Incoherent securitisation: The EU in the Iraq crisis 1

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Incoherent securitisation: The EU in the Iraq crisis[1]

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1. Introduction

The EU's 'great split' in the Iraq crisis 2002/2003 constituted a serious setback to the common endeavour to become a recognised security actor. While some member states promoted or entirely supported the attack on Iraq, others objected to any UN Security Council Resolution legitimising war. The EU's evident incoherence raised serious doubts as to whether the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) was anything more than 'sunshine policy'. Presumably, the EU is still suffering from a deficient common security

identity – i.e. a common understanding of 'how the world is' and 'what should be done about it' – which is held to be a necessary pre-requisite for EU actorness. Yet for many analysts, the crisis bears the fruit of future coherence. Two arguments support this view. Firstly, the Iraq drama may appear as a one-shot gaffe – "*an accident waiting to happen*" (Cameron 2003, 1). The CFSP has always been pushed forward by crises – a "*ratchet effect*" as Hill and Wallace (1996, 13) have coined it. The adoption of a '*European Security Strategy*' (ESS) still in 2003 served as proof for such a ratchet effect. But, in this respect, the paper calls for prudence. It will be argued here that the inconsistent securitisation of the member states over Iraq reveals structural deficits within the CFSP which are not likely to be healed by the ESS when the next crisis erupts.

The second argument relies on the wide-spread perception that the Europeans have fallen into two camps which can largely be identified as Atlanticists and Europeanists, known from the literature on CFSP (Stahl et al 2004). In this view, the Atlanticists were identical with the subscribers of a famous article published in numerous newspapers on 30/1/2003 – "*Europe and America must stand united*". The 'Europeanist camp' was represented by France and Germany which formed a coalition with Russia by drafting competing UN Security Council Declarations and calling for an autonomous ESDP headquarter in early 2003. Implicitly, the 'camp thesis' denotes that there was a considerable degree of coherence inside the two camps. With regard to the literature on policy convergence and Europeanisation, this could be interpreted as a case of 'clustered coherence' (cf. Börzel and Risse 2003, 73). Yet this study is challenging the 'two-camps thesis' by claiming that the countries' behaviour can rather be called idiosyncratic and that concerted action was merely incidental. In a qualitative assessment of eight member states' foreign policy behaviour throughout the crisis, I will try to demonstrate that the countries diverged regarding threat perception, the urgency and need for common action and the attributed role of the CFSP. By concentrating on the 'old' member states which at the latest acceded the EC in the 1980s the socialisation hypothesis can be challenged as a side-effect. The term 'socialisation' is usually applied to individuals which learn the values, norms and culture of their particular society. In EU-foreign policy, socialisation means that the decision-makers' perceptions and interests are transformed by common working habits (Manners and Whitman 2000, 8). In a wider sense, the socialisation hypothesis implies that

> "*prolonged participation in the CFSP feeds back into EU member states and reorients their foreign policy cultures along similar lines*" (Smith 2000, 614).

This study will rather suggest that in times of crisis, the member states remained unaffected by previous promises and rather acted like monads. In this respect, the study will support Hill's (1998, 36) notion of the "*renationalisation of foreign policy*".

In order to qualify EU actorness, 'consistency' serves as a key term. Vertical inconsistency applies "*when one or more member states pursues national policies which are out of kilter with policies agreed in the EU.*" (Nuttall 2005, 98).[2] By contrast, 'horizontal inconsistency' refers to EU policies pursued by different EU actors – like the Commission and the Council – which are not complementary to each other (Nuttall 2005, 97). Finally, 'institutional inconsistency' is characterised by mismatches in the bureaucratic apparatus – the EU's politics and polity (ibid.). Considering that 'consistency' is the current term in English whereas 'coherence' is mostly used in German and French, I am following Nuttall (2005, 93) in using 'consistency' and 'coherence' interchangeably here. The basic idea of vertical consistency does not serve analytical purposes only but is explicitly enshrined in EU law:

> "*The Member States shall support the Union's external and security policy actively and unreservedly in a spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity. (...) They shall refrain from any action which is contrary to the interests of the Union or likely to impair its effectiveness as a cohesive force in international relations.*"[3]

I assume that vertical consistency is a necessary (but, of course, not a sufficient) precondition for EU actorness. If the Union lacks consistency she is hardly capable of projecting any sensible foreign policy action. A case in point was the Yugoslav imbroglio when the member states' inconsistence prevented the EC from intervening effectively in the crisis. With regard to Iraq, Everts and Keohane (2003, 176) put it well: "*the war in Iraq (...) showed that the EU has zero influence if its member-states do not pull together.*"

When dealing with vertical consistency, 'Brussels actors' as well as member states should be included in the analysis. An obvious 'Brussels actor' is the Council which repre-

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[2] Similar definitions provide Duke (1999, 4) and Krenzler and Schneider (1997, 133).

sents the collective will of the member states in the CFSP – usually the foreign ministers meet in form of the 'General Affairs and External Relations Council' (GAERC). The European Commission has also a say in EU-foreign policy, the Commissioner for External Relations at the time (C. Patten) and the President of the Commission (R. Prodi) in particular. Since the innovations of the Amsterdam treaty, the EU-foreign policy is co-ordinated by the 'High Representative for Foreign Affairs' (J. Solana). Those 'Brussels actors' notwithstanding, the member states still have the national foreign policies at their disposal. Regarding country selection, it seems logical to choose member states which had an institutional say in the case (Security Council member, EU presidency). Secondly, in order to enable generalisation, the case study should focus on more than half of the then EU-15, thus including smaller countries. Thirdly, in order to nullify any socialisation bias all countries selected have been EU-members since the inauguration of the CFSP (Treaty of the European Union, 1993). Thus, the member states chosen here are Denmark (Danmark - DK), France (F), Germany (Deutschland - D), Greece (GR), Italy (I), the Netherlands (NL), Spain (España - E), and the United Kingdom (UK). Admittedly, the inclusion of some of the candidate countries in the study would have been tempting, but legally, their foreign policy was not part of CFSP, at the time, and so hardly could have been shaped by its institutional effects.[4] The neutral and non-aligned member states are also ignored here because their status provides them *eo ipso* with opt-outs in security policy.

What are the reasons for vertical inconsistency? The manifest answer refers to different national foreign policies which reflect different historical traditions, political cultures and geo-political structures. Theoretically, these factors can be subsumed under national identity approaches: Member states follow different foreign policies due to different national identities (Marcussen et al 1999L Hansen and Waever 2002L Joerißen and Stahl 2003). A centrepiece of every national identity is the construction of 'us' and 'them' and threats touching upon 'us' (Campbell 1992). The creation and politicisation of such threats is exactly the central theme of securitisation theory (Larsen 2004, 73). Inconsis-

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[3] Consolidated Treaty on European Union, Title V, Provisions on a Common Foreign and Security Policy, Article 11 (2).

[4] See Mouritzen (2006) for an overall assessment. Kavalski and Zolkos (2007) provide insights in Poland's and Bulgaria's Iraq policy.

tencies in threat perceptions can be made visible by applying the securitisation approach which was developed by the Copenhagen School in the 1990s (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998). Securitisation seems well-equipped to deal with the Iraq crisis since it focuses on the politicisation of threats regardless of their materialist foundation. In a nutshell, the assumption is that the more similar the member states' threat perceptions, the more complementary their respective securitisation strategies would be and the more consistent the EU's foreign policy would become. By analysing who, when, and how European governments politicised Iraq, I will try to show that the reaction to the crisis was largely internally driven and thus the CFSP has a structural deficit since threat perception and the attributed role of the EU remain country-specific.

The rich and extensive literature on the Iraq crisis can be grouped into three strands. First, some contributions deal with the crisis as such mainly stressing transatlantic relations (e.g. Gordon and Shapiro 2004; Petersen and Pollack 2003; Shawcross 2004). A second group focuses on single-country explanations (e.g. Heywood 2003; Kampfner 2004; Dalgaard-Nielsen 2003; Aliboni 2003; Gaffney 2004; Styan 2004; Szabo 2004). Finally, an increasing number of articles link the Iraq crisis to theoretical questions (e.g. Chan and Safran 2006; Dyson 2006, Mazarr 2007; Puetter and Wiener 2007; Shannon and Keller 2007). To date, only a few contributions aim at explaining the overall phenomenon, the 'European split' (Mouritzen 2006; Schuster and Maier 2006) and the same applies to comparative assessments (Kritzinger 2003; Menon and Lipkin 2003; Stahl 2005a; Stuchlik 2005; Wood 2003). A comparative securitisation approach could provide some added-value by exploring when and how the member states securitised 'Iraq' in the run-up to the war.

After having introduced securitisation theory, some extracted indicators (securitisation timing, threat perception, emergency action taken) will shape the subsequent empirical analysis. In the concluding remarks, possible explanations will be discussed and some implications regarding coherence and future EU actorness will be presented.

2. On Securitisation

The securitisation approach developed by Buzan, Waever and de Wilde (1998) has changed the traditional understanding of 'security' in two respects. First, it has broadened

the security agenda by including threats eminating from non-military sectors (e.g. environment, culture, economy). Second, it refrains from taking the meaning of 'security' as given. Rather, it treats 'security' as a contested concept putting it in a social-constructivist context.

> "(..) *security is about survival. It is when an issue is presented as posing an existential threat to a designated referent object (..). The special nature of security threats justifies the use of extraordinary measures to handle them.*" (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998, 21).

With the help of a securitising move something is presented as an existential threat to a "*referent object*" (Buzan et al 1998, 25). Typical referent objects are the society, the state, or the nation (p. 36). In this study – for analytical purposes – I take the referent object as given assuming that the governments are usually trying to securitise a threat to the country's population.

What remains central is the notion of 'threat'. But different to the neorealist understanding of 'threat' as something quasi material and objective (Walt 1987, 23ff.), threats are defined by governments, politicians or members of the élite: "*(T)he senses of threat, vulnerability, and (in)security are socially constructed rather than objecitively present or absent.*" (Buzan et al 1998, 57). The US-driven insistence of Iraq as a security concern, in the aftermath of 9/11, may serve as a prime example for the usefulness and applicability of the (social-constructivist) securitisation approach. The more so, as all material foundations of the attack (WMD, link to Al-Qaida) have dissolved.

Securitisation can be understood "*as a more extreme version of politicisation*" (p. 23). Some societal actors or groups of actors ("*enunciators*"/"*securitisers*") are raising their voices to make a specific issue a pre-eminent topic in the public debate – they are 'securitising' an issue. In this analysis – for convenience – I concentrate on the theory's performative aspect. The enunciators are the member states' governments and those politicians in the EU-foreign policy system in charge of the CFSP (Solana, Patten, Prodi). The CFSP is – in theoretical terms –
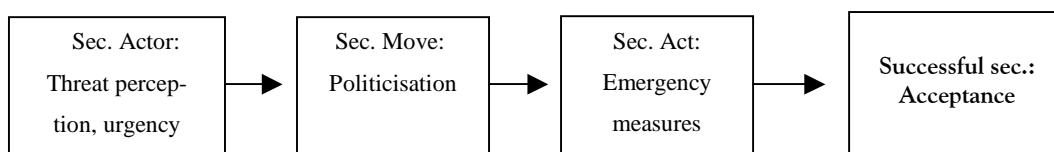
> "*[a] security complex, a set of states whose major security perceptions and concerns are so interlinked that their national security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another*" (Buzan et al 1998, 12).

As Sheehan (2005, 55) adds, "*securitizing is never an innocent act.*" Politicians may have arbitrary motives when they are attempting to define a threat and make it a political top-priority. Yet, as Wæver (2002, 27) has claimed for any kind of discourse analysis: The politicians' *"thoughts or motives (..), their hidden intuitions or secret plans"* shall be ignored. However, the political authority or societal position grants those "*managers of Angst*" (Huysmans 1998, 243) a first mover advantage in the securitisation process. But this advantage alone does not guarantee the desired outcome. In his endeavour to comprehend 'securitisation' as a strategic practice, Balzacq (2005, 184) notes that

> "*the success of the securitisation is highly contingent upon the securitizing actor's ability to iden-tify with the audience's feelings, needs and interests*".

At this point, the securitisation approach meets identity theory, which would claim that a securitising move is likely to be successful if its contents resonate well with the re-spective national identity (Risse 2003, 115). So the success of the politicisation efforts de-pends on the public's acceptance (Buzan et al 1998, 31). Acceptance makes the differ-ence between the effort ("*the securitisation move*") and the success ("*securitisation*").

Figure: The process of securitisation

Yet, little help is provided by securitisation theory when it comes down to practical meth-odological questions i.e. which audience is the most relevant, and when an audience is really persuaded (Stritzel 2007, 363). In sum, a (sucessful) securitisation consists of three components (Buzan et al 1998, 26): existential threats, emergency action, and effects on

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inter-unit relations by breaking free of rules. 'Breaking free of rules' could mean in the Iraq case to break the norm of sovereignty without the United Nation's consent.

One more definition seems useful when assessing the member states' foreign policy behaviour. An analytical term is needed for governments/politicians who are refraining from securitising: "*Desecuritisation – by contrast – means the attempt to remove an issue from the realm of the politics of existential survival*" (Sheehan 2005, 54). 'To remove an issue' does not necessarily mean to remain silent which could be termed "*asecurity*" (Diez and Joenniemi 1999, 5). Rather, desecuritisation applies to strategies which down-play an issue, or re-frames it in a different context.

Remarkably, little is said in Buzan et al (1998) about comparative securitisation. When comparing securitisations, it seems plausible to start with the urgency of a threat. As Buzan et al (1998, 30) assume, different actors hold "*different thresholds for defining a threat*". How could such 'thresholds' be operationalised methodologically? Firstly, a threshold can be interpreted in a dynamic way meaning differences in the perception of urgency.[5] An indicator for differences concerning urgency is the timing of securitisation moves. This simply reveals which actor reckons a threat as being very urgent and which actor prefers to remain in an 'asecurity' stage. An 'early bird enunciator' not only sets the stage but also pre-directs the debate by naming and framing the issue. In the Iraq case, this role was deliberately taken by the Bush-Administration which increasingly 'talked Iraq' in 2002. The EU felt compelled to react and to enter the debate, though inconsistently – as we will see.

A second element of a "*threshold in defining a threat*" refers to the threat itself – its contents and meaning. Recalling the identity perspective from above, the analytical question goes: What and who is threatening 'us'? Different threat perceptions – the plausibility argument runs here – would lead to inconsistencies regarding common emergency measures. 'Emergency actions' are a key element of securitisation theory which easily translates into the comparative approach employed here: In how far did the member states contribute to the attack on Iraq and the occupation forces? By contrasting the way governments speak about Iraq ('securitisation moves') with what they do about Iraq ('securitisation

acts') possible inconsistencies of the respective securitisations can be detected. In other words, to what degree are the respective timings, threat perceptions and emergency actions inter-related?

So the following analysis will be divided in the three parts 'timing', 'threat perception' and 'emergency actions taken'. It will be descriptive-analytical in either a chronological or country-specific manner. I mainly stick to primary sources (government statements, speeches, newspaper articles) which are complemented by secondary literature for the purpose of substantiating judgements.

3. The EU's securitisation in the Iraq crisis (2002-2003)

The European policies in the crisis can reasonably be assessed only when taking the historical context into account. In 2002, the Bush government increasingly focused on Iraq as its primary security concern (Gordon and Shapiro 2004, 66ff.). The administration provided three reasons for this: Firstly, the Iraqi regime was supposed to possess and further develop WMD. By so doing, Iraq had violated several United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions and thus international law. Secondly, there were - allegedly - links to the Al-Qaida network which would mean a serious proliferation risk. Thirdly, the autocratic character of Saddam's regime would contribute to destabilising the Middle East and would inhibit any Western efforts to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the following months, the US-administration attempted to convince its allies of the urgency of the threat and called for regime change, being the only adequate response. The quest for legitimacy for such a regime change by military means mainly took place in the UNSC between October 2002 and March 2003. In the discussions, the most critical point referred to the interpretation of the UN inspectors' work and the degree of Saddam's cooperation. In November 2002, the UNSC unanimously called for immediate Iraqi cooperation with the UN weapon inspectors, yet not specifying the consequences for Iraq's possible non-compliance. In January 2003, the divergent views on how to proceed

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[5] Van Ham (2004, 216), for instance, has pointed out that although European leaders agreed on the nature of the Iraqi regime they disagreed on the "*urgency*" and strategy for action.

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with Iraq became obvious: Whereas the US and some European allies like the UK and Spain considered Iraq's compliance to the UN's demand as inadequate and further inspections to be pointless, France, Germany and Russia insisted on an extension of the weapons inspectors' mission. After vain efforts to gain a majority in the UNSC and France's and Russia's veto threat, the US decided to remove the Iraqi regime by force, renouncing a clear-cut UNSC mandate. After having crushed the Iraqi defence in a few weeks, the US and their allies occupied the country in order to stabilise it and to support its transition to democracy. Until today, the intervention remains disputed – the more so since the first two reasons given by the US administration were proven wrong. Moreover, with regard to the third reason given, most analysts conclude that the overall situation in the Middle East and in Iraq in particular has deteriorated. In the following, the focus will be on the European reactions to the US endeavour to securitise 'Iraq' between January 2002 and March 2003.

a. The immediate threat – when to move?

After the successful intervention in Afghanistan, Iraq increasingly 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 reaction to this speech was rather negative; it "*caused a storm of protest and ridicule.*" (Shawcross 2004, 66). The former German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joschka Fischer (22 February 2002), stated in his speech to the Bundestag as early as in February 2002 that he doubted any connection between Al-Qaida and Baghdad. By contrast, the British Prime Minister Blair agreed in principle to an intervention after having met the US President in Crawford, Texas in April 2002 (Kampfner 2004, 168): "*The threat is real.*"[6] Yet Blair publicly insisted all through the year that „*war was not inevitable*", and attempted to gain more domestic support as well as to secure legitimacy for military action. When the EU-leaders gathered in Barcelona in March, the Commission's head Prodi challenged Blair over Iraq – the latter still being isolated on the issue (Independent, 17 March 2002). In general though, Iraq remained a taboo in Barcelona: The Spanish Prime Minister Aznar – Spain held the EU-Presidency at

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[6] See "*President Bush, Prime Minister Blair Hold Press Conference*" the White House (6/4/2002), http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/04/20020406-3.html [15/8/2007].

the time – prevented any attempt to place the topic on the agenda (CNN.com, 16 March 2002). The Spanish government stuck to their policy of 'asecurity' during its entire presidency term. The issue was neither mentioned in the EU-declarations in the UN nor in Aznar's speech to the Arab League on 27 March 2002.[7] The only exception was the CFSP-declaration of 20 May 2002 when Baghdad was encouraged to let the UN-inspectors return. But the text's central element was the relaxation of export restrictions for civilian goods due to humanitarian considerations. In the coming months, the EU commented on nearly every world trouble spot – Kosovo, Bosnia, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Myanmar etc. – except one: Iraq. Neither the Spanish nor the Danish successor presidency launched any security move and no EU statement reveals anything about threat perceptions.[8] For instance, the presidency conclusions of the Copenhagen summit on 12-13 December 2002 only entailed a brief "*declaration on Iraq*" in the annex IV which underlined the central role of the UN Security Council (UNSC) including the inspection operations and a succinct call for Iraq's compliance. It was only after the release of the 'Letter of the Eight' that the foreign ministers convened for an informal meeting on Iraq on 17 February 2003.

Bush's West Point speech in June and *New York Times* and *Washington Post* reports in July 2002 on the military build-up 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, 191). By autumn, it was clear that Bush had sided with the 'hawks' in his administration and strived for a regime change in Iraq (Petersen and Pollack 2003, 135). On 5 August, the German Chancellor Schröder on the occasion of the Social Democrats' national election campaign warned the US „*not to play around with war or military action*" (Economist, 10 August 2002). Much earlier, governmental statements on a possible inclusion of Iraq in the anti-terror war had been negative (Harnisch 2004a, 177). Triggered by a tense domestic elec-

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[7] See the EU@UN website: www.europe-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_1258_en.htm.
[8] See the Joint position on Iraq adopted by the 15 (17/2/2003), the 13th Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting (EU-GCC, 3/3/2003), the Demarche by the Greek Presidency to the Iraqi government on behalf of the EU (4/2/2003), and the GAERC-Sessions on External Relations (27-28/1/2003 and 19/11/2002).

tion campaign ('*Lagerwahlkampf*'), the German government opted for a 'loud' desecuritisation strategy which isolated the country in the EU until the French turn in January 2003. 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 in the run-up of the Gymnich meeting in Helsingør (Financial Times Deutschland (FTD), 29 August 2002). On this occasion, the Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stig Møller, called the discussion of military action still „*hypothetical*" (FTD, 2 September 2002). By so doing, he followed Prime Minister Rasmussen's line of argumentation who had previously insisted on the inspectors' free access to Iraq (Iraq Watch Bulletin, 25 March 2002). In HelsingLr, French foreign minister De Villepin and his Spanish colleague Ana Palacio added that the Security Council should keep all options on the table. Italy's Prime Minister and acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, Berlusconi, avoided any clear commitment at the informal meeting, but in Washington two weeks later he agreed to an UN-approved military invasion should Iraq not comply (AFP, 15 September). In his speech in Parliament in Rome (25 September 2002), he made it very clear that in times of crisis, Italy had always sided with the US. In spite of this obvious positioning, the Italian government carried on with its low-profile stance on Iraq (Dassú 2002, 5).

Bush's speech before the UN General Assembly on 12 September hardly changed the other member states' reluctance to take a stance. The Netherlands and Denmark in particular avoided any early positioning and stuck to their desecuritisation approach. The first Balkenende government had supported the US but fell in October 2002. In fact, the welcomed UNSC Resolution in November created some breathing space. The country was mainly absorbed by domestic problems still suffering from the rise and (tragic) fall of the right-wing populist, Pim Fortuyn. With an acting government for most of the time under study, the Dutch government was pre-occupied with coalition talks with the war-averse Labour party (PvdA). Since the negotiating parties could not agree on a consistent Iraq policy, the Balkenende government refrained from taking a prominent stance on the issue. Prime Minister Balkenende opted for a low-key position concerning Iraq and even turned down the Anglo-Spanish offer to sign the 'Letter of the Eight' (Gordon and Shapiro 2004, 129). This 'asecurity policy' was not contested – 'Iraq' was a rather marginal issue in the election campaign in January 2003 (Van Holsteyn and Irwin 2004).

Due to its responsibility as EU President, Greece was also hesitant about any early and explicit positioning on the Iraq issue. Notably, Greece was partly in charge of the EU Presidency in the second half of 2002 – 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 vehemently opposed any invasion of Iraq (AthensNews (AN), 27 September 2002). Any urges to make this more explicit were countered by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Papandreou, claiming that there was no reason „*why Greece should rush to take a stance*" (cf. AN, 4 October 2002).

France's resistance against US plans became ultimately clear on 20 January when the Minister of Foreign Affairs explicitly attacked the US policy in a press conference following a UNSC meeting (Gordon and Shapiro 2004, 121-125). This event marked the French turn from asecurity to active desecuritisation. On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Elysee friendship treaty on 22 January, President Chirac and Chancellor Schröder stated that they have the "*same judgement on the crisis*". In a joint declaration with Russia (10/2/2003) the two countries objected again to going to war and pleaded for more weapons inspections instead. By the end of January, France has joined Germany's 'loud' desecuritisation approach. Spain had shared France's desecuritisation diplomacy all through the year 2002 but opted for the opposite strategy of pronounced securitisation in early 2003. As a member of the UNSC at the time, Aznar and Ana Palacio stood side by side with its Anglo-Saxon partners as became highly visible with the 'Letter of the Eight' and the media event on the Azores with Blair and Bush just before the war began.

b. The immediate threat - what to securitise?

As mentioned above, the British government had been a staunch promoter of military action against Iraq right from the start. On 23 September, the government published a dossier on "*Iraq's Weapons on Mass Destruction*" which was presented by Blair in the House of Commons the next day. In his speech in parliament, Blair insisted that Saddam would mean a real threat to Britain which demands action:

"Why now? People ask. I agree I cannot say that this month or next, even this year or next, that he will use his weapons. But I can say that if the international community having made the call for his disarmament, now, at this moment, at the point of decision, shrugs its shoulders and walks away, he will draw the conclusion dictators faced with a weakening will, always draw. That the international community will talk but not act; will use diplomacy but not force; and we know, again from our history, that diplomacy, not backed by the threat of force, has never worked with dictators and never will work. If we take this course, he will carry on, his efforts will intensify, his confidence will grow and at some point, in a future not too distant, the threat will turn into reality. The threat therefore is not imagined. The history of Saddam and WMD is not American or British propaganda. The history and the present threat are real."[9]

In December, the government issued a second report focussing on the "*Crimes and Human Rights Abuses*" of Saddams regime. Blair explained to the members of the House of Commons in January 2003 his unequivocal support for the Bush Administration. A complementing dossier on "*Iraq: Its infrastructure of concealment, deception and intimidation*" which was published on 31 January became a PR-disaster ('*the dodgy dossier*') since some unreferenced and out-dated information had been included. The promulgated dossiers demonstrated Blair's belief in the threat emanating from Iraqi's WMD which demanded – in his view – immediate emergency action. Remarkably, Blair 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).[10] When Aznar came up with the idea of an open letter claiming that „*Europe and America must stand united*"(30/1/2003) it was Blair who edited it (Die ZEIT, 6 February 2003, 3). Moreover, Blair objected to informing Solana and the Greek presidency about the open letter in advance (Kampfner 2004, 253). As Hughes (2003, 2) has noted, it was not the letter's contents which was the problem but the evident lack of trust: Two days before, all ministers had agreed on a Council statement on Iraq but had refrained from informing each other of the letter. The intra-EU relations became increasingly frosty: When France objected to any new resolution, British government members openly denounced the French representatives for creating a 'new Yalta' and fostering anti-Americanism (Guardian, 14 March 2003). In spite of France's veto threat, the UK, Spain, and the US continued to lobby in favour of a second UNSC resolution in order to achieve

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[9] "*Prime Minister's Iraq statement to Parliament*" (24/9/2002), http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page1727.asp

[10] Yet as Hill (2005, 396) notes, this claim is not consistent with Blair's argumentation before 2002 when he had objected to any war on Iraq.

nine votes – the necessary quorum for a resolution. Eventually, the British Foreign Office conceded that this 'moral majority' was beyond reach.

In September, Aznar informed Bush that he could rely on Spain's support, in the event of a military attack on Iraq (El Mundo, 11 September 2002). Moreover, he stated that the UN should not become an obstacle to a necessary military intervention – so Spain's closeness to the US position was obvious (Le Monde, 14 September 2002). The Aznar government launched the 'Letter of the Eight' initiative on 30 January 2003 as well as co-drafted the vain second UNSC Resolution on 24 February. In addition to the British argumentation, the historic role of the US, 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 (El Mundo, 13 September 2002). Furthermore, when the difficulties in the UNSC became obvious, Aznar made it crystal clear that the war neither meant 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).

Spain's and Italy's approach in the crisis were overall similar. Berlusconi's early support for the Bush administration – though – meant a profound policy change. In February 2002, the Iraqi Minister of Culture had been highly welcomed in Rome (Croci 2002, 93), and the Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Senator Mantica, had stated in August still that

> "(..) *there is no doubt that the allies, which includes Italy, take a different approach to the Americans' (..). And all the allies have made it clear to the Americans that they are worried about the prospects of a war with Iraq.*"[11]

By contrast, Berlusconi (25 September 2002) - in his speech to the Parliament in Rome - emphasised the "*dictatorial political regime*" in Baghdad which "*is a regional and global threat*" and so has to be disarmed with all means – as "*the lessons of history*" would remind us of. Thus, Italy also signed the pro-US letter, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Frattini confirmed Italy's support of a possible US intervention (cf. Aliboni 2003, 86). He later

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[11] "*Dictatorial Regimes Collapse Unaided*", Interview by Andrea di Robilant (La Stampa) with Senator Alfredo Mantica, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs with responsibility for the Middle East, Source: Italian Foreign Ministry, August 9, 2002, http://www.iraqwatch.org/government/Italy/italy-mfa-080902.htm [11/11/2004].

admitted that Italy's participation was partly due to the outspoken Franco-German positioning in January (FAZ, 28 April 2003).

Denmark, as noted above, followed a desecuritisation approach in its moderator role as EU President in the second half of 2002. But when Anders Fogh Rasmussen, on behalf of the EU, stated that the UN-Resolutions to date sufficed to legitimise a military intervention, this statement was met with bewilderment by most colleagues (Le Monde, 14 September 2002). Yet the pro-US positioning could easily be perceived when examining the government's – and particularly Rasmussen's statements. As Rasmussen's opening address to the *Folketing* revealed, he entirely supported the US-argumentation:

> *"Europe and the USA must join forces in the endeavour to prevent tyrannical and rogue regimes from gaining command of weapons of mass destruction. (..) Iraq is ruled by such a regime. For years, Saddam Hussein has turned a deaf ear to the binding resolutions from the UN to dispose of these terrible weapons. The endeavours of the international community to enforce these resolutions through the Security Council have the full support of Denmark and the EU. After more than ten years' efforts vis-à-vis Iraq, the UN ought to live up to its obligations and put an end to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It will be too late once the poison gas has spread over one of our large cities."[12]*

Despite the threat's alleged urgency, the government desecuritised Iraq in the following months by pointing to the UN's responsibility and avoiding any serious securitisation moves.[13] For instance, Rasmussen did not even mention 'Iraq' in his address to the Nation on New Years Eve – in the face of Denmark's first declaration of war since 140 years this represents a remarkable default. In the weeks before the war begun, the government's main line of argumentation increasingly focused on Iraq's non-compliance behaviour which had violated international law.

The US threat perception was also shared in principle in The Hague: "*the very real threat posed by the possession by Iraq of WMD and its lack of active co-operation with the*

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[12] Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen's Address at the Opening of the Folketing Session on Tuesday 1 October 2002,
http://www.stm.dk/Index/dokumenter.asp?o=6&n=0&h=6&t=14&d=1185&s=2,
[20/1/2008].

[13] Neither in his account of the Copenhagen European Council delivered to the European Parliament (18 December 2002), nor in his speech at the at the NATO Summit in Prague (November 21-22 2002), nor in his '*Danish EU Policy after the Presidency*' Speech at 'The Institute for International Studies' (15/1/2003), Rasmussen found 'Iraq' worth mentioning. See http://www.stm.dk/Index/dokumenter.asp?o=6&n=0&h=6&t=14&d [20/1/2008].

weapons inspectors" (Letter to the Greek Presidency, 14 February 2003). On 2 February, the Dutch 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 UNSC Resolutions – thus the government wrote in its letter to the Dutch 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 ended its asecurity period and finally sided with the Atlanticist camp – Portugal, the UK, Denmark, Italy, and Spain (Economist, 22 February 2003).

As early as 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. Regardless of any UNSC Resolution, Germany would refrain from participating in military actions against Iraq ('double No'). Schröder reckoned that Germany as a „*self-confident country*" should no longer persue „*easy ways*" in foreign policy. In addition, its military capabilities were already over-stretched.[14] At the informal EU-meeting in Helsingør, Foreign Minister Fischer warned the US not to go it alone and argued that the region would be further destabilised in the event of war – an argument which was also used by the Greek government (AN, 27 September 2002). Furthermore, Fischer did not share the US-Administration's threat analysis and „*was not convinced*" (cf. Szabo 2004, 40). As a member of the UNSC at that time, Germany had to experience that this early and extreme positioning left very little space for manoeuvre. It even subscribed to the ultimate use of force in the EU's common position on 17 February. But in fact, as Harnisch (2004a, 185) notes, Germany never declared its 'No' to a UNSC Resolution legitimising military means and had probably considered an abstention in case of such a decision.

Whereas Germany made up its mind rather early in 2002, France remained noncommittal. Neither Chirac at the Franco-German summit in Hannover in September nor de Villepin evinced a determined position (NZZ, 8 September 2002⎣ Economist, 10 August 2002). France finally gave in when the US re-drafted SCR 1441. After having insisted that the text should not legitimise any violence, Paris is said to have convinced

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14 See Schröder's speech in Hannover on 5/8/2002, www.spd-bebelhof.de/div/such.htm [24/6/2005] and his Interview in the ARD-Report from Berlin on 9/8/2002, www.bundesregierung.de/interview-428321/Interview-mit-Bundeskanzler-Sc.htm [16/4/2005].

Syria not to vote against it and this way helped to achieve a 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 March 2003). In December, a French liaison officer talked with US Commander Tommy Franks about the possibility of including 15,000 troops in the Allied forces (Gordon and Shapiro 2004, 142). 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 January 2003). But after an UNSC meeting on 20 January, de Villepin announced that France would oppose any Resolution leading to war (cf. Petersen 2004, 15). Yet completely taken by surprise by the Letter of the Eight, 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 UNSC in February and March. On 7 March, France could somewhat reap the harvest of its anti-war stance. In a UNSC 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 UNSC in favour of a second resolution, France actively lobbied against it. The assertive desecuritisation finally peaked out when Chirac publicly announced France's veto against any resolution legitimising war (Le Monde, 11 March 2003). Not only would a war destabilize the entire Middle East it would also weaken the West's fight against terrorism, Chirac warned. In addition, the role of the UN, international law and the inspectors' successful work were also part of his argumentation.[15]

   The Greek position is not easy to discern as Greece had acted on behalf of the EU since 1 January 2003 and partly already since 1 July 2002. However, Papandreou made it crystal clear that Greece would not support any unilateral action against Iraq, leaving the question whether it would comply after a respective SC decision unanswered (AN, 4 Oc-

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[15] Interview télévisée de M. Jacques Chirac, Président de la République par M. Patrick Poivre d'Arvor (TV1) et David Pujadas (France 2), (10/3/2003), and de Villepin (Le Figaro 26/2/2003) as well as practically all speakers in the National Assembly debate on 26/2/2003.

tober 2002). Already in September, Premier Simitis had opposed an Iraq invasion (AN, 9 September 2002), yet he took a cautious stance before the European Parliament on 14 January, urging for a more vigorous geopolitical presence of the EU in general (cf. AN, 17 January 2003). The implications of war for the Middle East remained one of Greece's main concerns (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 and German position). Athens considered the informal meeting on 17 February – the infamous 'war summit' – 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 Eight' 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 (AN, 31 January 2003). Papandreou (12 March 2003) admitted that the EU had experienced a serious crisis and stated that big member states did not really pay attention to the small ones. Greece sided with the Franco-German-Russian initiative of early March (AN, 7 March 2003). Eventually, on the eve of war, Simitis expressed in parliament his government's strict opposition to war emphasising the lack of legitimacy and US unilateralism and noting that a war "*(...) means catastrophes, denial of human values, the establishment of blind violence and arbitrary behaviour*" (cf. AN, 28 March 2003).

The External Relations Commissioner at the time, Christopher Patten, followed a middle-of-the-road approach. On the one hand, he stressed "*the evil nature of the regime led by Saddam Hussein*" as well as the fact that "*Iraq never complied with this* [1284] *Security Council Resolution*". On the other hand, he cautiously stated that

> "*there are legitimate suspicions that the Iraqi regime is developing WMD. At his point of time, no clear evidence has emerged*" and pointed out that "*we must all respect the authority of the United Nations and of international law.*"[16]

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[16] Quoted from: Speech by The Rt. Hon Chris Patten, Plenary Session of the European Parliament, Strasbourg (4/9/2002), similar: Interview with Chris Patten in: NPQ, Global viewpoint (9/9/2002).

After having made these statements in September, he withdrew from the debate. This indecisiveness was underlined by the European Parliament's failure to reach any kind of agreement on the Iraq crisis (on 27 March 2003). The Commission's rather desecuritising approach was shared by Javier Solana, the EU's High Representative, who took a low-key profile in the crisis, too. Usually, he followed SC statements and refrained from giving his personal point of view. Implicitly, it was apparent that he did not share Bush's threat perception concerning Iraq. On the "*nature of the new terrorism*", Solana précised:

> "*We face an enemy that is unpredictable, multinational, suicidally fanatical, an enemy that operates at sub-state level but which is ready and capable of unleashing massive destructive power.*"
>
> (Javier Solana: "*The view from Europe*", IHT 10/9/2002)

Evidently, Iraq did not fit the definition. As early as in May 2002, he had identified the state of the transatlantic relations as a matter of concern due to divergent threat perceptions and diverging methods dealing with the world's problems (FT, 21 May 2002). In a Financial Times interview (7 January 2003), he envisaged different worldviews and attributed them to an Atlantic cultural and religious gap. After having been bypassed by events he impressingly regained his momentum in the following summer: In order to heal the wounds of the great split and the transatlantic frictions he tabled a common strategy paper to become the ESS on the European Council meeting in Thessaloniki: "*A secure Europe in a better world*".

c. Emergency action - how to react?

The United Kingdom mobilised reservists in early January, the final figure added up to 30.000 troops. They actively took part in combat and took charge of the Southern sector in Iraq. The significant contribution to the occupation forces and the emergency measures taken were largely consistent with the government's early securitisation moves and threat perceptions. By the end of 2004, the UK still held 8,700 troops in Iraq (IHT, 4 February 2005). Even when Bush decided for a temporary build-up of US-troops in early 2007,

Britain continued to gradually reduce its occupation forces - handing over Basra to the Iraqi army in late 2007.

Whether Denmark was going to actively support a military intervention even without a clear UN mandate was left open until 18 March (Copenhagen Post, 17 March 2003). On the same 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 the Danish Parliament, 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 Eight', Denmark had been prepared to actively support the USA (FAZ, 8 April 2003). Considering the Danish desecuritisation strategy when EU president, the assertive emergency actions taken – declaration of war and military engagement – came as a surprise and contrasted with the rest of the 'coalition of the willing' under study. Denmark contributed 510 troops to the occupation forces. The Danish government objected to any US suggestions to extend the mission but remained determined even when one Danish soldier was killed in Iraq (Reuters, 1 October 2005). When Britain announced a gradual troop withdrawal in early 2007, Rasmussen proclaimed that the Danish forces would leave the country by August 2007.

Unlike Denmark, the Dutch government decided to refrain from active participation in the war (RNW, 18 March 2003). As the Minister of Foreign Affairs, de Hoop Scheffer (4 April 2003), emphasised, 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-portrait as part of the Atlanticist camp also became visible when the Netherlands actively compensated for the German denial to deliver Patriot missiles to Turkey. In June 2003, The Hague took part in the stabilisation force with 1,300 troops. The overall pro-US stance of the acting government was mitigated by domestic constellations. Therefore, the Dutch desecuritisation approach was largely consistent: Due to a war-sceptical population and a split coalition the government gradually moved from asecurity to desecuritisation. Non-participation in the war and the employment of occupation forces were consistent follow-up policies. When

one soldier died in combat, Balkenende announced a re-consideration of the Dutch mission and decided to withdraw the troops after the mandate's expiration in March 2005.[17]

Berlusconi's decision to support the US increasingly met domestic resistance which was fuelled by the Vatican's anti-war attitude (FAZ, 13 March 2003). After the Highest Defence Council, including President Ciampi, had stated that a direct participation in the war had to be excluded due to constitutional constraints, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Frattini (29 March 2003) made it clear that Italy was not a nation at war. He summarised Italy's policy as follows:

> *"Italy decided on its own not to participate in military operations, and has chosen to stand beside a democratic United States and against a blood-thirsty dictator."*[18]

Italy refrained from actively taking part in the war either with material or with troops but granted fly-over rights and allowed the US to use bases – yet not for direct attacks. Considering that the main threat did not stem from Saddam's WMD but from the possible deterioration of the transatlantic partnership, the mere rhetorical support for the Bush administration seems comprehensible. Yet the affirmative participation in the occupation forces was remarkable: Italy sent around 3,000 troops to Iraq. Several hostage affairs put the Italian engagement 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 floated the idea of an Italian troop withdrawal (EUobserver.co, 16 March 2005) but re-considered the decision the next day. In December 2005, Italy's Minister of Defence announced the gradual withdrawal of 300 troops (Guardian, 15 December 2005). The newly elected Prodi government terminated the Italian engagement in Iraq by December 2006 (Le Monde, 1 December 2006). In sum, the securitisation behaviour suggests that Italy zigzagged through

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[17] See the website of the Dutch government:
http://www.government.nl/Subjects/Dutch_military_mission_to_Iraq [10/10/2007].

[18] Statement by Franco Frattini, Italian Foreign Minister. Reply to the Government's Report to the Senate on developments in the Iraq crisis, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 19 March 2003, http://www.iraqwatch.org/government/Italy/italy-mfa-frattini-031903. htm [11/11/2004].

the Iraq crisis: After having swapped sides from the 'European' to the 'Atlantic' position in September it still followed a desecuritisation strategy. As a 'nation not at war', the government refrained from participating in any military action but then contributed significantly to the occupation forces.

After having hesitated until mid-March, Aznar finally opted for a similar path. He 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 engagement was characterised in Aznar's words by their „*humanitarian mission*" (El Mundo, 19 March 2003). Spain contributed these 900 troops to the occupation forces. On 24 June 2003, the Aznar government announced it would send 1.100 additional troops to be deployed in the Polish sector (Lee 2003). The Spanish securitisation behaviour seems rather inconsistent. The Aznar government moved from asecurity as EU presidency 2002 to 'loud' securitisation moves in early 2003 but then degraded the emergency action to a '*humanitarian mission*'. This inconsistency might be explained by the huge élite-mass split and the massive contestation in Spain.[19] Due to the terrorist attacks in Madrid on 11 March, the Spanish election of 14 March 2004 received an historic flavour. After the *Partido Popular* had surprisingly lost the general elections, the newly elected Socialist government decided an immediate withdrawal from Iraq (FAZ, 16 March 2004).

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, as it had in Afghanistan (FAZ, 19 January 2003). The Greek desecuritisation moves were largely consistent with the non-participation in the war. The government had done its very best to conceal its proper attitude in order 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 its intransigent policy regarding the Macedonian question in the 1990s. In its moderator role, the government had to depart from its own position and received vivid criticism both from the

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[19] In a poll at that time, 60 per cent of the Spaniards objected 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).

left (Communist Party and Leftist Coalition) and from the right (New Democracy) (AN, 28 March 2003). Simitis and Papandreou were "*walking tightrope*" (AN, 4 October 2002) but were nevertheless by-passed by events – the Letter of the Eight in particular.

Simitis' approach was similar to that of the Schröder government since Greece also objected to any active participation but allowed the US to use its bases on Greek territory due to bilateral treaties. In February 2003, Germany, together with Belgium and France, for some time, even blocked a decision in the NATO Council regarding defensive missiles for Turkey 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. Moreover, they 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 July 2003). In sum, both desecuritisations look consistent in each case – yet two differences stand out: Timing and forums of the desecuritisation moves. Whereas France followed a desecuritisation approach all through the year 2002, Germany broached the issue of Iraq in August already. In so doing, the Schröder government preferred domestic forums to politicise Iraq while the French government capitalised on traditional diplomacy and made use of the international arena, the UNSC in particular.

d. Understanding inconsistent securitisations

The empirical findings of this study can be condensed as shown in table 1. The table reveals the great split in the Iraq crisis with regard to securitisation. On the whole, no easy pattern emerges when looking at the European actors' (de)securitisations. Inconsistencies not only applied across countries but the respective securitisations hardly follow the securitisation ideal. In an ideal case, credible threat perceptions signal urgency which leads to 'loud' securitisation moves translating into determined emergency actions which are accepted by the public.

Table 1: Comparative securitisation in the Iraq crisis

Criteria Country	Securitisation move: timing	Securitisation: the threat	Securitisation: Emergency action taken	Overall assessment
D (UN-SC)	5 August 2002	No immediate threat, risk of regional destabilisation	'Double No': No participation in military actions whatever SC decides	Early desecuritisation
F (UN-SC)	20 Jan. 2003	No immediate threat, risk of regional destabilisation	Active lobbying, Veto-threat in SC	Late desecuritisation
GR (EU-Pres.)	9 September 2002	No immediate threat, risk of regional destabilisation	No participation in military actions	Desecuritisation
NL	12 February 2003	Breach of UN-resolutions, WMD	Only rhetorical support, participation in occupation forces	Desecuritisation
I	15 Sept. 2002	Damage to transatl. relations, Iraq's regime character	Only rhetorical support, participation in occupation forces	Desecuritisation
E (UN-SC, EU-Pres)	11 September 2002	Damage to transatl. relations, Iraq's regime character	'Humanitarian mission', participation in occupation forces	Late securitisation
DK (EU-Pres.)	30 Jan 2003	Breach of UN-resolutions, Damage to transatl. relations	Declaration of war, participation in attack and occupation forces	Late securitisation
UK (UN-SC)	6 April 2002	WMD, Iraq's regime character	Participation in attack and occupation forces	Early securitisation
Commission	4 September 2002	Damage to UN and international law	None, delegation to SC	Desecuritisation
High Representative	10 September 2002	Damage to transatl. relations	None but launch of ESS	Desecuritisation
Council, Presidency	12-13 December 2002	Not specified	Delegation to SC, call for Iraqi compliance	Desecurtisation

By contrast, the timings by no means pre-determined the content of the securitisation move nor the following behaviour! Moreover, theoretically speaking, the securitisations were incomplete since the governments' securitisation moves did not meet the publics' acceptance – Denmark being a debatable exception. At least, the emergency measures taken corresponded to the threat perceptions. The belief in the existence of WMD led to

military engagement (UK), the alleged breach of UNSC resolutions to a declaration of war (DK), the possible deterioration of the transatlantic partnership to supporting rhetoric and participation in the occupation forces (I, E, NL), while the fear of a destabilising Middle East resulted in non-participation (D, F, GR). In this respect, the member states behaved in a consistent way.

The analysis of the European Union's securitisation timing has shown that the 'early birds' (UK, D) reacted to US securitisation moves in April and August 2002 respectively. Cheney and Bush's speeches in late summer seem to have triggered some European reactions in September ('September group': E, GR, I, Commission, HR). Finally, there were some late-comers who objected to any explicit securitisation move before January 2003 (NL, F, DK, Council). To eventually take a stance at that time – considering the discursive battles in the UNSC and the massive military build-up in the Gulf – could hardly be avoided. The securitisation timings indicate rather idiosyncratic foreign policies which were partly event-driven, notably by the behaviour of the Bush administration. Remarkably, hardly any 'strategic interaction' occurred with the notable exceptions of the 'Gang of 8' and the Franco-German understanding (but only after 20 January 2003). This impression is supported by the threat perceptions and the emergency actions taken. When comparing the contents of the respective securitisation moves it becomes obvious that the threat perceptions were different – even inside the 'coalition of the willing'. Unlike Blair, Aznar, Berlusconi and Rasmussen made it clear that their primary concern was not Iraq's possible WMD but the relationship to the US. The Danish Premier 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).

Also with regard to emergency action, the camp-thesis can harldy be up-held. The spectrum among the 'willing' ranged from rhetorical support (NL), 'nation not at war' (I), 'humanitarian mission' (E) to 'declaration of war' (DK) and to finally massive military engagement (UK). Even among the anti-war fraction, France, Germany and Greece, three different policy behaviours applied: active lobbying and veto threat (F), 'double no' (D), decent moderator/no participation (GR).

Why did the countries' securitisations diverge? As Waltz (1959) has postulated, causes for war can be attributed to three different levels of analysis ('*images*'): to the individual (1st), the society/the state (2nd), and the international system (3rd). Schuster and Maier (2006, 232) have argued that third image explanations do not look plausible for the behaviour of Western European countries. In spite of significant US pressure, a common external threat and institutional restraints from CFSP the member states' foreign policy did not converge. With this in mind, neither neorealist theory, nor institutional liberalism, nor socialisation theory provide the explanation. More plausible is first image factors. When leaders took action against public opinion – like Blair did – the personal factor was obvious (Dyson 2006; Hill 2005). Yet the personal factor becomes less persuasive when leaders' decisions were not contested domestically (F, D, DK). Consequently, the most promising explanations stem from second image factors.[20] All kinds of securitisation strategies depended on domestic political configurations. Empirically, this was most evident in the Dutch case when Balkenende explicitly justified the government's desecuritisation behaviour with domestic constraints i.e. coalition-talks and public opinion.

My thesis here is that identity theory provides some insights. As noted above, the starting point is that external threats resonate differently within the national discourse. Resonance depends on which 'part' of the national identity currently is 'in power' i.e. holds the 'discursive hegemony'. For instance, in cases when Atlanticist-minded élites were dominant (E, I, DK, NL) we could expect pro-US behaviour: Regardless of the immediate threat all those governments ranked the transatlantic relationship high in their rhetoric (the '*solidarity argument*') and uttered, at least, political support for the Bush administration.[21] The degree of material support in terms of emergency action depends on the level of contestation – in other words on the power of those domestic actors who represent competing interpretations of the national identity. In the Netherlands, explicit emergency action was hindered by coalition-talks and an élite-mass split, in Italy by constitutional constraints and in Spain by massive public protest. In Denmark, hardly any

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[20] Schuster and Maier (2006, 235) make the claim that the "*ideological background of governments*" could be the most promising factor. Applying New Geopolitical Theory, Hans Mouritzen (2006, 138) relies on "*Atlantic predispositions*" which reside in the political élite or even in the political culture.

[21] In some way, the argument here fits to Mouritzen's (2006) "*Atlantic predispositions*". Menon and Lipkin (2003, 19f.) discuss different forms of 'Atlanticism'.

contestation took place since the Atlanticist-minded government played the UN resolutions breach card which softened the (internationalist) opposition.[22] No wonder that Denmark made use of the most extreme emergency action – declaring war on Iraq.

Let us now turn to those countries where either hardly any Atlanticist-minded élite exists (GR, F), or the Atlanticists did not hold the discursive hegemony at the time (UK, D). In the UK, the majority of the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats subscribe to an internationalist-ethical understanding of foreign policy which supports military engagement in case of 'humanitarian catastrophes' only. But Blair stuck to a 'realist' argumentation stressing the immediate threat posed by WMD and the partnership to the US. This securitisation move did not resonate well within the 'humanitarian responsibility discourse'[23] and thus caused fierce domestic contestation including the resignation of two ministers. In the decisive vote in the House of Commons in January, Blair was only saved by the (Atlanticist) Conservative Party and never recovered from his loss of credibility. In Greece as well as in France, realist-minded élites held the discursive hegemony which largely explains their governments' insistence on the argument of regional instability in the Middle East. In both countries, this argumentation was fed by odd multi-polar and partly anti-American worldviews. The most striking case is Germany since the government opted for a 'loud' desecuritisation strategy which was neither in line with its traditional transatlantic security policy nor its behaviour in the Kosovo war. Yet, when voting on Germany's engagement in Afghanistan one year before Iraq, Schröder had to undergo a vote of confidence in order to get party dissenters on the track. Schröder's decision to object to any participation in the war was, therefore, largely motivated by the need to reunite the government on foreign policy facing a strenuous election campaign (Dalgaard-Nielsen 2003, 101; Harnisch 2004b, 29ff.). But besides those tactical motivations it was

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[22] Following Nikolaj Petersen (cf. Copenhagen Post, 6 March 2003), the desire to avoid any clear positioning in 2002 reflects that Danish loyalty has been divided between the UN (Møller) and the US (Rasmussen) – Europe not at stake. Not only that the government followed a desecuritisation policy, the literature on the Danish presidency in this respect is revealing: Neither 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.

[23] Lene Hansen (2007, 128) has extensively elaborated on the elements and stability of this discourse during the Bosnian war.

remarkable that the newly established discursive hegemony hardly met any domestic contestation so that even the (Atlanticist-minded) Chancellor Merkel decided to stick to it.

Admittedly, my country-specific argumentation here needs further elaboration[24] but in sum it can be stated that identity theory provides a good starting point for comprehending the member states' uneven securitisation – in particular when actual government constellations and domestic discursive hegemonies are taken into account.

4. Conclusions: A structural securitisation problem?

The findings support the assumption that the EU's foreign policy consistency largely depends on the member states' threat perceptions and subsequent securitisation strategies. Different views on the urgency, definition and management of the threat 'Iraq' superseded the commonly desired *"spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity"* and indeed *"impaired the EU's effectiveness as a cohesive force in international relations"* - as the CFSP provisions have warned. When the focus shifts from the member states level to the EU as a whole, the empirical result can be sketched like this: Until summer 2002, the EU remained in an asecurity stage with the notable exception of the UK. In late 2002, the EU moved from asecurity to desecuritisation delegating threat definition, securitisation moves and emergency actions to the UNSC. In this period, Germany stood out by following a 'loud' and pronounced desecuritisation strategy. Even in the run-up of the war, the EU stuck largely to its desecuritisation approach. The intra-EU rift peaked in January and February 2003 when Spain joined the UK's pronounced securitisation while France sided with Germany's determined desecuritisation. But the seemingly emerging two camps detracted from another insight: With the exception of the British government, the EU neither believed in the urgency nor in the definition of the threat 'Iraq'. This is why even the members of the 'coalition of the willing' (E, DK, I, NL) did not securitise Iraq before January 2003. To them, the major threat was not Saddam's regime but a possible damage to transatlantic relations, i.e. the governments took the US-side because of friendship, not because they have been convinced. For that reason, the famous newspaper article on 30/1/2003 did not read *"Saddam's WMD are threatening Europe"* but *"Europe and America must stand united"*.

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[24] For a more country-specific argumentation based on identity theory, see Stahl (2005b), 19-35.

So ironically, in view of securitisation theory, the newspaper article could serve as a proof for transatlantic estrangement regarding threat perception.

How can these findings be interpreted in light of future policy coherence so urgently needed for enhanced EU actorness? I resume the observation that some governments (NL, I, DK) which – in principle – accepted the threat and its urgency opted for a desecuritisation strategy for most of the time under study. The Danish case is striking: How does a declaration of war fit with desecuritisation behaviour all through the year 2002? Intuitively, most explanations would touch upon the country's EU-Presidency in the second half of 2002. Due to the Danish opt-out in security and defence the government showed no interest in securitising the issue. Yet the similar Spanish behaviour in the first half of 2002 raises doubts whether the opt-out is a sufficient explanation. Here the expectations of the EU-Presidency as a moderator come in. The Presidency's role rather demands to identify 'doable' policy initiatives which are then streamlined into concrete projects. Its external functions are mainly representative and the respective national apparatus is usually stretched with the operative work-load (Cameron 2007, 47). From this observation stems the first structural deficit of the CFSP: The Presidency has no incentive to touch upon 'hot potatos'. What applies to the Presidency can be generalised to the other Brussels actors. A lack of vertical consistency practically means a lack of mandate to speak up: When the divergence between the member states grew Solana, Prodi and Patten left the stage. This is a clear indicator that in terms of actorness, the EU remains a 'collective actor'. To put it bluntly, the innovations of the Amsterdam and Nice treaties gave the CFSP a face but no voice.

Particular constellations of governments notwithstanding, the national differences in securitisation tend to be a structural phenomenon resisting to socialisation processes, considering that all of the countries under study have been members of CFSP right from its inauguration. This is not to say – of course – that there is no convergence at all in CFSP. As even one sceptic noted ten years ago: "*European states' foreign interests (..) have been converging for the past forty years*" (Gordon 1997/98, 97). Moreover, in comparison to other regional powers the big member states' threat perceptions look very similar indeed (Sperling 2007, 265). Rather – the argument would run here – the overall convergence does not apply to foreign policy crisis yet. 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. Yet when dealing with Iran in the aftermath of the Iraq rift, the European 'ratchet effect' was highly visible: Coherent threat perceptions of the 'big three' (UK, F, D) could be streamlined into co-ordinated and consistent action vis-à-vis Teheran – with Washington's consent.

The *directoire* approach regarding Iran seems even more remarkable when considering two worrying observations from the Iraq experience. Firstly, the big member states' most radical positions were complemented by a considerable degree of introversion and lack of co-operation. The outspoken non-interest of the Blair, Chirac, and Schröder governments in their smaller partners, the EU-Presidency, Solana, and the European Commission sheds some gloomy light on the perspectives of future foreign policy coherence. Secondly, not only that European norms like coherence were contested separately in the domestic realm – as Puetter and Wiener (2007, 1085) have pervasively argued – but European institutions are not accepted as suitable forums for security policy. As the Iraq affair has demonstrated, the securitisation forums for member states' foreign policies were press conferences in Washington, newspapers and domestic election campaigns – not the European institutions. The fact that securitisation moves are still disconnected hinders a European discursive space from emerging and limits the 'power of persuasion'. This is deplorable since the mass demonstrations across Europe on 15/2/2003 had shown that there is a common ground for debate among the peoples of Europe.

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