

Reasons for Military Aggressions

The case of Iraq

When the USA and their Allies attacked Iraq, it was concluded, that Iraq might have threatened US interests. It was often repeated that oil and the Iraqi potential and aspirations as regional hegemon caused the US aggression. Often the C-capacity of Iraqi forces is added to these reasons. It is said, the territorial integrity of Iraq should be challenged and the Baa'th rule or even President Hussain be replaced with an Allied puppet regime.

Oil, regional hegemony, independence from and resistance against capitalist/imperialist order were explanations, which serve both the interests of imperialists and anti-imperialists. It is the conventional view of US-interventions. There were no real investigations about the 'dangers' or 'threats'. Very few efforts were undertaken to find out new elements of US politics and strategy after the Cold War. Nothing new under the sun?

If we don't learn to be more skeptical, questioning and interested we will always be believers reproducing stories from the past. What if the Iraqi oil is not needed anytime? What if Iraq was no threat to US interests and President Hussain a normal politician? What if Iraq was attacked because of its weaknesses and not strengths? What if reality reflects intentions and the real aim were the Iraqi people and not the Iraqi government?

But there is one clear fact to recognize. Most of us stood ready to support the mass extermination of Iraqi people. Leaders and politics seemed more important than normal peoples lives. The extermination of Iraqi masses was possible, because the Allied societies were ready for that war. This is where we stand for. All political and ideological talking means nothing against reality. We are simply the mighty privileged and force our will. It proved to be possible to demonize the government of a country and then kill systematically.

The case of Yugoslavia

Demonizing President Milosevic and the ruling majority of the Yugoslav parliament was simple and effective. Propaganda from the Hegemonial Court in Den Haag was added to provide further legitimization to the Great Powers interventions and aggressions.

Reasons for interventions and war aims were again interpreted without really analyzing. Propaganda and counter-propaganda dominated the minds. To summarize some of the explanations presented for intervention:

- The independence and integrity of Yugoslavia had to be destroyed to construct new and smaller states easier to control. While there have been serious and constant foreign interventions in internal Yugoslav affairs, the Slovenian and Croatian parliaments finally exercised their constitutional right to leave the Federation. They did so because they expected advantages for themselves from that move. Then Croatia and Yugoslavia went on to divide Bosnia. The interpretation, that the foreign interventions caused the splitting of Yugoslavia, or could largely be blamed for that, disregards the Yugoslav people and their decisions.

- The multiethnic character of Yugoslavia was a counter-model to the Great Powers racism and ethnicism and could not be tolerated. Racism and nationalism are indeed powerful means to group people against each other and were always used if necessary. But why worry about a multiethnic society if even after decades it was possible to reactivate racism among the Yugoslav people?
- The old conflicts among the people of the Balkans were conjured up to explain the people's readiness to let war be waged between them. But what happened in the past is history and only memories or stories are left. However, the decision to support racism is present and actual.
- Control of the lines of communication and resources should be secured. Yugoslavia was an important transit country, but could be surrounded. It has only marginal natural resources. NATO destruction succeeded in blocking the lines of communication at least in the medium-term.
- Capitalist restructuring and IMF structural adjustment is said to be a serious challenge to Yugoslav unity. However, the IMF isn't responsible for economic crises and current account deficits. The organization only intervenes, if a country already is in serious payment and credit troubles. With Cold War's end Yugoslavia lost its special role between the capitalist and communist blocs. Investors turned away and the Yugoslav credit standing was downgraded.
- Strikes and riots of Yugoslav people are interpreted as challenging to imperialist dominance. But resistance against IMF structural adjustment is widespread and seldom endangers capitalist rule seriously. We should accept, that resistance of Yugoslav people simply proved too weak to get real change and then fizzled out.
- Historical parallels were constructed with reference to the German-Italian plans prior to and their attacks against Yugoslavia in WW II. But some of the main determinants of the pre WW II plans and strategy fundamentally changed with the development of long range weapons, like bombers and strategic nuclear missiles. The military strategy based on control of the land lines of communication and with it the living space ideology lost any foundation.

Eastern Europe and the End of the Cold War

Yugoslavia enjoyed a special position and role during most of the Cold War. Not a member of NATO or WTO they had more room to maneuver than the other Eastern European countries. Extensive self-governing by the republics and further down to the provinces and city level was clearly different from the centralized version of socialism organized and exercised by the SU.

At least since the rise of Solidarnosc in Poland August 1980 and the declaration of inability to meet foreign payment obligations by the Polish government March 1981, the focus of capitalist planning shifted from detente to preparations for the Post Cold War era. The giant buildup and intensive R&D efforts of the US military under President Reagan marked this turn. The election of Gorbatschow as Secretary General of the Communist Party on March 11, 1985 was the beginning of the Soviet retreat from the Cold War. Russia turned from a concept of dominance to one of cooperation and mutual

confidence between independent states. To the extend as it became clear, that the communist bloc would dissolve, the bloc free movement in general lost its sense. The political importance of Yugoslavia decreased substantially.

Economic Transformation

At the end of the Cold War Yugoslavia was among the top ten exporters of manufactured products of developing countries. However, the Yugoslav exports concentrated on low tech manufacturing.⁽¹⁾

Share of Yugoslav Regions of total Exports 1989

Region	Percent
Slovenia	30.8
Croatia	20.9
Serbia	20.6
Bosnia-Herzegovina	13
Wojwodina	8.3
Macedonia	3.9
Montenegro	1.4
Kosovo	1.1

Foreign debt was relatively moderate at 3.609 billion \$ in 1989. Nevertheless, after the end of the Cold War investment and trade flows changed fundamentally. Economically South East Europe became now a very remote region of Europe with only minimal profit prospects for international investors and very small consumer markets. From that point Yugoslavia was simply a poor country with serious current account deficits and debt repayment trouble. The international credit and currency markets carried out a sharp devaluation of the Yugoslav currency and deteriorated the Yugoslav credit standing, thereby limiting availability of foreign credit and driving up credit costs. Prices of imported products rose dramatically and massive speculation further added to inflation. Ordinary peoples income dropped corresponding to high and hyperinflation. Credit was tight and expensive and many lost their jobs. Yugoslavia was not only financially and economically down and without much prospects to recover, but also militarily and politically weak. Only Slovenia, and to a certain degree Croatia in tourism and, after they advanced to a front state, sponsored by foreign aid, offer some opportunities for international investors. However, it remains to be noticed that capital doesn't need South East Europe.

The former CMEA Eastern European countries rapidly switched to capitalism. Politically they focused on the EU, which on her part systematically limited exports into the Common Market to protect their own incompetitive industries. The European Common Market is of crucial interest for all multi and transnational companies. Their immediate interest in Eastern Europe was to compete for market share in these countries. That meant investment in distribution networks and takeovers of local companies, which led to deindustrialization, debt accumulation and current account deficits. The size of the markets was relatively small and could be supplied from existing production capacities. The next step was investment in low and medium technology production facilities as part of their production networks for the European Common Market. Only those countries which are expected to be integrated in the the EU are interesting for this kind of investment. From the beginning it was clear, that competition for limited

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foreign investment capital would be intense and concentrate on Poland, Hungary and Czechia. The other Eastern European and South East European countries can only attract investment through extremely low wages to make up for their disadvantage of being blocked by EU protectionism.

Multinationalisation of Military Affairs

It is essential to realize, that multi and transnationalization fundamentally changed the influence and meaning of the nationstates. The nationstates lost influence over such crucial areas as economic policy and increasingly financial and monetary policy. Military policy always depended on agreements and alliances to join resources against a common enemy. But after WW II military integration went further. The NATO integrated military command and common infrastructure left most membercountries without independent military capabilities. Planning, organizing and execution of major wars have become multinational tasks.

But the nationstates have one unsubstitutable function. Identification of people with a group of others mostly depends on nationalism and racism. The state is the accepted frame of political decision making and legislation. The nation is source of emotional identification. Decisions are taken on inter and multinational levels and then must be transferred to the national political process. This constantly causes problems, conflicts and delays, but without national identification the states would fall and break.

Transforming Military Structures

Without its communist counterpart, capitalism has a substantial problem of justification. An order without any positive vision or promise of a better future for most people can only recruit to terror to force its dominance. Terror has to be organized against ordinary people, because they finally decide collectively about their destiny.

Even more NATO as an organization of the Cold War completely lost its public reason of existence. Without the Soviets no serious threat and enemy could be found. NATO therefore had to concentrate on redefining its tasks and building a new identity. A model for military intervention had to be created.

With Cold War's End a great new power gamble was opened. Not only the between the Great Powers themselves, but even more regional powers could try to exploit the situation. The meaning of strategic nuclear forces decreased, because the MAD situation between the superpowers was defused. On the other side, second order states face an increased danger of nearly unlimited attacks by the Great Powers. With that the meaning of even few nuclear weapons with suitable immediate range missiles increased also to provide a certain degree of deterrence.

The US world power status more and more depended on their military lead. The US military is the ultimate guarantor of the world financial and banking system. The technological, logistical and strategical superiority of their forces are the key to US dominance and their hegemonial role in the Great Powers Club. But only if wars expand.

The use of large conventional forces by the US and the European Great Powers to destroy second order countries was realized. There was no case of self-defence, but simply brutality and domination. The main target of suppression and destruction are the populations of countries, which were chosen for underdevelopment or recolonization. War is prepared and organized politically by hegemonial powers to make sure, that they were willing and able to kill without mercy.

The official 'reasons for military intervention' are propaganda efforts on the basis of virtual realities. Constant repetition of official ideology make many people believe. History is written before it happened. Hegemonial ideology lost any integrity. No effort can be seen to set up common values which then to enforce. Instead case to case positions and propaganda strategies are choosen. Although humanitarian values are declared and international laws cited, they are neither realized nor consistently adapted. Cannot recognize any line despite the law of the strongest.

The Problem with France and NATO

After returning to power in France 1958 De Gaulle pursued an independent foreign policy and France acquired nuclear weapons. In 1962 France left the disarmament committee in Geneva. De Gaulle declared a policy of detente towards the communists, which was concentrated on the SU, Poland and Romania. His vision was a "Europe from the Atlantic to the Ural" and his formula "detente-entente-cooperation". This strategy intended to limit US guardianship and establish Europe under French leadership as a third power center beside the two superpowers. In this context on January 22, 1963 the French-German Treaty of Friendship (Elysee Treaty) was signed. The French were disappointed, when the Germans insisted on a preamble, which deactivated the military part and effectively deprived the Treaty of its substance. France withdrew NATO's integrated military structure in 1966, while remaining a full member of its political structures.

German foreign policy, however, was always based on NATO and the final aim of reunification. The Germans knew about their strategic dependence from the US-forces to counter the SU and accepted it. Moreover, they often felt rather comfortable without intervention forces and militarily restricted to conventional forward defense against WTO forces in the frame of NATO. At least until the deployment of 108 Pershing II MRBMs and 464 Ground Launched Cruise Missiles (GLCMs) in the early 1980s, the US were generally seen as guarantor for peace and stability in Europe. Many Germans then suspected, the US would intend to regain the possibility of winning a nuclear war against the SU.

The question of nuclear weapons

The French military strategy based strictly on autonomy and national interests. The French didn't participate in forward defence against WTO forces. They concentrated on the case, that WTO forces break through NATO lines in Germany and head to France. In this concept, the French tactical nuclear weapons would mainly detonate over German territory. France saw the politics of dialogue between the blocs since the adaption of the Harmel doctrine December 1967 as an effort of the Superpowers to maintain their influence over European strategic and military structures and to hold down Europe. They didn't participate in the superpowers arms control talks. Until 1978 there was no French-German cooperation in the field of arms control.

European Integration Processes

In the 1980s the focus of security debates in and between Russian, France and German planners shifted from Cold War global superpower competition to issues of Greater European integration. France and Germany as the so-called engine of the West European integration process started to act. D'Estaing and Schmidt initiated some crucial developments, which were later continued by their successors Mitterand and

Kohl. The processes show a linkage between German monetary and French military obligingness.

The Common Market project was launched, and on March 13, 1979 the European Monetary System (EMS) to manage internal EC exchange rates was put into force. NATO's double-track decision of December 1979 to reinforce its Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INFs) and the Soviet military intervention against Afghanistan, which began on December 19, 1979 were starting points for redefining the French-German military relations.

- Regular consultations between the Foreign and Defense Ministers were agreed upon.
- In October 1982 a Security and Defense Committee was established with particular responsibilities in the field of disarmament and arms control.
- In 1983 France created a rapid deployment force named Force d'Action Rapide (FAR).
- Joint maneuvers were carried out in 1986 and especially in 1987 (about 20,000 French soldiers of the FAR were involved in "Kecker Spatz").
- On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Elysee Treaty, on January 22, 1988 both countries created a Defense and Security Council and deployed a joint brigade of 4,200 soldiers. This bilateral move caused much suspect among other NATO members, which feared a weakening of NATO and the transatlantic ties.

Repeatedly the French asserted reservations against NATO involvement and insisted on a strict bilateral character. But they realized, that outside or in competition to NATO there would be no Common European Security Policy. NATO infrastructure, experience and standardization were the basis, on which any further development had to be build. But they were not prepared to return fully into NATO military integration.

On February 29, 1986 Mitterand declared, France would consult Germany prior to any use of its pre-strategic nuclear weapons. Later in an interview on December 18, 1987 he specified, that the ultimate authority to decide about the use of its nuclear weapons would always be the President of the Republic de France.

The INF-treaty of Washington of December 1987 between the US and SU was to the first step of disarmament in the history of the Cold War. Both countries agreed to abolish land based nuclear missiles with a range between 500 to 5500 km.

Reactivating and Developing WEU

The Western European Union was reactivated in 1984 with a view to developing a "common European defence identity" through cooperation among its members in the security field and strengthening the European pillar of the North Atlantic Alliance. [1]

Meeting in The Hague in October 1987, the Ministerial Council of the Western European Union, made up of Foreign and Defence Ministers of the member countries, adopted a Platform on European Security Interests in which they affirmed their determination both to strengthen the European pillar of NATO

and to provide an integrated Europe with a security and defence dimension. [2]

November 1989 the WEU created an Institute for Security Studies, based in Paris, to assist in the development of a European security identity and in the implementation of Den Hague Platform.

After the Cold War

The Germans wanted to overcome limitations to the use of their military forces, which were in place since WW II. Never again were German soldiers supposed to attack and invade on the territory of anyone. During the Cold War their role was defined strictly as part of NATO forward defence against the WTO. After officially regaining its full nominal sovereignty Germany was determined to move ahead to become a major military power as part of European military forces. Only after fully participating in the destruction effort against Yugoslavia, they can now bring their full weight into the construction of European intervention forces. Moreover, Germany had a crucial role in the post Cold War European order as mediators between the US and France and also referring to Russia. Bringing back France to cooperate in the frame of NATO military integration and building independent European military capacities while maintaining and rebuilding stable transatlantic ties. Expanding NATO while keeping the Russians somehow integrated. To keep the processes going, the Germans heavily relied on war.

Just as Iraq demonstrated the US readiness and capability to attack, Bosnia made clear, how far the European Great Powers were away from independent and united action and intervention. It was an example of what Europe can and cannot do in the Common Foreign Policy and Military fields. The attacks against Iraq provided a model, how to win wars against second order conventional forces. To be sure, Bosnia was totally different, because it was a war between Yugoslavia and Croatia to divide another entity, which was too weak to defend.

War in Yugoslavia was a great opportunity for Germany. Building intervention forces could be politically legitimized and the agenda moved ahead. France stood under pressure to rejoin NATO's military integration. Both NATO and WEU were offered urgently needed tasks. The Germans had therefore strong interests to help organizing and continuing war in South East Europe. The Balkans provided the stories and events to work public opinion and preparatory war propaganda against Yugoslavia. It provided focus for the main questions of European military affairs.

References:

[1] "The NATO Handbook, 50th Anniversary Edition", 1998, NATO: Office of Information and Press, , page 331

[2] "The NATO Handbook, 50th Anniversary Edition", 1998, NATO: Office of Information and Press, , page 332