CHAPTER TWO
The European Security and Defence Policy and the development of a security strategy for Europe

Jess Pilegaard, Danish Institute for International Studies

TOWARDS A COMMON EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY?

The present chapter argues that the current approach to European security and defence policy is neither adequate nor sustainable. Insufficient resources are being spread too thinly, leaving the European Union and its member states with a rather limited capacity for international force projection.[1] Existing agreements in the field of security and defence are best regarded as short-term compromises in a more long-term process of adaptation to the changing global security agenda. More fundamental reforms will be necessary sooner or later, and maintaining the status quo is therefore not an option. The first part of this chapter expands on this claim, arguing that the European Union is facing a number of challenges that will require fundamental changes in the European approach to security and defence policy.

It is not possible to appreciate the challenges facing the Union without an understanding of the dynamics of European cooperation in this field. An understanding

---

1. See Kori Schake (2002), *Constructive Duplication: Reducing EU Reliance on US Military Assetts,* Centre for European Reform, London, January 2002.

of the *politics* of European security and defence policy is therefore critical. The efforts to reach a political consensus on a 'security strategy' are of special interest in the present context, as the bulk of the necessary security and defence reforms depend on a clarification of the aims and objectives of the European Union as an international security actor.[2] The second part of the present chapter therefore proceeds with an analytical overview of the political landscape in Europe, as it relates to the current security and defence challenges facing the Union.

PRESENT SECURITY AND DEFENCE CHALLENGES

For the past decade, EU member states have attempted to come to terms with the new international security environment and to adapt their military strategies and force structures to the changing realities on the ground. This process has taken place at both the national and multinational levels, in cooperation with NATO allies and partner countries. The 1990s witnessed intense institutional jockeying by Western governments eager to influence the contours of the so-called European security architecture. In the immediate wake of the revolutionary changes of 1989, Western Europe and the United States worked feverishly to ensure the continuation of existing multilateral security institutions. As Robert J. Art has explained, Western governments feared that a weakening of these institutions would lead to an upsurge in nationalism and ultimately the re-nationalisation of defence and security.[3] In short, Western European governments continued to regard security as indivisible and consequently felt compelled to cooperate in order to achieve national security. Determined efforts were thus made to consolidate international

2. Jolyon Howorth (2000), 'European Integration and Defence: The Ultimate Challenge?', *Chaillot Paper*, no. 43, Paris: Institute for Security Studies, Western European Union, p. 62; William Wallace (2003) 'A Security Strategy for the EU?', *FORNET CFSP Forum*, vol. 1, issue 2, September 2003, pp. 3-4.
3. Robert J. Art (1996), 'Why Western Europe Needs the United States and NATO', *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 111, no.1, pp. 1-39.

cooperation in the European Community (later the European Union), NATO and the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE/OSCE).[4]

Notwithstanding the important achievements in terms of developing a common European security framework (i.e. the EU's Common European Foreign and Security Policy and NATO's European Security and Defence Identity), the United States and her Atlanticist allies in Europe have managed to retain NATO as the central military security organisation in Europe.[5] This process of institutional positioning was accompanied by attempts to formulate new strategic doctrines and defence policies for the Western allies. However, the rapidly changing security environment that characterised the 1990s was hardly conducive to the formulation of long-term security policies and strategies.[6] There was broad agreement that the existing force structures – geared as they were to a massive conventional war with the Warsaw Pact – were rapidly becoming obsolete. It was more difficult to agree on a suitable replacement, and after a decade of efforts to reform, only a handful of countries seem to have achieved anything resembling a comprehensive defence reform.

While the temptation to *re-nationalise* security and defence policy was strongly resisted in favour of continued multilateral security strategies, the European security 'architecture' never quite achieved the solidity implied by this metaphor. Moving from a system of collective defence (passive reaction) to one of collective security (active pro-action) presupposes the development of a political consensus on the positive values and objectives of the security community in question. This process proved more painful and complicated than envisaged, and is far from having been completed. In the absence of a political consensus on the goals and objectives of security cooperation, it is difficult to launch an effective and targeted

4. Marc Otte (2002), 'ESDP and Multilateral Security Organisations: Working with NATO, the UN, and OSCE', in Esther Brimmer (ed.), *The EU's Search for a Strategic Role: ESDP and its Implications for Transatlantic Relations*, Washington D.C.: Center for Transatlantic Relations, pp. 35-56.
5. Art (1996), op cit. See also Howorth (2002), op cit., section 1.2.
6. Howorth (2000), op cit., p. 22.

defence reform. There is strong agreement on the desirability of sustaining the existing cooperative frameworks, but a large part of the motivation would seem to be negative rather than positive (i.e. a fear of the alternatives rather than a positive agenda for action).

The Western community is facing a new range of threats and risks, which necessitates the development of new approaches to international security and the formulation of new security strategies. However, it is difficult to agree on the exact nature of these threats and how best to counter them. Notwithstanding the *indivisibility* of security, the distance between Washington D.C. and Brussels seems to have grown considerably within the past decade, and it is increasingly acknowledged that the Europeans need to develop their own platform for security and defence policy. It is this recognition which has led to the development of a security strategy to help guide the future workings of the ESDP.[7] The following presents an overview and discussion of central challenges facing the European Union in its efforts to implement the security strategy and strengthen its security and defence policy.

A common strategy for an uncommon actor

Perhaps the single most serious impediment to achieving progress on the ESDP has been the lack of a truly common strategic framework. As William Wallace emphasises, '[a] shared sense of global responsibilities, actual and potential threats and appropriate responses to those threats is an essential foundation for a coherent foreign policy'.[8] Achieving this 'commonality of purpose' is indispensable in overcoming the tyranny of the 15-cum-25 sovereign decision-makers in the EU. In a governance system that has no government, the best hope for achieving greater coherence and consistency is to create a common strategic framework that will inform the foreign and security policy thinking of the different member states.[9]

7. *European Security Strategy: A Secure Europe in a Better World*, Brussels, December 2003.
8. Wallace (2003), op cit., p. 3.
9. See Sevn Biscop and Rik Coolsaet (2003), *A European Security Concept for the 21st Century*, Royal Institute for International Relations (IRRI-KIIB), Brussels, October 2003.

After the policy divisions of autumn 2002 to spring 2003, there was a stronger recognition of the need for a common strategic outlook for the Union. The draft strategy presented by the High Representative of the CFSP, Dr Javier Solana, in June 2003 therefore received an enthusiastic welcome as a step in the right direction.

It is expected that, in time, the EU security strategy will develop into a broader security policy (more akin to the US National Security Strategy than to NATO's Strategic Concept).[10] However, it is clear that the EU cannot and will not recreate the type of military capacity that the United States has at its disposal. It will consequently have to develop a different and distinct approach to security and defence policy.[11] Still, for the first time ever, the EU has the contours of a common threat assessment, emphasising not only the security risks of the 1990s (such as regional instability), but also the threats emanating from terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and failed states.

At present, there is relatively little controversy over the contents of the security strategy. However, this could well be a consequence of the lack of any public *debate* over the substance of the document. The process of implementing the strategy and prioritising the security and defence policy is bound to provoke substantial disagreements between the member states. The latter may view security as indivisible, but the threats and risks that dominate the international security agenda are not necessarily ranked in the same manner in all European capitals. Middle-range powers like Poland and Spain have very different security concerns, just as small countries (e.g. Luxembourg) face a strategic environment that differs markedly from the environment facing larger countries (e.g. the UK).

10. S. Everts and D. Keohane (2003), 'The European Convention and EU Foreign Policy: Learning from Failure', *Survival*, vol. 45, no. 3, Autumn 2003, pp. 167-86, at p. 167.
11. Schake (2002), op. cit.; Gerd Föhrenbach (2002), 'Security through Enlargement: The Worldview Underlying ESDP', in Esther Brimmer (ed.), *The EU's Search for a Strategic Role: ESDP and its Implications for Transatlantic Relations*, Washington D.C.: Center for Transatlantic Relations, pp. 3-21, at p. 8.

Moving forward but looking backward: the problem of strategy

A famous quotation by the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard reads, 'Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards'. Much the same could arguably be said of strategic thinking: The most accurate security threat assessments are obviously ex-post rationalisations, but strategy must necessarily look forward into the unknown. Nonetheless our strategic thinking is invariably coloured by the past and whether we like it or not, we often do plan for the future by looking backwards.

The agenda of the Franco-British St. Malo Summit of December 1998 was thus heavily influenced by the crisis in Kosovo. The objectives were relatively clear: 1) To enable the European Union to act military when the United States, for whatever reason, is disinclined to do so; and 2) to supplement the civilian instruments of the EU with 'hard' military capabilities.[12] While the challenge issued at St. Malo certainly remains relevant, it has in some ways been overshadowed by the tragic events of September 11th 2001 and the ensuing struggle to combat international terrorism.[13] Security policy can no longer be construed as a primarily external activity centred on traditional military defence. A security strategy for the EU will thus have to be defined in an environment marked by rapid change and fundamental alterations to the way in which both Europe and United States 'think' security and defence policy.[14] The security strategy, with its focus on the terrorism-WMD-failed state nexus, is thus very much a product of its time and a reflection of the most recent security thinking.[15]

---

12. Lisbet Zilmer-Johns (2003), 'Dansk sikkerhedspolitisk profil: tilbage til Start?', *DIIS Report* 2003/1, Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies.
13. See Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen (2002), 'Turbulent Neighbourhoods: How to Deploy the EU's Rapid Reaction Force', *Contemporary Security Policy*, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 39-60; see p. 50 for further discussion.
14. Föhrenbach (2002), op cit., p. 11. See also the *Eleventh Report of the Select Committee on European Union*, the House of Lords, 29th January 2002 (http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk).
15. See Biscop & Coolseat (2003), op cit., pp. 3-4.

Developing a common security strategy for the EU is just the first step. The real challenge is to develop the capacity for the common strategic thinking that is necessary to continue developing and adapting the strategic outlook of the Union. The EU cannot hope to cover the security concerns of the 25 member states in a single document. The security strategy must be a generic document capable of generating flexible, common responses to a wide spectrum of unknown challenges that may or may not emerge. This quality does not reside in the document, but in the preceding process of conceptualisation and the subsequent process of interpretation.

Developing the EU's 'toolbox'

From one angle, the EU is arguably well positioned to confront the emerging security agenda, including the challenge of international terrorism. The EU has a broad range of politico-diplomatic and external economic tools that are arguably crucial in the campaign to eradicate or contain international terrorism.[16] It has a relatively well developed consultation and decision-making procedure, and over thirty years of experience in formulating common positions on issues related to the external relations of the EU.[17] From another angle, however, the European Union is facing a number of important constraints stemming from the institutional organisation of Europe and the inadequacy of its hard military capabilities.

The institutional constraints are related to the problems of coordination and coherence in the policies of the Union.[18] The efforts to identify and demolish socalled terrorist cells requires active cooperation at different levels of authority in the EU and the controlled coordination of policy areas that are regulated under very different institutional mechanisms (i.e. cross-pillar coordination between

16. Hans-Christian Hagman (2002), 'European Crisis Management and Defence: The Search for Capabilities', *Adelphi Paper* 353, International Institute for Strategic Studies, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 12.
17. Rasmussen (2002), op cit., pp. 40-1.
18. 'The European Union Security Strategy: Coherence and Capabilities', *Proceedings of the Stockholm Seminar*, 20th October 2003.

especially the second and third pillars of the Union).[19] In the words of the CFSP High Representative, Javier Solana, 'A more effective foreign and security policy begins with the political will to use all the available instruments in a coordinated and coherent way. […] We can use our diplomatic, economic, and financial muscle to influence the behaviour of recalcitrant parties and aggressors'.[20] There are thus substantial potential benefits from synchronising or coordinating the many faces of European foreign policy. The potential benefits are of special interest in light of the new security threats facing Europe (terrorism, regional instability, migration etc.). These threats are probably best handled through the use of both 'soft' and 'hard' power, that is, through a mixture of economic, political, and military instruments. The EU has most of the 'tools', but must learn to coordinate them better.

Arming the civilian superpower?

In terms of international engagements over conflict resolution and peacekeeping, the European Union and its member states are arguably pulling their weight, as compared to the United States.[21] The Europeans have provided more than eighty per cent of the ground forces that have been deployed in Kosovo and are shouldering a similar burden in terms of reconstruction and financial assistance. While the EU may be yet to realise its full potential as an international security actor, there can be no doubt that it does play a tremendously important role as an international civilian power. The EU is a 'heavyweight' in terms of international development assistance to the developing world and official assistance to countries

---

19. Andréani, Bertram and Grant warn of the danger of member states government effectively side-lining the European Commission in their efforts to develop the ESPD further. An isolated, inter-governmental ESDP will forego many of the potential advantages and synergies in strengthened cross-pillar cooperation in the field of security. See G. Andréani, C. Bertram, and C. Grant (2001), *Europe's Military Revolution*, London: Centre for European Reform, pp. 44, 52.

20. Javier Solana, 'Why Europe needs the military option', *Financial Times*, 29th September 2000.

21. A. Missiroli (2002), 'Counting Capabilities: What For?', in Esther Brimmer (ed.), *The EU's Search for a Strategic Role: ESDP and its Implications for Transatlantic Relations*, Washington D.C.: Center for Transatlantic Relations (pp. 57-66), at pp. 63-4; B. Tertrais (2002), 'ESDP and Global Security Challenges: Will There be a "Division of Labour" Between Europe and the United State?', in Esther Brimmer (ed.), ibid., pp. 117-18; Hagman (2002), op cit., pp. 51-2.

in transition. The sheer economic and political importance of the EU makes it an anchor of stability in Europe, promoting international stability and respect for democracy and the rule of law. However, the EU's contribution as a civilian power arguably presupposes the existence of a military power, able and willing to pave the way for subsequent civilian efforts to have an impact. In the present international system, this implies a marked dependency on the United States.

Efforts are being made to address the lack of 'military muscle' by developing a stronger and more coherent European capacity to project military force. Leaving aside divergent political views on the desirability of actually 'arming' the EU (and the disagreements over the political aims of such a process), some fundamentals are relatively clear. If the European Union is to be able to engage effectively in military interventions outside the European mainland, substantial reforms and investments are necessary. Notwithstanding the creation of a European rapid re-action force of up to 60,000 men,[22] the fact remains that humanitarian interventions, crisis management, projection of stabilisation forces and extraction of EU citizens is currently impossible without the active involvement of the United States or – as an absolute minimum – Great Britain and France.[23] This implies that the international projection of force (and consequently the protection of the interests, values and ideals of the European and the international community) depends on the active interest of a very limited number of states in the international system.

22. Cf. the 1999 ESDP headline goal of 50-60,000 men (up to fifteen brigades) plus air and naval forces. The force should be sustainable for at least twelve months, implying (with rotation and national support) a commitment of up to 350,000 European troops. See Hagman (2002), op cit., p. 36. Other estimates are somewhat lower (see e.g. Rasmussen (2002), op cit., p. 42; Howorth (2000), op cit., p. 38). Such estimates are obviously subject to uncertainty, dependent as they are on the criteria employed in calculating direct and indirect support.

23. See Hagman (2002), op cit., pp. 45-9 for an assessment of the different scenarios. See also D. Keohane, 'Moving the Goalposts', *The Parliament Magazine*, September 22nd 2003. See also Wallace (2003), op cit., and Sir Michael Quinlan (2003), 'European Defence and the Western Alliance After Iraq', *FORNET CFSP Forum*, vol. 1, issue 2, September 2003, pp. 4-8.

Equipping the European Union with even a modest capacity for military force projection is a tremendous challenge. As a 2001 Rand study emphasised, 'thus far, the rhetoric behind the ESDP has proceeded far more rapidly than has the acquisition of the resources required to turn the concept into a reality, whether through the provision of additional resources or the reallocation of existing resources.'[24] While there may be a near-consensus on the *desirability* of giving some substance to the ESDP in terms of operational capabilities, the issue does raise a number of highly controversial political questions in Europe. The political controversy surrounding especially the ends – but also the means – of the ESDP has resulted in series of half-hearted political compromises that have so far failed to address the core issues of European security and defence. As Wallace cynically sums up the Helsinki Headline Goal, 'The declared objective was to create a force without any explicit purpose, ready for deployment to undeclared lands, in response to undefined threats. Hardly surprisingly, most national parliaments felt no sense of urgency in meeting Helsinki's declared goals.'[25]

There is consequently a growing discrepancy between the emerging threats and challenges that are likely to dominate the international security agenda in the coming years, and current European defence postures. 'The national interests of Germany are now being defended at the Hindukush', claimed the German Minister of Defence, Peter Struck, in an interview, begging the question of why Germany is still unable to deploy her military forces on the new front lines. Following the end of the Cold War, only a handful of European countries have managed to launch comprehensive defence reforms. The vast majority have settled for a less ambitious policy of 'muddling through'.[26] Ad hoc austerity measures and piece-meal 'across-

24. Charles Wolf Jr., and Benjamin Zycher (2001), European *Military Prospects, Economic Constraints, and the Rapid Reaction Force*, Santa Monica: RAND Corporation. The same study estimates that the ESDP/Rapid Reaction Force would cost anywhere in between $24 billion and $56 billion, counting only investments, while excluding operations and maintenance. See also Quinlan (2003), op cit.
25. Wallace (2003), op cit.
26. See e.g. István Gyarmati and Theodor Winkler (eds.) (2002), *Post-Cold War Defense Reform*, Washington D.C.: Brassey's Inc. See also Andréani, Bertram and Grant (2001), op cit., p. 54.

the-board' cost reductions have left most European states with armed forces that are reduced in size, but not yet reformed so as to engage the new security environment effectively. Ironically, the passing of the Cold War has in fact made the use of military force much more probable. The rigidity of the former bipolar system has been replaced by a much more fluid and indeterminate international distribution of power. Limited wars and armed conflicts that were near-unthinkable during the Cold War have materialised, prompting a re-evaluation of security thinking, policy and strategy. An efficient military capacity is becoming increasingly important for overall foreign policy and diplomacy. In the words of NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson:

> 'The days of planning for massive armored clashes in the Fulda Gap are behind us. Today, we need forces that can move fast, adjust quickly to changing requirements, hit hard, and then stay in the theater for as long as it takes to get the job done: this means that today military forces must be mobile, flexible, effective at engagement, and sustainable in theater.'[27]

At a time when the need for the projection of international military force seems to become ever more apparent, most European states have sought to cash in on the so-called 'peace dividend'. A common short-term solution to this dilemma has been the development of dual defence structures: traditional armed forces trained and equipped for territorial defence within the NATO framework have been supplemented with international 'rapid reaction forces' that can operate under different lines of national and international authority. Some of the savings realised through massive force reductions in terms of territorial defence have thus been redirected towards more modern, internationally deployable forces. The European trend is thus towards reduced territorial mass armies co-existing with smaller international units.

---

27. Lord Robertson, January 31st 2000 (quoted in Faupin, Alain (2002), 'Defense Sector Reform: The French Case Study', in István Gyarmati and Theodor Winkler (eds.), *Post-Cold War Defense Reform*, Washington D.C.: Brassey's Inc. (pp. 44-60), at p. 56).

However, given the limited funding that is made available, these dual structures are hardly sustainable.[28] While traditional armed forces are becoming increasingly symbolic, the capacity for international force projection is severely limited. In a number of European countries, the territorial armed forces have become incapable of mounting a concerted and credible national defence.[29] Reduced funding is being spread ever more thinly among armed forces that were originally developed in accordance with the concept of comprehensive territorial defence (including typically an army, navy, air force and home guard, in addition to civilian staff). Limited funding is simultaneously being invested in modern military units designed and trained for international assignments (and triple-hatted for NATO, UN and EU operations).[30] With falling or stagnating defence budgets, however, only a handful of European countries have the infrastructure to deploy these units effectively[31] – a fairly inefficient allocation of resources, reflecting an inability or unwillingness to define the future rationale of the armed forces in Europe.

Safeguarding the 'transatlantic link'

The recent US-led campaign against the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein was a disturbing demonstration of the widening gap in military technology between the United States and her closest ally, the United Kingdom. If the UK is finding it increasingly difficult to cooperate effectively with the United States in military operations, it has probably already become impossible for the majority of the European members of the NATO Alliance.[32] While the United States has invested heavily in recent years in the so-called 'Revolution in Military Affairs', her Euro-

---

28. Quinlan (2003), op cit., p. 7.

29. See Ralph Thiele (2002), 'Projecting European Power: A European View', in Esther Brimmer (ed.), *The EU's Search for a Strategic Role: ESDP and its Implications for Transatlantic Relations*, Washington D.C.: Center for Transatlantic Relations (pp. 67-82), at p. 67.

30. See Daniel Keohane, 'Moving the Goalposts', op cit.

31. See Hagman (2002), op cit., p. 37. See also Daniel Keohane, 'A Lack of Military Muscle', *The Parliament Magazine*, March 10th 2003, pp. 24-5

32. Schake (2002), op cit., p. 8. See also *Future Military Coalitions* (2002), 'The Transatlantic Challenge', September 2002, U.S.-CREST, US Center for Research and Education on Strategy and Technology, Arlington, pp. 12-13.

pean allies have been falling ever further behind.[33] This widening gap is gradually undermining the NATO Alliance as an effective vehicle for pro-active military action outside the European mainland.

The emerging trend of US-led 'coalitions of the willing' (Afghanistan, Iraq) raises a number of difficult questions for the present allies of the United States. The 'coalitions' are extremely asymmetric, the auxiliary contingents becoming less and less compatible with US forces and consequently being relegated to an increasingly symbolic role. At the same time, the decision to join a given US-led coalition (the arguments in favour often being quite compelling from a political point of view) often has a detrimental impact on the overall sustainability of the armed forces of the contributing nation. For example, it has been estimated that the UK's participation in the most recent Gulf War has in fact swallowed up the equivalent of the national defence budget for two years to come, effectively preventing the UK from undertaking a similar undertaking in the foreseeable future.[34] In order to fit in with ad hoc US-led coalitions, junior partners are being forced to stretch their forces and financial resources to the limit, thus complicating long-term planning efforts. The European NATO allies remain an important political resource for the United States. However, despite recent efforts to bolster practical cooperation and interoperability (e.g. the Prague Capabilities Commitment and the NATO Response Force), Europe's relevance in terms of modern military fighting capacity is falling drastically behind.[35]

---

33. Schake (2002), op cit.; Otte (2002), op cit.; Rasmussen (2002), op cit., p. 42. See also Klaus Naumann (2003), 'The New Enlarging NATO: Quo Vadis?', in Bertel Heurlin and Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen (eds.), *Challenges and Capabilities: NATO in the 21st Century*, Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies. For a less pessimistic assessment, see *Future Military Coalitions* (2002), cit.

34. Keynote lecture given by Dr Christopher Coker, London School of Economics and Political Science, at the DIIS seminar on the Future of Defence Policy, Friday May 2nd 2003, Danish Institute of International Studies, Copenhagen.

35. There are, however, significant differences between European countries, with the United Kingdom and France being in the lead. See *Future Military Coalitions* (2002), op cit. See also Jacques Isnard, 'A l'OTAN, des responsables américains louent le savoir-faire de l'armée française', *Le Monde*, October 8th 2003.

The American strategy of 'shock and awe' probably had the strongest political impact in Europe. It provided a sobering experience, influencing current thinking on the necessity and desirability of strengthening the European Union as a security actor.[36] If the European members of the NATO Alliance are intent on safeguarding the traditional 'transatlantic link', i.e. ensuring a continued dynamic partnership with the United States, they will have to strengthen their military potential. The European Union and its member states is an invaluable strategic partner of the US in terms of reconstruction and socio-economic development, but, lacking the ability to make meaningful contributions to military campaigns, the Europeans are being forced to accept a secondary role in shaping international security developments. This division of labour (military-civilian) is hardly in the interest of the Europeans, who will be left looking on from the sidelines. This cannot be in the interest of the United States, whose military expenditure is already stretched to the limit. And it is certainly not in the interest of the 'partnership' between the two continents, which is becoming increasingly lopsided.[37] The comparative advantages of Europe and the United States may in principle be complementary, but in practice this need not be the case.[38]

Summary: Europe at a crossroads?

European politicians have always had an extraordinary ability to avoid or postpone fundamental debates and decisions about the so-called *finalité politique* of the European integration project. The European integration process has arguably always functioned best without a clear understanding of the ultimate political

36. A process that had already begun after the first Gulf War and which gained further momentum in connection with the painful experience of European powerlessness during the tragedy in ex-Yugoslavia. See Andréani, Bertram and Grant (2001), op cit., pp. 53, 54.

37. Föhrenbach (2002), op cit., pp. 13-14. See also Howorth (2000), op cit., p. 76; Daniel Keohane, 'A Lack of Military Muscle', op cit., pp. 24-5.

38. See e.g. *Future Military Coalitions* (2002), op cit.: 'A "division of labour" approach to coalition operations would constitute a flawed and counterproductive operational solution to the failure to address transatlantic cooperability issues' (p. 37). This approach, which is arguably an attempt to make a virtue of necessity, is simply not an option. See also Andréani, Bertram and Grant (2001), op cit., p. 76.

objectives of the Union.[39] The open-ended nature of the integration process has made it possible for the different member states and the different national and transnational political movements to identify with the efforts to develop the European integration project further. It is therefore somewhat misleading to speak of the European Union as being at a crossroads. The EU embodies a number of very different projects for different political groups in Europe. In some ways, it is confronted with a perpetual crossroads: either to move forward towards increased – but politically ambiguous – European cooperation, or to slide backwards, thus weakening the integration process. Hence the political image of the European integration process as a bicycle that must keep moving forward in order not to come to complete stop.[40] The ultimate destination, though, remains unclear.

In the present context, however, the notion that the EU is at a crossroads is being evoked in a more limited but also more focused sense. The basic argument is that the European Union and its member states are faced with a number of fundamental challenges in terms of security and defence. These challenges are slowly eroding the status quo and will eventually force the Union and its member states to institute more fundamental security and defence reforms. At present, the Union and its member states are ill equipped to tackle the emerging international security agenda. They lack a common strategic outlook, and most European military force postures are outdated and inappropriate for the types of assignment that are emerging and that are likely to emerge in the years to come. Given the rapidly rising costs of research and technology intensive military hardware, the Europeans

39. Cf. Alfred Van Staden, Kees Homan, Bert Kreemers, Alfred Pijpers, and Rob de Wijk (2000), *Towards a European Strategic Concept*, The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 'Clingendael', pp. 5-6, who suggest that a certain 'studied imprecision' surrounds the ESDP. Cf. also Robin Niblett (1997), 'The European Disunion: Competing Visions of Integration', *The Washington Quarterly*, vol. 20, no. 1, Winter 1997, pp. 91-108, quoting former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing: '[I]f the European Community has succeeded in surviving and, even, in making some progress, this has always been at the price of maintaining a persistent ambiguity as to its ultimate destination' (p. 91).

40. The image was originally suggested by Walter Hallstein, the first President of the European Commission.

are being more or less forced to increase their military cooperation (possibly, but not necessarily, within the EU). These structural changes open up new possibilities in terms of further developing the Union's common security and defence policy.

However, developing common European responses to current security and defence challenges is a tremendous political undertaking. The issues involved are politically contentious, and it will be difficult to reach a consensus on the form and substance of a common security and defence policy. As Marc Otte stresses, '[T]wo kinds of gaps have to be filled: the first is a transatlantic one [i.e. the widening capability gap]; the other is a gap among Europeans themselves [i.e. the strategic policy gap]'.[41] Developing a common political vision of the EU as security actor and mobilising the resources required to implement this vision are the most formidable political challenges facing the European Union today.

ANALYSING THE POLITICS OF THE EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

In order to appreciate the character of the challenges facing the Union and to assess the Union's ability to meet them, it is necessary to understand the dynamics of European cooperation in this field. Different theoretical assumptions about the EU will lead to different expectations as to its capacity for strategic action and thus to different assessments of the potential for actually strengthening the ESDP.

The efforts to develop a ESDP can be seen as a logical outgrowth of the European integration process. In this view, economic integration led to the abolition of barriers and restrictions on the free movement of goods, labour and capital. This type of integration saw the establishment of new common policies, such as the Common Commercial Policy. The introduction of common policies has strength-

---

41. Otte (2002), op cit., p. 52. See also Thiele (2002), op cit., p. 80, on the technological and strategic policy gaps.

ened the international presence of the European Community and its successor, the European Union, which in turn has spurred a rise in expectations on the part of the outside world. Economic integration and increasing international expectations have forced the Union to develop common external policies, including a Common Foreign and Security Policy. The achievements of the past can only be consolidated by further strengthening the process of political and economic integration. In this perspective, the ESDP is an integral part of the European integration dynamic: for better or for worse, the EU is an international actor whose policies and actions have wide-ranging consequences for the international system as a whole. In order to assume the responsibilities that its economic and political influence gives it, the Union must also strengthen its ability to act as an international security actor.

The alternative approach places greater emphasis on the member states and their national interests. In this perspective, the ESDP is first and foremost a *political* creature. It is not the logical and inevitable outgrowth of European integration, a so-called 'functional' spill-over from increasing economic cooperation. On the contrary, it is a political process driven by individual EU member states, who are motivated by a multitude of factors and are therefore not necessarily pursuing the same or even similar objectives. The effectiveness and efficiency of the CFSP and the ESDP will therefore not improve markedly unless there is political agreement on the need for a stronger Europe in international affairs (i.e. 'policy convergence').

This traditional debate between (neo)functionalist and intergovernmentalist theories of European integration is arguably somewhat dated, but these differences of approach are still influencing the theoretical debate. Analytical approaches that conceptualise the Union as a relatively coherent actor (i.e. focusing on the whole rather than the individual parts)[42] can thus be juxtaposed to theoretical approaches that work from the bottom-up (i.e. focusing on the units rather than the whole). Similarly, while some researchers assume that the national interests of member states are inextricably

---

42. See e.g. Hazel Smith (2002) *European Union Foreign Policy: What it is and what it does*, London: Pluto Press; C. Bretherton and J. Vogler (1999), *The European Union as a Global Actor*, London: Routledge.

linked with the Europeanization process, [43] others maintain that the preference formation is exogenous (i.e. prior to and distinct from the process of integration).

Notwithstanding the richness of the theoretical debates in this field, it is fair to say that most explanatory frameworks emphasise the interests and actions of the member states. No one will deny that the political interests and policies of the member states are a *necessary* – if not *sufficient* – explanatory variable in explaining European efforts in the field of security and defence policy. In order to understand the potentials and limits of the ESDP, therefore, it is necessary to understand the political forces at work in the current European landscape.

The political landscape

As suggested above, Europe would seem to be at a historical crossroads, forced to make a number of important decisions, whether to safeguard what is or to create something new.

While the idea of a distinct *national-territorial* defence is on the retreat, [44] most countries insist on maintaining the basic contours of a traditional territorial defence and would consequently shun the idea of developing integrated defence frameworks under a multinational command. In some ways, the typical European nation state is arguably locked in an inefficient local optimum: the defence posture is inadequate to mount a credible national defence, but still sufficiently important to quell critical questioning of the rationale of 'mini-mass armies' organised on a national scale.[45] Basically, if Europe wants to make efficient use of armed forces on a larger scale, the

---

43. See e.g. Ben Tonra (2001), *The Europeanisation of National Foreign Policy*, Ashgate, Aldershot.

44. The costs involved in mounting a credible, national defence against an armed external aggressor are simply prohibitive when compared to the likelihood of the event actually materialising. See also *Future Military Coalitions* (2002), op cit., pp. 1-2, on the general differences between US and European willingness to accept vulnerability and risk.

45. Hagman (2002), op cit., p. 62: '[T]he cuts in European defence expenditure throughout much of the 1990s have obviously not been severe enough to force governments into far-reaching multinational cooperation, the pooling of assets and capabilities, role specialisation or the fundamental rationalisation of defence industries.' See also Andréani, Bertram and Grant (2001), op cit., p. 64.

member states will have to invest more nationally and pool their resources at the multinational level.

Current security thinking in Europe shows elements of both continuity and change. National positions have evolved significantly during the past decade, making it difficult – or perhaps, rather, potentially misleading – to present a 'snapshot' overview of current positions. [46] The political debate on the ESDP has arguably become increasingly 'European' in that the same fundamental questions are being raised across the continent. Instead of discussing the parameters of the national debate in individual member states, what follows is an attempt to define the main lines of thought at the macro-European level by critically examining existing approaches to and classifications of the European security debate.

'Old' and 'New' Europe

The US Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld, provoked his European audience when, at a press conference in early 2003, he suggested that there was now a political divide between Western Europe ('Old' Europe, signifying essentially France and Germany) and Central and Eastern Europe ('New' Europe, Poland being its main representative). Whereas 'Old' Europe was becoming increasingly lethargic, 'New' Europe was ready to assume its responsibility in the global struggle against terrorism and rogue states. [47]

---

46. See Howorth (2000), op cit, p. 53, who argues that 'there were, throughout the debates on ESDP, no clearly definable "camps". Each country adopted a position on each separate problem which combined realist or rational choice national interests, historical-institutional specificities and the cultural values and norms appropriate to its historical and social traditions. It is really impossible and in any case inappropriate to try to put these countries into "camps" – other than in the most simplistic terms of Europeanism/Atlanticism as defined by the Franco-British couple'.

47. The statement came on January 22nd 2003 at a high point of the Iraq crisis in a dialogue with the media. A journalist had asked the Defence Secretary about the opposition of France and Germany to the war, to which Rumsfeld replied: 'Now you are thinking of Europe as Germany and France. I don't. I think that's old Europe. If you look at the entire NATO Europe today, the centre of gravity is shifting to the east and there are a lot of new members. And if you just take the list of all the members of NATO and all of those who are invited in recently – what is it, 26, something like that? [But] you are right. Germany has been a problem, and France has been a problem'.

Notwithstanding the fact that a large proportion of the supposedly 'Old' Europe is arguably 'New' (i.e. Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Denmark, and Spain) were closer to the Polish policy response than to the Franco-German reaction), Rumsfeld's distinction did have some political resonance. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe are still in the midst of a massive process of political and economic transition. They are highly dependent upon the goodwill of Western governments and are thus essentially *demandeurs* in the present international system. They have to accept whatever is on offer and are not really in a position to challenge the decisions made by Western governments, especially the US government.

For the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the internal Western divisions over Iraq were a source of considerable tension, since it forced them to choose between their main allies. However, unpleasant though this may have been, the decision to support the US-led coalition was hardly surprising. For one thing, the majority of the Central and Eastern Europe countries had achieved a relatively satisfactory (if not generous) accession deal with the European Union at the December Summit in Copenhagen. They had the accession deal (and were thus outside the reach of any immediate 'carrots' or 'sticks'), but were still 'outside' the EU (and therefore under less peer pressure from their future partners).[48] In addition, a number of the older EU members were already part of the US-led coalition, thus lessening the dilemma for their eastern neighbours. Finally, in matters involving hard military security, they can hardly be faulted for placing greater confidence in the security guarantees of the United States than the political declarations of the Union.

The political significance of the divisions that arose during the Iraqi crisis can easily be overstated. This was never a division between an 'Old' and a 'New' Europe – assuming that these adjectives mean anything. The political debacle over the war in Iraq was extreme, as were the positions adopted by the Western governments. The

48. Kirsty Hughes, 'Is there a New Europe?', *BBC News On-line*, June 16th 2003.

countries of Central and Eastern Europe are no less European and no more 'pro-Atlanticist' than the average West European government.[49]

Europeanists vs. Atlanticists

In the decade following the reunification of Germany, the debate on European security was often cast in terms of an opposition between Europeanists and Atlanticists, i.e. those favouring the development of an independent security and defence capacity for the EU, and those preferring a continued reliance on the NATO alliance. As discussed above, this distinction is becoming increasingly irrelevant. No European government advocates the development of a European security and defence policy that is wholly autonomous of NATO and the United States. All European governments acknowledge the necessity of continuing and even strengthening security and defence cooperation with the United States.[50] At the same time, European governments seem in principle to have accepted the need to strengthen the 'European' contribution to the Western security community (i.e. strengthening the military capabilities of the European allies).[51]

The staunchest proponent of a distinct European voice in international security and defence has traditionally been France, and this objective is certainly still present in French foreign policy thinking (as shown by the calls for a multipolar system, with the EU acting as a counterweight to the United States).[52] However, an equally important element in French strategic thinking has arguably been its pragmatic acceptance of the fundamental power differentials between Europe and the United States. Paris has always been conscious of the limitations inherent in the European approach (if for no other reason than because France herself was never willing to

49. Kirsty Hughes: 'Is there a New Europe?', *BBC News On-line*, Monday June 16th 2003; see also 'Elargissement', *Le Monde*, Monday June 16th 2003. See also more generally A. Missiroli (2002) 'Conclusions' in Antonio Missiroli (Ed.) 'Bigger EU, Wider CFSP, Stronger ESDP?', *IIS Occasional Paper*, No. 34, April 2002 (pp. 58-64) p. 62.
50. On this policy convergence in Europe, see e.g. Andréani, Bertram and Grant (2001) op cit.: 13 ff., 37.
51. Whether this commitment 'in principle' will be implemented 'in fact' remains to be seen. On the convergence of European security thinking, see *Future Military Coalitions* (2002), pp. 1-3.
52. Claire Tréan, 'Chirac-Villepin, un premier bilan de leur politique étrangère', *Le Monde*, June 16th 2003.

compromise her own sovereignty and independence in this field). French thinking has certainly evolved markedly during the past decade, as exemplified by the strong presumption of several observers that France would eventually have supported the US-led coalition in the most recent Gulf War.[53] Notwithstanding the inflated rhetoric of the transatlantic skirmish, the French government is presumably well aware of the necessity of continued cooperation with the United States in the field of security and defence policy.[54] Similarly, the French government clearly recognises that the ESDP depends on the active participation of the United Kingdom.[55]

The British government, on the other hand, has come to accept the need for stronger European cooperation on security and defence policy. The United Kingdom has been one of the firmest supporters of the 'transatlantic link' and the primacy of the NATO alliance. The British government has made it absolutely clear that it would not accept any European plans or ideas that could serve to weaken the ties across the Atlantic. However, it has simultaneously become more interested in the possibility of equipping the European Union with a credible military capacity, seeing a stronger ESDP as a European contribution to maintaining the 'transatlantic link.'[56] With the French *rapprochement* to the NATO alliance and the American insistence that the European allies should shoulder a larger part of the security and defence burden, the idea of an ESDP has gradually become more palatable to the British government.

Following the launch of the US-led war against international terrorism, the United Kingdom appears to be giving a higher priority to bilateral security and defence cooperation with the United States, as reflected in the sizeable British contributions to the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. However, the British government

53. According to Stanley Hoffmann, the French President had actually earmarked troops for participation should the UN weapons inspectors find evidence of weapons of mass destruction. See Stanley Hoffmann, 'America goes Backward', *New York Review of Books*, Vol. 50, No. 10, June 12th 2003.
54. See Claire Tréan, op cit. See also Howorth (2000), op cit., pp. 12-22; Andréani, Bertram and Grant (2001), op cit., p. 13.
55. Charles Grant (2004), 'Stumbling Torwards Unity', *Global Agenda*.
56. Howorth (2000), op cit., p. 29.

has laboured intensively since the end of the Iraq campaign to repair its strained relationship with France and Germany. These diplomatic efforts culminated in December 2003 in what appeared to be a new trilateral agreement on the future development of the ESDP.[57]

Germany has also moved considerably during the past decade. In connection with the most recent Gulf War, the German government was castigated for its un-willingness to support or condone the US-led coalition, provoking both national and international debate about the responsibility and 'proper role' of Germany in the new Europe. In spite of the similarities between the German positions in the Gulf Wars of 1990-91 and 2003, it should be noted that Germany has in fact abandoned its former policy of non-intervention by sanctioning the deployment of ground troops outside German territory. Chancellor Schröder's coalition govern-ment thus committed combat aircraft to NATO's 1999 Serbia campaign and stationed over 8,000 troops in Bosnia and Kosovo in 2000.[58] German troops have also been deployed in both Macedonia (over 1,000) and most recently in Afghani-stan (almost 3,000 pledged, including approximately 300 special forces). Also, Ger-man naval forces are current deployed off the coast of Djibouti. More generally, the German government has bolstered its force projection capability, which would be of immense importance in possible future EU-led military operations.[59]

The traditional labels of 'Europeanist' and 'Atlanticist' are thus becoming ever less applicable in Europe. In the aftermath of the wars in the Balkans and the most recent Gulf War, European governments have been forced to reassess policies and positions adopted following the ending of the Cold War. The current debate is not between positions at the ends of a continuum, but rather in the middle ground, between Europeanists who accept the necessity of working with the United States and Atlanticists who accept the necessity of working through the European Union.

57. Charles Grant (2004), op cit.
58. Andréani, Bertram & Grant (2001), op cit., p. 13.
59. *Eleventh Report of the Select Committee on European Union*, the House of Lords, op cit.

Neutrality and pacifism vs. expeditionary activism

A different approach to the ESDP centres on strategic culture. The basic argument is that '[i]f the ESDP is to be used as an active instrument …, there has to be a under-lying agreement among the participating countries about the nature of the world and about how to react in accordance with this perception of the world'.[60] In this view, this 'underlying agreement' would become the strategic culture of the ESDP, and the central question is therefore whether the strategic cultures of the EU's current and future member states are compatible.[61]

Seen from this angle, the members of the European Union are a very diverse group. The United Kingdom and France have traditionally been posited as military activists, with a history of global military engagements.[62] They both have relatively strong armed forces and a certain capacity to project force internationally (witness their operations in Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast respectively). More importantly, they have demonstrated a *willingness* to use military force in international politics. In spite of the harsh allegations levelled against France for her reluctance to endorse an invasion of Iraq in early 2003, few would claim that France is a pacifist nation.

Germany, on the other hand, is often portrayed as the exact opposite of France and the United Kingdom, a pacifist, inward-looking nation that has forsaken the use of military force. Notwithstanding the 1994 ruling of the Constitutional Court establishing the constitutionality of out-of-area deployment, German strategic culture remains essentially defensive and arguably also anti-militaristic. When confronted with negative opinion polls in the run-up to the fall 2002 national elec-

---

60. Stine Heiselberg (2003), 'Pacifism or Activism: Towards a Common Strategic Culture within the European Security and Defence Policy?', *DIIS Working Paper* 2003/4, Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, p. 3.
61. See also Howorth (2000), op cit., pp. 42-4 and R.A. Lutz Ellehus (2001), 'Multinational Solutions vs. Intra-Alliance Specialization', *Report* 2002/5, Copenhagen: Danish Institute of International Affairs, DUPI, p. 8.
62. *Future Military Coalitions* (2003), op cit., pp. 2-3.

tions, Chancellor Schröder embarked on a campaign of open opposition to US sabre-rattling vis-à-vis Iraq. The gamble paid off, with German antipathy towards war translating into an SPD majority on polling day.[63] German strategic culture may be undergoing changes currently,[64] but its evolution is likely to be slow and gradual.

The Scandinavian countries represent another tradition altogether, typically described as pacifistic and non-aligned. However, there are significant differences between the different Nordic countries, and national positions have changed considerably since the passing of the Cold War. In the course of a decade, Denmark has changed from being a 'reluctant ally' to being an active participant in international military operations, not just at the lower end of the Petersberg tasks, but also including armed conflict (Afghanistan) and actual warfare (Iraq).[65] Sharing more than 1,000 kilometres of border with Russia, Finland is arguably the Scandinavian country whose security and defence policy has changed the least following the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. Finland continues to rely on a national-territorial defence posture coupled with an international commitment to peace-keeping operations. Similarly, Sweden maintains a policy of armed non-alignment coupled with a strong tradition of international activism within the framework of the United Nations. Finnish and Swedish international activism is primarily concentrated at the lower end of the Petersberg tasks, with a strong preference for conflict-prevention and peace-keeping.

The states that are about to join the European Union are, for obvious reasons, slightly more difficult to categorise in terms of strategic culture. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe are undergoing tremendous changes currently, with wide-ranging defence reforms gradually being implemented. The past is presumably a poor guide to their future strategic orientation, but a number of observa-

---

63. Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen (2003), 'Gulf War: The German Resistance', *Survival*, vol. 45, no. 1, Spring, pp. 99-116.
64. See e.g. Heiselberg (2003), op cit..
65. Zilmer-Johns (2003), op cit.

tions are nevertheless warranted. With extremely limited military capabilities, the Central and Eastern European Countries have no choice but to rely on international military cooperation. While Czechoslovakia briefly contemplated a number of different scenarios of armed neutrality, the fact remains that none of these countries are capable of mounting a credible territorial defence. NATO thinking is having a strong influence on the defence reforms currently taking place in Central and Eastern Europe. Given that they are now continuously 'rubbing shoulders' with mainstream Euro-Atlantic defence structures and strategic thinking, the emerging military establishments in the region are likely to develop a more activist international orientation than a fair number of the current members of the European Union.

The changing security environment is bound to have an impact on the strategic cultures of both current and future EU member states. There is a discernible convergence at the level of security and defence policy, centred on NATO's 1999 Strategic Concept (calling for more flexible and deployable capabilities). However, it remains to be seen whether these changes will lead to mutually compatible national strategic cultures, thus facilitating the evolution of a common European strategic culture.

The different theoretical approaches to the political landscape in Europe have one important thing in common: They are relatively open-ended, signalling significant changes in the politics of European security and defence policy. Standard concepts and assumptions that previously offered a fairly sensible assessment of different national positions are no longer adequate. There are obviously important elements of continuity, but the policy changes that can be witnessed point to increasing common ground between the actors within the ESDP and thus new opportunities for increased cooperation in the field of security and defence.

Summary

The European Union and its member states are facing a number of serious challenges in the field of security and defence policy. The existing frameworks and commitments are best seen as the result of interim compromises, and Europeans

will sooner or later have to make some difficult decisions about how to strengthen their international military capacity. New security threats, the need for new and improved military hardware and the changing dynamics of international security cooperation rule out the possibility of continuing with 'business as usual'. Transforming the European Union into a credible and effective international power will require difficult decisions.

Whether the EU and its member states will rise to the challenge is another matter. The past decade has witnessed significant movements in the European political landscape. The relative stability of the earlier bipolar system has given way to a rapidly changing strategic environment, while the positions adopted during the Cold War have changed significantly as a consequence of the momentous changes in the international security environment. Western European governments are still trying to come to terms with the new security challenges and their policies, and outlooks are consequently more ambiguous and open than they have been for years. The subsequent chapters will shed more light on the progress achieved, and the possibilities and limitations of the ESDP.