

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**IS EUROPEAN DEFENSE A BRIDGE TOO FAR?**

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## ABSTRACT

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During the last several decades the European Union has not paid much attention to defense, to such an extent that it sometimes has been referred to as an "economic giant, but a defense dwarf." Bosnia, and later Kosovo, made obvious European defense shortcomings. Then, after the Cologne European Council of June 1999, the European Union launched the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) to complement its economic and political power with military power. Since then, European defense policy has developed considerably and the military capabilities of the European Union have been strengthened with initiatives such as the battlegroup concept and the development of an operational military staff. The recent rejections of the EU Constitution and the feeble commitment of member states to military capability, however, cast doubt on the future of common European defense. The goal of this paper is to review the ESDP initiative with a focus on its military development, utility, and international credibility. Is European Defense a bridge too far?



## IS EUROPEAN DEFENSE A BRIDGE TOO FAR?

The formation of a European defense identity started with the beginning of European reconstruction after the end of the Second World War. However, the failure of the European Defense Community (EDC) in 1954 left European defense in the hands of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for fifty years. During these years, defense issues were a peripheral concern for advocates of European integration and for many Europeans themselves. When the Cold War ended, European countries tried to enjoy the new strategic environment; economic integration had priority but a common European defense was at odds with the reduced budgets and peace dividends demanded by public opinion. The Balkan tragedy of the 1990s was a serious awakening for Europe, Kosovo in particular, and led to a serious rethinking of European defense alternatives. The Saint Malo agreement in 1998 and the Cologne and Helsinki European Councils that followed in 1999 opened the way for the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP).

On 11 September 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States introduced a new defense parameter. Despite the commitment of EU leaders to cooperate with the United States, the US government declined most European offers of help in its immediate response to the attacks, with NATO support considered more a nuisance than a help by US military leaders. NATO later took over a secondary role in Afghanistan, primarily to free US assets needed in Iraq. NATO seems to be considered by the United States as a pool of countries and forces for its “coalitions of the willing.” The intervention in Iraq was also severely criticized by most traditional US European allies, further weakened the transatlantic link. To make matters worse, a bitter dispute erupted when France proposed to create an EU military staff at Tervuren, near Brussels. British diplomacy brokered an agreement to bypass the dispute but the political compromise did not address the real problem: the future of the European common defense.

The process of building a European defense identity has encompassed important initiatives, such as the Helsinki Headline Goals 2003/2010, the battlegroup concept, the operational civil/military cell, the European Defense Agency, and the published *European Security Strategy*. The European Union has also carried out several military operations. However, this progress has given way to major disagreements among the European countries and between them and the United States concerning a potential duplication of efforts and diversion of resources from NATO. It remains to be seen at the end of the ongoing process whether the EU will have a real common defense and what its relationship to NATO will be.

Most people consider the Saint Malo summit as the moment when the United Kingdom “crossed the Rubicon” and committed itself to the construction of a European common defense.

It is an important milestone but, in the long term, the 9/11 terrorist attacks may be much more important. Traditional states lost some of their preeminent role in the international arena with the new involvement of the violent non-state actors. The attacks of 11 September 2001 revealed a worldwide threat that has transformed the strategic environment. The threat of the use of force is not enough to counter the new global threat: transnational terrorism. With this in mind, it is appropriate to analyze European defense initiatives in two parts, before and after 9/11.

#### Before 9/11

The European countries have not paid much attention to the issue of autonomous defense in the last five decades. They did not have to. Since the signing of the Treaty of Washington in 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has successfully dealt with European defense. Thus, NATO's success throughout the Cold War inhibited European efforts to develop a separate defense entity. Consequently, a common European defense has not evolved in parallel with other EU initiatives such as the single market and common currency.

However, the idea of common defense has been around since the very beginning of European construction.<sup>1</sup> The Treaty of Dunkirk, signed in 1947 by Great Britain and France, was the first milestone in this process. These two countries feared that Germany, if rearmed, could pose a threat to them again. One year later, because of the increasing Soviet threat, Great Britain and France proposed to the Benelux countries- Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands- the creation of a mutual defense pact, no longer against Germany but against all aggression. This was the origin of the Treaty of Brussels, signed on 17 March 1948. The Treaty is considered the foundation of common European defense because it established a framework composed of a defense committee, a committee of heads of military general staff, and an armaments committee. It included a clause that established automatic assistance to any signatory state that might be attacked.

The Treaty of Washington founding NATO was signed in April 1949. It could be said that it was inspired by the Treaty of Brussels, but the participation of the United States left autonomous common European defense practically devoid of content. In 1954, the Brussels Treaty was modified by a series of protocols signed in Paris that established the Western European Union (WEU), now including Germany and Italy. The Paris agreements' main goal was to allow Germany to rearm because of the Soviet threat and to integrate it into the Western defense system.

The WEU was a result of the failed European Defense Community (EDC). Also known as the Pleven Plan,<sup>2</sup> for the French minister who proposed the idea in 1949, the EDC called for the creation of a common European army linked to European political institutions, directed by a European defense minister, and reporting to a European political body; it provided for a common defense budget and maximum integration of the military contingents provided by European member states. The EDC negotiations followed approval of the European Coal and Steel Community Treaty, a very successful example of European integration. As with the contemporary ESDP, the EDC's organizational relationship with NATO was initially vague. As the negotiations proceeded, it became clear that the EDC would not be a vehicle for the rise of a genuine third world power as many European leaders (particularly in France) had hoped at the time. In 1952 during a NATO Conference in Lisbon, it was decided that the EDC would coordinate with but operate separately from NATO. To advocates of a common European defense, this made the EDC nothing more than a European satellite of NATO. This discrepancy mirrors exactly the different contemporary conceptions European countries have concerning ESDP.

Despite misgivings about the plan's effect on NATO, the US Truman administration reluctantly supported EDC. Later on, the Eisenhower administration considered the EDC a mechanism to increase European defense expenditures. However, the question of German rearmament and the French realization that the NATO commander would have veto power over the deployment of French troops led to a rejection of the EDC by its own creator. Despite ratification by all other signatory countries, the French National Assembly voted against the plan in August 1954.

The transatlantic link thus became the key factor in European defense. The early failure of the EDC explains why common European defense initiatives were relegated to a secondary role. The main priority for the construction of Europe became economics and the idea of a common foreign and security policy did not appear as the "second pillar" until the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. The treaty's fifth section on Foreign Common and Security Policy states that its primary objective- article J.1- will be "to safeguard the common values, fundamental interests and the independence of the Union." The Treaty also mentions in its article J.4: "the common foreign affairs and security policy shall include all questions related to the security of the Union, including the eventual framing of a common defence policy, which might in time lead to common defence." For the first time an official document records that defense is a concern of the European Union. However, no plan was articulated on how it would be implemented. In the same article, the EU requested the WEU "to elaborate and implement decisions and actions of

the Union which have defence implications.” It is also mentioned that this initiative “shall respect the obligations of certain Member States under the North Atlantic Treaty, and be compatible with the common security and defence policy established within that framework.”

In June 1992, WEU ministers agreed at the Petersberg Conference on the scope of the crisis management tasks the WEU should be able to assume. These included humanitarian and rescue missions, peacekeeping and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking (known as the “Petersberg missions”).<sup>3</sup>

The Treaty of Amsterdam, which came into force in May 1999, mentions explicitly the defense issue. It introduced the term- article J.7: “progressive framing of a common defence policy..., which might lead to a common defence,” instead of the vaguer “eventual framing...” that appeared in the Maastricht treaty. Again there was a reference to “respect the obligations of certain member states, which see their common defense realized in NATO.” There were two more key references: one concerning the cooperation in the field of armaments and the other mentioning the so-called “Petersberg missions.”<sup>4</sup>

At Saint Malo in 1998, the European reluctance to take on common defense changed dramatically. France and the United Kingdom made public their agreement to build-up military capabilities and to make possible a progressive common defense policy within the European Union. This change of heart in London is a landmark in the construction of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP).

Saint Malo was followed by NATO’s operations in Kosovo, beginning in March 1999. The United States dominated operations against Serbian forces because Europe was incapable of dealing with the crisis. The conflict was an expression of Europe’s military weakness and revealed a large capability gap between United States and its European allies. The three major European deficit areas identified were strategic airlift, command and control, and precision guided munitions. The European military insufficiency during the Kosovo crisis was a wake-up call for seriously beginning the construction of the common European defense. This process posed a double challenge. First, to reach a sufficient level of military capabilities to carry out the Petersberg missions; and second, to have the decision-making bodies, separate from those of the Atlantic Alliance, to make military operations possible.

The development of the common European defense had started. But it was not until the European Council meeting held in Cologne in June 1999 that the European Union as such took the first real steps in the area of common defense. The meeting laid out the institutional framework to carry out the Petersberg missions: a Policy and Security Committee (PSC), a Military Committee including the European Chiefs of Staff, and a Military Staff. It also

established that the Ministers of Defense could join the Council for General Affairs (i.e., the Council at the European Union) whenever necessary-attended until that moment only by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs. In December 1999 during the Helsinki summit, the issue of common defense was finally addressed thoroughly. Based on the decisions taken in Cologne, an agreement was reached to create a European Rapid Reaction Force. This was envisaged as a robust, deployable, and capable force able to execute the entire range of Petersberg missions.

Three factors among others favored the new impulse to European defense: the Kosovo crisis, the partial success of the single European currency, and the European fervor of UK Prime Minister Tony Blair. It is necessary to keep in mind, however, that behind this new European spirit the Europeans had different goals: the French would like to reduce US hegemony and to have autonomy to decide and carry out operations without NATO, whereas the British would like to keep the United States involved in Europe while giving preeminence to NATO, acting as Europe only when NATO decided not to get involved, and avoiding duplication of effort.

What was the reaction from Washington? The United States historically complained that the defense burden was not shared equally with the Europeans. The figures were clear. Overall, the EU states spent approximately two-thirds on defense as the US defense budget. Europe also spends less and less effectively; its defense budgets focus too much on personnel and not enough on technology and procurement. The European armies have two million military personnel whereas the United States has only one and a half million. Furthermore, of all European military personnel, only a tiny part, around 2%, can actually be deployed.<sup>5</sup> Kosovo reflected the European insufficiencies. Ironically, when the Europeans decided to increase their common defense, the reaction from US administrations was distrust. This was because of fears of weakening NATO.

The Atlantic alliance posture has historically been that any European defense effort would be within the organization. Thus, the concept of the "European Security and Defense Identity" (ESDI) was introduced at NATO's Rome summit in 1991, later expanded at the Berlin summit in 1996, and finally blessed at the Washington summit in 1999. It stated that the Europeans could have access to Alliance assets in case the United States did not wish to participate in a particular operation. It was a step forward, but left the decision to use NATO assets pending a North Atlantic Council (NAC) decision where every NATO country had a potential veto. The so-called "Berlin plus" agreement ensured the planning capabilities of the Alliance as well as essential strategic assets were earmarked for potential EU-led operations. In addition, a complex security protocol was developed to share classified information.

After 9/11

The world changed dramatically the morning of 11 September 2001, as did the security concepts of the European Union. In less than 72 hours after the terrorist attacks, the EU sent a communiqué stating the determination of the member states to fight terrorism, as well as the need to strengthen cooperation with the United States. The EU also called for the reinforcement of its second and third pillars, ESDP and justice, respectively. Later on, in a special meeting held on 21 September 2001, the European Council restated that the fight against terrorism was a prime goal and requested that this goal be incorporated in all EU policies, included ESDP. Until that moment, ESDP had been limited to building capabilities for Petersberg missions; from that moment on, the objectives had to be modified to incorporate the Council mandate.

NATO's North Atlantic Council invoked Article V for the first time in its history and declared an overt aggression against one of its members. However, the offer of help was turned down; Kosovo memories were still fresh and Washington considered NATO more a hindrance than a help. It seemed that the Bush administration wanted only its more faithful allies alongside in the Afghan campaign. As a consequence, NATO was relegated to a secondary role and rendered ineffective because of political disagreements between the United States and most of its allies. According to Robert Kagan, the Europeans failed to grab the real meaning of the 9/11 attacks for the American administration: "Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus: They agree on little and understand one another less and less."<sup>6</sup>

The worst disagreements occurred later. The United States intervention in Iraq divided European allies. Despite the initial diplomatic success of United Nations Security Council 1441 Resolution, the US attempt to legitimize the war was blocked by France. The transatlantic link weakened. In March 2003, at the time of Iraq's transatlantic controversy, France, Germany, Belgium, and Luxembourg proposed the idea of an independent European military headquarters to be located in Tervuren. Although these countries were the partners of Spain in the Eurocorps military formation, the announcement was a complete surprise for Spain, at the time a close US ally.

This conflict among allies stimulated the construction of the common European defense. The European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) was declared operational at Laeken in December 2001, theoretically declaring the Union capable of conducting some crisis-management operations. The Seville European Council in June 2002 reaffirmed the role of European defense in combating terrorism. In June 2003, the EU undertook its first autonomous operation in Africa under United Nations mandate- Operation Artemis. At the same time the

European Union remained committed to a police operation in Bosnia and in Macedonia (FYROM) to crisis management and police operations Concordia and Proxima.

The *European Security Strategy* written by Javier Solana and endorsed by the EU countries in December 2003 at their Thessaloniki summit contains a completely different view than the US *National Security Strategy* (NSS) issued in December 2002. The US NSS is based on unilateralism and preventive wars; the European strategy is based on “preventive engagement”<sup>7</sup> that includes rapid deployment of troops, humanitarian assistance, policing operations, enhancement of the rule of law, and economic aid. Europeans consider this “effective multilateralism”<sup>8</sup> based on the legality of United Nations Charter. The Europeans intend to look at future conflicts from a peacekeeping perspective while Americans will retain a warfighting approach.

Despite the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) aim of strengthening the EU as a global political player,<sup>9</sup> the different views among the member states have prevented effective common policy creation and implementation. Efforts to develop a common defense for the European Union may actually be weakening the cohesion of the European community as well as the transatlantic link.

#### Current European Security and Defense Policy Initiatives

##### Helsinki Headline 2003/2010

In December 1999 at Helsinki, the European Council decided to develop an autonomous capacity to make security-related decisions and, where NATO as a whole is not engaged, to launch and conduct EU-led military operations in response to international crises. To achieve this goal, member states agreed on the “Helsinki Headline Goal,” to be able by 2003 to carry out the full spectrum of Petersberg missions. Its main goal was the creation of a military land force of up to 50,000-60,000 troops, with naval and air components capable of deploying in less than 60 days, and able to sustain such a deployment for at least one year. The decision was joined with optimism and enthusiasm in Brussels. However, the expectations were greater than member state commitments.

Since the end of 1999, when an inventory of available military resources was drafted identifying the shortfalls to accomplish Petersberg missions, there have been few achievements. Neither the “Helsinki Force Catalogue” that detailed the voluntary contributions from member states nor the “Helsinki Headline Catalogue” that detailed the needs to match Petersberg requirements - both drafted in November 2000- served to produce real improvements. In June

2001, the "Helsinki Progress Catalogue" detailed the differences between commitments and requirements and suggested the need to have military capacities beyond Petersberg.

At the first Capability Improvement Conference in November 2001, EU defense ministers agreed on the European Capabilities Action Plan (ECAP) to address the identified shortfalls.<sup>10</sup> The ECAP was composed of 19 panels of national experts. In May 2003, a second Capability Conference was held to discuss the options proposed in the final report of the panel experts. Several project groups headed by a lead nation were established in order to seek solutions based on acquisition, lease, multinationalization, or role specialization.<sup>11</sup> Despite the existing limitations, it was officially declared that "based on the Forces contributed to the Helsinki Force Catalogue 2003...the EU now has operational capability across the full range of Petersberg Tasks, limited and constrained by recognized shortfalls." In December 2003 the European Council recognized the need to set new objectives and the Headline Goal 2010 was born. The Helsinki Headline Goal focused on a quantitative approach, whereas the Headline Goal 2010 focused on qualitative aspects. The key element of the Headline Goal 2010 was the battlegroup concept.

#### Battlegroup Concept

The EU battlegroup is based on combined arms, battalion sized force, and reinforced with Combat Support and Combat Service Support elements. It is about 1500 soldiers.<sup>12</sup> A battlegroup could be formed by a Framework Nation-where one nation accepts responsibility to provide the majority of forces- or by a multinational coalition of Member States. In all cases, interoperability and military effectiveness are key criteria. Battlegroups must be associated with Force Headquarters and pre-identified operational and strategic enablers, such as strategic lift and logistics; they have to meet the criteria of military effectiveness, deployability, and readiness.

The battlegroup initiative derives from the NATO Response Force (NRF) concept that was approved at the Prague Summit in November 2002 by NATO Heads of State and Government. They decided "to create a NATO Response Force consisting of technologically advanced forces including land, sea, and air elements ready to move quickly to wherever needed, as decided by the Council."<sup>13</sup> At its maximum, the NRF comprises about 25,000 personnel. The NRF reached initial operational capability in October 2004 with full operational capability due by October 2006. The EU battlegroup initial operational capability, defined as the ability to undertake at least one battlegroup-sized rapid response operation, was achieved in 2005. Full Operational Capability, defined as the ability to undertake two concurrent single battlegroup-size rapid response

operations, including the ability to launch both such operations simultaneously, is expected in 2007.

All concerned understand that the forces developed by the EU and NATO should be interoperable, and several initiatives have been launched for further development and coordination between EU battlegroups and the NRF. However, as nations are not going to create new capabilities for the sake of contributing to this initiative, the risk of double-earmarking exists. NATO staff point of view is that dual-hatting of forces to the NRF and EU battlegroups should be avoided.<sup>14</sup> From the EU staff point of view however, arrangements whereby forces are declared by Member States to the EU or to NATO must not lead to a “freezing” of those forces in one organization and thus preventing them from being made available to the other organization.<sup>15</sup>

NATO NRF and EU battlegroups will consequently draw from the same limited pool of deployable forces. In the future, there will be controversies within the EU Member States about which organization has priority. One solution to this potential conflict could be to make the NRF answerable to the European Union, since it is made up entirely of European forces,<sup>16</sup> but Washington is likely to disagree.

#### Civil/Military Cell

The EU Military Staff (EUMS) was established in 2001 to provide military support and expertise through the EU Military Committee (EUMC) to the EU's Political and Security Committee (PSC: the ambassador-level group of officials who manage the Common Foreign and Security Policy, under the Secretary General/High Representative). The EUMS is double-hatted. On the one hand it is an integral part of the General Secretariat of the Council directly attached to the Secretary General/High Representative Javier Solana; on the other hand, it operates under the military direction of the EUMC which it assists and to which it reports regarding situation assessment and military aspects of strategic planning. In 2003, after the controversy brought by the Tervuren incident, an agreement was reached to ensure transparency between NATO and the EU: the EUMS would receive a small liaison team from NATO and, in parallel, an EU planning cell would be set up at NATO strategic headquarters in Mons, Belgium. This accord would mainly affect operations carried out under the Berlin plus agreement. However, some EU members wanted more. Thus, on 13 December 2003, the European Council welcomed the proposal to establish a cell with civil/military components to enhance the capacity of the European Union Military Staff. It stated:

Regarding the conduct of autonomous operations...In certain circumstances, the Council may decide, upon the advice of the Military Committee, to draw on the

collective capacity of the EUMS, in particular where a joint civil/military response is required and where no national HQ is identified. Once such a decision was taken, the civil/military cell in the EUMS would have responsibility for generating the capacity to plan and run the operation. This would be a capacity rapidly to set up an operations centre for a particular operation.<sup>17</sup>

In June 2004 the European Council welcomed the report on the progress made on the establishment of the civil/military cell and an operations center to plan and conduct operations. The spectrum of tasks envisaged in the Treaty would be on the scale of Operation Artemis which involved nearly 2000 peacekeeping troops, mostly French, dispatched to the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2003. The initial aim was for the civil/military cell to begin its work before 2005 and the Operations Center by 1 January 2006. However, successive delays have precluded full implementation. The Operations Center is now expected to be fully operational by September 2006.

The cell has given EUMS the capacity to plan and run an autonomous EU military operation and to set up an operations center for a particular contingency. The cell and the operations center will be manned by 20 military personnel and 10 civilians, subject to augmentation during a crisis. The use of civilian expertise within a military planning staff is in line with the *European Security Strategy* that encourages non-military means of external intervention, such as police assistance and training, development aid, trade agreements, political dialogue, and humanitarian assistance. This new EU body is only a small military step because Artemis itself was a relatively minor military operation.

From a political standpoint, however, the civil/military cell is a huge challenge to NATO because it represents the consolidation of the willingness to act outside the Alliance. The EU considers that there is space for three types of EU interventions: an autonomous EU operation, an operation where NATO assets and capabilities would be used under Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (D-SACEUR) command (Berlin plus agreement), and participation in a NATO led operation.

A fully autonomous EU operation would be an alternative to an operation having recourse to NATO assets. Since the Union lacks its own permanent operational headquarters, the primary option is to reinforce a national headquarters made available to the EU and change it into a multinational headquarters. This was the model used in Operation Artemis carried out in the Democratic Republic of Congo in the summer of 2003, when France acted as Framework Nation. Five EU member nations-United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, and Greece- have offered a national headquarters to the European Union.

The other option would be for the Council to draw on the collective capacity of the EUMS, particularly in case there are both military and civilian components participating in an operation and no national headquarters is available for the operation. Once such a decision is taken, the civilian/military cell in the EUMS would have responsibility for generating a plan and running the operation. This is not a standing HQ- at least not for the time being-but a capability to set up an operations center for a particular operation. This center would be under a designated Operation Commander and would operate separately from the EUMS.

NATO strategic headquarters in Mons now has a competitor in Brussels. It remains to be seen whether the United States will be ready to accept this as a more balanced relationship with its European allies or as a duplication of effort. In the past, the reaction of US officials has always been to oppose EU autonomous operations. But, how can the United States justify the rejection of a European initiative that provides a more balanced defense partnership while at the same time it is waging wars unilaterally? Should not Europeans also conduct military operations on their own and assemble "European coalitions of the willing?"

#### The European Defense Agency

The defense industry has always been linked to national interests, and therefore it was kept out of the process of European integration. Article 223 of the founding Treaty of the European Economic Community excluded it from the implementation of the guidelines for a single market. Forty years later, the same reservations were maintained in Art. 296 of Amsterdam Treaty in 1997.<sup>18</sup> Some of the objectives established at the Cologne European Council, however, were to strengthen the industrial and technical basis of defense and to promote the restructuring of the European defense industries. This mandate was renewed at the Helsinki and Laeken summits and reflected a new political will to create a single defense market within the European Union. In a globalized world, Europe's defense industry could only be competitive with the enormous size of America's defense industry if they would join efforts.

Despite these declarations, advances in this area have been limited. Multilateral initiatives such as the Organization for Joint Cooperation in Armaments (OCCAR) and the Letter of Intent (LoI) were formed outside the EU framework. In a statement made in 1996, the European Commission expressed its concern that only 3-4% of defense systems were procured within the Community, while 75% were imported from the United States.<sup>19</sup> Again in 2003 the Commission stated that it was essential that EU policy on defense equipment be more coordinated.<sup>20</sup> In 2004, the European Defense Agency was created to help EU member states develop their defense capabilities for crisis-management operations under the European

Security and Defense Policy. According to Solana: “the need to bolster Europe’s military capabilities to match our aspirations is more urgent than ever. And so, too, is the need for us to respond better to the challenges facing our defence industries. This Agency can make a huge difference.”<sup>21</sup>

However, the statement that a common defense market would contribute to Common Security and Defense Policy is just a theory. *The Economist* summarized the issue in 1997: “whatever politicians might hope, merging Europe’s defence companies will probably prove harder than the creation of a single currency.”<sup>22</sup> The development of the defense industry is closely related to the economic interests of member states. Moreover, the European member states have different policies on arm exports making it difficult to harmonize the different postures within the European Union. To further complicate the matter, American industry has invested heavily in some European countries, such as General Dynamics in Spain. Some countries like the United Kingdom also prefer American partners for high-tech ventures, such as the Joint Strike Fighter aircraft. A real European armaments policy would make it possible to put the defense industry to the service of defense policy, and not defense policy to the service of industry.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless the relative failure of the EF-2000 Eurofighter symbolizes the latter: an expensive, technologically obsolescent plane designed to meet a Cold War threat that has not been cancelled for the sake of European industry.<sup>24</sup> EADS is another example. Despite the integration of the national capacities of France, Germany, and Spain, EADS is not able to compete globally with American corporations on defense issues. In 2003, commercial aircraft represented 80% of sales and 90% of EADS profits; Boeing has defense sales of over 27 billion euros (more than half its total sales) while EADS sells only 8 billion euros in the defense area (only a fifth of its sales).<sup>25</sup>

The creation of the European Defense Agency has of course added fuel to the fire between Brussels and Washington. The operational and economic values of interoperability, scale, and dual-use technology compete with national interests. Despite the world globalization process, the defense market is more regionalized than ever.

#### European Union Deployments

In 2003 the European Security and Defense Policy became operational. It was engaged in four distinct operations: a police mission in Bosnia–Herzegovina (EUPM), a crisis management operation in the Former Yugoslav Republic Of Macedonia (FYROM) (Operation Concordia), a crisis management operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Operation Artemis), and a police mission in FYROM (Operation Proxima). The EU has followed an

incremental approach. It started with a police mission (EUPM), then it was followed with the military operation (Concordia) also in FYROM that involved the use of both EU and NATO assets under the Berlin plus agreement.

Operation "Artemis" marked the first truly autonomous EU military mission and was carried out in a non-permissive environment. It was launched to stabilize security conditions and to improve the humanitarian situation in Bunia (Democratic Republic of Congo) under a UN Security Council Resolution. France played the role of Framework Nation and provided the bulk of personnel (1700 peacekeepers out of 2000), the headquarters, and the commanders. The operation made clear again the limited capabilities of Europe in the areas of strategic airlift, communications, and sustainability. It also showed the inadequacy of EU financial mechanisms. And despite triumphant declarations of Artemis as an EU operations it was almost a wholly French mission and hence not of real significance.

More important was the EU commitment to Bosnia. The Council of the European Union decided on 12 July 2004 to conduct a military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) following the decision by NATO to conclude its SFOR operation. Operation Althea deployed a robust force (EUFOR) to Bosnia in December 2004-starting at the same 7000 troop force level as the NATO-led SFOR- to ensure continued compliance with the Dayton/Paris Agreement and to contribute to a safe and secure environment in BiH. This EU operation is being carried out with access to NATO assets and capabilities under the Berlin plus agreements. Thus, the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (D-SACEUR) has been appointed EU Operation Commander for Althea.

Strategic reach is an important issue to consider for future deployments. On the one hand, the *European Security Strategy* specifically mentions the Mediterranean area, the Balkans, the Middle East, southern Caucasus, West Africa, central and south-east Asia, and North Korea as regions of particular EU interest. On the other hand, the distances that are used for planning purposes for peace enforcement operations are 6,000 km and include the mid-African continent, the Middle East and northern part of India; the 10,000 km for conflict prevention and evacuation of personnel includes the northern part of South America, the African continent and part of Asia, and the 15,000 km for humanitarian operations includes the whole world except New Zealand and part of Australia. The European Union has ambition to carry out autonomous operations all over the world; when and how are the questions.

## Analysis

There are two visions concerning the common European defense. On the one hand, the NATO version, supported by the United States envisages European defense as a process inside NATO following the notion of “separable but not separate.” On the other hand, the EU version, supported by France, envisages space for autonomous operations “when NATO is not engaged as a whole.” It can be argued whether the NATO and EU visions are complementary or competitive.

It is necessary to recognize therefore that within the European Union a gap exists among those who consider the transatlantic relationship the essential element of European defense and those who desire to create an autonomous and independent European defense. This question, basic to defining a strategy of European security, is still pending and underlies all other debates and decisions concerning security and defense issues inside the EU. Aware of this division, the *European Security Strategy* is ambiguous on these issues, although it is possible to observe a slippery slope toward the independent side. Thus, the document depicts NATO as “an important expression of the transatlantic relationships” while the Constitution Treaty considers it the “foundation of their collective defense.” The problem is even more acute when considering that France and the United Kingdom, the two most important EU countries at least as far as defense is concerned, support opposing views.

Three criteria will be used to analyze the future of the European common defense: feasibility, suitability, and acceptability. In order to determine feasibility, the relevant question to answer is whether the European common defense can be accomplished with the means available. Despite statements about the EU’s ability to undertake crisis management operations, the figures concerning military budgets do not match the aspirations. From 2001 to 2003, the EU defense expenditure mean was 1.9 percent of GDP whereas the NATO mean was 2.2 per cent, and the US mean was 3.3.<sup>26</sup> In 2004, the US spent more than twice as much on defense as the 25 EU members combined. By 2009, the US defense budget is expected to surpass half a trillion dollars, further widening the transatlantic gap. Defense spending is also very uneven among EU countries. Three countries- France, Germany, and the United Kingdom-accounted for more than 60 per cent of total EU defense spending in 2004. However, budget expenditures do not fully explain the lack of EU capabilities. Europe’s fragmented defense markets and varied national procurement policies have led to costly duplication. At the recent EU summit at Hampton Court, Solana emphasized that there was not enough money to finance EU crisis management commitments for 2006.<sup>27</sup> European defense resources do not

match the level of ambition set by EU politicians, even to achieve the full range of Petersberg missions. A common European defense is not feasible with the current level of expenditure.

Concerning the suitability of the common European defense, the question to answer is whether it will accomplish the desired effect. The challenge for the EU is to deal with future needs derived from the 9/11 attacks. However, previous conflicts in which EU countries were involved biased common defense developments and hindered its suitability. When EU members decided in 1999 to start a process for an autonomous European solution concerning security and defense, the decision was heavily influenced by the recent Kosovo crisis and the previous humanitarian interventions in the Balkans. When the Berlin wall fell and Western countries reached a disproportionate victory in the first Gulf war, European countries did not feel any threat and looked for "peace dividends." The need for a new role for the military and pressure from public opinion resulted in a focus on humanitarian missions. Therefore, most European armies were oriented toward these new missions. This fact also helped to improve the image of the armies in societies with strong pacifist movements. Spain is a case in point. But the 9/11 attacks were a dramatic awakening; high-intensity capabilities were again necessary against rogue states. The threat of terrorism changed the strategic scenario, but in Europe the attacks were not perceived as dramatically as in the United States.

Four years later, despite 9/11, Afghanistan, and Iraq, ESDP continues as if the world has not changed. When most security analysts acknowledge that the question of a terrorist attack with weapons of mass destruction is not "whether it is going to take place" but "when," ESDP continues to focus on humanitarian operations away from its borders, leaving the military defense of European territory to NATO. The recent lack of agreement among European NATO countries concerning the possibility that the alliance would take the lead in the fight against the terrorism in Afghanistan shows that European countries are not focused on the fight against terrorism either in NATO or the EU. They prefer focusing on stabilization and security missions rather than offensive operations against terrorists. Some common measures have been taken within the third EU pillar- police and justice-but not within the exterior dimension of the second pillar. When the *European Security Strategy* (ESS)<sup>28</sup> discusses future contingencies, it considers widening the spectrum of missions to include disarmament operations, support for third countries combating terrorism, and reform of the security sector. No mention is made regarding high-intensity operation capabilities. Therefore, the core military missions needed to challenge rogue states are not even considered within EU military parameters. The current European defense architecture is suitable to match neither current nor future challenges.

The third yardstick is the acceptability of common European defense. In the middle of the Cold War, France designed the European Defense Community (EDC) to integrate post-war Germany into the Western system. When it became apparent that the new European army would no longer be national, the French National Assembly rejected its own plan. In 2005 France did the same thing when voting on the European Constitutional Treaty. The current security and defense policy could lead in the future to a common European defense, but could entail a loss of sovereignty that some European countries are reluctant to accept. This rejection is more likely to occur when considering that the single European currency still has not been adopted by all EU members, and also that security and defense are not priority items to Europeans.<sup>29</sup> Their preponderant concerns are unemployment and environmental improvements. A serious defense commitment would also require additional resources and increases in defense budgets, but current defense expenditures are low and will stay that way for the foreseeable future. To complicate matters further, there is a lack of defense culture in most European countries and their populations are not going to renounce social and welfare benefits for the sake of a larger and more capable military. Unfortunately, today a common defense is acceptable neither to European states nor their citizens.

### Conclusions

Since 1999, the European Union has taken very significant steps to develop a common security and defense policy. Thus, the proposed Constitutional Treaty includes a clause to guarantee solidarity in the event of terrorist attack and a catalogue of military missions to be conducted out of area. The Union has published a strategic concept and developed an important institutional lattice for the implementation of decisions. Finally, the EU has already carried out limited military operations and started an apparently irreversible process to provide the European Union with a military dimension.

But two views remain on the definition and ambition of common European defense. For some, led by United Kingdom, the common European defense should be compatible and complementary to the existence of the Atlantic Alliance-with the defense of Europe falling under NATO responsibility. For others, led by France, the final objective should be to endow the Union with a common defense that allows full strategic autonomy of the EU and different defense capabilities from those of NATO. All EU member partners dislike losing sovereignty in defense matters and some- Austria, Ireland, Finland, and Sweden- are reluctant to assume any defense commitment beyond their borders. These discrepancies are reflected in the calculated ambiguity of official EU documents, such as the proposed Constitutional Treaty and the

*European Security Strategy*. These contradictions hinder the development of a truly common European defense.

Despite grandiloquent statements, the EU lacks today the political consensus and the necessary will to advance in defense issues. Unlike the European single currency, the European security and defense policy has failed to be an effective framework for strengthening solidarity and links within the EU. Despite some limited success, the different visions and national interests have exacerbated differences among European countries. This is particularly true of the civil/military cell being created within the EUMS. The moves by France, Germany, Belgium, and Luxembourg in April 2003 to establish an EU military headquarters at Tervuren divided EU member states. The decision to augment the EUMS capacity was an ad-hoc solution to overcome the disagreement. It bypassed the real question that remains open since the beginning of the ESDI: NATO primacy or EU autonomy?<sup>30</sup> That said, it is foreseeable that an independent European HQ will evolve out of the EU planning civil/military cell; the seeds for future EU disagreement have been sown.

In order to correct European military deficiencies, the EU countries should pursue a four prong approach. First, defense budgets, currently located at minimum levels, must be increased. This does not seem likely except for United Kingdom and France. Second, EU partners should rationalize military spending through common defense industrial efforts. In the view of current deficiencies is hard to accept costly spending duplications and redundancy of capabilities, but national interests and different risk perceptions are likely to prevent major developments in the area of national specialization. So far, the results of the European Capabilities Action Plan are not very encouraging. One case in point that illustrates a potential risk in renouncing essential military capabilities is the Parsley Island incident. In the summer of 2002 a Moroccan military detachment occupied a tiny island located in the Strait of Gibraltar that has historically been under Spanish sovereignty. France, Spain's close NATO and EU ally, moved with calculated ambiguity instead of fully supporting Spain's position to reclaim the island; France's national interests prevailed over EU solidarity. Third, it is necessary to begin a deep transformation of European armed forces to adapt them to the requirements of the post 9/11 world. In this sense, the re-formulation of the Headline Goal for the period 2003-2010, including the new battlegroup concept, is a step in the right direction. Finally, information campaigns must be carried out to educate European societies about defense needs. Unless current pacifist trends are reversed, future EU defense commitments are in jeopardy.

The division of labor in future military interventions between the Atlantic Alliance and the European Union is unofficial but real. NATO will perform high demanding military operations

requiring the use of force while the EU will carry out mid-level operations requiring civil capabilities. Europe feels comfortable with this limited role. However, this short-sight policy is contributing to the hegemony of the United States and widening the defense gap between the United States and the European Union. Only total US disengagement from Europe would force the EU to face its defense challenges, which is not likely in the near future.

The current ESDP was never intended to provide a common European defense; it was just a step in the political integration of the EU. After pushing the economic, commercial, humanitarian, and diplomatic approaches, and mainly after the Balkans tragedy, the EU political masters realized that the European Union could not reach international credibility without a defense identity to back-up its foreign policy. However, the EU still considers defense as a side-show and uses its great civilian capacities to justify its military weakness. It is doubtful, taking into account European reluctance to use military capabilities against terrorism, that the political will and limited military capabilities of the EU will allow it to take on more demanding operations.

In spite of the notable advances registered in the area of security and defense, the European common defense is still a bridge too far. Today the defense of Europe continues to be a NATO responsibility. EU military-led operations are subsidiary to the Atlantic alliance and ESDP has not developed a credible response to the emerging threats of transnational terrorism born on 9/11. This situation is likely to continue for at least the medium term.

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