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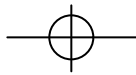
## ESDP and the Structure of World Power

Barry R. Posen\*

Disputes within the transatlantic alliance over the necessity and timing of the 2003 US-led war with Iraq and the modalities of the reconstruction of that country have produced doubts about the future of transatlantic relations. This article will consider this future from a theoretical point of view: what does "realism," the oldest and (arguably) most reliable theory of international politics, suggest about the future of transatlantic relations? What are the larger forces that shape this issue? These questions will be examined in light of one of the more peculiar developments of the last decade: the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Why does the EU, absent the Soviet Union, and largely sheltered under the umbrella of the mighty United States, choose to spend time and resources on such a project?

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## 6 ESDP and the Structure of World Power

### Structural realism and unipolarity

#### Tenets of realism

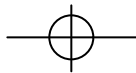
In its modern guise, "structural realism" is an analytical, not a prescriptive theory. It tells us a little bit about how international politics, especially great power politics, works. Structural realism depicts the world as an anarchy – a domain without a sovereign. In that domain, states must look to themselves to survive. Because no sovereign can prevent states from doing what they are able to do in international politics, war is possible. The key to survival in war is military power, generated either internally or through alliances, usually both. States care very much about their relative power position because power is the key to survival. They try to increase their power when they believe they can do so without too much risk. They try especially hard to preserve the power they have. Because war is a competition, power is relative. One power's position can deteriorate due to another power's domestic or foreign success. When another power increases its capacities through either internal or external efforts, others have incentives to look to their own position. Structural realism does not predict that all powers will behave this way all the time, but those who do will likely survive and those who do not will likely suffer and perhaps disappear from history.<sup>1</sup>

States that get the message may choose from an array of possible strategies – all problematic. States of the first rank are generally expected to balance against the greatest powers, figuring that failure to look to their own capacities will invite future predation.<sup>2</sup> They will build up their capabilities and form balancing alliances. Sometimes, however, great powers may choose to pass the buck, that is, look to their own national capacities to the extent that they can but hope, bet or scheme to get other great powers to shoulder the majority of the risks and costs of containing the greatest power.<sup>3</sup> If one state expands its power, others may try to bandwagon with it in the hopes of getting a good deal. Realists on the whole expect small, weak states to band-

<sup>1</sup> On realism, see K. N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA.: Addison-Wesley, 1979) pp. 102-28; J. J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001) pp. 29-54.

<sup>2</sup> This is Kenneth Waltz's central prediction. Speaking of the anarchical condition of international politics, he observes, "A self-help system is one in which those who do not help themselves, or who do so less effectively than others, will fail to prosper, will lay themselves open to dangers, will suffer. Fear of such unwanted consequences stimulates state to behave in ways that tend toward the creation of balances of power." Waltz, *Theory of International politics*, p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> On buckpassing, see Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, pp. 157-62.



wagon because they have little choice.<sup>4</sup> Some second rank, but still consequential powers may also bandwagon with the greatest states in a gamble to improve their own positions.<sup>5</sup> On the whole, realist theorists and their critics continue to debate which of these strategies is more common, and which nations prefer which strategies. All the behaviours are observed, but unless the ultimate failure of all aspiring hegemon on the Eurasian landmass in modern times is to be attributed to chance or the intervention of Providence, it must be concluded that balancing ultimately happens and is backed with enough force to bring down the greatest powers.

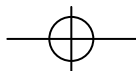
### The distribution of capabilities

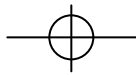
Because structural realists believe that power is the key means and end of states in international politics, they view the distribution of capabilities in the system as an important causal variable. Historically, two patterns have existed: multipolarity and bipolarity. Multipolarity, a system of three or more great powers, has been the most common pattern. Multipolarity is viewed as quite war prone because of its complexity. States cannot be too sure who, among them, is the greatest danger. They are sorely tempted to buckpass to each other if they think they can get away with it. This may produce windows of opportunity for expansionists, allowing them to defeat their opponents piecemeal. The relative power of opposing coalitions depends greatly on decisions taken by the members. These are difficult to assess in advance and can change quickly. Under-reaction and miscalculation are the major weaknesses of multipolarity.

Bipolarity characterised the Cold War. Realists view it as the more stable of the two patterns of power distribution. When only two great states face each other everything is clear. Each knows that the other is the key security problem. They watch each other carefully. Their attention is focused. Most of the important power assets are contained within each of the superpowers. Calculation of relative capabilities is easy. International moves to improve capabilities will usually be countered because they are hard to miss. Tension and over-reaction are probably the principal problems of bipolarity. Our understanding of bipolarity is obviously complicated by the presumed stabilising effect on the adversary of secure second-strike nuclear capabilities, which helped to produce a certain caution on both sides.

<sup>4</sup> For a review of the literature on bandwagoning, and scepticism about whether even weak states do it unless they absolutely have no other alternatives, see E. J. Labs, "Do Weak States Bandwagon?" *Security Studies*, vol. 1, no. 3, 1992, pp. 383-416.

<sup>5</sup> R. L. Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In", *International Security*, vol. 19, no. 1, 1994, pp. 72-107.





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Realists are now forced to consider the implications of another distribution of power: "unipolarity", as it has been dubbed. The US today is overwhelmingly the greatest power in the world. This goes well beyond military superiority, where the US advantage in inputs and outputs is clear.<sup>6</sup> US overall economic and technological capability exceeds that of almost any other dyad of existing consequential nation states – Russia, China, Japan, Germany, France, UK, Italy.<sup>7</sup> Indeed it is difficult to find a plausible threesome that could equal, much less exceed US capabilities.

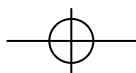
How might unipolarity work?<sup>8</sup> First, the greatest power can be expected to exploit its opportunity to organise international politics to suit its interests best. In particular, the US should try to consolidate and indeed improve its unusual relative power advantage. US power creates its own foreign policy energy. Second, the US will not see itself as particularly constrained by the risks that another great power or even a coalition of great powers might directly oppose any particular action that it chooses. There isn't another equivalent great power to do so and it would take an unusually large and cohesive coalition of the other consequential powers to make much trouble for the US. Third, the US can be expected to behave in ways that seem capricious to its allies and friends. It will take up issues abroad with little thought to the views of its allies because their capabilities will not seem critical to US success. Moreover, they essentially have no place else to go; there is no great power out there to exploit their unhappiness, or US absence.

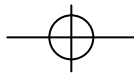
How will the other consequential powers behave? Will they bandwagon, balance, or buckpass? This is the key question of transatlantic relations. Given US power, most small states should be expected to bandwagon. The larger states face a more interesting choice. They may also bandwagon in the hope that something good will fall their way from the greatest power's table. Large though powers such as Britain, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and Russia are relative to most other states in the world, they are individually significantly weaker than the US, so bandwagoning will seem reasonable to some of them.

<sup>6</sup> On the military aspects of US superiority, see B. R. Posen, "Command of the Commons, The Military Foundation of US Hegemony", *International Security*, vol. 28, no. 1, 2003, pp. 5-46.

<sup>7</sup> On the power position of the United States, see W. C. Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World", *International Security*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1999, pp. 5-41. To equal US GDP in 1997, one would have to add the GDP's of the next three economic powers, p. 12. Between 1995 and 1997, the US spent more on all types of research and development than Britain, Japan, France and Germany combined, p. 19.

<sup>8</sup> Kenneth Waltz does not expect it to work well or to last long. See K. N. Waltz, "Evaluating Theories", *American Political Science Review*, vol. 91, no. 4, 1997, pp. 913-17: "In light of structural theory, unipolarity appears as the least stable of international configurations."





Some consequential powers will nevertheless find bandwagoning uncomfortable. Though the US may be a benign hegemon today, there is no reason to assume that this will always be so.<sup>9</sup> Some efforts by the US to improve its power position may necessarily erode the power position of others and could indeed reduce their security. Other US initiatives may simply create a more dangerous world in the eyes of other states. Even powers that do not fear US capabilities may fear the autonomy that such capabilities allow. The US may, for its own reasons, be absent from some regions. During its absence, those who have grown dependent upon it for security in the past could suddenly find themselves with regional problems that the US finds uninteresting. Consequential states will at minimum act to buffer themselves against the caprices of the US<sup>10</sup> and will try to carve out an ability to act autonomously, should it become necessary. Such ability would permit a divorce at a later date. It could support a strategy of buckpassing – waiting for another truly great power to emerge and bell the US cat or, ultimately, a policy of directly balancing the power of the US.

One final cautionary point is in order. Structural realism is a theory about how constraints (or their absence) and incentives, inherent in the geopolitical environment, regularly shape the decisions of statesmen and the behaviour of states. But “shape” does not mean “determine”. The theory leaves considerable scope for freedom of action by states and statesmen.

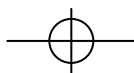
## The evidence

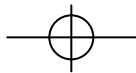
### NATO and Bandwagoning

On the whole, there is considerable evidence of bandwagoning among European states. Many realists expected NATO to weaken after the Cold War ended. Instead NATO has turned into a principal instrument of US hegemony on the Eurasian land mass. Though NATO’s military preparations have diminished greatly, as measured by defence spending, its membership has increased. Its doctrine has become more expansive, largely to accommodate the interests of the United States. The NATO command structure has changed in order to make the alliance more expeditionary. For their own reasons or after not-so-gentle NATO encouragement, states are abandoning conscription and building professional militaries that can be

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 915: “Unlikely though it is, a dominant power may behave with moderation, restraint, and forbearance. Even if it does, however, weaker states will worry about its future behavior.”

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 916: “The powerful state will at times act in ways that appear arbitrary and high handed to others, who will smart under the unfair treatment they believe they are receiving.”





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dispatched and sustained abroad with fewer domestic political complications. Since at least 1999, NATO's force goals have been increasingly directed toward expeditionary warfare. European states have plans to acquire more aerial tankers, airlift aircraft and amphibious shipping. Fighter aircraft have been reconfigured to operate more effectively with US counterparts and to deliver precision-guided munitions. An entire NATO command is now dedicated to ensuring that European forces are interoperable with fast-changing US forces.

Critics are quick to point out that Europe's military reformation has been slow, and that European defence spending is on the whole too low. This is to be expected. Most European states, in their NATO guise, are not arming to defend themselves against agreed threats or to pursue vital interests – they are arming to make the US happy. Bandwagoning is not a particularly heroic stance and on the whole it is not surprising that most states do not throw themselves into it. The exception has been the UK, which trades on a traditionally close relationship with the US to play above its weight in international politics – or so its leaders think. Tony Blair speaks glowingly of the virtues of unipolarity.<sup>11</sup>

### ESDP and Balancing?

The emergence of the European Union Security and Defence Policy suggests that however comfortable bandwagoning with the US has been for most European states, they also want other options. It is no surprise that US officials from both the Clinton and Bush administrations have viewed ESDP with suspicion.<sup>12</sup> The US has opposed European steps toward true military

<sup>11</sup> In an 28 April 2003 interview with the Financial Times, Prime Minister Blair laid out his preference for a bandwagoning strategy, "Some want a so-called multipolar world where you have different centres of power, and I believe will quickly develop into rival centres of power; and others believe, and this is my notion, that we need one polar power which encompasses a strategic partnership between Europe and America." As reported by Agence France Presse (AFP), "Blair Warns against a Europe opposed to the United States", 28 April 2003.

<sup>12</sup> During the Clinton administration, then US Ambassador to NATO Alexander Vershbow developed the ability to support and critique ESDP in the same speech to a high art. Translated into plain English his message was simple. So long as ESDP produced real capabilities identified by NATO, coordinated closely with NATO as an institution, and consulted closely with non-EU European NATO member states, it would be a great thing for NATO, and the US would support it. If the EU focused on capacities for autonomous action, then ESDP would be a bad and divisive thing: "...If ESDP is mostly about European construction, then it will focus more on institution-building than on building new capabilities, and there will be a tendency to oppose the 'interference' of NATO and to minimize the participation of

autonomy.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the Pentagon states explicitly that the purpose of NATO cooperation with the EU, through a set of procedures known as "Berlin Plus", is "to prevent the creation of an EU counterpart to Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) and a separate 'EU' army...".<sup>14</sup> One would expect nothing less from a unipolar hegemon.

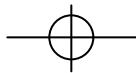
Though the EU has been interested in foreign and security policy since its inception, most substantive progress has taken place since late 1998. It is widely acknowledged that it was the accord achieved by Britain and France at their St. Malo defence ministers meetings that launched ESDP on the track of producing some real capabilities – the Military Committee, the Military Staff, the adoption of the Petersberg tasks, the commitment to the Helsinki Force Goal, that is to develop the ability to deploy a force of 60,000 for a range of peacekeeping and peacemaking tasks within six months of a decision to do so, and an ability to sustain the mission for a year. The appropriate forces have been identified. Qualitative lacunae have also been pin pointed and steps taken to rectify them.

Out of deference to NATO, the EU denied itself the ability to command this force independently and agreed to depend mainly on NATO-SHAPE for the necessary resources both to plan and to command any serious stabilisation operation. NATO was unable to work out suitable methods for cooperation until political issues associated with Turkey and Greece were ameliorated. Since early 2003, the EU and NATO have made considerable progress in developing the modalities of EU-NATO cooperation. Nevertheless, France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg have remained dissatisfied with this dependence and have set out to find a second way to run an EU operation. After much controversy, a decision was made both to formalise and to strengthen an EU military planning cell at NATO and to augment the EU military staff rather than to set up a new EU command

non-EU Allies. The danger here is that, if autonomy becomes an end in itself, ESDP will be an ineffective tool for managing crises and transatlantic tensions will increase." See his speech to the Transatlantic Forum in Paris, "European Defense: European and American Perceptions", 18 May 2000 <[www.usembassy.it/file2000\\_05/alia.a0051907 .htm](http://www.usembassy.it/file2000_05/alia.a0051907.htm)> .

<sup>13</sup> Efforts by France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg starting in Spring 2003 to set up what seems to be a small nucleus of a standing operational headquarters that might plan and run EU military operations were met with total opposition by the US. US Ambassador Nick Burns called it the "most serious threat to the future of NATO". A special NATO meeting was called to ease the concerns of the US, but it apparently failed to accomplish much. See S. Castle, "NATO calms US fears of European defence HQ", *The Independent*, 21 October 2003.

<sup>14</sup> US Dept. of Defense, *Responsibility Sharing Report*, June 2002, Chapter II, p. 5.



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organisation as these four states originally suggested.<sup>15</sup> Presumably, the augmented EU military staff would coordinate the delegation of operational authority for EU missions to the national operational headquarters that have been developed in Britain, France, Germany and Italy since the mid-1990s, headquarters that have been pledged to the EU in the event of a collective decision to launch a peace enforcement operation.<sup>16</sup> The option to use these headquarters to plan and command an EU-led stabilisation operation without access to NATO-SHAPE assets was prefigured in the British-French St. Malo communiqué in December 1998.

The causes and timing of ESDP's birth suggest that it is indeed a response to US hegemony. Its limits suggest it is not quite a balancing project, but certainly an effort by Europeans, including many who bandwagon in their NATO guise, to develop an alternative security supplier.

There are four different, but not mutually exclusive, explanations for the evolution of ESDP in the last decade:<sup>17</sup>

1. EU-ism. ESDP is simply a logical extension of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, which itself arose merely from a recognition that an economic bloc and loose political entity the size of the European Union would inevitably be a global political player. Thus it would need a foreign policy, and a foreign policy is nothing without some kind of defence policy. This view is most often heard in EU official circles, and also among small member states. While this view is widely held, if it were valid, more progress would have been made earlier. Instead, most ESDP progress came after 1998, that is, well after the Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties. Nonetheless, this view makes it politically difficult to undo what has been done. ESDP is sticky.

2. Britain needs an EU role that plays to its strengths. Though Britain's political class and people on the whole remain sceptical of the EU, the country has long since made the choice that it is safer to be in the EU than outside of it. That said, Britain is still not ready to adopt the Euro and accept the

<sup>15</sup> J. Chalmers, "UK clinches EU defence deal", Reuters, 11 December 2003; and "EU agrees to create military planning cell next year", AFP, 12 December 2003 <<http://uk.news.yahoo.com/031212/323/egx37.html>>.

<sup>16</sup> S. Castle, "Italy Brokers Deal to End EU Defence Rift", The Independent, 3 Oct. 2003; Financial Times Information, Global News Wire-Europe Intelligence Wire, 2003, reports an Italian proposal for a rotating team of EU planners to be associated with the existing national operational headquarters in the UK, France, Germany, Italy and Greece.

<sup>17</sup> The discussion that follows is based largely on several dozen interviews conducted in Fall 2002-Spring 2003 among European officials currently or previously involved in NATO or ESDP and exchanges of views with scholars and analysts.



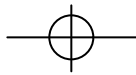
constraints that would accompany that move. The other three greatest powers in Europe are in the Euro, so those Britons who wished to play a significant role in the EU – Prime Minister Blair foremost among them – were casting about for another mechanism. Military capability is a British speciality. As one of the two biggest defence spenders in the Union and acknowledged even by the French as its most accomplished military power, Britain hit upon ESDP as an issue where it could lead, pursuing both prestige and power in the EU.

3. Capabilities, capabilities? In this view, ESDP was and is little more than a sales tool for NATO's force goals. Britain and France, each for their own reasons, were looking for arguments that would produce more serious attention to defence issues in Europe than emerged in the early 1990s. They were and are the two big defence spenders in Europe (together they provide roughly 45 percent of the defence spending of the Fifteen); they are the most serious about having genuinely usable capabilities, including capabilities with some strategic reach. NATO pleas lacked the political "sizzle" to elicit serious defence reform efforts from most European states. Indeed, NATO could not prevent, slowdown or stabilise the significant reductions in defence spending that occurred during the 1990s and which continue in some countries. The EU, however much it is derided by European publics, has more appeal. The fact that the EU's own force goals are so similar to those of NATO, in spite of the clear differences in their chosen missions, supports this point. But what were the respective British and French reasons for wanting more capabilities from the rest of Europe?

3.a. Britain is interested in more European military capability to improve British influence, prestige and autonomy. British leaders believe that the US will take Europeans more seriously if they deliver some usable capabilities to NATO. Furthermore, if Britain is seen as the agent of these improvements, its standing with the US will rise. Finally, British planners discovered during their first major post-Cold War defence review that they simply cannot afford all the capabilities they want Britain to have for its own security reasons. Britain's European allies looked like a possible source for these capabilities.

3.b Jacques Chirac asserts that it is a multipolar world and French diplomats are quick to echo this point.<sup>18</sup> It is more an expression of intent than of fact,

<sup>18</sup> "In every meeting with our European partners I observe a new state of mind, summarised in one wish: that Europe may be able to enlarge its voice in the administration of world affairs and above all in our continent's affairs. That it may assume its responsibilities, that it may act in favour of a balanced, multipolar, and law-respecting world." J. Chirac, "A Responsible Europe in a Renewed Atlantic Alliance", Speech to the Assembly of Atlantic Societies, 19 October 1999, Strasbourg <[www.dgap.org/english/tip/tip2/chirac191099\\_p.html](http://www.dgap.org/english/tip/tip2/chirac191099_p.html)>.



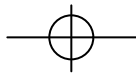
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but it suggests the French are strongly interested in building up Europe's power position. France has had the longest standing interest in an independent European defence capacity. When queried about French interests, other European officials and academics are quick to intimate that France has ambitions. Some assert that the French simply want to drive NATO out of Europe. Others suggest a more plausible and subtle strategy, consistent with the public statements of French leaders that Europe will only get a voice in world affairs if it can stand on its own. Though this sounds like the British position, it is somewhat different. French planners know that Europeans cannot pursue a more autonomous policy, which France favours, if Europe cannot take care of itself. A practical defence organisation and enhanced capabilities are thus necessary. French leaders may also believe that Europe needs the strategic option to "exit" its relationship with the US, if Europe's views are to be taken seriously by the US. Ironically, the words of a former British official, Sir Rodric Braithwaite, capture French reasoning perfectly: "A junior partner who is taken for granted is a junior partner with no influence. In dealing with the Americans we need to follow the basic principle of negotiation: you must always make it clear that you will, if necessary, walk away from the table."<sup>19</sup>

4. *Balkan failures – never again.* ESDP aims to give Europe the capability to deal with the Petersberg tasks, that is, tasks of crisis management, peacekeeping and peace making. These were the tasks that the US did not want NATO to take up at the outset of the Balkan wars and which Europe could not then address. The EU did try to wield its economic clout early in the Balkan crisis but it proved inadequate to the tasks. Experts and participants differ on whether the Bosnia war or the Kosovo crisis or the second following so hard on the first, provided the primary impetus. It is striking that no significant progress on European capacities was made until the British and French agreed at St. Malo in 1998 that such capabilities were essential, which suggests that Bosnia alone was not embarrassing enough. Many suggest that Prime Minister Blair in particular was deeply frustrated by the fact that Europe was still dependent on NATO and the US to do anything militarily about the emerging Kosovo crisis in 1998. At least two lessons were drawn from the Balkan experience: first, for some crises only military force will do; second, the US will not always be interested in problems on Europe's periphery.

The conduct of the Kosovo war also helped spur the EU's efforts. Though NATO's first war was publicly lauded as a great success, there were problems. NATO's command structure did not really run the war; the US is said to have relied much more on the EUCOM command structure. European officers

<sup>19</sup> R. Braithwaite, "End of the Affair", *Prospect*, May 2003 <[www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/ArticleView.asp?P\\_Article=11914](http://www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/ArticleView.asp?P_Article=11914)> .



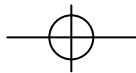
were excluded from tactical planning that involved stealth aircraft. US military commanders complained of micro-management of air attack targeting by the civilians of the North Atlantic Council – a charge that most European officials hotly deny. Europeans complain that the US did not generously share important intelligence information with them. Finally, General Wesley Clark came close to producing a diplomatic disaster when he proposed to race the Russians to the Pristina airport – a project rejected by the British commander on the ground. Though these concerns are not the first to come up when the lessons of the Balkans are cited, they are often raised.

### Summary

A review of the timing and the reasons for the development of ESDP suggests that they can largely be traced back to the problem of unipolarity. France provides permanent pressure for a more autonomous Europe, that is it promotes pure balancing behaviour, but this antedates the end of the Cold War. For others, the strategic rationale centres on the creation of options. The UK joined this effort out of dissatisfaction with dependency on the US, the implications of which were manifest in the Balkan wars. Other European states joined largely for the same reason, though “EU-ism” also provided a motive. Had Britain not joined with France to take a leadership role, most agree that little would have been accomplished. Britain joined for other reasons as well. British defence planners could not afford all the capabilities they wanted to maintain their own decision-making and military operational autonomy. Europe was a plausible place to develop these capabilities. NATO would have been the preferred organisation for Britain, but it had lost its sizzle with publics and parliaments. Tony Blair also wished to preserve and expand Britain's role in Europe. After 11 September 2001, Blair seems to have lost interest in ESDP. This is where “EU-ism” plays a role. The EU cannot go back on a project of this magnitude and visibility.

US policy on Iraq, another manifestation of the unipolar moment, has succeeded in weakening Germany's once nearly instinctive allegiance to NATO and produced a much stronger inclination toward an EU security project.<sup>20</sup> Germany cannot entirely replace the UK as an ESDP leader, but its growing support for the project is another factor making it difficult for the EU to reverse course on defence. Due to the US' power position alone,

<sup>20</sup> This inference, derived from a number of interviews, is supported by both anecdotes and public opinion polling. For example, an unnamed German editor reports that his editorials arguing that the EU should not be built against the Americans produced a torrent of e-mails to the contrary. See W. Pfaff, “US Message: Who Needs Allies?” *The Boston Globe*, 27 April



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it is likely that similar US policy initiatives will occur in the future, with similar results.<sup>21</sup>

### The consequences of ESDP for transatlantic relations

ESDP has provided Europe with a limited capability. Some Europeans want to use it. Insofar as the US is busy, it seems likely that the EU will soon take responsibility for securing the peace in Bosnia, and shortly thereafter, Kosovo. If ESDP missions are successful, the project may attract more public and elite support. If so, the resources devoted to Europe's security project may also increase and Europe's autonomous military capabilities will grow. If this comes to pass, ESDP is likely to complicate US-EU relations in three ways.

- First, because of its peculiar relations with NATO, ESDP gives Europeans a way to encourage the US to be more interested in Europe's special security concerns than would otherwise be the case. Europeans have strong interests in peace and order on Europe's periphery, including the suppression of civil conflict. NATO has taken on these missions, but it has also taken on missions farther afield to satisfy the US. It is clear that the US has a strong interest in preserving NATO's primacy on the continent. If Europeans were to propose to NATO a mission that they thought was important but that the US thought unimportant in its own terms, the US now has a second reason to approve the mission – to keep it out of the EU's hands and avoid the loss of prestige associated with an EU success. The EU will have a certain agenda-setting power in NATO. The US is not going to like this.

- Second, the maturation of the ESDP will produce Europeans who are increasingly convinced that they could provide for their own security if they had to do so. This is not a prediction of an EU ready to compete with the US. It is a prediction of an EU ready to look after itself. This will not

2003, p. E11. A recent poll reports that "Germany, the long-time American ally, now expresses an unambiguous preference for Europe over the United States". In 2002, 55% of Germans polled said that the EU was more important than the US to Germany's vital interests; by 2003, 81% of Germans polled said the EU was more important. See, German Marshall Fund of the United States, *Transatlantic Trends 2003*, "Key Findings", pp. 3, 9.

<sup>21</sup> Those who attribute the US-led invasion of Iraq and overthrow of the Baath regime solely to the Bush administration's peculiar approach to the war on terror ignore the depth and breadth of suspicion and hostility to the Iraqi Baath regime in the US since the first Gulf War. During the 2000 campaign, Vice-President and Democratic Party Presidential candidate Al Gore alluded to the need for a stronger policy to overthrow Saddam Hussein than that pursued by his then boss, President Bill Clinton. "It is our policy to see Saddam Hussein gone," he averred in a public speech. See J. Lancaster, "In Saddam's Future, A Harder US Line", *The Washington Post*, 3 June 2000.

happen soon, but given the planned pace of European capabilities improvements, a more militarily autonomous Europe will appear viable in a bit less than a decade.<sup>22</sup> As consciousness of this fact grows, Europeans are likely to speak to the US inside and outside NATO with greater expectation that their views will be taken seriously. The US will have decisions to make about how it wants to conduct its foreign policy and in particular about how much it cares about Western Europe relative to its other international projects.

- Third, insofar as US officials already recognise that ESDP is and will be a complicating factor for them, they will have to decide on the US attitude toward the project. On the whole, US officials have supported the project, but with the understanding that it will provide Europe with no truly autonomous capabilities. When it appears otherwise, they oppose, sometimes artfully and sometimes clumsily. The more the US opposes the project, the more suspicious many Europeans become about the ultimate rewards of bandwagoning with the US in the context of NATO. Overt US opposition may produce the very capacities that the US opposes. Given US power and consciousness of its power, it is not obvious that the US will find a subtle way to deal with the EU's defence efforts. This will add more friction to the transatlantic relationship.

## Conclusion

The European defence project was not pursued with much vigour until after the end of the Cold War. Most progress is comparatively recent. Though many factors have contributed to this recent progress, specific problems posed by the hegemonic position of the US appear particularly important. Viewed in this light, ESDP is a form of balance-of-power behavior, albeit a weak form. Should ESDP progress, as it well might given the causes at work, and should the EU progress on other fronts, it seems likely that Europe will prove a less docile ally of the US in a decade or two.

<sup>22</sup> This estimate is based on the planned acquisition pace of key enabling military assets. Significant deliveries of the A400 airlift aircraft are planned for 2009-12; see S. Coniglio, "A400M, An-70, C-130J, C-17: How Do They Stand?" *Military Technology*, vol. XXVII, no 7, 2003, p. 58. Skynet 5, a sophisticated European military satellite communications system that will mainly serve the UK is expected to be fully operational by 2008; see C. Hoyle, "UK Concludes Skynet 5 deal", *Jane's Defence Weekly*, vol. 40, no. 17, 2003, p. 3. The first test models of the Galileo navigation satellite will be in orbit by early 2006; see D. A. Divis, "Military role for Galileo emerges", *GPS World*, vol. 13, no. 5, 2002, p. 10. < [www.globalsecurity.org](http://www.globalsecurity.org) >. Several European satellite reconnaissance programs should yield usable assets over the next few years; see "The New Challenges Facing European Intelligence – reply to the annual report of the Council", Document A/1775, Assembly of the WEU, 4 June 2002, paragraphs 81-4, 104.

