

**US LOGIC OF AMBIGUITY TOWARD EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE**

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*Everything undergoes development  
and becomes its own contradiction.<sup>1</sup>*

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE: PATTERNS FOR THE FUTURE**

European security and defence is very much an area of unfinished business in the European Union (EU). But things are changing. As European integration continues, the political and economic strengths of the EU are driving the organisation to seek a credible role on security and defence. The question is whether this development will be compatible with the paramount leadership role that the US has grown accustomed to in Europe.

Imagine if the EU were able to launch autonomous military operations — where NATO as a whole is not engaged — and that these missions were integrated with the diplomatic, political as well as the economic instruments of the EU. The EU would then have a framework for a true multidimensional crisis strategy. But will this vision become reality? EU leaders seem to believe so. There is now common European commitment as well as motivation and expectations to launch and carry out political action in the area of European security and defence.<sup>2</sup> As a result the transatlantic security and defence partnership might be facing fundamental changes.

The European vision of a European Security and Defence policy (ESDP) is not built upon abstractions. Europeans realise that European crisis management has been woefully inadequate and they want to see change. Furthermore, the heavy emphasis placed upon European military shortcomings in the Kosovo war has brought issues on European security and defence to the

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<sup>1</sup> Arbnor and Bjerke, *Methodology for Creating Business Knowledge*, SAGE Publications 1997.

<sup>2</sup> See Brunsson, *The Irrational Organisation*, John Wiley & Sons Ltd 1985, for a further explanation of how this impacts on action.

forefront of EU discussions. The aim is to turn the EU into a competent crisis management operator and client in relation to NATO. This will take time, and it will also demand that the EU has military expertise.

During the past year the Europeans have taken a number of significant steps in this direction. At the European Summit in Cologne in June 1999, leaders decided to develop an autonomous capacity for launching EU-led military operations in response to international crises, including the setting up of new political and military bodies and structures. Six months later at the Helsinki Summit, EU leaders committed to a headline goal of a 60,000 person European corps-sized force capable of the full range of so-called Petersberg tasks that will enable the EU to respond to the whole spectrum of crises.<sup>3</sup> These involve humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping and combat missions in crisis management, including peacemaking.

By strengthening the European role on security and defence, the Europeans are expected to shoulder a larger responsibility for the security in their own continent. A greater capacity to project its own force would turn Europe into a more attractive and equal partner to the US. This could lead to increased security for both the US and Europe, which in turn would strengthen, not undermine NATO.

While excellent arguments can be made to support ESDP, it is also important to anticipate that in a highly interdependent transatlantic partnership even limited European moves on security and defence could bring both unexpected and unintended consequences to the transatlantic relationship. If the Europeans fail to manage ESDP successfully it could have serious

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<sup>3</sup> The Petersberg WEU Ministerial meeting of 19 June 1992 decided to focus on WEU's operational development on a range of humanitarian, evacuation, peacekeeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management including

implications for NATO and could produce transatlantic divisions. This highlights the great risks involved.

A key issue to whether the Europeans will be successful in building a common European Security and Defence Policy is US support. However, a wholehearted US endorsement of European security and defence reforms will depend on how the US perceives European intentions.

The problem is that the complexity of issues involved, and the ambiguities present in the concept of ESDP itself, mean that Washington officials are not always clear on how the concept will contribute to overall security in Europe or how it will reinforce NATO's role. This American uncertainty about European intentions<sup>4</sup>, in particular about issues related to increased European influence, often leads to vague and ambiguous expressions. But this lack of American clarity also indicates that the US Administration might not be completely sure of which outcome it prefers and thus wants to keep its options open. There might also be an element of the Administration wanting to keep both the Europeans and Congress guessing about its preferences, based on the desire to have maximum flexibility so as to increase its influence over the outcome of the ESDP process.

Consequently, the Europeans are often faced with uncertainties about the US attitude toward ESDP. This highly fluid American relationship to European security and defence reforms deserves more attention. The purpose of this paper is to develop a greater understanding for US perceptions of ESDP by looking at major factors, interests, threats, and opportunities that

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peacemaking. These 'Petersberg tasks' became part of the EU's Treaty responsibilities under the Treaty of Amsterdam. WEU is currently the instrument of their execution.

seem to influence the varying degrees of US support. The first chapter of this paper gives a short historical overview of European security and defence issues and examines the current process of developing ESDP. The second chapter focuses on US strategic interests in Europe and the compatibility of American and European interests. The third chapter presents both opportunities and threats that European security and defence reforms could pose to the transatlantic security partnership. The final chapter looks at possible outcomes of ESDP and discusses ways to ensure a lasting transatlantic partnership on security and defence.

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<sup>4</sup> In a speech at the Western European Union Institute in Paris on 19 May 2000 Alexander Vershbow, the US Ambassador to NATO, called on Europeans to think carefully about their motives in launching ESDP.

## **Chapter One**

### **EVERYTHING HAS A BEGINNING - THE DEVELOPMENT OF ESDP**

A glance at history will show that throughout the second half of the 20th century, European security has largely depended on the United States. The Europeans have considered American troops, nuclear weapons, intelligence-gathering networks, and diplomatic efforts indispensable to the Continent's security and stability.<sup>5</sup> Strong US leadership within the Alliance has curbed intra-European friction, and the Europeans have been able to limit their own defence expenditures. Although the US Administration has been mostly supportive of European efforts to take on a larger role in security and defence, there have also been concerns that this would be in competition with NATO and that demands for increased influence would ultimately pose a threat to the US leadership role within the Alliance.

Even if the end of the Cold War has brought with it fundamental changes in the shape and nature of European security, partnership with the US in maintaining peace on the European continent continues to be a vital interest for Europeans. The mutual dependency between the US and Europe, as well as shared cultural roots, perceived common values, and interests promote close diplomatic, political, economic, and military co-operation. Nevertheless, as the economic and political integration of the EU continues to develop into a 'success story', the relationship between the US and Europe is becoming increasingly complex.

And as European integration proceeds, the Europeans are becoming more focused on strengthening their own identity on security and defence matters. The Europeans no longer want to be accused of being a free rider on American-provided security, but they are also becoming

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<sup>5</sup> Boilard, *The Promise and Reality of European Security Co-operation, From Double Containment to Double Vision: The Fragmentation of America's Europe Policy in the Post Cold War Era*, Praeger Publishers 1998

increasingly aware that the new challenges Europe is facing might not always engage US security interests. For instance, in the future there might be regional conflicts or civil wars in Europe in which the US chooses not to act. Indeed, the Europeans might have an uncertain future in crisis management if they were to be solely dependent on US military assistance in a complex emergency. In short, the Europeans see significant American defence spending, but at the same time sense less willingness to use the US military in crisis management.

Indeed, many American politicians are reluctant to see United States ground forces in open-ended peacekeeping missions such as Kosovo and Bosnia, and question why the US should allocate major funds and send troops to areas when vital interests are not involved. In addition, there are members of Congress and Pentagon officials who claim that the introduction of ground forces to the peacekeeping missions in Kosovo and the continued mission in Bosnia have had a negative impact on the US Army. They fear that open-ended peacekeeping operations will decrease readiness and thus distract the US military's ability to perform its wartime missions.<sup>6</sup>

But perhaps the Europeans show more caution and suspicion about American participation in European crisis management operations than proves to be justified. Still, the dilemma is that European decision-makers simply cannot be sure in which direction the American pendulum will swing.<sup>7</sup> Will the Administration be able to convince a sceptical Congress and the American public that important American interests are involved in a future crisis that affects European

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<sup>6</sup> Bradley Graham, 'Two Army Divisions Unfit for Major War', *Washington Post*, November 19, 1999.

<sup>7</sup> In June 1999 Secretary of State Madeleine Albright warned that 'Some hope, others fear that Kosovo will be a precedent for similar interventions around the world. I would caution against such sweeping conclusions.' In July 1999 the National Security Adviser Sandy Berger explained that in cases of genocide the US needed to weight its national interest in a country before deciding to employ military power.

interests? It is impossible to tell. In the face of this, it should come as no surprise that the Europeans conclude it is time to take on a stronger role in crisis management.

### ***1. Changes That Never Were***

The concept of a European role in security and defence is not new; it has been on the European agenda since the end of the Second World War. An important European objective has been to secure American military presence in Europe by showing seriousness in addressing security deficiencies. The debate about whether the Europeans were doing their share in terms of military contributions has been a recurring theme.

The European Defence Community (EDC) was the first serious attempt to create co-ordinated security and defence co-operation among European states.<sup>8</sup> The EDC treaty envisaged the creation of a *European army*, with a homogeneous unity, structure, and administration under a European political authority. NATO's Supreme Allied Commander in Europe would supervise the organisation of the force, but member states would retain control of their forces not integrated into the European army.<sup>9</sup> The British were generally supportive of defence integration between European partners, but decided not to join EDC because of its supranational structure.

At first the US Administration was sceptical toward the idea of a European army on the basis that it was 'impractical' and involved Europeans getting engaged in tasks beyond their strength.<sup>10</sup> Over time this position changed and Washington decided to support the project on the

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<sup>8</sup> EDC was the result of increased western fears of a conflict with the Soviet Union as a consequence of the outbreak of the Korean War. The EDC Treaty was signed by France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg in 1952.

<sup>9</sup> Dinan, *Encyclopaedia of the European Union*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc 1998

<sup>10</sup> Chace, *Acheson-The American Secretary of State who Created the American World*, Harvard University Press 1998, pp 331. General Dwight Eisenhower was instrumental in turning Acheson around.

condition that EDC would be closely related to NATO and would permit a substantial German military contribution in the future.<sup>11</sup> This was important because leading Americans at that time anticipated an eventual American withdrawal of troops stationed on the continent.<sup>12</sup> In 1954 the French National Assembly voted down the EDC treaty, in large part because of its supranational character and the inclusion of the Federal Republic of Germany as a partner in the enterprise.<sup>13</sup> This despite the US threat to withdraw to a peripheral strategy if France failed to ratify the Treaty.<sup>14</sup>

## ***2. Changes We Have Witnessed***

The collapse of EDC was a major setback for European integration, and the Americans began to question whether the Europeans were serious in their efforts to take greater responsibility for their own security environment. The US perception at the time was that Western Europe was too divided and too vulnerable to be trusted, but too important to let go.<sup>15</sup> The British tried to rescue the situation by convening a conference that led to a modification of the original Brussels Treaty, which opened up for German and Italian membership in the Western Union, henceforth known as the Western European Union (WEU).<sup>16</sup> Over the years, WEU remained an intergovernmental actor without any of EDC's supranational features and was built around a territorial guarantee (Article V) that was operationalised through NATO. It

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<sup>11</sup> Powaski, *The Entangling Alliance - The United States and European Security 1950-1993*, Greenwood Press 1994 p 21.

<sup>12</sup> Chace, *Acheson-The American Secretary of State Who Created the American World*, Harvard University Press 1998, pp 331

<sup>13</sup> Cyr, U.S. *Foreign Policy and European Security*. St Martin's Press New York 1987, p. 30

<sup>14</sup> Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*, Harvard 1997, p. 11

<sup>15</sup> Harper, *American Visions of Europe*, Cambridge University Press 1994, p. 327

<sup>16</sup> The origins of the WEU go back to 1948 when Britain, France, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands signed the founding document of the Brussels Treaty Organisation, also known as the Western Union.

possessed no integrated military structures to direct military forces in wartime. Rather, WEU's direct role in defence activity was to be marginal.

Consequently, European defence matters remained firmly wedded to a transatlantic framework. Thus, when the EC came into being in 1957, foreign and security policy issues were left outside Community competence. Nevertheless, even though the EC did not embrace foreign policy, security or defence co-operation, there was a desire to fashion a single voice in world affairs. The spillover effect from economic integration would eventually encourage European countries to co-ordinate their foreign policies more closely.

With the end of the Cold the Europeans saw a new opportunity to achieve a more balanced transatlantic security partnership. Two trends emerged: European integration, and NATO adaptation.<sup>17</sup> The first led to the development of a genuine European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI), which would enable the European allies to assume a greater responsibility for defence matters. This included the development of a common foreign and security policy (CFSP) and enhancement of the role of WEU. The EU Treaty of Maastricht of 1991 stated that CFSP would include all questions related to the security of the Union, including the progressive framing of a common defence policy that might in time lead to a common defence. WEU was to serve as the defence component of the European Union and as a means of strengthening 'the European pillar' of the Alliance. Closer institutional relations between the EU and WEU were to be fostered, and some countries envisaged the integration of WEU into the Union. WEU now became the pivotal link between the EU and NATO and would eventually offer a forum for all

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<sup>17</sup> General Wesley K. Clark, *Reflections on Europe*, Army Magazine, June 2000

European NATO allies, all members of the EU, and partners from Central and Eastern Europe to discuss European security issues.<sup>18</sup>

The second trend involved NATO adapting to meet new security challenges in the early 1990s. The end of the Cold War had raised important questions about NATO's future. Despite the disappearance of the external threat both Europeans and Americans found themselves in a world with increased uncertainties, and serious disagreements among allies over Bosnia exacerbated the situation. Still, both Americans and Europeans were eager to ensure that NATO would remain Europe's dominant security institution linking the US to European security. This would also ensure that a unified Germany would continue to be tightly integrated into post-war structures. NATO was assigned new tasks, while preserving the capability of collective defence, and new members were accepted to join the Alliance.

With substantial US force reductions in Europe, the European NATO members felt strongly that they should assume greater responsibility for European security and defence. This resulted in mounting pressure — especially from France — that there should be a 'Europeanist' rather than 'Atlanticist' approach to European security. Consequently, in every high level NATO document since 1991 the European role in security and defence was emphasised.<sup>19</sup> The US supported this emphasis albeit with mixed feelings. In sum, the US wanted firm guarantees that ESDI would be built within the transatlantic framework and that there would be no EC caucus in the Alliance. In 1991 the Bush Administration felt the need to warn the Europeans that

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<sup>18</sup> In 2000 the Nations of WEU consist of 28 countries divided into four different categories: 1. *WEU Full Members*: Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and United Kingdom, 2. *WEU Associate Members*: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Iceland, Norway, and Turkey, 3. *WEU Observers*: Austria, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, and Sweden, 4. *WEU Associate Partners*: Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia

the US would bring its troops home if it were excluded from discussions on European security.<sup>20</sup> Subsequently, the Franco - German initiative in October 1991 to create the joint military unit EUROCORPS was an unwelcome surprise to the Americans. Initially, the US vehemently opposed the initiative, as there was a fear that it would draw Germany away from its NATO commitment. Only when there were sufficient guarantees that the EUROCORPS would be closely co-ordinated with and have linkages to the NATO integrated command, did the US become supportive.

The Americans were clearly concerned that European efforts in the area of security and defence could eventually undermine NATO.<sup>21</sup> The compromise that the US was looking for came at the 1996 NATO Foreign and Defence Minister meeting in Berlin, where it was decided that ESDI was to be built within the Alliance according to the formula 'separate but not separable' from NATO.

ESDI meant that the collective assets of the Alliance were to be made available for WEU operations undertaken by the European allies in pursuit of CFSP on the basis of consultations in the North Atlantic Council (NAC).<sup>22</sup> This effectively meant that the US would have a voice in the conduct of European-only operations that relied upon American assets designated to NATO. This was important for two reasons: first, the US wanted to ensure that the central principle of

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<sup>19</sup> Schake, Bloch-Lainé and Grant, *Building a European Defence Capability*, Survival, vol. 41, no 1, Spring 1999, pp. 20-40

<sup>20</sup> Grant, Charles, *Delors — Inside the House That Jacques Built*, Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 1994, p 188

<sup>21</sup> At the 1991 Rome NATO Summit President Bush questioned European intentions: 'If your ultimate aim is to provide for your own defence, then it is time to tell us today.'

<sup>22</sup> In 1994 the concept of Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTF) was introduced. This concept would provide the Alliance with an improved ability to deploy appropriate multinational forces matched to the specific requirements of a particular military operation. But, it could also be used as a key instrument by which the Alliance could provide support to operations led by WEU as part of the Alliance's contribution to ESDI.

unity of command was not undermined and second, the US could not rule out being called upon to assist its allies in a deteriorating situation.<sup>23</sup>

ESDI would provide a genuine European military capability without duplicating the command structures, planning staffs or military assets and capabilities already available within NATO. Furthermore, ESDI offered a way to increase pressure on the European allies to commit the resources necessary to upgrading their capabilities to rapidly deploy forces over long distances, sustain operations for extended periods of time, and operate jointly with the United States in power projection missions.<sup>24</sup> Increased European military capabilities would in principle make the Alliance stronger and remove some of the pressure from the US to act in every crisis. However, ESDI did not suggest that the Europeans would be capable of acting without US help or leadership.

As NATO continued its work on ESDI, the foreign policy voice of the EU was unacceptably muted and ineffective, given the economic weight and strategic interests of the Union. The overall experience of CFSP was that there was a serious gap between intentions and outcomes. The EU's global influence could not be based on diplomatic declarations alone. The persistent imbalance between the tools at the disposal of the European Commission and those offered through CFSP remained and were not sufficiently addressed. As a result, the EU could not effectively deal with the emerging policy of 'comprehensive security', as this would require

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<sup>23</sup> Cornish, *Partnership in Crisis, The US, Europe and the Fall and Rise of NATO*, Chatham House Papers, 1997

<sup>24</sup> SRES 208, Committee of Foreign Relations, Expressing the sense of the Senate regarding United States policy toward the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the European Union, in light of the Alliance's April 1999 Washington Summit and the European Union's June 1999 Cologne Summit.

the combined use of economic, diplomatic and military means in a continuing and effective manner.<sup>25</sup>

European leaders made a serious effort to promote a more coherent, effective and visible foreign policy through the Treaty of Amsterdam. They appointed a High Representative for CFSP to increase the role of the EU on foreign and security policy issues, established a policy planning and early warning unit (PPEWU) and introduced the so called Petersberg missions as EU Treaty tasks. WEU would remain the instrument for their execution. Efforts to integrate WEU into the EU were effectively opposed by Britain and the non NATO-EU member states Austria, Finland, Ireland, and Sweden.

But the Treaty also reformed the decision-making process by introducing majority voting for decisions concerning the implementation of agreed policy. It also introduced a 'constructive abstention' procedure, whereby a member state is not obliged to apply a particular decision but will accept that the decision taken commits the EU. Thus, it would make it politically harder for a member state to block an EU decision.

### ***3. Changes That Are Being Created - An Unexpected European Move on Security and Defence***

European security and defence reforms could not be constructed solely on Franco-German foundations. Britain had to play a central role in underpinning the process. At this stage, however, Britain did not share the goals of its continental allies. It was sceptical about developing the EU into a meaningful defence actor, because it considered this to be an

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<sup>25</sup> Bonvicini, *Making European Foreign Policy Work, The European Union beyond Amsterdam*, Routledge 1998

encroachment on British sovereignty and ultimately perceived it as a threat to Britain's special relationship with the US.

Britain's stance did not change until 1998, when Prime Minister Tony Blair decided that the area of security and defence was one where Britain could join France in taking the lead. This strategy would raise the British profile in the EU and perhaps even serve as a stepping stone for future membership in the European Monetary Union (EMU). Co-operation with France was strategically important to Britain and would balance the German - French axis.

The US had mixed feelings about the British U-turn on European security and defence. On the one hand it welcomed the new British approach, but on the other hand it felt uncomfortable with the rapprochement between Britain and France on these issues. It can be argued that many American politicians, officials, and policy analysts have preserved the image that France wants to push the US out of Europe, and often ignore information contrary to this belief.

By taking a lead on an issue where Britain has traditionally held back, Blair became the influencer - the architect of "the leading story".<sup>26</sup> Blair's story was not created in a vacuum. It was based on common European values, interests and objectives, and the message was clear: "The Europeans cannot expect the United States to play a role in every disorder in our backyard." In other words, the Europeans must have the capacity to act in crises on their own continent. This message was something most Europeans could understand and support. He touched upon common values and interests and gave European leaders power to create unexpected change.

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<sup>26</sup> Gardner, *Extraordinary Minds*, Basic Books, 1997

Despite different and competing visions of a European security and defence policy, EU leaders now called for a more coherent and united European approach to complex emergencies. This resulted in a more serious commitment to the development of a multidimensional strategy that would draw holistically on the economic, diplomatic, political, and military instruments of the EU. While many of these tools such as civilian policing, humanitarian assistance, electoral and human rights monitoring, were already being used in response to crises, it was the united approach to crisis management that was the novelty and the challenge for the EU.

This British change of heart enabled the Europeans to move forward on security and defence matters in unprecedented ways. One major breakthrough was the joint British-Franco declaration on European defence of 4 December 1998, which stated that "*the [European] Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them and readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises.*" This statement suddenly opened the way for EU-led military operations outside the framework of the Alliance.

Somewhat overwhelmed by the British-Franco move, the Americans were particularly uncomfortable with the ambiguity of the word *autonomous*, especially as the French stressed the possibility for the Europeans to be able to act independently of the US and NATO when necessary. In an article published in the *Financial Times* on 7 December 1998, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright declared support conditional on three principles, commonly referred to as the 'three Ds': decoupling, duplication and discrimination. First, there should be *no decoupling* of European and NATO decision-making. Second, *duplication* of NATO capabilities was undesirable: "*Defence resources are too scarce for allies to conduct force planning, operate*

*command structures, and make procurement decisions twice — once at NATO and once more at the EU.*” Third, any *discrimination* against non-EU NATO Allies should be avoided. Although not stated in the article, the US also wanted assurances that NATO would have the right of first refusal in crisis situations.

As things transpired, the British-Franco declaration was simply an appetiser. At the June 1999 EU Summit in Cologne, EU leaders underlined their determination to develop an autonomous capacity to take decisions where NATO as a whole was not engaged, so as to launch and conduct EU-led military operations in response to international crises. Direct links between the EU and NATO would be established for the first time, and the EU would in the process absorb WEU. Through a separate decision the EU High Representative for CFSP also became the secretary-general of WEU, a move aimed at facilitating the integration of WEU into the EU.

The Cologne conclusions caused American concern, as they were perceived as deviating from the Strategic Concept adopted at the 1999 NATO Summit in Washington. The Americans felt that they had a strategic deal after the Washington Summit. ESDI was to be conducted in a transatlantic framework with the presumption that NATO would deal with hard security and the EU with soft security. Now Washington perceived that the Europeans were building autonomous military capabilities and at the same time pocketing NATO assets. Remarks by European Commission President Romano Prodi that a European army would be the next logical step contributed to further American uneasiness.<sup>27</sup> The subsequent American message to the Europeans was clear: The gap between NATO’s Strategic Concept and European political statements had to be narrowed. The question was how much the Americans needed to get out of

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<sup>27</sup> Prodi’s comments were quickly refuted by European leaders.

the Europeans. If Washington were to demand too many exacting guarantees, this could be interpreted by the Europeans as a sign of American fear and mistrust. The intense discussions between the US and European NATO-allies that followed resulted in three key principles that were stated at the Helsinki Summit in December 1999:

*1. NATO will remain the foundation of the collective defence of its members.*

By clarifying that NATO remained the foundation of collective defence, the controversial and highly complex issue of WEU's Article V was temporarily put aside. Still, there has been no agreement among EU Member States to abolish it. Instead, the most likely outcome is that Article V will be kept outside the EU Treaty by the signatories in an additional protocol. However, a number of European countries still question whether in the long run Article V can be kept outside the EU Treaty. If collective defence was brought into the Union, this would raise a number of difficult issues and might lead to the creation of different security zones within the EU.<sup>28</sup>

*2. The EU will only act where NATO as a whole is not engaged.*

The Europeans have not been willing to state explicitly that NATO should have the right of first refusal in a crisis situation. This reluctance continues to raise concern among American officials.

*3. A need for dialogue, consultation and co-operation between the EU and NATO.*

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<sup>28</sup> So-called neutral countries like Austria, Ireland, and Sweden would have a problem if collective defence were to be brought into the Union. Furthermore, EU enlargement will bring in new countries that are not members of

The US argues that the very success of ESDP will be contingent upon how EU-NATO links will work in practice. This illustrates the need to have a broad discussion *before* key decisions are made. Still, it will not be possible to fully determine in advance how the collective decision procedure will work in a future crisis that would involve both the EU and NATO. It is all contingent upon how the considerations add up and what interests are brought to bear.

In Helsinki, EU leaders also decided that by 2003 member states must collectively be able to deploy within sixty days and sustain for at least one year military forces of up to 50,000-60,000 persons capable of the full range of Petersberg tasks. New political and military bodies and structures would be established to enable the EU to provide necessary political guidance and strategic direction to such operations. In addition, a non-military crisis management mechanism would be created to co-ordinate and make more effective the various civilian means and resources, in parallel with the military ones at the disposal of the EU and the member states. This would give the EU necessary military and civilian capabilities to act in crisis situations.

But American officials have trouble imagining a crisis that would engage the Europeans and not the US. They argue that a real disorder in Europe would still need a response from NATO, not the EU. Indeed, as the list below indicates, when envisaging future crisis management operations most options involve operating through NATO structures:

1. *A NATO-led military operation* (Example: Kosovo and Bosnia)

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NATO. If collective defence were to be operationalised through NATO, the US would hardly accept that these countries obtain security guarantees through 'the back-door'.

2. *A NATO-led European-only operation.* Headquarters reside within NATO structures. The US does not contribute troops, but American military officers serve in a NATO headquarters. (Example: The NATO-led extraction force under French command in Macedonia).
3. *An EU-led operation with access to NATO assets and capabilities.* The European Council takes the political decision to initiate the military operation. The fact that the operation draws upon NATO assets (in essence this means American assets) requires NAC approval, which effectively means that the US has veto power over the operation. NATO's Deputy Supreme Allied Commander serves as commander of the operation. Headquarters reside within NATO structures.
4. *An autonomous EU-led operation without recourse to NATO assets and capabilities.* The European Council takes the political decision to initiate the operation. (More likely to be low intensity operations such as humanitarian and rescue operations, and peacekeeping, including civilian police missions, and de-mining operations.)
5. *A European-led ad hoc coalition without recourse to NATO assets and capabilities.* (Example: The Italian led 'Operation Alba').

What kind of operations would then the untested EU be able to mount? Two examples from the past that can serve as illustrations. In early 1997 there was a breakdown of civil order in Albania. Germany and Britain opposed WEU involvement in the crises, but with important national interests at stake, Italy went ahead and formed and led a 5,000 strong ad hoc force that intervened in the crisis.<sup>29</sup> The force included contingents from France, Greece and Spain. The

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<sup>29</sup> Wyn-Rees, *The Western European Union at the Crossroads*, Westview Press, 1998

intervention was mandated by the UN, but was carried out without assistance from NATO or WEU. 'Operation Alba' was ultimately considered a success and demonstrated the importance of European capabilities. A year later a French officer led the NATO-led Extraction Force in Macedonia. The purpose of the mission was to be able to extract Organisation for Security and Co-operation (OSCE) observers from Kosovo, and the operation was based on solid European capabilities. But there are also those who argue that many of the features of the ESDP concept are at work in the NATO-led peacekeeping operation in Kosovo. The Europeans provide approximately 80 percent of the troops and KFOR was initially commanded by a British officer, who was then succeeded by a German officer. A Spanish officer, whose headquarters are provided by the EUROCORPS, currently commands KFOR.

The fact remains that the EU is hardly able to initiate any serious military operations without US technology and intelligence available to NATO. It is thus unlikely that the Europeans will in the near term find a complex crisis where they are so confident of their military superiority that they would be uninterested in the support the US could offer. Indeed, it will probably take more than a decade before the Europeans are likely to have the military capabilities needed to carry out any major joint military operations, and even then it is doubtful that Europeans would *opt* to go it alone. For the time being, ESDP is more like taking out a fire-insurance policy, though this doesn't mean that the Europeans expect their house to burn down.

#### ***4. Changes That Must Still Take Place***

##### *The Full Reintegration of France into NATO's Military Structure*

The US Administration expects France to view NATO as a necessary tool to create a genuine European security and defence policy. Furthermore, there are American expectations that ESDP could serve as a way to increase pressure on the French to rejoin NATO's military command.<sup>30</sup> Since 1995 France has resumed participation in NATO's military committee and its supporting staffs, as well as meetings of defence ministers and France has participated in all NATO-led operations since 1995.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, French troops are not part of NATO's defence planning and command structures, and this has important consequences.<sup>32</sup> First, by staying out of the integrated military command, France risks not keeping up with NATO standards and procedures, an effect clearly evidenced in the Gulf War, where France was found to lag significantly in military capabilities. However, it should be acknowledged that since then France has taken a number of steps to professionalize its forces, which involve scrapping conscription. Second, France does not have to report on its spending plans and military capabilities, which continues to be a major irritant in the Euro-Atlantic partnership. Third, the

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<sup>30</sup> There were several reasons for de Gaulle's decision to pull out of NATO's military command structure in 1966. However, the main reason was to free itself from US hegemony and create an independent nuclear capability.

<sup>31</sup> Schake, Bloch-Lainé, and Grant, *Building a European Defence Capability*, Survival, vol.41, no 1, Spring 1999, pp 20-40

<sup>32</sup> It is increasingly ironic that NATO's defence planning process now cover Austria, Finland, and Sweden (through PARP), but not France.

French demands for increased European influence in the Alliance are likely to be taken less seriously as long as France remains outside the integrated military structures.

Still, even though the French might realise that in order to be more European tomorrow they have to be more Atlanticist today, the prospect of the full reintegration of France into NATO's military command could still take time.<sup>33</sup> So far there has been no political commitment on part of the French.

### *The Role of the Non-NATO EU Countries*

When looking at the future there is a second factor that requires attention; namely the different EU and NATO membership categories. In the future ESDP might bring increased pressure on the non-NATO EU countries Austria, Finland, Ireland, and Sweden to join the Alliance. Today, all have close co-operation with NATO, but the concept of membership in the Alliance still seems distant. However, with a clear role for the EU on security and defence and a direct link between the EU and NATO their arguments against NATO membership will over time become weaker. It is true that Europe's security has substantially improved and that there is no immediate threat of massive military confrontation. Still, it is not possible to predict what potential risks to security the future holds, and thus a majority of Europeans see the security partnership between Europe and the US as the best guarantee to peace.<sup>34</sup> The hard question to answer is what level of security non-NATO EU countries aspire to have in an ever-changing world. So far the gain in security that NATO membership is likely to bring does not seem to compensate these countries for the added political risks that are associated with a radical change

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<sup>33</sup> Gordon, *NATO's Transformation*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, p. 59

in policy. After all, it is easier for governments to defend the status quo than alter it, especially when the issue affects core national values.

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<sup>34</sup> Speech by the secretary-general of NATO, Dr. Javier Solana at the Council of Foreign Relations, Washington, 15 March 1999.

## Chapter Two

### AMERICA AND EUROPE - DIFFERENT VISIONS OF SECURITY?

#### *1. American Strategic Interests in Europe*

The way the US views its strategic interests in Europe has important implications for how Washington will respond to the increased European tempo in European security and defence reforms. Europe can be seen to lie at the heart of America's political, economic and military interests. It is the place where American core values are perceived to be best matched and reinforced in the world. Europe also serves not only as America's essential bridgehead to the Eurasian continent, but as a springboard for the progressive expansion of democracy deeper into Eurasia.<sup>35</sup> Stability in Europe is a vital interest to Americans as a major conflict in the continent would also pose a direct threat to US prosperity. Today, the US and Europe are deeply interdependent with over \$1 trillion in annual shared economic activities and several million Americans are employed by European businesses.<sup>36</sup>

The European Union has become one of the most advanced examples of regional integration in the world. Traditionally, US policymakers have been sincere supporters of European integration, though this has not meant unconditional support. The US wants to remain the continent's pre-eminent power and help shape the European security environment in ways favourable to US interests. A united Europe would generate the resources and cohesiveness to allow Europe to share America's burdens both on the European continent and out of Europe. This includes support to peace efforts in troubled regions and countering global threats, such as

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<sup>35</sup> Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard, American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives*, Basic Books 1997

the spread of weapons of mass destruction and dual-use technology.<sup>37</sup> Although the US retains capabilities to protect its interests unilaterally, there are advantages in acting in concert with like-minded nations when responding to crises. Not least since this generally strengthens the political legitimacy of a course of action and brings additional resources to bear, ensuring that the United States need not shoulder the political, military, and financial burdens alone.<sup>38</sup> This is important, as US public opinion generally prefers that responsibilities for international security be shared with allies rather than carried out unilaterally. However, acting in coalitions demands that allies act coherently and expeditiously. If the Europeans are mainly perceived as "baggage", then the US is more prone to act unilaterally.

Since the end of the Cold War, it has been widely viewed that American interests in Europe are best served by maintaining the cohesion of NATO under continued American leadership. The main emphasis has been placed on reinforcing the position of NATO as the main institution through which European and North American allies address security issues of transatlantic concern. The US commitment to maintain approximately 100,000 military personnel in Europe is no longer primarily about contributing to European stability. It is very much a strategic advantage, as it enables the US to work with allied forces and then deploy from bases in the Continent to contingencies both in and out of Europe.<sup>39</sup> It also increases US knowledge about the region and raises both the political and military credibility of the US.

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<sup>36</sup> Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, remarks at European Institute Awards Dinner in Washington DC, 26 January 2000

<sup>37</sup> *A National Security Strategy for a New Century*, The White House 1998

<sup>38</sup> Report of the Quadrennial Defence Review, May 1997

<sup>39</sup> Gompert, Kugler, Libicki, *Mind the Gap*, The Institute for National Strategic Studies, NDU 1999

## ***2. The Compatibility of American and European Interests***

Having briefly examined US strategic interests in Europe it is also important to look at the compatibility of US and European interests. The US and Europe have many common security interests and share similar security concerns. And even where these interests are not completely aligned, they are mostly compatible. At the same time, however, it should be acknowledged that the US and Europe at times perceive threats differently, have different objectives and apply different political, economic, and military strategies in pursuing their interests, all of which tend to cause tensions in the transatlantic partnership. The European reluctance to support politically and/or economically certain foreign policy initiatives supported by the US executive branch and Congress does raise American concern.<sup>40</sup> The Europeans respond by complaining about American arrogance and a failure to appreciate any other perspectives other than their own. This leads the Americans to view their allies as ungrateful and complacent and to issue warnings about increased alienation from Europe. The risk here is that different views on how to respond to crises can lead to Europeans and Americans talking past each other on important security issues, which could in turn affect the implementation of ESDP.

Europeans are generally less inclined than Americans to contemplate the use of force without exhausting every other option to protect their interests. In 1994 the different views on the use of force created the worst crisis within the Alliance since the Suez crisis in 1956.<sup>41</sup> The Europeans simply refused to support the American call for air strikes over Bosnia. In the end the US decided to put the unity of the Alliance first and temporarily abandoned the idea.

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<sup>40</sup> Much of the tension is caused by the US tendency to resort to unilateral sanctions and then expect Europe to follow.

<sup>41</sup> Daalder, *Getting to Dayton, The Making of America's Foreign Policy*, Brookings Institution Press, 2000, p. 33

When the Europeans see military intervention as the only option, they are more inclined to adhere strictly to international law, including the UN Charter and UN Security Council decisions.<sup>42</sup> They also tend to be more concerned about the proportionality of the force used. In addition, Europeans are more prone to take a broader approach to European security and focus more on both civil and military aspects in conflicts. Kosovo is a case in point.

To project power is a key element in American security thinking. The US considers most important military missions to involve power projection and would like to see ESDP bring active European participation in potential out-of-Europe missions. With the exception of Britain and France, most Europeans are reluctant to think in these terms: they simply do not share the US propensity to protect distant interests and defeat distant threats. To Europeans, 'defence' means protecting borders; power projection on the other hand connotes offensive warfare, even if it involves defending overseas interests that are attacked.<sup>43</sup> Although Britain and France have some power projection capabilities, a majority of the EU countries do not. In fact, several European countries are more concerned with territorial defence. When developing ESDP, many Europeans prefer to think in terms of low intensity missions such as humanitarian operations and peacekeeping missions, despite the fact that the Petersberg tasks could include peace enforcement operations. The result is US disappointment, as there is a sense that ESDP stirs up a lot of feelings in Washington, but brings limited additional value.

But there is also a risk that the accelerating technological divergence of American and European military forces could hamper future co-operation in complex crises. The US incorporates new technologies and operational concepts at a pace faster than the Europeans,

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<sup>42</sup> Gompert, Kugler, Libicki, *Mind the Gap*, The Institute for National Strategic Studies, NDU 1999 p. 20

which has led to a widening gap between American and European military capabilities. The US military is adapting to an environment of increased uncertainty through the rapid adoption of advanced information technologies — the revolution in military affairs (RMA). Through RMA the US can use information technology to give US forces strategic advantage through advanced concepts, doctrine, and organisations, so that they can dominate any future battlefield. This in turn poses significant interoperability challenges in order to ensure that US and European forces can operate effectively together, and this highlights the tension between the strategic redesign of the US military and the requirements to conduct military operations with allies.<sup>44</sup>

Despite these differences the transatlantic relationship can be seen to rest on a solid foundation. The at times defensive role of the Europeans could probably be modified if the US were to seek a genuine dialogue with Europe in the early stages of the policy process — before key decisions are made. Equally important is for the US to avoid lecturing the Europeans and attempting to force its views upon them. The more complex and uncertain the world becomes, the more important it is to have friends and allies. Ultimately, both the US and Europe realise that their long-range national interests are best served by following a co-operative course of action.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid p. 21

<sup>44</sup> Laird, Mey, *The Revolution in Military Affairs: Allied Perspectives*, INSS, National Defense University, McNair Paper 60, April 1999

### Chapter Three

#### ESDP — MORE OPPORTUNITIES THAN THREATS?

The Clinton Administration has so far been mainly supportive of the ESDP. In fact, it claims to be the most pro-European Administration in many years. Since the Helsinki Summit, American officials have moved away from clearly defining and articulating ESDP's limits to being more explicit about what it will take for the policy to be perceived as adding value.<sup>45</sup> In other words the Americans are trying to design their behaviour in a way that can be seen as working with, rather than against European expectations.<sup>46</sup> They do not want to run the risk of being blamed for hampering the development of ESDP. Hence, the Administration has moved away from "the three Ds" to support "the three Is": indivisibility of the transatlantic link, improvement of capabilities, and inclusiveness of all Allies.<sup>47</sup>

Despite overall support, there are some major underlying tensions about European power and influence, which lead to American ambivalence, and ambiguous expressions about ESDP. Some Americans have a genuine fear that the US role in Europe's security affairs might shrink as European integration and self-confidence grow. Most Americans would react with unease to the possibility of Europeans encroaching on the US leadership position within NATO.<sup>48</sup> But the US Administration is also concerned that ESDP will play into the hands of US isolationists in Congress and elsewhere. Since the end of the Cold War, there are a number of American politicians who question why the US has remained committed to NATO and do not understand

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<sup>45</sup> In an address to the Slovak Foreign Policy Association Under Secretary for Political Affairs Thomas Pickering stated that ESDP will mean little without improved capabilities.

<sup>46</sup> This is illustrated by Deputy Secretary Strobe Talbott addressing the North Atlantic Council shortly after the Helsinki Summit. "We are not against [a stronger Europe], we are not ambivalent, we are not anxious, we are for it".

<sup>47</sup> The formulation "the three Is" was introduced by the NATO secretary-general Lord Robertson.

<sup>48</sup> Gompert, *America as a Partner, America and Europe*, Cambridge University Press, RAND 1997 p 150

why the US should continue to pick up the bill for Europe's security when the main threat has gone. If the perception is that Europe now suddenly thinks it can go it alone, then it is a good excuse to 'bring the boys home'. These people are highly supportive of European efforts, albeit for the wrong reasons.///

Yet, the fact is that the development of ESDP is likely to make it easier in the long term to maintain US domestic support for NATO. It makes sense that a Europe that contains some of the wealthiest nations on earth should assume a greater role in security and defence. However, to arrive at this conclusion, it is important to look at the opportunities and risks in more detail.

### ***1. A Direct Link between the EU and NATO***

There is some concern that the Europeans are busy building new structures with minimal American influence and participation. What will the new EU structures mean for transatlantic co-operation and NATO?

A strengthened ESDP will reinforce NATO: there are no plans to duplicate the huge investment that the allies have made in NATO infrastructure, nor does it call for the creation of a supranational European army. Decisions will be taken by governments, and the forces involved will remain national.<sup>49</sup> This means that full consultation, co-operation and transparency between the EU and NATO will have to be developed, taking into account the EU's and NATO's respective decision-making autonomy.<sup>50</sup> The aim is to have developed agreed principles for NATO-EU links and relations by the EU summit in Portugal in June 2000. The right NATO-EU

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<sup>49</sup> Lord Hurd, Foreign Secretary 1989-95, *Not a Time to Rest on Defence*, FT February 18, 2000

<sup>50</sup> Speech by Dr. Javier Solana, *The Development of a Common European Security and Defence Policy — The Integration Project of the Next Decade*, Berlin, 17 December 1999

links will ensure that neither NATO nor the EU will take organisational decisions about future military operations in isolation.<sup>51</sup> A key issue is to find the right mechanisms to ensure that there will be no confusion between the EU Council and NAC about the political control over a future EU-led operation with recourse to NATO assets and capabilities.

Even so, there is US concern that the different EU and NATO organisational and bureaucratic cultures will be an obstacle to developing links. The Americans are worried about the EU's slow and bureaucratic process, but also identify obstacles. So far, the High Representative for CFSP Javier Solana and NATO secretary-general Lord Robertson have only managed to hold carefully staged breakfast meetings, due to the reluctance of certain EU states to move ahead before the agreed principles on EU-NATO links have been decided upon.

In the future, the Americans hope to see the NATO secretary-general invited to relevant council meetings with EU foreign and defence ministers where issues related to crisis management are being discussed. This would be in line with current procedures within WEU. In addition the High Representative should be given a stronger mandate to act on ESDP on behalf of member states. An important step in this direction would be to have the High Representative chair Council meetings that bring together EU foreign and defence ministers.

## ***2. From Theory to Practice***

The Americans feel that the greatest single obstacle to the development of a common European security and defence policy is the Europeans themselves: Will the Europeans be able to curtail their national interests for the sake of EU solidarity? The Americans are not so sure.

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<sup>51</sup> Marc Grossman, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, Hearing of the European Affairs

The Americans have legitimate concerns that ESDP will have the same features as the EU's common foreign and security policy (CFSP), which is often associated with good intentions but few actual outcomes. The perceived lack of progress in CFSP is blamed on a policy vacuum caused by complex arrangements and the differing national interests of the EU member states. When the Europeans embark on a common European security and defence policy (ESDP), some Americans worry that it will be more of the same and that the bureaucratic constraints within the EU, as well as conflicting national interests, will prevent the organisation from achieving any concrete results in the area of security and defence. There would still be lack of European unity and coherence, which would cause delay and slowness in the EU decision-making process. Moreover, the Commission could prove to be an ineffective vehicle to support the new ideas and approaches that ESDP is likely to bring. In other words the Europeans might still be unable to act in a crisis situation in their backyard. But there are also those who fear that the Europeans are getting into something that they cannot handle. Experience shows that non-Article 5 missions can be just as demanding or even more challenging than Article 5 ones and it cannot be ruled out that the escalation of a future crisis could result in a situation where NATO's security guarantees enter into effect.<sup>52</sup> Both scenarios could lead to the US having to bail the Europeans out.<sup>53</sup>

At the same time, there is the unspoken American fear that ESDP might work all too well in the future and that the Europeans might then feel less dependent on the US. The fact that a number of important decisions on ESDP have been taken in the last year illustrates the

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Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 9 March 2000, Subject: NATO and the European Defence Program

<sup>52</sup> Deputy Secretary Strobe Talbott, Address at the North Atlantic Council, Brussels, Belgium, 15 December 1999

<sup>53</sup> Senator Jesse Helms has gone as far as saying that 'the EU could not fight its way out of a wet paper bag'.

seriousness of the Europeans. The headline goal to set up a 60,000-person rapid reaction force is a case in point. It would be pointless and possibly even harmful for EU leaders to commit themselves to a development that would never materialise. They would be accused of not having tried hard enough or for not having anticipated the complexities involved. In fact, there is now little incentive to discontinue even if changes occurred in the course of an action that deprived ESDP of its advantages; for example, in the unlikely event that the process ultimately undermined the role of NATO.

It is also important to acknowledge that political individuals matter in this process. When influential leaders like Blair, the EU's High Representative Javier Solana, and Commissioner for External Relations Chris Patten commit themselves to a political action, people expect it to be carried out. This is particularly the case when the sunk costs involved to create capacities quickly accumulate. But, the important role of political individuals also means that if any one of them were to leave office, it could have serious impact on the process. This illustrates the need to ensure that decisions are guided by an over-all purpose and provide the Europeans with a clear prescription for action.

### ***3. Will ESDP Bring Increased Military Capabilities?***

There is also the risk that American support for the strengthening of ESDP will wane if the Europeans indulge in rhetoric without resourcing. After all, how will ESDP manage to put pressure on European governments to increase their military capabilities, when NATO has so far failed? The Europeans, on the other hand, point to the European Monetary Union (EMU) as an example of what can be achieved if there is common commitment among member states.

To the Americans it is important the ESDP headline goal<sup>54</sup> will be complementary and not in competition to NATO's Defence Capabilities Initiative (DCI), which was launched at the NATO Summit in 1999. The objective of DCI is to improve defence capabilities to ensure the effectiveness of future multinational operations, with a special focus on improving interoperability among alliance forces.<sup>55</sup> Experiences from Kosovo and Bosnia show that even small deficiencies in mobility, communications, and sustainment can seriously hamper mission success. The Europeans are now busy addressing these shortcomings by auditing military assets and capabilities. The real issue is to ensure that ESDP does bring improved military capabilities. This will demand political will on behalf of European governments.

The US spent 3.2 percent of its gross domestic product on the military in 1999. Germany, with one of the largest armies in Europe, spent only 1.5 percent, while France and Britain spent 2.8 and 2.7 percent respectively.<sup>56</sup> It should be pointed out that these figures do not measure military spending against valid requirements, or show the amount of deployable capabilities.<sup>57</sup> However, they do indicate that at these levels of defence spending these European countries are not likely to catch up soon to the US in C4ISR (command, control, communication, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) as well as combat aircraft, precision-guided munitions, airlift, deployability, and logistics and other assets they lacked in Kosovo.

Nevertheless, several European countries are working hard to restructure and modernise their forces, and several have scrapped or are moving away from conscription. Still, the US will

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<sup>54</sup> 60,000 person force capable of the full range of Petersberg tasks.

<sup>55</sup> Defence Capabilities Initiative, Press Release NAC-S(99)69

<sup>56</sup> Bailes, *European defence: What are the 'Convergence Criteria'?*, RUSI Journal: London June 1999

<sup>57</sup> In the article 'European Defence: What are the 'Convergence Criteria'?' by Alison Bailes published in the RUSI Journal it is stated that the UK spends 27.9 of its budget on materiel compared to Belgium with 5.4. In general

not consider European security and defence ambitions complete until Germany has fully engaged in modernising its forces. This is why the current downward trend in German defence spending causes American concern. However, Germany took a step in the right direction in May 2000 when the government adopted a strategy to increase the number of professional soldiers at the same time as the total numbers in the armed forces were cut.<sup>58</sup> These changes deserve recognition, as does the German role in the Kosovo war. After all this was the first time there was participation of German troops in a combat mission since the Second World War. But even more importantly the cost of German unification has been a huge burden on the German economy and needs to be taken into account.

At the same time as the Americans maintain the view that a real step-up in defence capabilities can only come as European governments make expensive commitments to new equipment EU budgets are more squeezed than ever, largely because of the restraining effects of the European Monetary Union.<sup>59</sup> Therefore, it should come as no surprise that defence expenditures are likely to face even greater downward pressure in the near future.<sup>60</sup> In view of this, it might be logical in the long term for the European nations to specialise — some of their armed forces might focus on command and control and air transport, while others might focus on naval forces.<sup>61</sup> For now, however this is probably too great a political challenge for Europe to

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Europeans tend to spend large proportions of their defence budgets on personnel-related costs (Spain 69 per cent and Italy 72.9).

<sup>58</sup> Atkins, *Germany to Cut Size of Armed Forces*, FT 24 May 2000. This reduction would leave the armed forces with roughly 280,000 soldiers of which 80,000 would be conscripts. The announcement about down-sizing coincided with the publication of a report by a special commission headed by Richard von Weizsäcker, warning that the Bundeswehr had become "too big, badly comprise and increasingly out of step with times".

<sup>59</sup> Alexander Nicoll, *Europe's Defence Dilemma*, FT 19 October 1999

<sup>60</sup> *The European threat to Nato's future*, John Bolton, senior vice president of the American Enterprise Institute, FT 11 February 2000

<sup>61</sup> David Buchan, *Forward March for Europe*, FT 25 November 1999

consider, since it could imply the creation of a common European defence. The idea of introducing 'convergence criteria'<sup>62</sup> on defence to measure readiness and capacity has so far been rejected, and the nature of ESDP is likely to remain inter-governmental for the foreseeable future. Any encroachment upon a country's defence policy by outside agencies is still considered a serious infringement of sovereignty.

Nevertheless, ESDP is likely to put greater pressure on the Europeans to spend money more effectively in building a more flexible, more mobile, and more rapid military capacity to respond to crises. Improving the quality of existing spending and finding creative solutions will accomplish a good deal. One example is large military aircraft to transport troops. The Europeans have established arrangements with Ukraine to facilitate the provision of long-haul air transport assets in support of crisis management operations, making it possible for the British to turn to Ukraine to secure air-lift transport for some of its troops to Kosovo. This form of practical co-operation serves both British and Ukrainian interests.

Finally, it needs to be acknowledged that defence spending as a percentage of GDP does not reveal the whole spectrum of European capabilities to respond to security. For example, it does not show that the Europeans allocate a majority of the funds for humanitarian and reconstruction efforts in Kosovo and Bosnia. It is clear to the Europeans that no matter how effective KFOR is there will be no lasting peace in Kosovo and Bosnia unless the international community deals with the root causes of the conflict and focuses on rebuilding the civil society. The Europeans are therefore eager to find ways to integrate further civilian and military efforts

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<sup>62</sup> The idea stems from convergence criteria established for membership in the European Monetary Union (EMU).

to achieve a more comprehensive approach to security in the region, and this requires significant funds.

#### ***4. Unnecessary Duplication Is Not Desirable***

The Americans are concerned that the Europeans will focus on building new structures that duplicate the tremendous investment that allies have made in NATO infrastructure. The biggest concern in this respect is that the Europeans would replicate NATO's force planning as this could lead to different priorities, which in turn could result in different force goals.

That there will be some duplication of NATO's resources and capabilities is inevitable, but both the Helsinki and Cologne decisions clearly state that there will be no *unnecessary* duplication. However, the definition of what is considered necessary duplication is not altogether clear. Nevertheless, even if there is a theoretical possibility that the European could develop separate capabilities that would enable them to act without drawing on US assets, this seems highly unlikely. In a world of tight defence budgets, the Europeans simply cannot afford unnecessary duplication and do not want it. Instead, ESDP is about turning the EU into an intelligent customer of NATO. When NATO itself is not engaged, but the EU launches a military operation, it should have recourse to NATO assets and capabilities. This requires that US-European interests are sufficiently harmonious to trust that American assets would be available for such operations.<sup>63</sup>

#### ***5. How to Involve the Different Membership Categories of the EU and NATO***

The Americans want assurances that the non-EU European NATO members (i.e. Czech Republic, Hungary, Iceland, Norway, Poland and Turkey) as well as Canada, and US are given special status in the ESDP process. The main reasons are these countries' Article 5 commitment and their readiness to contribute NATO and national assets to EU-led operations in the event a conflict should escalate, and finally as a way of fulfilling their own contribution to European security.<sup>64</sup> In particular, the Americans are sensitive to any European moves that could be perceived to marginalise their strategic ally Turkey.

At the Helsinki Summit, EU leaders decided that there would be appropriate arrangements to allow non-EU European NATO members and other interested states to contribute to EU military crisis management. This will be done while at the same time the EU's decision-making autonomy is respected. In other words, the countries concerned will have a voice, but no vote. This issue also concerns EU members that are not members of NATO — i.e., Austria, Finland, Ireland and Sweden. Modalities will be developed for full consultation, co-operation and transparency between the EU and NATO, taking into account the needs of all EU member states. Both Finland and Sweden can be expected to be large contributors in crisis management, as these two countries were the driving force behind introducing the concept of Petersberg missions as EU Treaty tasks.

## ***6. Impacts on Transatlantic Defence Co-operation***

The Americans and Europeans are both eager to ensure that the NATO and EU defence market rests on a transatlantic basis, thus requiring better co-ordination between defence

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<sup>63</sup> Rees, *The Western European Union at the Crossroads*, Westview Press 1998 p. 87

<sup>64</sup> Deputy Secretary Strobe Talbott, Address at the North Atlantic Council, Brussels, Belgium, 15 December 1999

industries on both sides of the Atlantic. Today, defence trade across the Atlantic is largely in the direction of US production being purchased in Europe, but things might be changing. For example, in the past year the British government decided to support two large European projects — the Meteor missile and the A400M transport aircraft — and left the US with small orders for equipment that will eventually be replaced by European products.<sup>65</sup> Opportunities for European defence companies in the US market are still small, as the Americans have shown limited willingness to purchase weapons systems from European allies, even when a competitive European product is available at a lower cost.<sup>66</sup>

Furthermore, the slow pace at which the US State Department licences transfers of technology has hampered cross-border mergers and joint ventures between US and European defence industry.<sup>67</sup> There has also been a US tendency to treat its allies as "junior members of the firm" by showing continued reluctance to transfer *advanced* technology to them. A step forward was taken through the Defence Trade Initiative, which was unveiled at a meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Florence in May 2000. The initiative aims at "*the increasing difficulty of protecting US technology without hurting the competitiveness of US industry.*"<sup>68</sup> The US is realising that if the Europeans are denied advanced technology in areas where there are alternatives; US industry will lose out in the long term. But the Americans also find that it will be increasingly hard to close the widening technology gap and to improve interoperability between the US and Europe unless the Europeans have access to more sophisticated weaponry

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<sup>65</sup> Nicoll, *Fight for \$7.5 bn Defence Orders 'Was not a Transatlantic Battle'*, FT 17 May 2000

<sup>66</sup> Testimony of Ambassador Robert Hunter before the House Committee on International Relations, 10 November 1999

<sup>67</sup> Testimony of Ambassador Robert Hunter before the House Committee on International Relations, 10 November 1999

<sup>68</sup> Buchan, Fidler, *US in Move to Ease Access for Defence Trade*, FT, 25 May 2000

and communications systems. This shows the importance of the Defence Trade Security Initiative in supporting the goals of DCI.

### ***7. Wild Cards that Might Affect the Development of ESDP***

Today, one of the biggest clouds in the US and European security partnership is the US plan to build a National Missile Defence (NMD). The US has not been able to convince the Europeans that they too face a real threat if North Korea, Iran, and Iraq continue to develop or acquire intercontinental nuclear missiles. The Europeans simply do not agree with the American assessment of the seriousness of the threat from these states.

The debate in Europe is currently focusing on the role of the US: A US convinced of its invulnerability to nuclear attack might also delude itself that one day it could decouple its strategic interests from those of the Alliance, especially as at this stage it would only protect the US and not Europe.<sup>69</sup> The main European concern is that the US could be pursuing a path that will eventually lead to a crisis with both Russia and China, which in turn could lead in turn to a renewed arms race.

The Administration sees NMD as a way of enhancing the security of both the US and its allies and wants to move forward together with the Alliance on this issue. The reality is that NMD will require active participation from at least three allies — Canada, Denmark and Britain — who are likely to demand that they be included in the shield as a condition for participation. Some Europeans fear that this will create different security zones within the Alliance. If NMD continues to be an issue of tension between Europe and the US, there is a risk that this could

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<sup>69</sup> Stephens, *Raising the Flag for Europe's Army*, FT December 10, 1999

have repercussions on the implementation of ESDP. The Europeans — in particular the French — might become less eager to accommodate American viewpoints.

But there is also increased irritation on both sides of the Atlantic when it comes to trade disputes. In the last year there have been statements from the American side about the risks of trade conflicts spilling over into the area of security. But even if this can be dismissed as rhetoric, it does contribute to increased tension between the US and Europe. The US and the European Union have repeatedly clashed in recent years over products such as bananas, hormone treated beef, and aircraft. The American perception is that France has been taking the lead on several of these contentious trade issues. The reality is that foreign policy has to take domestic considerations into account, and politicians spend a lot of time appeasing their constituencies. The way forward is to find means to expand transatlantic trade and investment without allowing trade disputes to dominate the transatlantic partnership.

#### ***8. American Views on the EU***

Finally, while European integration proceeds, the European perception is that the US seems to be suffering from dwindling information and expertise on the EU. Complex institutions such as the EU are not very interesting to many Americans. Furthermore, as Americans do not necessarily perceive themselves as direct stakeholders in the EU, they have fewer incentives to learn about the organisation's intricacies. This partly explains why many Americans have a hard time thinking creatively about the EU as an organisation, especially in the area of foreign and security policy.

In the academic world the situation is a bit different. Although there are a limited number of American scholars who claim to be EU-experts, there is a clear trend toward an increased interest in the study of European integration.<sup>70</sup> At the same time as there has been a large scaling back of US foundation resources devoted to the study of Europe, the European Union has become an increasingly important source of funding for US study about Europe.

In the political world the EU generally still attracts limited interest. Few American congressmen travel frequently to Europe; in fact many make a point out of not travelling outside the US at all.<sup>71</sup> Majority Leader Richard Armey (R-Tex.) proudly declared that he has no need to visit Europe because he has ‘already been there once.’<sup>72</sup> This only illustrates the need to increase contacts between US and European politicians. Such encounters would be mutually beneficial, because just as American politicians need to learn more about the EU, Europeans need to learn more about the role of the US Congress. This will ensure that information will be exchanged in a way that both can relate to and comprehend. By talking things out explicitly it will also be possible to correct misperceptions as well as misinterpretations that both sides might be making of each other.

A different problem is that the EU is plagued by a pressing public relations problem. Despite being an important player in world affairs, both in political and economic terms, the EU does little to promote its image outside Europe. A step in the right direction has been taken through the appointment of Javier Solana as the EU’s new High Representative for CFSP, who will promote a more active EU foreign policy. But that is not enough. The EU needs to work

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<sup>70</sup> Makins, *The Study of Europe in the United States*, A 1998 report to the German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Delegation of the European Commission to the United States.

<sup>71</sup> Two-thirds of the Republicans elected to Congress in 1994 allegedly did not even have passports.

harder on marketing its policies on CFSP and ESDP in the US. No European idea is ever so good that it doesn't have to be sold to the major US actors that influence policy toward Europe (e.g. the Administration and Congress). But there are also ample opportunities for Europeans to influence the shape of Executive-Congressional interaction on foreign policy.<sup>73</sup> While this includes targeting key US senators, there are also other important forces that need to be taken into account, such as public opinion, media, think tanks, and interest groups. A complicating factor is that Americans generally obtain most of their information about CFSP and ESDP bilaterally through major European powers such as Britain, France and Germany. Not surprisingly, the US is often given different interpretations by EU member states of EU decisions. This in turn leads to continuous reinterpretations that are given different meanings. This causes unnecessary uncertainty and increases the risks of misperceptions.

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<sup>72</sup> Walt, *Two Cheers for Clinton's Foreign Policy*, *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2000

<sup>73</sup> Zoellick, *Congress and the Making of US Foreign Policy*, *Survival* Winter 1999-2000

## **CONCLUSION**

### **WANTED: A TRANSFORMED BUT LASTING TRANSATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP**

Europeans should be concerned that if they do not contribute more to transatlantic security in the future they risk America's increasing detachment from European security. This is why developing a common European security and defence policy is so important. When the various adverse and favourable factors on ESDP are weighed against each other the favourable factors outweigh the adverse. As long as ESDP brings more resources and capabilities within a transatlantic framework, and not solely under a European flag, American Administrations will most likely be supportive.

An effective security and defence policy could enable the EU to approach European crises in a wholly new light. There will be greater confidence to act. The Europeans will be prepared to take responsibility as well as military action when the US cannot or does not wish to become directly involved in a particular crisis. This development is in the interest of both Europe and the US, but the latter should not see this as a signal to lessen its engagement in Europe. It would be dangerous if US expectations on European crisis management were set too high, and Americans and Europeans abandoned current capabilities to rely on new and untested European ones.<sup>74</sup> This would offer a false sense of security.

It is also important to recognise that in the short term a stronger European security and defence policy is not likely to equal greater military co-operation with the Americans to meet challenges outside Europe. The Americans must avoid wishful thinking in this respect. It is

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<sup>74</sup> Gompert and Larrabee (editors), *America and Europe*, Foreword by Robert B. Zoellick, Cambridge University Press, RAND 1997, p ix

unlikely that the EU countries as a group would venture ‘*out-of-Europe*’ to perform any serious military operation in the near future.

### ***1. Tensions that ESDP Is Likely to Bring***

The Europeans often find mixed American responses to European security and defence reforms: European defence ambitions are either not taken seriously enough, or are taken too seriously. But Europe’s uncertainty over Washington’s attitude toward European security and defence is not new. It is a phenomena that has occurred whenever the Europeans have been perceived by the Americans as taking steps on security issues that could affect major US interests. The fact is that a more balanced transatlantic partnership is likely to demand significant adjustment by the Americans as they have grown accustomed to an unchallenged leadership role. Indeed, the development of the American-European defence relationship could be a source of tension in the future, not least since there continues to be a tendency in the US to see a choice between defence structures dominated by NATO and those around the EU.<sup>75</sup>

The fact is that NATO remains one of the few multilateral organisations that Americans regard positively: there is clear American leadership, and the organisation is perceived as results-oriented. However, if the Europeans claim more power and influence and NATO as a result becomes less effective in the eyes of the Americans, there is a risk that the US would lose interest in the organisation. The same would apply if NATO were to focus solely on low intensity missions. Without collective defence, the American engagement would most likely disappear; without the US, the integrated military structures — in which allied forces plan for

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<sup>75</sup> Gompert, Larrabee, *America and Europe*, RAND 1997

operations under a single command — are likely to disappear; and without integrated military structures, NATO would lose the capacity to respond rapidly to a crisis.

However, for all the vague threats of American disengagement, the US is not likely to walk away from its role in European security solely because of sudden perceived European ingratitude. There is simply too much at stake. US strategic interests are far too great to adopt a strategy that moves Europe to the periphery; disengagement from Europe would limit the US capability to shape the European security environment in ways favourable to US interests and would also jeopardise the transatlantic partnership by destroying trust between them and their allies. In essence, the threat of sudden disengagement is so obviously painful to the transatlantic partnership that the Europeans do not really take it seriously. However, the US could under certain circumstances choose to carry out small reductions, and the cumulative effect of such steps could cause alarm among Europeans. Even if the US were to take actions that are only preparatory to the main act of disengagement, these too would constitute an effective threat. An early withdrawal of American troops from Kosovo, for example, would constitute such an act.

## ***2. Competing Political Visions of ESDP***

It is important to recognise that there is more than one way to see the world. This must be taken into account when Europeans interpret American perceptions of European security and defence reforms. The possibilities for the Europeans to put forward their image of ESDP to the Americans is contingent upon how European behaviour can influence pre-existing images of European crisis management. So far, the Europeans have had limited success in preventing new information from being interpreted in the old framework. Many Americans still doubt that the

Europeans will be able to show unity of resolve and effective capacity to deal with a future crisis. They see a risk that the Europeans are getting all dressed up with no place to go.

In addition, the urgency of finding solutions in the area of a common European security and defence has perhaps obscured the enormous complexity of the technical, financial and political problems involved. It is important not to underestimate their scope and magnitude, particularly in light of the natural tendency of governments to become emotionally attached to such goals. There will be political and technical problems arising at every stage of the implementation process, because of competing visions of ESDP. In addition, subgoals are likely to develop along the way, which could take on lives of their own, thus endangering their ability to contribute to the higher end.

### ***3. Success Criteria***

How will we be able to measure the success of a Common European Security and Defence Policy? Is ESDP going to be an organic change with no end in sight? Success criteria can be established, but in the end it will all be about different countries' interpretations. However, there are three factors that are crucial to whether European security and defence reforms will be *perceived* as a success by both the US and Europe. The first is to ensure that the transatlantic security and defence relationship remains strong. It is important for the Europeans to secure a common understanding through increased dialogue with both the US Administration and Congress. If the Europeans are not co-ordinated in their communications with the Americans, both the Administration and Congress can misjudge European actions. This in turn can lead to increased misunderstandings and increased American ambivalence or even lack of support for ESDP. A strategy for uncertainty reduction will therefore provide a better basis for action. This

can be achieved through clear political objectives, as well as greater co-ordination and transparency in decision-making and implementation on behalf of both the EU and NATO.

Secondly, there has to be political leadership to see the process through. Political leadership includes tough decisions in EU countries on how to spend money more effectively to increase capabilities. It is important to avoid a gap between rhetoric and resources as well as intentions and policy outcomes. It is also important to ensure that the process of implementation will occur in the way decision-makers have intended. A policy is only as good as its implementation.

Finally, it would be unfortunate if more complex structures are developed within the EU, without increasing European military capabilities. It does not help to have elegant flow-charts in the middle of a crisis if there is no unity of resolve or rapid access to necessary resources and capabilities. Moreover, it is crucial to address the imbalance between the tools at the disposal of the EC and those of CFSP. Past experiences show that delays and slowness have tended to characterise the decision-making process in the Commission. Based on these experiences the Commission will have to draw up firm plans on how to secure the quick release of funds to enable urgent action. Unfortunately, sometimes governments take the most important questions for granted. By careful analysis and reality checks the EU member states will hopefully avoid making the wrong mistakes.

The US relationship to European security and defence reforms is likely to remain highly fluid, as ESDP will not offer one set of robust outcomes. The differences between US and European perceptions of ESDP suggest that it would be misleading to believe that the policy can result in a straightforward win-win situation. Instead, we are faced with a mixture of mutual

dependence and tension, as well as partnership and competition.<sup>76</sup> The development of ESDP involves a complex transatlantic bargaining game, in which there will be tensions between efforts to create value and claim influence. This is why the tasks that lie ahead require responsibility on both sides of the Atlantic. The aim should be to ensure that ESDP brings enough benefits to the transatlantic partnership that both the Europeans and Americans will be satisfied with the outcomes.

In summary, the question comes down to whether the Americans and Europeans will make the kind of adjustments that are necessary in achieving a lasting transatlantic partnership on security and defence. More specifically, this requires the ability to balance transatlantic tensions, obtain a unified vision of ESDP, and develop a common metric to measure success. This would maximise the chances of success and make it possible for both sides to declare victory.

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<sup>76</sup> Schelling refers to this mixed game as either a bargaining game or a mixed-motive game, *The Strategy of Conflict*, Harvard University, 1997