

**FOCUS ON...  
Europe and International Order  
after the War on Iraq \***

Thinking about the post-war period in order to start reconstructing the web of international institutions, which too many, from all sides, concurred to lacerate: while the Iraqi war flared up, as harsh and painful as every war, it was necessary to hurry up and let the international community return to be something more than an empty rhetorical expression.

Now, while the US-led forces are sorting out how to cope with a post-Saddam Iraq, it is no use wasting time in discussions about how distant this world is from our ideals of perfection or sympathizing with the weakness of international institutions, while the task is preventing the latest tyrant from dragging us to his logic: “so much the worse, so much the better”. On the contrary, it is far more useful to favour the reform of those institutions, so that they may turn into useful political instruments, still able to offer always valid and concrete alternatives to the recourse to violence.

Undoubtedly, the United Nations and the European Union come out particularly humiliated by the result entered by the Iraqi crisis last April. Actually, the wide opposition manifested by the Security Council was not

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enough to prevent the United States from choosing the military option, more or less the solitary one. On the other hand, at the same time, the European Union revealed itself inconsistent on the international arena, and was shocked by numerous and deep ruptures in its internal dimension.

Europe's ineptitude and impossibility to speak with one voice ended up in determining two results. Firstly, they consolidated the American prejudice according to which the Union represents a weak and inconsistent political and strategic partner, whose preferences, as a consequence, do not have to be taken in excessive consideration. Secondly, they gave back objective space to the national interests of each single member state, which demonstrated not necessarily homogeneous, most of all in terms of security.

The saddest show for anybody caring about a Europe more capable of assuming a role and responsibility within the international zone, was to see that the two European states which are also permanent members of the Security Council are divided and ready to exhibit the escalation of such a break until the mutual veto.

Starting from this consideration, Mr Pierferdinando Casini - the Speaker of the low Chamber of the Italian Parliament- launches an appeal to reconsider the possibility of a permanent seat for the European Union within the UN Security Council, which would "force" the Europeans to work out a unitary position on the most delicate issues, before they undergo the judgement of the Security Council. Reintroducing an idea which today sounds like a provocation, the Speaker of the Chamber is fully aware of the fact that such a result will certainly represent the completion of two different determining

goals: a real harmonization of the foreign and security policies of the member states, and the effective launch (and not the usual pompous announce) of a military instrument integrated within the Union. Let's not deceive ourselves: none of these steps appears at the horizon, but perhaps the disastrous show of these months' European failure might offer a chance to a project otherwise almost unrealistic. Actually, whatever their political evaluation may be upon this war, European Governments have proven able to establish two facts: that division means defeat (for everyone), and that the survival of the Union in itself is at risk as a political subject, if we are not able to collocate the security issue in a really common sphere. But unfortunately, the draft European Constitution seems unable- so far- to show the necessary vision such a move would entail.

