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EU AND NATO: CO-OPERATION OR COMPETITION ?

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BRIEFING PAPER:

EU AND NATO: CO-OPERATION OR COMPETITION?

Dr Paul Cornish

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is a compelling case for closer collaboration in matters of security and defence between the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. The merits and necessity of such collaboration have become an enduring theme in speeches and statements concerning transatlantic security. This paper tests the rhetoric of security co-operation against the reality of NATO-EU relations, in five areas:

1. **Geopolitical Burden-Sharing.** This issue has exercised NATO and the EU for many years. Both organisations have a global outlook, and both have aspirations to act in a wide variety of circumstances. The prospects appear slim, therefore, of finding a straightforward division of labour between NATO and the EU, whether geographical or functional. That said, there could be a possibility of establishing a *modus vivendi* over Africa. Functional co-operation will be harder to achieve, however. Without agreement, at the highest political levels, that NATO and the EU should not and cannot be in competition, the trend is towards functional competition, rather than co-operation. Yet the reality is that while NATO can offer high-level force projection capability, it cannot compete with the EU in many areas of policy. Conversely, the EU has neither the ability nor the need to rival NATO on all levels and in all places. What the EU requires, instead, is sufficient, fairly low-level military capability to be fully equipped as a complex security actor in certain areas of the world.
2. **Berlin Plus and Beyond.** A framework for operational collaboration now exists between NATO and the EU; ‘Berlin Plus’. The EU has mounted two operations under Berlin Plus – Operations Concordia and Althea – which have increased the EU’s operational experience considerably. European forces have also undertaken other military missions not under the auspices of NATO or Berlin Plus. Gradually, the EU is acquiring experience which many assumed could never happen in the absence of a transatlantic security consensus. Some now argue that Berlin Plus-style collaboration should flow in both directions, hence the proposal for a ‘Berlin Plus in reverse’ which could see NATO drawing upon EU strengths in policing and complex crisis management. But while military co-operation is good, several differences persist at the political level, threatening to prevent further progress. Once again, it becomes apparent that a ‘grand bargain’ has yet to be struck between NATO and the EU – whether geographical or functional or ‘geo-functional’. Without a robust and durable rationale for NATO-EU co-operation, the hard and soft, military and civil assets of each organisation can scarcely be exploited to best effect.
3. **Rapid Reaction Force Planning.** In this area, the efforts of NATO and the EU are strikingly similar, albeit at different levels of capability. There ought to be firm grounds for collaboration between NATO’s Response Force and the EU’s Battlegroup project. But there are doubts as to the effectiveness of the EUBG project, even when Full Operating Capability is reached in 2007. Even at full capacity, one force will in military terms have an ‘operational’ capability, while the other will be merely tactical. NRF and EUBG cannot be compared like-for-like, and it would be as unreasonable to expect NATO to do so, as it would be unrealistic for the EU.

Deconfliction between the two force structures is declared to have been achieved, but much more could be done to generate positive and constructive co-operation, in scenario and contingency planning, training and certification, and in logistics and communications. The prospects for multi-national collaboration in rapid reaction deployments are in any case uncertain, given the increasing use of ‘national caveats’ and ‘red cards’. An important area for NATO/EU co-operation, therefore, would be to devise some way to mitigate this problem, perhaps by a system of mutual force substitution.

4. **Resource and Capability Planning.** Neither organisation is meeting expectations in resource and capability planning, and it would therefore be prudent not to expect too much in terms of co-operation in this area. The relationship between NATO and the EU in capability development could not be described as healthy and productive. Co-operation between the Prague Capabilities Commitment on the one hand, and the European Capabilities Action Plan and European Defence Agency on the other, needs to reacquire momentum. The focus should be on achievable targets – such as the rationalisation of airlift and sealift co-ordination centres – rather than more ambitious plans to export the defence transformation agenda from PCC to ECAP/EDA. An incremental, ‘bottom-up’ approach to co-operation is more likely to ensure that NATO-EU co-operation is expertise-led, rather than institution-focused.
5. **Responses to Terrorism.** The security relationship between NATO and the EU is least developed where terrorism is concerned. The Euro-Atlantic area is generally vulnerable to terrorist attack, and perhaps even to terrorist use of CBRN technology and weapons. The relative lack of co-operation between NATO and the EU in this area is more than merely inefficient, however. Since terrorists are usually proficient at identifying and exploiting political differences and divisions, the present state of affairs between NATO and the EU could invite the attention of terrorists. The NATO-EU counter-terrorism relationship requires urgent consolidation. But this, in turn, will require more detailed and more timely exchange of intelligence and information, and it is precisely at this point that political differences and distrust within and between both organisations come to the fore.

The conclusion of this paper is that while there have been practical achievements in NATO-EU co-operation, the realisation of a mature and efficient security relationship is hostage to the illusion of a ‘grand bargain’; agreement at the highest political levels on the purposes and character of transatlantic security co-operation. In order to create a virtuous circle of efficient and mutually supportive co-existence between NATO and the EU, the solution must be to abandon for the time being the pursuit of a ‘grand bargain’ and concentrate instead on achieving what is actually required to meet predicted security risks and challenges. In time, the practice of ‘learning by doing’ might even lubricate the highly politicised transatlantic security debate which has for so many years proved to be an impediment to effective co-operation.

INTRODUCTION

Recent years have seen protracted attempts to agree and then to consummate a durable strategic partnership between the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. With the globalisation of security concerns and with the series of major terrorist attacks beginning on 11th September 2001, it has become increasingly difficult to rationalise a Cold War-style separation of the two organisations, with NATO offering ‘hard’ or military power, and the EU offering a ‘soft’ or civil alternative. There are compelling reasons to expect close collaboration between the two organisations: there is considerable overlap in membership; members of both organisations, new and old, are constrained in their defence spending and cannot maintain commitments to support two entirely separate multilateral military structures; and contemporary security challenges no longer respect institutional boundaries, if indeed they ever did. Furthermore, the simple proximity of the two organisations in Brussels creates a widespread expectation that the EU and NATO should be in constant dialogue on issues of mutual concern. It can only appear inefficient and dysfunctional, for example, that the representative of a foreign government might visit one body but not the other, that NATO does not offer a conduit to the EU, and vice versa, and that the two organisations have not developed mutually reinforcing diplomatic positions.

Collaboration between NATO and the EU has become an enduring theme in speeches and statements concerning transatlantic security. Thus, US President George W. Bush’s conviction that ‘When Europe and America are united, no problem and no enemy can stand against us’,¹ is met by the Netherlands Minister of Defence, Henk Kamp’s insistence that ‘We need to further develop a fully transparent and mutually reinforcing relationship between NATO and the European Union.’ (Kamp, p.88) At the institutional level, NATO has declared that ‘The [NATO Response Force] and the related work of the [European Union] Headline Goal should be mutually reinforcing while respecting the autonomy of both organisations,² while the EU’s December 2003 European Security Strategy is almost gushing in its admiration of NATO:

One of the core elements of the international system is the transatlantic relationship. This is not only in our bilateral interest but strengthens the international community as a whole. NATO is an important expression of this relationship. [...] The EU-NATO permanent arrangements, in particular Berlin Plus, enhance the operational capability of the EU and provide the framework for the strategic partnership between the two organisations in crisis management. This reflects our common determination to tackle the challenges of the new century.³

Militarily, the Director General of the EU’s Military Staff has commented on the ‘strategic partnership that the EU and NATO have established in crisis management’, insisting that ‘both organisations are complementary and have committed themselves to a transparent and mutually reinforcing development of the military capability requirements

¹ President George W. Bush, ‘Remarks by the President to the People of Poland’, 31st May 2003. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/05/20030531-3.html>

² Prague Summit Declaration, 21st November 2002, para. 72.

³ European Union Institute for Security Studies, *A Secure Europe in a Better World: European Security Strategy* (Brussels, 12th December 2003), pp.15, 19.

common to the two organisations.’ (Perruche, p. 26) Similarly, the Chairman of NATO’s Military Committee has argued that ‘The evolving defence and security role of the European Union [is] an element that can only strengthen the Alliance and add to its effectiveness.’ (Henault, p. 41)

The purpose of this paper is to gauge the extent to which this rhetoric of co-operation is supported in practice. Where are there grounds for expecting complementarity between NATO and the EU? Is the relationship between the two organisations defined more by competition or by co-operation, and can the balance be adjusted in favour of the latter? The paper reviews each of the following five areas:

1. Geopolitical Burden-Sharing: Territory and Role
2. Operational Collaboration: ‘Berlin Plus’ and Beyond
3. Rapid Reaction Force Planning: NATO Response Force and EU Battlegroups
4. Resource and Capability Planning: Prague Capabilities Commitment and European Capabilities Action Plan/European Defence Agency
5. Responses to Terrorism

GEOPOLITICAL BURDEN-SHARING: TERRITORY AND ROLE

The debate concerning the division of geopolitical responsibility and burden between NATO and the EU (and previously the Western European Union, or WEU) has a long pedigree. In the early 1990s, two contending solutions were offered: ‘bifurcation’ and ‘binarism’. Bifurcation was to have been a functional division of responsibility, with NATO undertaking responsibility for high-level, Article 5 collective defence operations, while the WEU undertook lower intensity, non-Article 5 military tasks. Binarism, on the other hand, would have seen the abolition of NATO’s integrated command, with the United States and Europe each becoming responsible for their own territorial defence. (Cornish, 65, 70) As the 1990s wore on, the claim that the future of European security could be reduced to a choice between these two discrete options steadily lost credibility. Indeed, it could be argued that many years of often frustrating and inconclusive discussion between NATO and the EU, and the complexity of arrangements such as Berlin Plus (discussed below), were driven by the wish not to have to choose between these two options. Nevertheless, neither option has disappeared entirely from the debate, and in one recent case were merged. On 19th January 2004, the outgoing chairman of the EU Military Committee, General Gustav Hagglund argued both that the US and European pillars of NATO should be ‘responsible for their respective territorial defences’, and that the US should deal with high intensity operations concerning WMD and terrorism, while Europe deals with crisis situations. (Bereuter, p.24)⁴

Latterly, the mainstream debate has shifted to a global, rather than Euro-Atlantic context. Which organisation is best suited to undertake which range of military and crisis management tasks, and in which parts of the world? Here, the ambition of both

⁴ See also ‘EU official calls on Europe, US to defend own territory’, *ISN Security Watch*, 19th January 2004: <http://isn.ethz.ch/news/sw/details.cfm?id=8141>

organisations suggests incompatibility and competition. But there are also signs that an accommodation might be achievable.

Having for many decades been a highly-developed military alliance focused on territorial defence in Europe, NATO has moved consistently to a broader, arguably even global perspective. At the 2002 Prague Summit, for example, NATO leaders committed 'to strengthen our ability to meet the challenges to the security of our forces, populations and territory, from wherever they may come'.⁵ The following year, NATO mounted its first military operation outside Europe; the International Security and Assistance Force in Afghanistan. During the Cold War, this would have been described as an 'out of area' operation – geographically and strategically peripheral – yet analysts doubt that ISAF will be NATO's last such commitment. (Toczeck, 59-63) The Chairman of NATO's Military Committee has voiced the Alliance's new, more expansive approach in clear enough terms: 'In order to guarantee our safety at home, we are now required to go further and further afield to promote security and stability in an ever more unpredictable world. There is now very little distinction between domestic and international security, or between homeland defence and forward defence.' (Henault, 40)

NATO has also been eager to develop an international political presence, and has been willing to go 'out of area' in this regard, too. The Alliance has developed individual partnerships with Russia and Ukraine, regional partnerships with CEE countries, the Mediterranean Dialogue, and with the Gulf Co-operation Council through the 2004 Istanbul Co-operation Initiative. NATO is also creating a framework for security co-operation far beyond the Euro-Atlantic area; a 'global partnership' which could involve fragile democracies such as Iraq and Afghanistan, and like-minded nations such as Japan, New Zealand, South Korea and Australia, with whom NATO's Secretary General signed a security agreement in March 2005. The initiative is intended to cut across geographical boundaries and facilitate military operations and civil emergency planning.

For its part, the EU has always been a regional and global actor, in a diverse range of trade, economic and development activities. Most recently, in the December 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS), the EU has adopted the rhetoric of a security actor with a global outlook. The ESS expresses Europe's concern with far-flung problems ranging from WMD proliferation in the Middle East, to tension on the Korean Peninsula, to regional conflict in the Great Lakes Region, to state failure in Somalia and Liberia, and to organised crime in Afghanistan and the Balkans. The most expansive rhetoric is reserved for terrorism, described in the ESS as a 'key threat' which is 'global in its scope'. In all, the claims made for the EU are strikingly similar to those made for NATO: 'In an era of globalisation, distant threats may be as much a concern as those that are near at hand.'⁶ The rhetoric of the ESS is, to some extent, borne out in recent practice; the EU has, after all, conducted a wide variety of military, police, justice and development missions in Africa, South-eastern Europe, Iraq and the Caucasus.

⁵ NATO Prague Summit Declaration, 21st November 2002, para. 3.

⁶ 'European Security Strategy: A secure Europe in a better world', Brussels, 12th December 2003, p.11.

All of this could suggest that in terms both of political rhetoric and practical experience, NATO and the EU are emulating each other and are engaged in a competition to become the preferred international security actor for the European area and beyond. NATO, a highly developed military alliance for so many decades confined to its treaty area, seeks to renew its political authority by broadening its geographical scope. The EU, in many ways more internationally well-developed than NATO, is focused on addressing a functional deficiency – the lack of credible military capability. While the trajectory of each organisation is very different, their ambitions are broadly convergent; ostensibly not the best basis for collaboration and co-operation.

There are, however, some indications that accommodations – both geographical and functional – could, after all be possible between the two organisations. In spite of its global ambitions, there is at least one part of the world beyond Europe where conflict is rife, yet where NATO appears unlikely to become fully involved and content to let the EU take the lead. Since the disastrous outcome of its involvement in Somalia in 1993-1994, followed by the 1998 bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the US has been reluctant to become involved in military operations in Africa, a reluctance borne out in Liberia in 2003. Judgements could easily shift, particularly with reports that the Pentagon is considering establishing a separate Africa command (Thompson), but for some time it has been thought unlikely that Africa could become a major ‘theatre of operations’ for NATO. (Ulriksen et al, pp.522-523). Yet it is just as difficult to imagine the EU not becoming increasingly involved in Africa, when confronted by state failure, economic degradation and social collapse. (Lindley-French and Algeri, p.6).

As for a possible functional EU/NATO division of labour, it is important to focus on the reality – rather than the rhetoric – of EU military capability. No analyst could seriously suggest that in the short or medium term the EU could match NATO for military capability and expeditionary reach. But a low-level military capability might be all that the EU needs, or wants. The EU is not seeking to become a politico-military alliance, but to develop a military option to sit alongside several others. The ESS, after all, articulates the need not only to ‘address new threats’, but also to build security in the EU neighbourhood and strengthen ‘effective multilateralism’. Supplementing its predominantly ‘soft’ approach to security with some ‘hard’ tools, if the EU involves itself in Africa or in other areas of tension and conflict, then it will seek to do so as a complex actor, with a wide range of diplomatic, political, economic and security tools available to it. NATO, on the other hand, for all its strategic strength and experience lacks the breadth of capability offered by the EU, in economics, trade and development, for example. But without a robust political-strategic relationship, it becomes impossible for the two organisations to work in a mutually complementary way, to best effect. Thus, although both organisations are committed to the stability and reconstruction of Afghanistan, the NATO/EU strategic debate over Afghanistan is under-developed, and the two organisations’ efforts in Afghanistan are not, as a result, mutually supportive.

At least for the foreseeable future, military forces are not likely to be the sole or even the dominant feature of EU crisis operations. The functional (and perhaps face-saving) accommodation between NATO and the EU could, therefore be described as follows: the

EU's strength is as a complex security actor, and the military forces at its disposal are designed not merely to undertake low-level military tasks (i.e., the original meaning of 'bifurcation'), but to provide a capability which can be militarily significant within a highly-developed and fast-changing political context. NATO, on the other hand, remains concerned with those occasions when a far greater military force is required.

OPERATIONAL COLLABORATION: 'BERLIN PLUS' AND BEYOND

At NATO's Washington summit in April 1999, member governments declared themselves 'ready to define and adopt the necessary arrangements for ready access by the European Union to the collective assets and capabilities of the Alliance, for operations in which the Alliance as a whole is not engaged militarily as an Alliance' and reached agreement on proposals made three years earlier in Berlin. The so-called 'Berlin-plus' arrangement came in four parts: 'assured EU access to NATO planning capabilities'; 'the presumption of availability to the EU of pre-identified NATO capabilities and common assets'; 'identification of a range of European command options'; and 'the further adaptation of NATO's defence planning system to incorporate more comprehensively the availability of forces for EU-led operations.'⁷ But the implementation of Berlin Plus was contingent upon agreement between NATO and the EU on the security of information. This agreement was not reached until March 2003 and covered access to, exchange and release of classified information between NATO, the Council of the EU, the High Representative and the EU Commission.⁸ Just days later, the North Atlantic Council declared that NATO's Operation Allied Harmony in Macedonia would end on 31st March 2003, and that NATO would help the EU in taking on the commitment (as Operation Concordia). This transition would not have been possible without the Berlin Plus arrangement. Later that year, at their meeting in Naples in November, EU foreign ministers acknowledged that four types of European crisis operation could now take place: NATO only; EU-led using the Berlin Plus arrangement and NATO's planning capacity; an EU operation mounted under the 'framework nation' concept; and a smaller-scale crisis management operation planned and run by the EU's own military staff.

The EU has so far mounted two major military operations under the auspices of the Berlin Plus arrangement. The first of these, Operation Concordia in Macedonia, lasted from 31st March to 15th December 2003, and was replaced by an EU police mission. Operation Concordia was the first mission of the ERF, involving some 400 troops from 26 countries and commanded by Germany's Admiral Reiner Feist, NATO's DSACEUR. The second mission – Operation Althea in Bosnia-Herzegovina – was launched on 2nd December 2004 and remains in place. Operation Althea was the successor to NATO's SFOR mission and remains the EU's most ambitious military operation to date, with 6,000-7,000 troops acting under a UN Charter Chapter VII mandate. A third operation – Operation Artemis in the Democratic Republic of Congo in August-October 2003 – was the first EU military mission outside Europe. Operation Artemis, involving about 1,500 troops and led by France, was an 'autonomous' EU operation, not one conducted under

⁷ Washington Summit Communiqué, NAC-S(99)64, 24 April 1999, para. 10.

⁸ A draft of the NATO-EU agreement, dated 17 February 2003, can be found at <http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/asroberts/foi/security.html>

the Berlin Plus arrangement; by one account NATO was not even offered the opportunity to participate. (Keohane) Nevertheless, the mission did make full use of NATO standard operating procedures, suggesting at least some level of useful overlap.

Although not formally an EU organisation, deployments of the Eurocorps offer further illustrations of co-operation between NATO and European force structures. Eurocorps, established in 1992, is a multi-divisional force comprising at least nine armoured and mechanised brigades from France, Germany, Spain, Belgium and Luxembourg, as well as other countries. Eurocorps units are largely 'double-hatted' national forces, and in the unlikely event that all were deployed together would amount to about 60,000 troops. Eurocorps is described on its website as 'a force for Europe and the Atlantic Alliance'⁹ and has been deployed three times under NATO command. Between 1998-2000, elements of Eurocorps deployed to Bosnia-Herzegovina under command of NATO SFOR. From April-October 2000, Eurocorps provided the core (350 troops or about 40% of staff) of the headquarters elements of the 45,000 KFOR III in Kosovo, having taken over from NATO's LANDCENT command. For the duration of the deployment, the commander of Eurocorps – Spain's General Juan Ortuno – was under the direct command of NATO's SACEUR, General Wesley Clark. Finally, Eurocorps provided the core of NATO's ISAF VI Headquarters staff in Kabul from August 2004 to February 2005. As with past deployments, Eurocorps operated under the auspices of NATO and was integrated into NATO's Joint Force Command.

Most recently, since early 2005 both NATO and the EU have been involved in providing airlift support to the African Union Mission (AMIS II) for its peacekeeping operations in the Darfur region of Sudan. The EU provides military assistance in the form of technical, planning and management support, and works closely with NATO in a joint strategic air transport cell in Addis Ababa.¹⁰ Procedurally, there are now regular meetings between the Military Committees of both NATO and the EU, and for planning purposes each has its own permanent liaison team embedded in the other organisation, at SHAPE and EUMS respectively. There have also, finally, been a number of command exercises designed to test and improve interoperability for future NATO and EU operations.

In many respects, therefore, there would seem to be grounds for optimism as far as operational collaboration is concerned between the EU and NATO, both within the Berlin Plus framework and beyond it. Most objective analysis of European security and defence, however, is rather more cautious. Militarily, co-operation between NATO and the EU is usually good; armed forces are, after all, trained to co-operate with allied and coalition forces to at least some extent. Thus, although the EU makes use of the European Airlift Centre in Eindhoven, while NATO uses the Air Movement Co-ordination Cell at SHAPE, the staffs of both centres are in good communication with each other out of necessity, and without much political fanfare. It is precisely at the political level that many analysts find the operational partnership most deficient. There remains lingering controversy over the questions of 'autonomy' (should the EU assume

⁹ Eurocorps website: <http://www.eurocorps.org>

¹⁰ Council of the European Union, 'Presidency Report on ESDP' (Brussels 12th June 2006, 10418/06), paras. 21-22.

autonomy merely in decision-making, or in the deployment and control of armed force as well?), and ‘sequencing’ (should NATO be offered ‘first refusal’ as a crisis develops and a response is required?). There is also concern that, in spite of the March 2003 intelligence sharing agreement, the exchange of classified information between the two organisations is still inadequate; largely a result of Turkey’s refusal to grant Cyprus and Malta clearance to receive NATO intelligence material. In its annual review, the IISS in London finds ‘persistent difficulties in NATO-EU co-operation’, and notes that both organisations find it ‘difficult to strengthen their strategic dialogue’. The IISS notes delays in decision-making on Operation Althea and regarding support to the AU’s AMIS II mission in Sudan, and concludes that ‘except for matters of operational planning the EU-NATO partnership remains limited.’ (IISS, pp.167-168)

What is still absent from NATO/EU collaboration is precisely the sort of grand bargain – whether geographical, functional or ‘geo-functional’ – discussed in the previous section; an inter-institutional rationale for more effective and efficient military co-operation. Several ideas have been put forward as the basis of a new politico-military framework for EU/NATO co-operation, most of them offering ‘soft power/hard power’ arrangements reminiscent of the debates of the 1990s. James Dobbins, for example, sees that in Afghanistan the ‘synergy between NATO and the European Union is largely missing’, and argues that ‘if Afghan reconstruction is to become a truly transatlantic project, then the EU should become more prominent on the civil side even as NATO takes over on the military side.’ (Dobbins, p.25) Franco Frattini, the EU’s Commissioner for Justice, Freedom and Security, has suggested that NATO could act both ‘in a military capacity’ and in the aftermath of a crisis, as a ‘peacekeeper’. (Quoted in Merritt, p.18) Most radical of all, a recent report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington has suggested a ‘Berlin Plus in reverse’, whereby NATO would seek to draw upon the EU’s strengths by gaining access to the ‘EU civilian and constabulary capabilities for crisis management operations.’ (Flournoy, p.13)

RAPID REACTION FORCE PLANNING: NATO RESPONSE FORCE AND EU BATTLEGROUPS

It is in the matter of rapid reaction force planning that the two organisations come closest, and where there has been most suspicion. The EU Battlegroup (EUBG) project is an extension of an earlier idea – the European Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF). The similarities between ERRF and the NATO Response Force (NRF) impressed many analysts, and led some to question the motives behind the NRF, the newer of the two. One commentator noted that with the NRF NATO had ‘seized back the initiative’ (Foster), while a NATO official described the NRF as ‘the intellectual equivalent of a raid.’ (Mariano and Wilson) With the EUBG project moving forward, the question remains whether NATO and EU force planning processes can be made compatible. How, for example, will the unavoidable ‘double-hatting’ of military forces be organised? And how will sequencing be planned; will the NRF have first call on a given operation?

At the initiative by US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, the NRF was announced at NATO’s Prague Summit in November 2002, as a core component of NATO’s

'transformation' agenda.¹¹ With some 21,000 troops earmarked by NATO nations, including land, sea and air elements, the NRF would be 'technologically advanced, flexible, deployable, interoperable, and sustainable'. The NRF was scheduled to achieve an initial operating capability (IOC) by October 2004, and a full operating capability (FOC) by late 2006.¹² At FOC, the NRF 'spearhead force' (Binnendijk and Kugler) would be deployable within five days for missions of up to 30 days. Driven by the principle of 'first force in, first force out', the roles envisaged for the NRF include demonstrations of solidarity in order to face down potential aggressors, stand-alone operations for either Article V (i.e., collective defence) or non-Article V missions (e.g., non-combatant evacuation operations, humanitarian aid and crisis response operations, peacekeeping, counter-terrorism and embargo operations¹³), and providing an entry point for a larger, follow-on force. Even before reaching full capability NRF elements have been deployed to assist with the response to Hurricane Katrina in September 2005, and to contribute to the humanitarian relief effort in Pakistan following the earthquake in October 2005. At FOC, it is expected that the NRF will consist of the following:

- A brigade-sized land component (i.e., 4 or 5 battlegroups);
- A naval task force comprising one carrier battle group, an amphibious task group and a surface action group;
- An air component capable of 200 combat sorties each day.
- Special forces as necessary. (Bonsignore, p.48)

The EU's battlegroups project was launched at the Franco-British summit at Le Touquet in February 2003, in order to 'improve further European capabilities in planning and deploying forces at short notice, including initial deployment of land, sea and air forces within 5-10 days.'¹⁴ Later that year the two governments were able to put more flesh on their proposal:

The EU should be capable and willing to deploy in an autonomous operation within 15 days to respond to a crisis. The aim should be coherent and credible battle-group sized forces, each around 1500 troops, offered by a single nation or through a multinational or framework nation force package, with appropriate transport and sustainability. The forces should have the capacity to operate under a Chapter VII mandate.¹⁵

At this early stage the French and British governments were especially interested in operations in Africa. As the idea acquired more substance, however, this emphasis was dropped. (Granholm & Jonson, p.6, n.2) In June 2004 the EUBG concept was formally

¹¹ At an informal NATO defence ministerial meeting in Warsaw 24th September 2002, Rumsfeld warned: 'If NATO does not have a force that is quick and agile, which can deploy in days or weeks instead of months or years, then it will not have much to offer the world in the 21st century.' (Quoted in Pengelly)

¹² NATO, Prague Summit Declaration 21st November 2002, Press Release (2002) 127, 21st November 2002.

¹³ NATO (SHAPE) Press Release, 6th October 2003.

¹⁴ 'Declaration on Strengthening European Co-operation in Security and Defence', Le Touquet, 4th February 2003.

¹⁵ Franco-British Summit Declaration, 'Strengthening European Co-operation in Security and Defence'. London, 24th November 2003.

adopted by the European Council as a feature of the Headline Goal 2010,¹⁶ and in November 2004 at the EU Military Capability Commitment Conference the EUBG concept was set out in the following terms:

The Battlegroup is a specific form of rapid response. It is the minimum military [*sic*] effective, credible, rapidly deployable, coherent force package capable of stand-alone operations, or for the initial phase of larger operations. The Battlegroup is based on a combined arms, battalion sized force and reinforced with Combat Support and Combat Service Support elements. A Battlegroup could be formed by a Framework Nation or by a multinational coalition of Member States. In all cases, interoperability and military effectiveness will be key criteria. A Battlegroup must be associated with a Force Headquarters and pre-identified operational and strategic enablers, such as strategic lift and logistics.

Commitments were made to establish 13 battlegroups (four national and nine multinational) to reach IOC in 2005 and FOC in 2007. From 2007, the EU's intention is to be able to mount two EUBG operations simultaneously, with two battlegroups at readiness to move on a six-month rotation. Missions envisaged for the EUBGs include the 1992 'Petersberg Tasks' ('humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking'), as well as activities required by the 2003 European Security Strategy. Following a series of Battlegroup Co-ordination Conferences, all EUBG requirements up to first half of 2010 have been filled (apart from one gap in 2009), and progress has been made on both 'naval enablers' and on a 'Rapid Response Air Initiative'.¹⁷ In spite of this progress, doubts remain as to the military efficacy of the EUBG project. In the first place, the lack of dedicated strategic airlift is a major deficiency. Battlegroups can also vary in the quality of training, in their military capability and in their readiness to deploy. There are even disagreements as to the basic mission of the EUBGs, and whether the primary role should be expeditionary operations or territorial defence. Most important of all, the battlegroups are mainly ground forces, with very few naval and air assets attached. As Granholm and Jonson suggest, however, this deficiency could prove to be an area for NATO/EU co-operation in the form of 'add-on packages' drawn from the NRF. (Granholm & Jonson, p.4)

The two projects – NRF and EUBG – are so close in so many respects that the relationship between them could tend easily in the direction of either co-operation or competition. Both projects involve joint force packages of multinational units, at a high readiness to move, based on six month rotations, and equipped for expeditionary operations beyond Europe, covering a wide range of contingencies. As such, there ought to be good grounds for co-operation and exchange of best practice in several areas, including logistic support, in apportioning the costs of a given deployment, and in using the development of a rapid reaction force as an engine for military transformation; 'a catalyst for the acquisition of new capabilities' in Europe. (Flournoy, p.57)

But there are some obvious and important differences between the two initiatives. The first such difference is in terms of military capability. As a brigade-sized force, with

¹⁶ See European Council, Presidency Conclusions, Brussels, 17th-18th June 2004.

¹⁷ Presidency Report on ESDP, 12th June 2006.

naval and air support, the NRF will be capable of missions up to and including collective territorial defence missions, and is in military terms an 'operational' capability. An EU battlegroup, on the other hand, is much smaller and less capable, and is at best a 'tactical' capability. The EU/NATO rapid reaction relationship, in other words, is not on the basis of like-for-like. As far as logistic support is concerned, both NRF and EUBG will conform to the long-established rule that logistics and support costs 'lie where they fall' – i.e., they are the responsibility of the troop contributing nation. But for a single long-distance deployment of, say, a nationally contributed EU battlegroup, the costs of a separate logistics chain might be disproportionate to the perceived benefit of the deployment. Some efficient cost-sharing procedure will be required, but it is not clear that there is yet sufficient government-to-government and NATO-EU co-ordination to prevent duplication of effort. Even if there were sufficient co-ordination between the EU and NATO, there are concerns that the two organisations might be fundamentally incompatible in their spending rules. NATO has a culture of financial flexibility and of last-minute deals brokered between allies in order that the urgency of the response to a crisis is not lost. The EU, however, might be less financially flexible in the face of a crisis, particularly in its prohibition on deficit spending. (Toczeck, p.62)

Other concerns relate to the nature of the relationship between national governments and the organisation in question, whether NATO or EU. Both NRF and EUBG rely, in the end, on the strength of national commitments of armed forces. NATO has a long-standing tradition that a force contribution, once made, should not be withdrawn. The authority of this tradition appears to be dwindling, however, even in NATO, while in the EU the tradition has even less purchase. Recent controversy over Germany's contribution to an EU deployment to the Democratic Republic of Congo, over the Dutch contribution to the expansion of NATO's ISAF in Afghanistan, over the reinforcement of the ISAF mission in southern Afghanistan, and over the vexed question of how to respond when confronted by child soldiers, all suggest that in some cases the contribution of forces is coming to be regarded as a veto mechanism – known as 'national caveats' and 'red cards' – on the scope and role of the deployment. If accurate, this interpretation of recent events suggests that the prospects for rapid, multi-national deployment of European forces are not good. National sensitivities also threaten to hinder the development of an effective operational relationship between NRF and EUBG, by hindering the ability of military commanders to switch operational control of armed forces from NRF to EUBG, and vice versa, as circumstances require.

Europe's armed forces are double- if not triple-hatted; available for national purposes and then for either NATO or EU deployment, or both. It is essential, therefore, that the two multilateral frameworks are at least deconflicted. By mid 2006, rotation schedules had been drawn up such that NRF and EUBG commitments would not conflict, although it remains to be seen whether something similar can be achieved for 'critical enablers' such as strategic airlift. (IISS, p.170) But deconfliction alone will be insufficient; steps must also be taken to improve co-operation between NRF and EUBG. Without practical collaboration, the political differences referred to above and elsewhere in this paper will continue to intrude and divide. Yet with so much disagreement at the political level, practical co-operation will continue to be difficult. The only way to make this circular

relationship self-reinforcing rather than self-defeating is to abandon the idea – at least temporarily – that all political differences must be solved before practical co-operation can occur. If complete political consensus is not allowed to be a pre-condition for practical co-operation, then a good deal could be achieved, and it might be found that increasing practical co-operation helps to create the political coherence which had been absent from the outset. Taking this approach, there are several areas for improved co-operation between NRF and EUBG. There could, for example, be more scenario and contingency planning work between NATO and the EU. Efforts could be made to ensure that the EUBGs are geared more closely to NRF-style planning and operational practices. With this in mind, the training and certification of EUBGs should increasingly be made to correspond to NRF certification procedure. But by the same token, and in the spirit of the ‘Berlin Plus in reverse’ suggestion noted earlier, NATO should be more responsive to what the EU has to offer, whether in the form of the battlegroups or some other initiative, such as the European Gendarmerie Force. Finally, there should be a determined effort to address the ‘national caveat’ issue to reduce the incidence of their use and to mitigate the effects of their being used too frequently or too late. There might be a case for a process of mutual force substitution to ensure that a national veto, if called, does not disable an entire operation.

RESOURCE AND CAPABILITY PLANNING: PRAGUE CAPABILITIES COMMITMENT AND EUROPEAN CAPABILITIES ACTION PLAN/EUROPEAN DEFENCE AGENCY

In security and defence policy, the challenge for governments and multilateral organisations alike is to ensure that a military force has the capabilities it is most likely to need for future operations. Hence, there has been much focus recently on developing strategic lift, deployable communications and combat support/logistics. In the European context, there is also a closely associated challenge to reduce the fragmentation and duplication which persists within European defence industry; it is frequently observed that Europe as a whole spends about half the US defence budget but for all that expense achieves a much smaller proportion of US capability. If, for whatever reason, European armed forces are doomed to second-class status when compared to those of the United States, then the adverse effect on NATO itself and on defence relations between NATO and the EU will be considerable. The resource and capability planning component of this analysis of NATO/EU co-operation is embodied in the relationship between NATO’s Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC), and the EU’s European Capabilities Action Plan and European Defence Agency (ECAP/EDA).

The PCC was launched at the Prague NATO summit in November 2002. The initiative was intended to revive NATO’s faltering Defence Capabilities Initiative with its 58 targets for improvement, by focusing on fewer, but strategically critical capabilities: defence against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear attack; intelligence, surveillance and target acquisition; air-to-ground surveillance; deployable and secure command, control and communications; combat effectiveness, including precision-guided munitions and suppression of enemy air defences; strategic airlift and sealift; air-to-air

refueling; deployable combat support and combat service support units.¹⁸ A judgement on PCC progress is difficult to make, as the key data are usually classified. Nevertheless, a recent review of the PCC by NATO's Parliamentary Assembly was encouraged to note 'that the many PCC goals appear to have been incorporated into national force goals'. (Shimkus, p.2) The PCC has also encouraged several practical achievements:

- A process whereby excess commercial shipping can be available for military use on either an 'assured access' or a commercial charter basis;
- A system of sealift co-ordination to make use of unused capacity;
- Agreement on an interim consortium arrangement (SALIS) for chartering Russian and Ukrainian strategic airlift;
- Supply and logistics co-ordination for the NRF;
- Missile defence (IISS, p.48);
- Ground surveillance;
- Precision-guided munitions;
- The establishment of a Czech-led CBRN defence battalion.

But the PCC's achievement overall has been mixed. Technology transfer sensitivities, for example, have slowed progress on precision-guided munitions, and in the vital area of air-to-air refueling, 'even the joint PCC-ECAP meetings in this area have failed to increase the number of refueling aircraft available to European militaries. (Flournoy, p.44)

The EU has addressed the capabilities issue through two closely related initiatives: first ECAP and latterly EDA. ECAP was established at the Laeken Summit in December 2001 and was an attempt at a more subtle approach to the problem of capability deficiencies, by identifying 'bottom-up', multinational projects which had a reasonable prospect of being delivered. For the first phase of the ECAP project, from 2002-2003, nineteen panels were established (listed in full in Schmitt), co-ordinated by a Headline Goal Task Force (HTF). The work of the panels was to be shaped by a number of principles including the need for improved co-ordination between the EU and NATO (via an arrangement known as 'HTF-Plus') in order to 'avoid wasteful duplication and ensure transparency and consistency with NATO'.¹⁹ In March 2003, the second phase of ECAP was launched, with the panels being replaced by 15 project groups, each under a lead nation.

The EDA was established by Council Joint Action on 12 July 2004 with the mission 'to support the Council and the Member States in their effort to improve the EU's defence capabilities in the field of crisis management and to sustain the ESDP as it stands now

¹⁸ NATO, 'Prague Capabilities Commitment' 19th September 2005:

http://www.nato.int/issues/prague_capabilities_commitment/index.html

¹⁹ 'Statement on Improving Military Capabilities', GAERC, 2386th Council Meeting, Brussels, 19th-20th November 2001.

and develops in the future.’²⁰ As both ‘catalyst’ and ‘conscience’, the EDA is intended to provide an element of ‘top-down’ guidance to the ECAP project groups and to persuade governments to make meaningful commitments to the Headline Goal 2010.²¹ It was with governments in mind that the EDA launched a new (voluntary and non-binding) Code of Conduct for defence procurement on 1st July 2006, intended to increase transparency and competitiveness in the European defence market.

ECAP and EDA work closely together; ECAP project groups have steadily been ‘migrating’ to the ‘more integrated structures in the framework of EDA’; a process which is expected to be complete by end 2006.²² In spite of this rationalisation, and in spite of the undoubted energy behind the EU’s initiatives, the performance to date has not been impressive. The May 2006 Capabilities Improvement Chart, covering six months of activity since November 2005, records progress towards the 1999 Headline Goal and the Headline Goal 2010, set in 2004. Of the 64 capabilities listed in the 2006 Chart, the shortfall in member states’ contributions was shown as ‘solved’ in no more than seven cases. In only another five cases was the situation recorded as having ‘improved’, with the remainder staying ‘approximately the same’. Twenty two capabilities are listed as ‘readiness shortfalls’, significant for the development of EU rapid response capacity, but in only seven cases is the shortfall described as ‘solved’ or that the ‘situation has improved’.²³ Of the 24 capabilities listed as ‘significant in the assessment of capability’, only four are shown as either ‘solved’ or to have ‘improved’ between 2002-2006. Overall, with the exception of one ‘improved’ (for strategic airlift), the I/2006 Chart is identical to the II/2004 Chart published eighteen months earlier, suggesting that very little progress has been made over that period.²⁴

Neither PCC nor ECAP/EDA is meeting expectations, implying that co-operation between the two sides might not yet prove fruitful. The diagnosis is not entirely gloomy, however. The EU-NATO Declaration of 16th December 2002 was clear enough: ‘Both organisations have recognised the need for arrangements to ensure the coherent, transparent and mutually reinforcing development of the capability requirements common to the two organisations, with a spirit of openness.’²⁵ And the mandate of the EDA provides for a formal relationship with NATO: ‘other working relations between the Agency and relevant NATO bodies shall be defined through an administrative arrangement [...] in full respect of the established framework of co-operation and consultation between the EU and NATO.’²⁶ There have been regular bilateral meetings between PCC and ECAP, and from March 2003 an EU-NATO Capability Group, which

²⁰ Council Joint Action 2004/551/CFSP of 12th July 2004 on the Establishment of the European Defence Agency, Article 2.

²¹ ‘Declaration on European Military Capabilities’, Brussels, 22 November 2004, Annex: The Evolution of ECAP 2001-2004, para. 10.

²² Presidency Report on ESDP, 12th June 2006, para. 43.

²³ Council of the European Union, Capabilities Improvement Chart I/2006, <http://consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/newsWord/en/misc/89593.doc> downloaded 1st September 2006.

²⁴ Council of the European Union, Capability Improvement Chart II/2004, Brussels 17 November 2004.

²⁵ ‘EU-NATO Declaration on ESDP’, NATO Press Release (2002) 142, 16th December 2002: <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-142e.htm>

²⁶ Joint Action 2004/551, Chapter VI, Article 25, paragraph 3.

‘catapulted the EU and NATO into a previously unreachable level of dialogue and exchange’ while also making clear just how vast was the challenge to make the two capability mechanisms compatible and mutually reinforcing. (Flournoy, p.65) NATO’s Secretary General has also been invited to attend meetings of the EDA Steering Board.

To a considerable extent, NATO/EU collaboration on capability development is unavoidable; NATO’s Strategic Airlift Interim Solution (SALIS) launched in March 2006 and mentioned above, involves 16 countries, 14 of which are EU member states. In some cases collaboration has had more tangible results; in the development of interoperable communications capabilities for EU forces, for example, the EDA and the EUMS have collaborated with NATO’s Consultation, Command and Control Agency. And the EDA’s project to develop a Long Term Vision for Europe’s military requirements in the longer term was drawn up with the advice of NATO’s Allied Command Transformation, International Staff and International Military Staff, and has been closely co-ordinated with NATO’s own Future Vision, due to be published in 2007. (Williams (a))

The similarities between PCC and ECAP/EDA are striking, and co-operation in capability development between NATO and EU is surely essential if there is to be substantial progress in reducing waste and duplication of effort in European defence. A working and productive relationship between the PCC and the EPAC/EDA is therefore necessary, but to date, and in spite of the collaborative efforts described above, much of the interplay between the two bodies has been ‘largely informational and unproductive.’ (Flournoy, p. 13) As with so many aspects of the broader NATO-EU relationship, all the necessary structures and procedures are in place for a successful relationship. To bring the EU/NATO capability relationship to life, what is required at this stage is to identify a small number of achievable goals, such as agreement to consolidate all airlift and sealift co-ordination centres into one ‘European Strategic Mobility Centre’ serving both NATO and the EU (Flournoy, p.71), and agreement to rationalise the leadership of PCC working groups and ECAP project groups, such that one government takes the lead for a given capability in both organisations. Once the PCC/ECAP/EDA relationship has reacquired its momentum, it should be possible to set more ambitious goals, such as transposing the PCC’s force transformation agenda into the ECAP/EDA, and finding ways to make the overall capability effort ‘expertise-led’ (rather than ‘institution-focused’), by identifying a national expertise and exploiting that advantage for either PCC or ECAP/EDA, or both.

RESPONSES TO TERRORISM

The terrorist attacks on the United States on 11th September 2001 were met with very different responses from NATO and the EU. For the first time in its history, NATO immediately declared the crisis to be one of collective defence, under Article V of the Atlantic Treaty. The EU’s response was of a different character and tempo. An extraordinary European Council meeting on 21st September produced an action plan with 79 measures. The action plan, revised in subsequent weeks, concentrated on important but largely non-military issues such as definitions of terrorism, the need for a common EU arrest warrant, inter-agency co-operation in counter-terrorism, anti-money laundering regulations, and measures on air transport security and air traffic control. With such

different styles of response, it was inevitable that the counter-terrorism relationship between NATO and the EU would develop slowly and cautiously. Months later, when NATO and EU foreign ministers met in Reykjavik in May 2002, they merely 'reaffirmed that co-operation between NATO and the European Union was important to the fight against terrorism, and hoped useful consultations on several questions in this regard between NATO and the EU would continue.'²⁷ Although substantive discussions had doubtless been taking place, this was scarcely the high-minded and purposive rhetoric that might have been expected. Weeks later, NATO's Secretary General George Robertson was able to expand on the developing relationship. 'NATO's relationship with the EU continues to take shape', Robertson insisted; 'The fight against terrorism is obviously high on the agenda of the growing number of meetings between our organisations, at various levels.' Robertson went on to note that Civil Emergency Planning in particular had emerged as a 'promising avenue for practical co-operation' between NATO and the EU.²⁸

At NATO's Prague Summit in November 2002, a Military Concept for Defence Against Terrorism was agreed which set out four roles for NATO's armed forces: anti-terrorism (i.e., defensive measures); consequence management (i.e., emergency preparedness); counter-terrorism (i.e., offensive measures); and military co-operation. NATO's DAT programme has also developed a close interest in the role of new technology, through a Counter-Terrorism Technology Co-ordinator, and a Counter-Terrorism Technology Unit. Much of this effort has been concerned with specific weapon threats and with counter-measures. But work has also been undertaken in the area of critical infrastructure protection – another 'civil' area offering scope for NATO/EU co-operation. At the Istanbul Summit in June 2004, NATO announced an 'enhanced set of measures' in its programme to defend against terrorism, including improved intelligence sharing via a Terrorist Threat Intelligence Unit; rapid response to CBRN use; assistance to protect major events (such as Olympic Games); maritime counter-terrorism operations; the development of new technologies; and co-operation with partners in the implementation of NATO's Civil Emergency Action Plan, including 'the active pursuit of consultations and exchange of relations with the European Union.'²⁹

The post-9/11 campaign against international terrorism has also constituted a vitally important area of operations for the EU, encompassing all three policy pillars. The EU has tended to see military force as of limited value and has characteristically argued for a more integrated policy response, both within the EU and without. Thus, initial military commitments to Afghanistan were made by individual governments, rather than through the EU. Otherwise, the EU's approach has been to improve its capacity to prevent terrorist attacks in the first place, and then to deal with the consequences of any that succeed. (Cornish & Edwards (2005), p.809) This approach was outlined in the European Council's Declaration on Combating Terrorism of 25th March 2004, soon after

²⁷ Joint Press Statement by the NATO Secretary General and the EU Presidency: NATO-EU Ministerial Meeting, NATO Press Release (2002) 060, 14th May 2002.

²⁸ NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson, speech at the conference on 'International Security and the Fight Against Terrorism', Vienna, 14th June 2002. <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2002/s020614a.htm>

²⁹ NATO Istanbul Summit Communiqué, Press Release (2004) 096, 28th June 2004.

the bombings in Madrid. Consistent with the view that terrorism was not a territorial threat to European security, deserving an exclusively military response, the Council called for a focus upon 'priority third countries where counter-terrorist capacity or commitment to combating terrorism needs to be enhanced'.³⁰ By way of a summary of the EU's approach, according to the EU's counter-terrorism co-ordinator, the Council of Ministers has set four priorities for EU counter-terrorism policy: protection of Europe's critical infrastructure, requiring public-private co-operation; disaster management and civil protection in the event of CBRN attacks; identification of the causes of radicalisation/recruitment, internationally and in member states; and review of 'stagnating societies' around the world, where young people have no hope. (Merritt, p.17)

NATO and the EU have, plainly, responded to the terrorist threat in characteristically different ways. Nevertheless, both sides have acknowledged the need for policy co-ordination, at the very least. Civil emergency planning, as noted above, is an obvious and compelling area for such co-ordination, and the two organisations have exchanged information and data on relevant inventories. High level meetings have also been held regularly between NATO's North Atlantic Council and the EU's Political and Security Committee, addressing such issues as counter-terrorism policy and CBRN proliferation (and any connections between the two). Yet it has proved difficult to move the NATO/EU counter-terrorism relationship much beyond rhetoric and process to real policy substance; one analyst describes the relationship as 'woeful', arguing that NATO and the EU 'have no meaningful policy contacts across the entire spectrum of homeland security.' (Tigner) While all can agree that there is a strong case for co-operation, it is the differences in approach – in style, focus and tempo – which best describe EU/NATO co-operation in counter-terrorism, rather than the similarities. To a considerable extent, the weakness of the relationship reflects fundamental differences between the two organisations. NATO is a politico-military alliance, led by the world's only military superpower, with a well-focused strategic culture developed over decades. Although the EU's counter-terrorism activity could be said to be expanding and maturing, what is characteristic of the EU's efforts – as well as being predominantly 'civil' – is that unlike NATO, the EU considers itself more of a policy facilitator than a 'first responder', and focuses its activity on 'complementing security policies existing at the member state level.' (Lindstrom) But even in its preferred civil approach to counter-terrorism, the EU has been found wanting; in counter-terrorism and homeland security preparedness and policy, the EU has been criticised for a lack of common vision and co-ordination, for a lack of policy coherence among member states and within the institutions of the EU, and for the failure to articulate clearly the role of the military in homeland security. In September 2006, following a meeting in Tampere, Finland, the EU's counter-terrorism and cross-border policing plans were described as being 'in tatters'.³¹

³⁰ See European Council, 'Declaration on Combating Terrorism', Brussels, 25 March 2004, http://www.eu2004.ie/templates/document_file.asp?id=10762. See also Council of the European Union, 'EU Plan of Action on Combating Terrorism – Update', 16090/04, Brussels, 14 December 2004. <http://www.statewatch.org/news/2004/dec/terr-action-plan-16090.pdf>

³¹ 'EU plan to fight terror in tatters', *Financial Times*, 23rd-24th September 2006.

In the response to terrorism, the relationship between NATO and the EU is weakest and least developed. Steps need to be taken, and urgently, to move the relationship beyond procedure and into substance. Without real co-operation between the EU and NATO, the Euro-Atlantic response to terrorism will be characterised by division, difference and uncertainty, rather than by coherence and unity of purpose, and will in effect constitute a standing invitation to terrorist groups to attack, in order to expose those differences. Measures are being considered which could give substance to the NATO/EU counter-terrorism relationship, such as the development of standardised warning and alert procedures between NATO and the EU, and agreement on procedures by which NATO could ‘back-fill’ national requirements for key equipment, assist in the deployment of forces and their logistic support, and offer assistance in counter-terrorism operational planning. Measures such as these could, in time, make it both reasonable and possible to move towards the key feature of successful counter-terrorism co-operation between NATO and the EU – the full and frank exchange of terrorism-related intelligence.

CONCLUSION

As has been clear since the end of the Cold War, the development of a durable and efficient security and defence relationship between NATO and the EU is as essential as it is unavoidable. The two organisations are united in many ways; by strategic vision, sense of responsibility, similarities in membership, and by vulnerability to security threats and challenges. NATO and the EU are also united by budgetary constraints; it is beyond the means of member governments to maintain two, entirely separate security and defence organisations. Nor would it make much sense to do so. In each of the five areas surveyed in this paper, the structures and procedures for NATO/EU co-operation are largely in place. In terms of practical co-operation, however, the results are mixed, and overall the outcome is neither co-operation nor competition, but dysfunction:

1. The question of **Geopolitical Burden-Sharing** is one which has exercised NATO and the EU for many years. Both organisations have a global outlook, and both have aspirations to act in a wide variety of political circumstances. The prospects are slim, therefore, of finding a straightforward division of labour between NATO and the EU, whether geographical or functional. That said, there could be a possibility of establishing a *modus vivendi* over Africa. Functional co-operation will be harder to achieve, however. Without agreement, at the highest political levels, that NATO and the EU should not and cannot be in competition, the trend is towards functional competition, rather than co-operation. The mutual rhetoric of omnicompetence obscures the reality, which is that while NATO can offer high-level force projection capability, it cannot compete with the EU in many areas of policy. Conversely, the EU has neither the ability nor the need to rival NATO on all levels and in all places. What the EU requires, instead, is sufficient, fairly low-level military capability to be fully equipped as a complex security actor in certain areas of the world.
2. The **Berlin Plus** arrangement provides a robust framework for operational collaboration between NATO and the EU. The EU has mounted two operations under Berlin Plus – Operations Concordia and Althea – which have increased the

EU's operational experience considerably. European forces have also undertaken other military missions not under the auspices of NATO or Berlin Plus. Gradually, the EU is acquiring experience which many assumed could never happen in the absence of a general transatlantic security consensus. Some now argue that Berlin Plus-style collaboration should flow in both directions, hence the proposal for a 'Berlin Plus in reverse' which could see NATO drawing upon EU strengths in policing and complex crisis management. But while military co-operation is good, several old and intractable differences persist at the political level, threatening to prevent further progress. Once again, it becomes apparent that a 'grand bargain' has yet to be struck between NATO and the EU – whether geographical or functional or 'geo-functional', as proposed in the first section of the paper. Without a robust and durable rationale for NATO-EU co-operation, it seems, the hard and soft, military and civil assets of each organisation can scarcely be exploited to best effect.

3. In **Rapid Reaction Force Planning** the efforts of NATO and the EU are strikingly similar, albeit on different levels of capability. There ought to be firm grounds for collaboration between NATO's Response Force and the EU's Battlegroup project. But there are doubts as to the effectiveness of the EUBG project, even when Full Operating Capability is reached in 2007. Even at full capacity, one force will in military terms have an 'operational' capability, while the other will be merely tactical. NRF and EUBG cannot be compared like-for-like, and it would be as unreasonable to expect NATO to do so, as it would be unrealistic for the EU. Deconfliction between the two force structures is declared to have been achieved, but much more could be done to generate positive and constructive co-operation, in scenario and contingency planning, training and certification, and in logistics and communications. The prospects for multi-national collaboration in rapid reaction deployments are in any case uncertain, given the increasing use of 'national caveats' and 'red cards'. An important area for NATO/EU co-operation, therefore, would be to devise some way to mitigate this problem, perhaps by a system of mutual force substitution.
4. Both organisations are making slow progress in **Resource and Capability Planning**. Since neither organisation is meeting expectations, it would be prudent not to expect too much in terms of co-operation in this area. There is a relationship between NATO and the EU in capability development, but not one that could be described as healthy and productive. Co-operation between the Prague Capabilities Commitment on the one hand, and the European Capabilities Action Plan and European Defence Agency on the other, needs to reacquire momentum. The focus should be on achievable targets – such as the rationalisation of airlift and sealift co-ordination centres – rather than more ambitious plans to export the defence transformation agenda from PCC to ECAP/EDA. An incremental, 'bottom-up' approach to co-operation is more likely to ensure that NATO-EU co-operation is expertise-led, rather than institution-focused.
5. In their **Responses to Terrorism**, the security relationship between NATO and the EU is least developed. The Euro-Atlantic area is generally vulnerable to terrorist attack, and perhaps even to terrorist use of CBRN technology and weapons. The

relative lack of co-operation between NATO and the EU in this area is more than merely inefficient, however. Since terrorists are usually proficient at identifying and exploiting political differences and divisions, the present state of affairs between NATO and the EU could invite the attention of terrorists. The NATO-EU counter-terrorism relationship requires urgent consolidation. But this, in turn, will require more detailed and more timely exchange of intelligence and information, and it is at this point that political differences and distrust within and between both organisations come into play.

In each of the areas surveyed in this paper, NATO-EU collaboration appears to be frustrated by the absence of a 'grand bargain' between the two organisations. Yet it is precisely that collaboration which should be the purpose of such a 'grand bargain'. How then should EU-NATO co-operation best be pursued; by persisting in the notion of a transatlantic 'grand bargain' as the essential precondition for effective collaboration, or by some alternative means? The grand bargain could usefully be understood as a 'top-down' approach to developing NATO-EU relations, offering a division between 'hard power' (NATO) and 'soft power' (the EU), or along geographical lines. But these are declaratory, rather than practical politics, and several years of repeated declarations have served merely to reiterate and reinforce differences, rather than provide solutions. The central conclusion of this paper is that while there have been practical achievements in NATO-EU co-operation, the realisation of a mature and efficient security relationship continues to be hostage to these declaratory politics. In order to create a virtuous circle of efficient and mutually supportive co-existence between NATO and the EU, the solution must be to abandon for the time being the pursuit of a 'grand bargain' and concentrate instead on the 'bottom-up' achievement of what is actually required in the real world of security risks and challenges, rather than on the distant and somewhat abstract goal of an institutional accommodation between the EU and NATO. In time, through a process of 'learning by doing', practical co-operation might well lubricate the highly politicised and intractable transatlantic security debate which has for so many years proved to be an impediment to effective co-operation.

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