
CFSP, ESDP, and the Future of European Security: Whither NATO?

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Security arrangements in Europe have undergone a period of rapid transition since 1989. The demise of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO), the rise of a unified Germany, the movement towards a common foreign policy in the European Union (EU), and the triumph of Western liberal values has been much noted on both sides of the Atlantic. Much is made of the new uncertainties of the post-Cold War world in the popular media and in more specific academic debates. On the eve of the twenty-first century, Europe was said to be returning “back to the future,” going back to the dark days of old-style balance of power politics. As the forthcoming analysis reveals, however, the new Europe is essentially characterized not by cold, dark, classical realism but instead by transnationalism, democratization, interdependence, and multilateral cooperation.

Traditionally the EU has been a “civilian power” concerned with welfare generation and economic regulation.¹ As an international actor, the EU is ambiguous. The EU has always, and inescapably, been a foreign policy project, but that does not mean that it is cast in the constraining mold of the statist version of foreign policy.² The Union’s status as a kind of “great experiment” has clearly affected both the wider Europe and the international arena through processes of emulation and diffusion. One only has to think of the copies of the EU’s common market; NAFTA, ASEAN, and Mercosur bear witness to the broader influence of the EU in world politics.

The movement towards a regulated common European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) that is separate from the United States and the Atlantic Alliance (NATO) is a key issue in post-11 September transatlantic relations. Philip H. Gordon recently stated that:

If done right, the development of a serious EU defense force could be a good thing for all concerned—reducing American burdens in Europe, making Europe a better and more capable partner, and providing a way for Europeans to tackle security problems where and when the United States cannot or will not get involved. If done badly, however, the EU project risks irrelevance as an empty institutional distraction—or even worse, a step back toward the situation in the Balkans in the early 1990s, when separate European and American strategies and institutions led to impotence and recrimination.³

U.S.-European Terms of Engagement?⁴

Since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, the United States has either been plowing a quasi-unilateralist or quasi-multilateralist furrow, according to where you stand. Much has been written alleging that the Bush administration wants to rewrite the rules of international relations. The argument runs as follows: The world has never known a power such as the United States. Consequently, Europe cannot expect the United States to be anything other than unilateralist; the United States is simply too powerful. What matters, therefore, is the nature of U.S. unilateralism. It could be either broad unilateralism, open to the counsel of allies and capable of adjustment in the light of events, or narrow unilateralism, closed and dismissive of others, reflecting a United States that prefers to use its power to export domestic policy rather than construct effective and engaged foreign and security policy. Unfortunately, the more powerful the United States becomes, the more vulnerable it perceives itself to be. Consequently, 11 September has reinforced the trend towards narrow unilateralism and a narrow concept of engagement that is not only undermining transatlantic security relations but is also reinforcing a myth of U.S. military exceptionalism, the application of which is often as narrow as the policy that controls it.⁵

The above argument slightly exaggerates the extent to which the United States is disengaging from the European continent. It also implies that the United States is in a strictly patron-client relationship with the EU on all levels. Yet the United States still plays a significant role in NATO, as it does in a broad range of international institutions. Europe and the United States are also broadly comparable in economic terms and in trade. Indeed, the United States is still the EU's largest trade partner, and vice versa. The above analysis also seems to exaggerate the military side of the security dilemma to the exclusion of societal and economic security. Nevertheless, this analysis is understandable in the wake of 11 September.

Despite all of this, numerous U.S. airbases and multinational corporations are still located in Europe. The United States still broadly supports the development of a more regulated common foreign policy for the EU, albeit within limits and in the context of NATO. Furthermore, Europe is much more effective as a strong partner alongside Washington in its fight against global terrorism than as an also-ran lackey. This is the key to U.S. security thinking on terrorism, and it implies a partnership to some degree with Europe in NATO.

Finally, one must not forget that the United States exists in a “hyper-relational” world that is strongly influenced by globalization and sovereignty-draining institutions. Even the sole superpower cannot ignore this. Additionally, alternative power centers are developing, such as China, India, Brazil, Southeast Asia, and the EU. Nevertheless, the EU and its Member States must be in a position to support the objectives of U.S. foreign policy after 11 September if Washington is not to begin behaving in a worryingly unilateral fashion as a matter of course, rather than piecemeal, as at present. Arguably, however, the EU is still a regional power in terms of foreign and defense policy. It is overshadowed by the military power of the United States and often finds it difficult to present a consistent, common position.⁶ Recently a

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journalist summarized the current international order: “The U.S. fights, the UN feeds, and the EU funds.” A strong and credible foreign policy must satisfy a few conditions: strong and unequivocal political leadership, operational military capacity, and supportive public opinion. Only one EU Member State, the United Kingdom, recently met these conditions and has consequently been able to contribute to the recent military operation in Afghanistan. Most European states keep their military operations confined to peacekeeping within the European region—in the Balkans, for example. Even in that case, leadership by the United States was required. Would European countries have taken up arms against the Milosevic’s regime if U.S. leadership had been absent?

The EU Commission and “federalist” Member States, with an eye to the transatlantic relationship, have thus been attempting to fashion a more unified approach to defense and security since the Amsterdam Treaty).

The Treaty of Amsterdam and CFSP

The Treaty of Amsterdam was signed on 2 October 1997 and finally came into force on 1 May 1999. It consists of 15 articles, three parts, one annex, 13

Protocols, a Final Act, 51 Declarations adopted by the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) and annexed to the Final Act, and eight Declarations. There appears to be an overall consensus within the EU that the Amsterdam Treaty had not resolved the fundamental shortcomings of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

The objectives of the new CFSP post-Amsterdam remain essentially those laid down at Maastricht. Article J.1 is particularly important, as it lays down the right of Member States to legitimate defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter and the principle of the inviolability of borders.⁷ With regards to

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enlargement, the latter principle, especially, could have very serious consequences for the European order. For instance, when the Baltic States join the EU and/or NATO, how will Russia react? The Amsterdam Treaty

lacks the *mutual assistance clauses* included in the NATO and—now defunct—Western European Union (WEU) Treaties. In addition, there is still not a comprehensive recognition that human rights should be considered to be of major importance in the CFSP. Indeed, human rights and democracy clauses *should*, normatively speaking, be included in all agreements with third countries so as to contribute to the defense of democracy and basic freedoms throughout the world.

As far as the analysis of capabilities is concerned, the Treaty of Amsterdam stipulated that a Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit be established within the Council Secretariat, under the responsibility of the High Representative for CFSP (“Mr. CFSP,” who is also Secretary-General of the Council). This did not imply, however, that the High Representative would be able to attend meetings of the Political Committee of the Council. This created a clear risk of interference between the activities of the Policy Planning and Early Warning unit and those of the Political Committee.⁸ Nevertheless, on 14 February 2000, the General Affairs Council decided that in a crisis situation, an Interim Political and Security Committee could be chaired by the High Representative for CFSP, replacing the actual Presidency-in-Office of the Council. Interestingly, in a crisis situation, the External Relations Commissioner will take charge of coordinating civilian crisis management arrangements. There will undoubtedly be problems associated with the coordination of activities between

the High Representative for CFSP (for military matters) and the External Relations Commissioner (for civilian matters). Regarding enlargement, it remains to be seen to what extent, if at all, the unit's work and the work of the Interim Political and Security Committee will benefit from the addition of numerous new Member States and what this will achieve, in terms of policy effectiveness, in the foreign policy planning of the enlarged Union.

The role of the Commission in CFSP is ambiguous. The Commission has not made full use of its right to submit proposals to the Council. As far as enlargement is concerned, the Commission—which possesses extensive powers regarding both membership negotiations and the Community pillar—will be deprived of any significant role in CFSP. This highlights the fact that the EU's foreign policy is still driven by intergovernmentalism, with some input from the High Representative for CFSP and the External Relations Commissioner. The position of the External Relations Commissioner is ambiguous, however, with much depending on the political prowess and clout of the Commissioner himself.

The capabilities of CFSP are directly related to the fact that decisions must always be unanimous. The general rule for CFSP decision-making is unanimity plus constructive abstention. This will, no doubt, have particular consequences for enlargement, as the inclusion of new members will provide even greater possibilities for disagreement on issues. As far as the fledgling Common European Security and Defense Identity and crisis management are concerned, however, the Helsinki European Council of December 1999 made several important decisions. The European Council decided that it would have an overall coordinating role in crisis situations, including decisions to carry out Petersburg tasks (rapid reaction corps, peacekeeping, and peace enforcement). The Defense Ministers of the Member States are to advise the General Affairs Council on military matters. In addition, the following permanent political and military bodies will be established within the Council:

- The Standing Political and Security Committee (PSC), based in Brussels, made up of national representatives at the rank of Ambassador. The PSC will take decisions in consultation with the Council on matters of defense and security more generally.
- The Military Committee (MC) will comprise the National Chiefs of Defense. The committee will advise and make recommendations to the PSC on professional military matters.
- The Military Staff (MS), to be set up within the Council, will provide military expertise and support for the ESDP.

On 14 February 2000, as an interim measure, the Council established the following internal Council bodies, effective from 1 March 2000:

- The Standing Interim Political and Security Committee, staffed by Ambassadors;
- The Standing Interim Chiefs of Defense Committee;
- The Standing Interim Military Staff Committee;
- The High Representative for CFSP, who is also the Secretary-General of the Council, will liaise with the above bodies.

Nice and Beyond: ESDP Influences on Enlargement⁹

Building on the Amsterdam Treaty, in December 2000 the Nice European Council adopted the French Presidency's report on European security and defense policy. The report provides for the development of the EU's military capacity via the development of permanent political and military structures. Nice also transferred WEU crisis management capabilities to the EU. The resulting Treaty of Nice amended Article 17 of the Treaty on European Union by removing the provisions defining relations between the EU and WEU—the latter organization is now redundant to the EU. The Nice Treaty also authorized the Council to take “appropriate decisions ... in order to ensure political control and strategic leadership in crisis management operations.”¹⁰ This served to further enhance the powers of the new High Representative for CFSP Javier Solana over External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten. Nevertheless, in 2001 the citizens of the Irish Republic rejected the Nice Treaty in a referendum and thereby delayed the entire enlargement process.

On 19 November 2001, EU foreign and defense ministers gathered in Brussels for the Capability Improvement Conference (CIC). They assessed the progress made in filling the capability gaps to meet the Helsinki goal of being able to deploy 60,000 soldiers in less than 60 days and to sustain them for at least one year. The CIC confirmed that the EU should be able to carry out the whole range of crisis management tasks by 2003, but cautioned that further efforts must be made if it is to be able to carry out complex operations without undue risk. In response to the shortcomings identified, Member States have agreed on a European Capability Action Plan to gradually advance national and multinational solutions. Despite shortfalls and the outstanding issue of whether the EU will reach an agreement with NATO on the use of NATO assets for EU-led operations, ESDP was somewhat prematurely declared operational at the Laeken European Council on 14-15 December 2001.¹¹

On 13 May 2002, EU defense ministers participated formally in the General Affairs Council for the first time and discussed European military capabilities. Among the issues covered were the Capability Development Mechanism; progress within the framework of the Capability Action Plan; Rapid Response elements of the Helsinki headline goal; Command and Control

arrangements for Operational Headquarters; and cooperation in the field of armaments. The following day, defense ministers from the EU, the candidate countries for accession, Iceland, and Norway met to discuss the GAC's conclusions, first in a 15 + 15 format (including all ministers) and then on a 15 + 6 basis (involving EU ministers and those of the six non-EU NATO member countries). This meeting also discussed EU-NATO cooperation.¹²

Between 22-28 May 2002, the EU carried out its first crisis management exercise (CME 02) under the ESDP framework. The key objectives of the exercise were to test the decision-making framework within which the full range of EU civilian and military instruments would be coordinated. The exercise also tested the ability of the EU institutions and Member States to coordinate and interact efficiently with each other in a crisis management situation. CME 02 was based on a fictitious crisis scenario involving ethnic problems on an unnamed Atlantic island. Conducted in Brussels and relevant states, it involved Member States, relevant Council bodies (including the Political and Security Committee, the EU Military Staff, and the Policy Unit), the High Representative for CFSP, the Commission, the EU Satellite Centre located near Madrid, and NATO and UN representatives. An evaluation of the exercise was presented to the Seville European Council in June 2002.¹³ Overall, the exercise was deemed a success.

Finally, the key issue for ESDP at this time revolves around the Convention on the Future of Europe, chaired by former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. The European Commission released its first wide-ranging contribution to the work of the Convention on the Future of Europe on 22 May 2002. It included proposals for a radical overhaul of the way that the CFSP is organized and implemented in light of enlargement and immediate demands such as terrorism. To ensure efficiency and coherence between different external policy instruments, it argued that the positions of High Representative for CFSP and External Relations Commissioner should be merged into one new office located in the Commission. The new office would be responsible for overall consistency of policy initiatives and would have a leading role in crisis management. The proposal also calls for a marked increase in the resources available for CFSP in the Community budget and the development of a stronger, more effective network of external delegations. Perhaps the most controversial aspect of the Commission's proposals is the use of qualified majority voting, rather than the unanimity rule, in the EU's external policy. Larger Member States, notably Britain and France, have moved swiftly to dismiss this proposal.¹⁴

In October 2002, Ireland finally ratified the Nice Treaty. The admission of 10 new Member States on 1 January 2004 will introduce new security problems onto the EU's foreign policy agenda. These include the Cyprus issue, the position of Roma gypsies in Eastern and Central Europe, the Baltic states' relations

with Russia, and the movement of the EU's frontier eastwards and its accompanying security threats. These more specific threats from the EU's new eastern border encompass migration and Russian organized crime. The problems, to a great extent, begin and end with "soft security."

Conclusion: Towards A Regulated CFSP/ESDP?

Recent events in Yugoslavia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq—in addition to those on 11 September—have highlighted a perceived growing gap between the military capabilities of the United States and Europe. Europe, in the form of the EU, is constrained by national interests, unwieldy multilateral structures, and different military traditions. These events also revealed the vulnerabilities

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of a large, multi-member coalition of states. In short, Europe has a contested vision of itself. These continuing European deficiencies mean that the United States will form the indispensable backbone of global security, especially given Europe's deficiencies in low-intensity conflicts and related assets. The Europeans can expect continuing pressure from the United States for more defense spending in the short-term. The only way for Europe to remedy its defense deficiencies is to commit to larger investments now. The United States requires its allies' forces to be interoperable, deployable, and sustainable within three years. Furthermore, the Europeans should expect additional pressure from the United States to invest in proven U.S. military programs rather than in new and unproven ones.¹⁵

In October 2002, the Convention on the Future of Europe put forward proposals for a "United States of Europe" with national and European citizenship, a European President, and a European Foreign Minister with extensive executive powers modeled on the U.S. Secretary of State. This proposal will undoubtedly be given a lukewarm endorsement by federalist-minded states such as France, the Benelux countries, and Italy. The remaining states will probably accept a compromise deal, and the British will balk at the idea of a federal European foreign and defense policy that undermines NATO. Gaullist France has visions of creating a European "hyperpower" that can make foreign policy decisions independent of Washington. Nevertheless, the Europeans still suffer from a considerable "capability-expectations gap" in international relations and still rely heavily on the United States for support in a crisis.¹⁶

Having said all the above, however, the EU is unquestionably a considerable success story in general post-war terms in economics and trade. As one author has recently maintained:

Increasingly, the EU seems to be influencing the behavior of other actors in the international political economy. Above all, the EU is a model for other regional integration efforts. Countries in Asia, North America, and Latin America are trying to imitate the apparent successes of the EU in the commercial sphere.¹⁷

Nevertheless, the same author highlights that many academic specialists and practitioners are of the belief that the EU's international capacity is greatly attenuated by a number of crucial factors:

First, the lowest common denominator position prevents the EU from making innovative proposals and therefore from having a lot to offer its negotiating opponent in order to extract concessions of a similar nature. Second, the institutional design of the EU deprived negotiators of one crucial element: uncertainty. Because Member States reveal their position during the Council meetings ... the EU cannot hide its bottom line. Finally, as a result of the shared power between the Commission and the Member States, the EU is ill equipped to act swiftly in the final hours of a negotiation, when agreements are always hammered out.¹⁸

As was stated earlier, the Treaty of Amsterdam and its successors still suffer from deficiencies that affect the prospects for CFSP and for enlargement. This is the big question to be answered by the current Convention on the Future of Europe. Current preoccupations with terrorism after 11 September 2001 have also made enlargement seem further away. Paradoxically, however, enlargement also seems more central to EU security policy-making, given the new security threats from the east of Europe and the former Soviet Union. Yet more than any other event, it is EU enlargement that will have greatest long-term impact on European foreign policy and the European security order more generally.

It is a fact that the expansion of the EU is more far-reaching and comprehensive than NATO's and, therefore, slower and proportionately more complex and complicated.¹⁹ The CFSP *acquis* will be complicated beyond recognition as a result of further enlargements of the EU. The relationship between the existing Member States, the new Member States, the EU's institutions, and decision-making procedures will fundamentally change.

Indeed, the internal developments in the applicant countries highlight that Central and Eastern Europe is not homogeneous in terms of political, social, and economic stages of development.²⁰ It is feasible the enlargement process itself will generate "in" groups and "out" groups of countries. Ten Central and East European states are situated in the core "in-group." This "in-group" will benefit from open access to the EU's internal market, direct elections to the European Parliament, the opportunity to join European Monetary Union (EMU), free movement of persons within the EU, a probable improvement of average wages, access to the European Regional Development Fund and European Social

Fund, access to Common Agricultural Policy subsidies, and other benefits. This is very important, as a citizen's general attitudes towards democracy and the free market economy are the strongest predictors of support for the EU. Citizens who are satisfied with the democratic transition in their country and favor a free market economy are most likely to support EU membership.²¹

Romania might be identified as being a representative example of the "out" group. Bulgaria, Southeastern Europe (including Turkey), the Balkans, and Russia could also be added to this list. This group will be denied access to the EU in the short- to medium-term, until at least 2007. None of the above countries meet the Copenhagen Criteria on political or economic grounds. They


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suffer from deficits in democracy, corruption, and varying degrees of Mafia infiltration, and they have deep-seated economic problems. Even within this group, Romania and Bulgaria are the most developed and still do not meet the stringent EU entry criteria. Russia is arguably too large to join the EU and would create imbalances even if it did. It would also probably demand

leadership in Europe. The countries of the Balkans are unlikely to meet entry criteria. This "out" group will not enjoy the same fringe benefits of EU membership as the "in" group. What, then, are the consequences for the European order?

Divisions in the new Europe will stem from a country's membership status in the EU and NATO.²² The potential for prosperity, continuing from post-1945 developments, is best achieved in a democratic, capitalist framework. Winners and losers will exist alongside each other according to whether they are members of the EU (and the single market), and even within and between EU Member States themselves. New security problems will undoubtedly emerge and are most likely to flow from the "out" groups identified above.

Since the St. Malo Summit in 1998, the movement towards ESDP has been inexorable. The whole process is at the core of the Commission's project for political union. Furthermore, the process has taken on an almost teleological logic akin to the one taken by the EMU in the 1990s. The EMU has thus far been a great success for the European project overall. Conversely, the price of failure would be the dramatic ushering in a new period of "Euroscleoris." The same logic applies to the process of political union and ESDP. Success will bring great benefits for Brussels' vision of EU integration, whereas failure will set the project back years, if not decades.

Historical forces are impacting on the ESDP process in new ways. U.S. disengagement from Europe has been ongoing since 1989. Unilateralism in U.S. foreign policy under the current Bush administration is also a key issue. U.S. policy on National Missile Defense (NMD), climate change, terrorism, and Afghanistan have opened up fissures in transatlantic relations. President Bush expects Europe to contribute to its defense spending to a much greater extent than at present, but expects this to be done in the context of the Atlantic Alliance, under U.S. leadership. The EU's plans for an independent ESDP, however, are perceived by the Bush administration as a threat to its policy hegemony in NATO. Indeed, these are interesting times. 

Notes

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