

Summary of Discussions

SWP / AICGS Working Group **Diverging Strategic Perspectives on the Middle East**

2nd Colloquium, Berlin, May 15-16, 2003
at Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik:

The United States and Germany in the Middle East

The US and Germany share common goals in the Middle East: (1) a peaceful solution to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, with a secure Israel and an independent Palestinian state; (2) stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq and the establishment of a democratic government; and (3) stabilization of the entire region with a long term perspective for modernization, democratization and cooperation in the area of security, economics and cultural affairs. In spite of these common goals, important disagreements on priorities and how to best achieve those goals impede a common effort to resolve the remaining problems.

Germany continues to see solving the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians as the key to achieving peace and stability in the Middle East. Germany favors an approach of cooperation and peaceful engagement towards the Arab Nations. Germany's engagement, however, does not extend to direct intervention but is limited to supporting segments of society that promote modernization.

While the future US approach remains somewhat open, current US policy differs significantly from European policy. One major difference between American and German assessments is that President Bush does not see the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as the cause but rather as a consequence of the problems in the region and therefore resolving it is not his top priority. With regards to democratization of the region, President Bush assumes that the Middle East is going to be inspired by the liberation of Iraq, rather than feel threatened by the US-led invasion as many in Europe believe. In dealing with Europe the Bush administration changed the American approach: instead of consulting European leaders in advance of making decisions, as was the case in the past, the US now confronts them with a *fait accompli*. This is partly a result of the experience with the Iraq war, which led the US government to conclude that it can achieve its goals unilaterally if it acts with sufficient determination. Moreover, the US seems to undervalue the legitimacy for such actions that be can conferred by having broad, especially European, support.

Despite these disagreements, cooperation between the United States and Europe, American engagement as well as European unity, is pivotal to a resolution of the Middle East conflict. Given that the US administration is not convinced that it needs European partners, Europe (and especially Germany) has to make the case that it can make important contributions, e.g. by assisting with institution building in a Palestinian state and providing economic aid. US engagement remains the crucial factor because only the US can guarantee Israel's security interests and, at the same time, pressure the Israelis into cooperating with the peace process. In addition, the US and Europe will need to agree on, and enforce, monitoring mechanisms and sanctions if the Palestinians and Israelis do not adequately cooperate on the implementation of the Road Map. If the Road Map is to be successful, focus must shift from confidence building measures to resolving substantive issues.

Summary of Discussions

SWP / AICGS Working Group **Diverging Strategic Perspectives on the Middle East**

2nd Colloquium, Berlin, May 15-16, 2003
at Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik:

Concerning Iraq, most observers are skeptical about the ability of the US to manage the tasks of restoring order, establishing an interim administration, and providing the country with a long-term perspective. The past record of interventions does not look encouraging and the US does not seem to be willing to put up the resources needed to match its ambitious goals. Europeans are less concerned about American imperialism than about a lack of staying-power. The fact that the proposed Iraqi leaders lack legitimacy and are perceived to be predetermined by America also undermines the credibility of the democratic project. For European participation some kind of legitimacy of the occupying forces is important. Germany might be willing to contribute to state-building in Iraq, if the conditions are right.

The tasks ahead remain difficult. However, solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a necessary condition to establishing peace and stability throughout the Middle East.

Summary of Discussions

SWP / AICGS Working Group **Diverging Strategic Perspectives on the Middle East**

2nd Colloquium, Berlin, May 15-16, 2003
at Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik:

Agenda :

Session I: *The Middle East after Iraq: Incentives and Barriers to U.S.-European Cooperation*

Have German and European strategies toward the Middle East changed in light of all that has transpired in Iraq and transatlantic relations? Do Americans and Germans have different visions of their own and each other's role in the region? What have been the results of specific German and/or European initiatives (e.g. Islam officers) and how do these compare with recent U.S. initiatives to engage more broadly and more effectively with non-governmental elements of Arab societies? What German, European (or American) structures, processes or mechanisms might offer a basis for cooperation in the Middle East? Should the process be bilateral or U.S./EU?

Session II: *Transatlantic Cooperation and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process*

Does the Quartet remain a viable model for international cooperation on Arab-Israeli peacemaking? Should Germany and the EU assume a different role in that exercise? What existing (Quartet?) or new modes and methods of cooperation might be used for U.S.-European cooperation in the Arab-Israeli Peace process?

Session III: *Transatlantic Cooperation in the Reconstruction, Reform, and Democratization of Iraq*

How, if at all, should the U.S., Germany, and Europe cooperate in post-conflict Iraq and, if so, how should it be done? What are the barriers to cooperation? What are the specific roles Germans or other Europeans would be best suited to play? What are views in the region on U.S.-European cooperation in advancing this agenda?