

**A stronger, global Europe ■ By Margarita Mathiopoulos**

## Toward a new Atlantic partnership

**W**hat is the destiny of the North Atlantic alliance after the Sept. 11 attacks and the trans-Atlantic turbulence over Iraq? In the spirit of George Robertson, the retiring NATO secretary general, who kept the alliance together at a time of the greatest strain ever on allied cohesion, the answer can only be partnership, not rivalry, between a strong Europe and the United States.

On the European side, this requires two main issues. First, Europe must match its own standards to the realities of the 21st century and speak with one voice on the international stage. This voice must be backed by credible military capabilities.

The United States, for all its military might, needs a strong democratic partner to pursue global security. What is required is a new trans-Atlantic charter in which the Americans renew their commitment to remain a power in Europe and Europe assumes its responsibilities for maintaining the European-Atlantic space as a sphere of stability, democracy and progress.

Clearly, we need each other. It's time to stop contemplating a split between the United States and Europe — this is not an option.

Lord Robertson has declared, "A new trans-Atlantic consensus has emerged: a consensus on today's new threats, the responses needed to meet them, and the capabilities required to do so successfully." Do these words stand up to the somber reality of a trans-Atlantic relationship in crisis?

Does the North Atlantic Treaty Organization want to play a real military role in the war against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, or will it become an armed version of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, irrelevant in projecting power on a global scale?

Are the Europeans willing to keep NATO militarily relevant, which means not only making another general political commitment to increase expenditures, but a genuine, precise, timed commitment to acquire the missing defense capabilities?

The Americans will have to give an answer as well: Are they interested in keeping NATO militarily relevant for future crises at all, or will the apparent Pentagon doctrine of "the mission determines the coalition" carry the day? For a vigorous NATO-EU security

relationship to emerge from the present crisis, the following three guidelines ought to be considered:

First, there is only one way for Europe to gain influence with the United States, and that is to possess capabilities that really matter. This means the Europeans have to concentrate on those capabilities, such as ground surveillance and air transport, that the United States is in dire need of when running several overseas operations simultaneously.

To this end, NATO should take a new approach to force planning. The issue is no longer planning for capabilities that more or less copy American capabilities, only on a much smaller scale. The issue is to identify American shortfalls and weaknesses and to plan for capabilities that reduce these weaknesses. This way the EU could eventually turn into an indispensable military partner for the United States within a globally operating NATO, forestalling American temptations to go it alone and increasing its political clout in Washington.

Second, a willingness on the European side to begin a modernization program should be met by an increased American preparedness to share technology.

Third and most important, all these good intentions will be in vain if Washington sticks to its preference for military action by U.S.-dominated ad-hoc coalitions — "NATO-à-la-carte." Of course, Europe likewise needs to improve its political credibility if it wants to become a global player. Paris should drop its arrogance, London should join the euro and Berlin would be well advised to abandon "freelance diplomacy" and do its homework, setting strategic priorities, defining foreign policy goals and accepting the security and military consequences.

Sept. 11 and the Iraq crisis made clear that the political will to exercise a global role is a prerequisite for a Europe that is competitive and that cares to preserve its cultural identity vis-à-vis any attacks from Islamic terrorists.

It is also the prerequisite for an equal partnership with the United States and a strong and balanced European-Atlantic alliance, able to meet new challenges anytime and anywhere.

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