who at present distrust Europe. It could do so by spelling out how it
would upgrade its partnership with Israel in the context of its ‘wider Europe’
policies after a settlement with the Palestinians. Israel already has significant
privileges in trade with the EU, which is why closer ties should be strictly
conditional upon Israel adopting a more constructive stance towards the
Palestinians. But there is ample scope for an eventual deepening of political and
other ties, for instance through closer cooperation on transport, research or
competition policy, or in the fight against organized crime. The basic idea
behind such seemingly ‘technical’ proposals is to give Israelis a sense that they
could participate in the broader European integration process. Europeans should
ask them: if Israel is building a wall to keep out the Palestinians, with which
region does it want to integrate? Europe could be Israel’s ‘strategic depth’.
Despite the rows over Europe’s alleged anti-Semitic biases, many Israelis also
say they want to get closer to the European system. The EU could help to

11 See e.g. the article in Ha’aretz on 11 March 2004: http://www.haaretzdaily.com/hasen/pages/
ShArt.jhtml?ItemNo=402996&contrastID=1.
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reinvigorate the section of Israeli public opinion that is pro-peace and worried about the consequences of Sharon’s policies—a section of opinion which, after years of silence, is slowly starting to speak out. Raising the prospect of stronger ties with Europe could have a transformative effect. However, all Israelis need to realize that any such deepening of economic and political links with Europe can occur only if Israel accepts EU norms and policies, especially regarding the conflict with the Palestinians.

In foreign policy as in personal relations, incentives and rewards tend to be more effective than punishments and coercion, certainly in the longer term. Nonetheless, the EU should also be prepared to make clear that certain types of Israeli behaviour carry a cost. For instance, if the Europeans are serious about their claim that Israeli settlements are illegal and an obstacle to peace, they should accept the consequences. This means sticking to a firm line on the ‘rules of origin’ dispute.\(^\text{12}\) Chris Patten deserves full support in his battle with the Israelis who have been stonewalling on this issue. It is true that the sums involved are small. But since settlements are a touchstone issue, the EU needs to hold its position.

The EU should adopt a similar mixture of sticks and carrots with the Palestinians. For example, the EU should continue to support Palestinian leaders, such as Hanan Ashrawi, who have condemned suicide bombings as morally unacceptable and counterproductive. Similarly, the Europeans should offer funding for road-building—for example, linking East Jerusalem with the West Bank—to keep alive the possibility of a viable, contiguous Palestinian state. Few people in the West realize that Israel has not just expanded its illegal settlements in the West Bank but also built a whole supporting infrastructure, including ‘settler roads’ which only Israelis are allowed to use, while destroying the roads upon which Palestinians rely.

But financial aid to the Palestinians has too often come without any strings attached. True, US and Israeli insistence on Palestinian reform as a precondition for negotiations has been excessive. Palestinian reforms are hard to implement in the context of the continuing occupation. Nonetheless, further reform of the PA is needed. A corrupt and authoritarian PA is not what the Palestinians want or deserve. Nor is it a credible partner for peace to the Israelis. Yasser Arafat has exercised an unhealthy control over the PA and he has failed to bring the Palestinians closer to having their own state. The EU should support the emergence of a new generation of Palestinian leaders with homegrown legitimacy, such as Salam Fayad and perhaps, if he is released from prison, Marwan Barghouti. A gradual power shift away from Arafat is in the interest of the Palestinians. The PA is in crisis now, and there is a growing risk of anarchy.

\(^{12}\) The rules of origin dispute involves products made in Israeli settlements. Israel claims these products should be able to enter the EU market under the preferential tariff offered to Israel in its association agreement with the EU. The EU argues that these products should not be labelled ‘made in Israel’ and that a higher tariff should apply. It has asked Israel to put in place adequate procedures to separate products made in Israel within the 1967 borders from those made in settlements. At the time of writing (May 2004) there was no mutually agreed solution.
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The one thing Europe should not do is abandon the Palestinians. The EU must help them run their own affairs—and try to convince the Israelis that it is in their own interest to have a viable PA.

At present, too much of the EU’s money goes to general budgetary support for the PA. The EU should target its financial assistance better towards projects that prepare the Palestinians for eventual statehood. In particular, the EU should expand its training programmes for Palestinian security forces, to begin with in Gaza. Both Israelis and Palestinians would benefit. The point of all these proposals is to keep the state-building perspective alive and to build capacity on the Palestinian side so that they, eventually, can run their own affairs.

There are many reasons to be pessimistic about the prospect of a two-state solution. Time is fast running out. If the outside world wants to keep it alive, it will have to become more engaged and be prepared to adopt a clever mix of small and big steps. Few things are simple in the Middle East. But the axiom that the US and Europe will not succeed in their broader agenda—fighting terrorism, succeeding with the transition in Iraq, promoting democratic reforms, etc.—without a real commitment to serving an Israeli–Palestinian peace is correct.

Iran: avoiding the next transatlantic breakdown

After Iraq, Iran risks becoming the next big issue to fragment the West. The Americans have a long list of grievances, including Iran’s alleged interference in southern Iraq, its refusal to hand over Al-Qaeda suspects and its support for Hezbollah. But what agitates Washington most is Iran’s nuclear programme. For months, the United States has been pressing Mohammed el Baradei, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), to declare Iran in breach of its non-proliferation commitments. That would refer the issue to the UN Security Council for a debate on possible responses, with the United States most likely wanting to turn the screws.

European governments are also coming to the conclusion that Iran’s nuclear programme is incompatible with Tehran’s assurances that it has a solely civilian purpose. Crucially, this more critical European stance is the product of IAEA reports and their own intelligence and other assessments—not of deference to Washington’s position. All Europeans now recognize that Iran is fast becoming a test case both of the future of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and, more broadly, of their foreign policy ambitions. Iran offers Europeans a chance to give substance to the idea that there is a European approach to managing security issues and to implement the doctrine of effective multilateralism that was the centrepiece of the recently adopted EU Security Strategy.

Over recent years, the US and EU have agreed that Iran has a poor record on human rights, democracy, support for terrorist groups, and development of

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13 See Steven Everts, Engaging Iran: a test case for EU foreign policy (London: Centre for European Reform, March 2004).
14 Solana, A secure Europe in a better world.
ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction programmes. But the two sides have adopted diametrically opposed policies. Washington has sought to isolate and confront Tehran, with little or no effect. Europe has pursued a policy of ‘conditional engagement’ which offers the prospect of closer ties but also, if necessary, the threat of sanctions. The EU argues that Iran’s domestic politics remain in flux, despite the serious setback for the reformist camp at the February 2004 parliamentary elections. EU diplomats add that they have a better feel for the domestic situation because, unlike the US, they have embassies in Tehran. For instance, very few Europeans believe, as some Pentagon hawks do, that Iran is ‘ripe’ and that an end to the Islamic regime is just around the corner.

The EU must now prove that ‘conditional engagement’ can deliver lasting results. An apparent breakthrough in the tense standoff between Iran and the West occurred in October 2003, when the foreign ministers of Europe’s ‘Big Three’ (France, Germany and the UK) reiterated that Europe was prepared to resist US pressure to refer its nuclear programme to the UN Security Council. The Europeans said they were willing to continue their dialogue with Tehran, and even to offer more trade, investment and technology; but first Iran had to allay growing international concerns about its nuclear ambitions and pledge to cooperate fully with the IAEA. Iran got the message and promised three things: a complete and accurate account of its nuclear activities, including a list of suppliers; a promise to sign and ratify the ‘additional protocol’ of the NPT; and a suspension of its uranium enrichment activities. This was a good day for European foreign policy. In terms of presentation it would have been much better if Javier Solana had accompanied the three foreign ministers to signal this was genuinely an EU initiative. But in terms of broad substance, the agreement was a good one. It showed that conditional engagement could be effective. In Tehran, the story is that a fear of ‘losing Europe’ played a key part in Iranian calculations.

Iran must live up to all these commitments, and prove its trustworthiness. Specifically, the new, conservative-dominated parliament must ratify and abide by all requirements of the additional protocol. Iran must stop assembling centrifuges and refrain from threats to export nuclear fuel. Most important of all, uranium enrichment can resume only under enhanced international supervision. For conditional engagement to succeed, Iran must be assured that if it implements its commitments, so too will the EU and others. Conversely, Iran must satisfy the EU and other countries that it means what it says, and that relations with the West must be built on trust and changes in Iranian behaviour, not merely warm words about ‘dialogues between civilizations’. Thus, if the IAEA board produces a favourable report on Iran’s cooperation at its September 2004 meeting, the EU should resume negotiations on a trade and cooperation agreement. But the EU should make clear that progress in these talks depends

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15 Agreed statement at the end of a visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran by the foreign ministers of Great Britain, France and Germany, also known as the Tehran Declaration, 21 Oct. 2003: available on www.fco.gov.uk.
on continuing Iranian compliance with the IAEA and also on constant political reforms. Conversely, if Iran continues to stall on some of its commitments, and especially if IAEA inspectors uncover further incriminating evidence, the EU should agree that the UN Security Council must discuss the issue. If Iran then continues to defy the IAEA, the EU should support targeted sanctions.

Towards a Gulf regional security forum

As well as exerting pressure and reiterating its demands, the West also needs to develop a broader set of policies. These should make clear that it takes Iranian security concerns seriously while explaining that going nuclear is not the answer. In this context a closer look at the regional security situation will be crucial. From Iran’s perspective, the region looks distinctly threatening. Iran is a proud and nationalistic country with a deep distrust of the outside world. This outlook is based partly on paranoia and ideology; but it also has a rational core. Throughout the twentieth century there was plenty of foreign interference in Iranian politics. Take the Anglo-American organized coup in 1953 against the nationalist government of Mohammed Mossadegh. In the 1980s, Iraq repeatedly used chemical weapons against Iran—with at least tacit agreement from the United States. Israel, Iran’s arch-enemy, has an extensive nuclear arsenal, not subject to any international inspections. Then there are Pakistan and India, each with a nuclear deterrent. Most importantly, Iran fears US intentions, especially given the vast numbers of US troops next door in Afghanistan and Iraq. The wry joke in Tehran is that there are just two countries in the world that have the United States as their only neighbour: the other one is Canada.

To an outsider it is clear that the multiple security problems of the Gulf cry out for a regional security forum. More than any other region in the world, the Gulf is beset by both exceptionally high levels of tension while lacking a significant multilateral security organization to tackle them. Regional leaders and outside powers alike are addicted to seeking security in balance of power calculations and short-term bilateral deals. But the record of frequent wars and lasting instability shows the costs and limitations of this approach. Now there is a chance to break out of this loop. Talks with senior officials from across the region reveal widespread support in principle for a regional security initiative. And yet nothing is happening.

Europe should step into this breach and, together with the United States, propose the creation of a Gulf regional security forum. A judiciously timed proposal could demonstrate that Europe is serious about tackling ‘grown up’ problems such as Gulf security. A Gulf security forum would not be like the old NATO: a classic military alliance against a clear, external threat. Rather, the point of the forum would be threefold: to reduce political tensions; increase transparency on military postures; and promote cooperation on common security threats such as fanatical terrorism, which threaten all governments in
the Gulf region. A Gulf security forum would also be different from, but compatible with, another idea that is fast gaining support, namely to set up an ‘OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] for the Middle East’. The advocates of such a body stress the benefits of a comprehensive and cooperative approach to security. Similarly, they tend to argue in favour of a large membership, extending to all countries of the ‘greater Middle East’, from Morocco to Afghanistan. Outsiders such as the EU, US and Russia would be full rather than associate members. Istanbul, with its ties to the West and its pivotal role in the region, would be a good location for its headquarters.

This idea of an OSCE for the Middle East has many merits. But a Gulf security forum would be different. To increase the chances of early success, its membership would be much more limited in number, say including Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and the smaller Gulf states. The US, EU and Russia would be associate members. Its remit would focus tightly on key Gulf security issues. In its outlook, it would be more akin to the OSCE’s predecessor, the Helsinki process, which focused on confidence-building measures. Over time, the Gulf security forum could be a building block for a looser and larger ‘OSCE for the Middle East’. But it is best to start quickly and small, given the urgency of the problems and the need to avoid the Israeli–Palestinian conflict hijacking the debates and preventing much-needed progress in other areas. Concretely, a Gulf security forum could help policy-makers find creative solutions for the three countries that top the international agenda: Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

With respect to Iran, it is clear that the deal on nuclear issues is extremely fragile. Constant international pressure on Iran to fulfil its commitments will be necessary. But at the same time, the West will have to provide convincing answers to Iran’s legitimate security concerns if Tehran is to forgo nuclear weapons. Without a change in Iran’s perception of intense vulnerability, any Iranian government will want nuclear weapons. One way to tackle Iranian security concerns is through structured discussions among the key players on regional security issues. This could lead to a regional non-aggression pact, underwritten by the US and EU. Iran’s neighbours should bear in mind that states that do not feel threatened tend to behave less threateningly.

Iraq constitutes the second reason to push for a regional security forum. After the transfer of sovereignty in June 2004, international attention should turn to how the new Iraq can fit into a broader, regional structure. Both Iraqis and their neighbours should start discussions now about the future size, equipment strength and doctrine of the new Iraqi army. Similarly, Iraq’s neighbours, including Iran, will want to have their say about how Iraq’s political system will evolve, including the issue of Kurdish autonomy, after the transfer of sovereignty.

A regional security forum might even help policy-makers deal with Saudi Arabia. Everyone recognizes that extremist Islamic groups, including Al-Qa’eda, are on the rise while the authority of the ruling House of Saud is declining.
The ultimate test case

Political reforms have been small in scope and slow in coming. In many respects, Saudi Arabia is an accident waiting to happen. But hardly anyone, in the region or outside, has a good idea of how to promote political and economic reforms in the country. If regional tensions were lower, the current Saudi regime might be more willing to experiment with political pluralism at home. In a regional security forum, the neighbours of Saudi Arabia could emphasize that growing support for fanatical Islamic groups threatens not just the House of Saud but the entire region.

Finally, a regional security structure could help reassure the smaller Gulf states about the intentions of their bigger neighbours. If the Gulf monarchies felt safer vis-à-vis their neighbours, they could reduce their dependence on the United States, which in turn would have a beneficial effect on the entire region.

In short, there are many reasons to favour a regional security forum—and no convincing arguments against it. It is time to move the debate from the world of think-tanks and planning staffs, where these ideas have long been discussed, to operational departments for concrete action.

Promoting a US–Iranian rapprochement

In addition, the EU must try to nudge US policy on Iran in a more constructive direction. It should encourage Washington to start thinking about giving Tehran some of the things it craves. Ever since the 1979 revolution and hostage crisis, strong emotions and dissident groups with questionable political agendas have influenced US thinking about Iran. It is time for the United States to set up normal diplomatic relations, a step that ordinary Iranians are clearly longing for. The religious leadership in Iran may prefer to stick to anti-American diatribes as a means to underline the revolutionary identity of the Islamic regime; but most ordinary Iranians want more normal ties with the United States. They wish the regime would focus less energy on ideological battles with the ‘Great Satan’, and rather more on sorting out the country’s dismal economic performance. According to Saideh Lotfian, a senior Iranian analyst who works at the Tehran-based Middle East Centre, more than 80 per cent of Iranians would currently favour a rapprochement with America.

Washington in turn should play its part to facilitate a gradual normalization of US–Iranian relations. Such a move is manifestly in the US interest, as it would promote further liberalization and diversification of Iranian politics, thus weakening the grip of the hard-line religious leaders. In the United States growing numbers of analysts and politicians outside the administration have already spoken out in favour of a diplomatic opening towards Tehran—not because they believe the regime is fundamentally sound or stable, but because they reckon such a move would speed up its eventual demise.

Of course, a large number of political and emotional obstacles stand in the way of a rapid rapprochement. But the debates on both sides are in flux. European governments should help to ensure that those people in Iran and the
United States advocating change win their arguments at home. In the short term, Europeans may benefit—politically and economically—from poor US–Iranian relations. Some senior European officials argue that it is not self-evidently in Europe’s interest to work for a rapid US–Iranian thaw. They add that the current ‘good cop, bad cop’ routine has produced good results. But EU–Iranian relations can only develop into a meaningful partnership if there is a parallel improvement in US–Iranian relations. Likewise, frayed EU–US relations will not recover from the damage incurred during the Iraq saga if the West splits again over how to handle Iran.

If the aim is a gradual normalization of US–Iranian relations, it is clear that both sides will have to amend entrenched positions. Iran has to implement all its commitments on the nuclear issue and maintain its (for the most part) cooperative stance regarding Iraq. It must also find creative ways to persuade Americans of its reliability when it comes to fighting Al-Qaeda; and it will have to balance its position on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Iran is, of course, perfectly entitled to support the Palestinians in their struggle to end the Israeli occupation and get their own state in the West Bank and Gaza. But Iran should state clearly that a two-state solution is the only acceptable outcome to the conflict. At present, Iran is at least equivocal on this issue, given its ties to groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad which violently oppose a two-state solution. The PA and a majority of Palestinians aim to end the occupation, not destroy Israel itself. There is no need for the Iranians to be more Palestinian than the Palestinians. Since Israel occupies such a central place in the American psyche, it is hard to see a durable improvement in US–Iranian relations without a public recognition by Iran of Israel’s right to exist.

The United States, for its part, should signal that it is ready to negotiate a gradual restoration of full diplomatic relations. In the context of such a normalization process, the US should repeal the sanctions it has imposed on Iran. Like so many ‘untargeted’ sanctions, these measures have failed to achieve any political change; all they have done is to harm US economic interests and, because of their illegal, extraterritorial provisions, act as a constant source of tensions between the US and EU.

America will also have to think about conditional security guarantees for Iran. With North Korea the United States is, reluctantly, offering a deal whereby the North Koreans would get a multilateral security guarantee—that is, a non-aggression pact—in exchange for denuclearization. Something similar has to happen with Iran. If Iran is to give up the nuclear option for good, it will want assurances that its security and independence are guaranteed. A Gulf regional security forum, discussed above, would be a good place to initiate discussions on concrete ways to address Iran’s security concerns.

The United States must also lift its veto on the prospect of Iranian entry into the World Trade Organization—especially since it is lobbying for Iraqi membership. The EU, Japan and numerous Middle Eastern countries are supporting Iran’s bid, launched in the mid-1990s. But at the moment Iran’s
The ultimate test case

application is blocked, because Washington remains gripped by the superficial appeal of broad economic sanctions. It is time to rethink that position. Iranian membership of the WTO would not just increase trade and investment; it would also have positive political consequences. If China’s entry into the WTO was desirable at least in part to promote political reforms, why would the same logic not apply to Iran?

In addition to the general argument that international trade and the openness it brings will have a positive political spillover effect, there are also specific reasons to favour Iran’s bid for WTO membership. Because of the WTO’s transparency requirement on subsidies, it would undermine the role of the bonyads—the foundations run by clerics which have a stranglehold on the economy. Ordinary Iranians complain not only about the restrictions on their personal freedom and dress codes but also, and as much, about the rampant corruption and economic exploitation by the clerical establishment. Authoritarian governments the world over use their political power and connections to stifle genuine competition and maximize their private wealth. WTO membership would make it harder for the hard-liners in Iran to sustain these forms of favouritism and corruption. It is thus in America’s interest that Iran joins the WTO as soon as possible.

Most of all, the United States has to make clear that it no longer aims for regime change. Of course, the US and others are perfectly entitled to push for greater democratization in Iran; but they must stress that such change has to come from within. Taunting regime change rhetoric, popular in neo-conservative think-tanks, is removing any incentive for Iran to comply with the West’s demands on nuclear and other issues. Why should the Iranians cooperate if the ultimate aim, and for some the only acceptable outcome, is an end to the Islamic regime? Iranian officials have a point when say they may be damned if they do comply, and damned if they don’t.

The point of all these proposals is to change the calculations of Iran’s leadership. It will be very difficult to get Iran off the nuclear track for good. But a non-nuclear Iran is possible. There is a chance that sufficient numbers of Iranians will start to believe that the country is paying too high a price for its nuclear weapons activities. A relatively recent argument used in the Iranian debate is that national greatness is best achieved through economic success and political reforms. Former President Rafsanjani has gone as far as suggesting that regime survival depends on popular legitimacy, not a nuclear deterrent. On the other hand, hard-liners such as Ayatollah Jannati continue to insist that Iran should defy the West.

At present, hard-liners in both Washington and Tehran are driving the respective administrations’ policies—and conforming each other’s worst fears. It is no exaggeration to say that the US and Iran are on a collision course. But it is not too late for cooler heads to prevail. A robust and joint US-European approach, focused on Iran’s nuclear ambitions together with efforts to promote more democratic practices, plus a positive agenda of promoting a regional
The crisis of governance: how to promote peaceful democratic change

The ‘crisis of governance’ in the wider Middle East has now reached the top of the international agenda. Something of a new consensus has emerged—in Europe and America, and across the Middle East itself—that ‘Arab state failure’ is not just a political or socio-economic problem, but also the source of many security threats. A series of summits in June 2004 (G8, EU–US, NATO) have tried to forge a set of policy ideas. But other than an abstract realization that the crisis of governance is acute, policy-makers lack a clear strategy on how concretely to promote higher standards of governance, with more respect for political pluralism, human rights and religious tolerance.

In dealing with this complex region, there is a danger that the West will move from crisis to crisis, treating symptoms rather than causes. In that case, the names of the rogue states, failed states and terrorist groups will change, but the underlying problems of ossified political systems, growing religious extremism and widespread anti-western sentiment will not. That is why a long-term strategy is needed to transform the region’s political and economic systems.

Too often in the past, western pressure has aimed at structural economic reforms while ignoring the underlying political and social shortcomings, particularly the impact of autocratic systems on development. Frequently, short-term calculations drove western governments to support ‘moderate’ Arab regimes as these presented themselves as bulwarks against radical Islam. This strategy had pretty disastrous results: poor development outcomes, more support for political extremist groups (including Islamic fundamentalist ones) and greater migration pressures. Since the September 11 attacks, western governments have embraced security and intelligence services in the region—ignoring the fact that these are the main instruments of political repression. The time has come for a more courageous and consistent strategy favouring democratic reforms. Europeans, in particular, need to allocate a more prominent place in their policies to promoting democracy and freedom—goals far too important to be left to the neo-conservatives.

Obviously, if people in the region perceive western strategy as an attempt to ‘impose democracy’ it is bound to fail. Regional ‘ownership’, as Europeans and Arab reformers themselves point out, is crucial. Therefore, western governments should listen more to what reformers in the region advise and then back up their demands. Also, western governments must tailor their strategies more specifically to the particular circumstances of individual countries. Methods that may work in one country could easily backfire in another.

Moreover, many people in the region—both democracy activists and government autocrats—question whether the United States is really willing to let democratization override other US objectives. Deputy Secretary of Defense...
Paul Wolfowitz gave exactly the wrong signal in May 2003 when he lamented the fact that the Turkish army had not campaigned more forcefully for US troops to be allowed to use Turkey for a northern front. The Turks may have mishandled the US request, but the final decision was the product of a democratic process (a parliamentary vote). It is crucial that democratic reformers in the region can point to concrete examples of the US accepting decisions taken democratically that went against stated US ideas or policy. Regrettably, in Iraq in 2003–2004 the United States made a number of decisions—for instance, closing down newspapers, postponing elections or curtailing massively the powers of the Governing Council—which have undermined confidence in the region that the pro-democracy rhetoric is worth its salt, and fed suspicions that realpolitik will continue to trump democracy.

Finally and most importantly, the United States has a massive image problem in the Middle East. Many in the region distrust America’s motives and doubt its sincerity. They see an America that gives blanket support for the Israeli occupation which negates the Palestinians’ right to self-rule; an America that aligns itself with representatives of the existing, retrograde Arab order such as repressive regimes in Saudi Arabia and Tunisia. Surveys by the Pew Research Center show that the Iraq war has made America’s image abroad much worse, especially in the Muslim world. Resentment is so strong that majorities in three Muslim countries surveyed—Jordan, Pakistan and Morocco—feel that suicide bombings against Americans and other westerners in Iraq are justifiable. The poll found that even in Turkey, an American partner in NATO, 31 per cent felt such attacks were justifiable. A lot of people in the Middle East, including democracy activists, have become much more wary of US rhetoric about spreading democracy to the region.

Europe can be of help here. For well-known reasons it is more widely trusted than America. A joint transatlantic strategy for promoting democratic reforms could have three positive effects: increasing the strategy’s chances of success by making sure the message comes from a more trusted source; ensuring that the United States could learn from Europe’s own mistakes; and having a therapeutic effect on the US–European relationship itself. If carefully designed and executed, a strategy to promote peaceful democratic change could be the common project around which to rebuild the transatlantic partnership.

Some specific proposals

What would this mean in practice? A serious strategy must do three things—increase support for democrats in the region; create a better regional context that facilitates democratic development; and reorganize decision-making.

procedures in Europe and the United States to facilitate the pursuit of pro-democracy policies in the region.\textsuperscript{18}

First, Europe and America must recognize publicly and unequivocally that, while the West must play a critical supporting role, change must come from within the region. The task ahead is to strengthen—symbolically and practically—indigenous political forces pushing for democratic change.

In many countries democratic activists sit in prison because of their commitment to human rights—and yet Europeans and Americans do little to help them. A new strategy could start by setting a new benchmark for providing these campaigners with consistent political and moral support. No senior American or European leader should visit the region without raising human rights and defending those brave individuals already fighting for democracy.

In practical terms, the West must dramatically increase its direct support for local NGOs and campaigners (although in countries like Egypt it will first need to get the government to change the law so that they can receive foreign funding). Whereas the United States now spends nearly $430 billion on defence every year, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) has lived on an annual budget of some $40 million. Washington is now doubling that amount, but a bigger and bolder step is needed—for example, raising the level of support tenfold or even more, both for the NED and for countless other NGOs. The EU, for its part, should dramatically increase its democracy promotion efforts in the context of a revamped EU–Mediterranean dialogue. It should be politically feasible to increase the funding for the EU’s democracy promotion programme to at least €500 million a year.

This money should be administered at arm’s length from government to ensure that it is not constrained by diplomatic pressures. A new, independent Trust for Democracy in the Middle East could be created to which European countries and the US government could contribute funds and expertise.

As well as working at a grassroots level, Washington and Brussels should use their policies on trade, aid and migration to encourage governments to reform and enlarge the space for legitimate political action. Through a transparent benchmarking process, they need to reward those countries that are making progress on democracy and good governance—and be ready to withdraw privileges from those that do not. They must do so in a consistent manner, ending the current routine of high-minded rhetoric glossing over multiple standards in practice.

Second, the United States and Europe need to help create the external security environment and regional context in which democratic change can occur more easily. The history of the last century in Europe shows that providing security is crucial in fostering democratic development. The most urgent task is to devote real resources to a peace accord between Israel and

\textsuperscript{18} The following section is partly based on an article I wrote with several colleagues: Urban Ahlin, Ronald Asmus, Steven Everts, Jana Hybaskova, Mark Leonard, Michael McFaul and Michael Mertes, ‘A joint plan to help the Greater Middle East’, \textit{International Herald Tribune}, 15 March 2004.
Palestine, as discussed above. They must also help Turkey succeed in turning itself into a fully fledged democracy that qualifies for EU membership, renew pressure on the Iranian regime for democracy and arms control, and work for a rapid and complete transfer of power to Iraqis.

Working closely with Arab states, Europe and America should try to create a new regional security regime, modelled on the OSCE, for the wider Middle East. The great contribution of the Helsinki process was its recognition that true peace required a new relationship between rulers and ruled as well as between states—and that it empowered societies to demand from their governments that they behave accordingly. Creating such a regime in the region would mean developing a range of incentives so that Arab countries can see the benefits that will accrue to them from signing up (in the same way that African leaders did over the New Economic Partnership for African Development).

The third big step in a grand strategy for democracy promotion is to reorganize decision-making procedures at home. As well as creating a new generation of diplomats and democracy-builders who know the region and its languages, governments must maintain their commitment over the long term. It is striking that in both the United States and Europe, the causes of building democracy and promoting a political transformation agenda are buried deep down in the bureaucracies. If they remain there, these tasks will never receive the necessary leadership, attention and resources to thrive. Therefore, in the United States, President Bush or his Democratic successor should create a Department of Democracy Promotion headed by a cabinet-level official. The EU should appoint a Commissioner for Democracy and Human Rights Promotion in the new European Commission that will take office in November 2004.

There is a danger that Europeans and Americans will pursue competing democratization strategies. While both sides bring different things to the table—and there are real advantages in complementarities—it would be better to pool the best proposals available on both sides of the Atlantic, and coordinate their implementation in a joint endeavour.

Conclusions
After the deep divisions over the war in Iraq and the ensuing problems that the transition has encountered; with time fast running out for a two-state solution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict; and with Iran challenging the West on both the non-proliferation and the democracy front, the EU and the US have a unique opportunity to rediscover an old truth: pressing problems only get solved if both sides work in parallel. That conclusion may sound like a boilerplate cliché, but, like many clichés, it contains a large element of truth. The multiple problems of the wider Middle East are set to dominate the international agenda for years to come. By choice or default, Europeans and Americans will devote a huge amount of time, resources and energy in the region. A conscious choice in favour of a joint yet flexible transatlantic strategy...
Steven Everts

could pay handsome dividends. But it will work only if the European leadership becomes more strategically audacious and the American more politically sensitive.