GROUPEMENT D'ÉTUDES ET DE RECHERCHES
NOTRE EUROPE

President: Jacques DELORS

The European Security Conundrum:

Prospects for ESDP after September 11, 2001

Jolyon HOWORTH
Jean Monnet Professor of European Politics, University of Bath (UK)
Senior Research Fellow, Institut Français des Relations Internationales (Paris)

Policy Paper N°1
March 2002

POLICY PAPER ONLY AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH

Http://www.notre-europe.asso.fr/

This publication benefits from the financial support of the European Commission. Nevertheless its content is the sole responsability of the author. Niether the European Commission nor *Notre Europe* are to be held responsible for the manner in which the information in this text may be used.

CONTENTS

I. The Nature of the Problem

I.1. The European Security Conundrum

Since the closing years of the Cold War, European member states and their transatlantic allies have been involved in vigorous debates about the future configuration of security and defence arrangements for the old continent. Since December 1998, these debates have produced more progress towards a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) than in the previous fifty years. That progress was galvanised by the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. The debate has essentially turned around three inter-related challenges emerging from the end of the Cold War.

- How to introduce security and defence policy issues into the European Union as prescribed by the Maastricht Treaty.
- How to maximise European security and defence autonomy in terms of both political decision-making and military capacity.
- How to retain US commitment to European security through a restructured Atlantic Alliance guaranteeing Euro-Atlantic complementarity rather than contradiction.

In the first instance, the challenge to actors and analysts alike involved *understanding the political and military implications* of the above challenges. This occupied the years 1990 to 1997/8. Thereafter, the task became one of introducing *new mechanisms and procedures* in order to begin to move forward. The terrorist attacks on New York and Washington on 11 September 2001 *accentuated the urgency* of finding answers to this triple conundrum.

I.2. The Rise and Fall of the WEU "Solution"

From the mid-1980s, when the European political class began to think seriously about enhanced coordination of EC/EU security policy, the solution to the conundrum seemed to be best sought via the *Western European Union*. Hence, the enormous profusion of policy papers, analytical studies and institutional blueprints which dominated the attention of actors and analysts from 1987 (Platform of The Hague) to 1997 (AFSouth crisis and UK veto on EU-WEU merger proposals[1]). The potential of WEU to offer the solution to the conundrum seemed to most experts to be self-evident. WEU had a long (if not glorious) history. It was the only dedicated *European* security and defence institution common to most EC/EU member states. It succeeded, progressively, in associating with its activities most other European states, although this is considered to have exacerbated the awkwardness of its procedures[2]. It

[1] President Chirac, in August 1996, wrote to President Clinton suggesting that the much-heralded restructuring of the Alliance might begin with agreement to transfer NATO's southern command (AFSouth, in Naples) from a US general to a European general. The answer was an unequivocal "No". In June 1997, Tony Blair vetoed the Franco-German proposal to merge the WEU and the EU. Both proposals were seen by their advocates as being essential to breaking the impasse on a European political and military capacity.

[2] Non-EU NATO members were known as "associate members". Non-NATO EU members were offered "observer" status and EU/NATO accession candidates from Central and Eastern Europe were offered "associate partnership". Although this involved all possible partners, it did not increase the effectiveness of the WEU as an organisation.

had begun to work increasingly effectively with NATO. And it avoided the apparent political minefield of introducing defence and security issues directly into the EU. The mid-1990s proposals for a European Security and Defence *Identity*[3] (ESDI) within NATO, and for the development of Combined Joint task Forces (CJTFs) flowed directly from the WEU logic.

ESDI: an acronym which acquired currency in the mid-1990s to designate a *European Security and Defence Identity* from inside NATO. The idea was to allow EU forces to be separated out from the NATO force pool in order to undertake a mission with which the USA or "the Alliance as a whole" did not wish to be involved. ESDI was therefore a facilitating mechanism within NATO which hinged around the notion of "separable but not separate" forces. One key feature was the pre-designation of an EU command chain allowing the deputy supreme commander (DSACEUR), a European officer, to command an EU-led operation.

CJTF: Combined Joint Task Forces. A military structuring plan allowing a given operation to be manned by appropriate forces drawn from a range of services and a number of different countries. This allowed total flexibility in the designation, from within NATO of air, naval and land elements from a range of EU countries, under the pre-designated European command chain. These would be drawn up via WEU/NATO consultation procedures.

However, the WEU "solution" proved to be an impasse. By 1997, WEU was perceived by many key analysts as part of (if not *the*) problem rather than as part of (if not *the*) solution. Politically, it merely perpetuated the unhealthy imbalance between the EU and the US whose necessary rectification was at the heart of the European security conundrum. Institutionally, it still left the EU impotent in terms of decision-making. Militarily, it enshrined the EU's dependency on NATO/US assets and capabilities without offering any long-term guarantees that such assets and capabilities would actually be available in the event of a crisis. The reluctance of the US military to loan state of the art American military systems to the Europeans was a major stumbling block. The crises in the Balkans in the early 1990s - rendered even more dramatic by 1997-1998 with the looming conflict in Kosovo - had demonstrated to the EU the unsatisfactory nature of such a series of handicaps. The WEU approach failed adequately to meet any of the three challenges noted above.

I.3. The Radical Alternative: ESDP

A new approach was urgent. It came with the Franco-British *Declaration* at the Saint-Malo summit in December 1998. By positing the need for "appropriate structures" to be established *within* the EU; for the EU to acquire "the capacity for autonomous action backed up by credible military forces"; and for an EU contribution to "the vitality of a modernised Atlantic Alliance", Saint-Malo went directly to the heart of the threefold European security conundrum. The immediate logical corollary to Saint Malo was the construction, within the EU, of a European Security and Defence *Policy*[4] (ESDP). Such a development had immediate implications at three levels: institutional, military, budgetary. The Cologne European Council (June 1999) set out the institutional framework; the Helsinki Council (December 1999) dealt with the military arrangements. To date, however, the budgetary dimension (on which, ultimately, the entire project stands or falls) has been sidestepped or fudged.

[3] The very fact that ESDI was about *identity* (within NATO) rather than about either *policy* or *capacity* spoke volumes about its limited ambition.

[4] The difference between ESDI and ESDP is the difference between a viable and a non-viable solution to the threefold conundrum posed at the beginning of this paper.

I.4. The institutional framework

The institutional framework for ESDP is something of a hybrid deriving from a succession of discrete initiatives over the previous years. Had leaders sat down at Cologne with a blank sheet of paper, they might not have produced the hybrid that currently exists. The "appropriate structures" emerging from Cologne therefore have many strengths and certain weaknesses. It is one of the purposes of this study to offer some suggestions for correction of the latter.

The *General Affairs Council* (GAC), which originally derives from the procedures of European Political Cooperation, meets monthly and comprises the EU's fifteen foreign ministers. It is the key decision-making body for CFSP and ESDP, only superseded by the trimestrial European Council meetings of head of state and government. However, its agenda is over-loaded, compromising it's ability to remain abreast of the minutiae of foreign and security policy.

The post of *High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy* (HR-CFSP), currently occupied by Javier Solana, was created by the Amsterdam European Council in June 1997 - although the appointment of its first incumbent in the summer of 1999 had to await the outcome of an ideological battle among the national capitals over the level of seniority and the political remit of the appointee. The HR-CFSP is assisted by a small (26 member) *Policy Unit* (PU), also created by the Amsterdam Council with the formal title of the Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit. The PU's function is to assist the HR-CFSP in assessing situations and in formulating policy responses. The role of the HR-CFSP himself is to act as the external face of the EU and to help forge consensus on policy issues within the Council. But Solana is currently disadvantaged by the inadequacy of his staff and of his budget and by the existence of competing agencies with high stakes in the formulation of CFSP and CESDP (governments and ministries in national capitals, the European Commission, NATO).

The *Political and Security Committee* (known universally by its French acronym COPS) was created by the Cologne European Council in June 1999. It comprises permanent representatives at "senior ambassadorial level" from the 15 EU member states plus a representative from the Commission. Its primary function is to provide analysis on international situations to the GAC and to the European Council, to prepare policy options in anticipation of events and, in the event of a regional crisis, to take over the day to day political running of military operations[5]. It is in some ways the EU equivalent of NATO's North Atlantic Council.

The *European Union Military Committee* (EUMC) is the highest EU military body, formally composed of the Chiefs of the Defence Staff of the fifteen member states meeting at least biannually, but normally represented by their military delegates who, in most cases, are double-hatted with each nation's NATO representative. It offers military advice to the COPS and directs the work of the EU Military Staff.

[5] Its functions are to: keep track of international situations, and offer policy advice to the Council; liaise with and provide guidelines for the other EU security organisms; coordinate, supervise and monitor discussions on CFSP; engage in dialogue with NATO, with the "Fifteen" EU accession candidates and with the "Six" non-EU NATO member states; take responsibility for the political direction of the development of military capabilities; take responsibility for dealing with crisis situations and examine all options for action; exercise "political control and strategic direction" of the EU's military response to any crisis (See Rutten 2001, 191, annexe III to Annexe VI of Nice Presidency Conclusions on ESDP).

The *European Union Military Staff* (EUMS) comprises some 150 senior officers from the 15 member states. It provides military expertise and capacity, including during the conduct of EU-led military operations. The EUMS works under the political direction of the European Council (through the COPS) and under the military direction of the EUMC. Although the EMS does not act as an operational HQ, it performs the operational functions of early warning, situation assessment and strategic planning.

These five institutional agencies all operate under the aegis of the European Council. In addition, four other intergovernmental bodies with a long pedigree have their inputs into CFSP and ESDP. The *Political Committee* (which emerged out of the EPC process) comprises the Political Directors of the 15 Ministries of Foreign Affairs and meets fortnightly. Much of its *security and defence* agenda has now been assumed by the COPS, although occasionally the COPS can be convened at Political Director level. The *Committee of Permanent Representatives* (COREPER) has long been responsible for preparing the meetings of the GAC. It has been involved in a turf war with the COPS over its precise remit in the realm of security and defence policy. The *Council Secretariat*, which, prior to 1999, was primarily responsible for overseeing and servicing CFSP, has had to redefine its brief to concentrate on the more juridical aspects of foreign and security policy, leaving the early warning and situation assessment tasks to the Policy Unit. Finally, the rotating *Presidency* has responsibility for galvanising policy during its six-monthly stint, and for drafting the "Presidency Conclusions" on ESDP which are tabled at the final European Council meeting of each semester. These "Presidency Conclusions" cumulatively represent the stages of development of the ESDP *acquis*.

In addition to these nine separate agencies of intergovernmentalism, there is, of course, the supranational *European Commission*, which is largely responsible for the *delivery* and *implementation* of CFSP and ESDP via the Directorate General for External Relations and the Commissioner, Chris Patten. Finally, there is the complex business of parliamentary oversight via the *European Parliament*. The second part of this report will assess the optimum approach for rationalising this unwieldy nexus of agencies and actors.

I.5. Military Capacity and the Rapid Reaction Force

An initial *Capabilities Commitment Conference* (CCC), held in November 2000 delivered the raw materials (troops, planes, ships) to meet the Helsinki European Council's "Headline Goal" for the creation of an EU Rapid Reaction Force (RRF). Since then, defence planners have been struggling to convert these assets into a coherent fighting force. They have also been identifying deficiencies and gaps, which need to be filled before the RRF can acquire military credibility.

A *Capabilities Improvement Conference* (CIC) took place on 19 November 2001. The credibility of the CESDP hinges on the ability of the EU-15 to carry out, independently of the US, combat missions at the higher end of the "Petersberg tasks"[6]. Such a requirement became even more urgent after 11 September as the US began to transfer military assets away from Europe. The November 2001 CIC aimed to narrow the yawning "capabilities gap" between the EU and the US. The CIC claimed that "the EU should be able to carry out the whole range

[6] The Petersberg tasks, so designated at a meeting in Petersberg, near Bonn in June 1992, go from low intensity to high intensity and cover: "humanitarian and rescue tasks; peacekeeping tasks; tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking". Technically, the Kosovo war of 1999 came at the high end of Petersberg

of Petersberg tasks by 2003", while nevertheless recognising that further efforts were required if the Union was to tackle serious combat operations. The Capabilities Improvement Conference took place under the aegis of an informal meeting of the Council of Defence Ministers, which recommended the adoption of the conference's conclusions to the General Affairs Council, meeting in joint session with the Defence Ministers. The CIC Conclusions were then adopted by the European Council at Laeken on 15 December 2001[7].

Capabilities Improvement Conference: Main Conclusions

- In quantitative terms, member states' voluntary contributions amount to a pool of 100,000 troops with adequate support and back-up resources; 400 combat aircraft meeting the basic requirements for air defence and ground troop support; and 100 warships.
- Additional contributions since the 2000 CCC - rectifying a number of deficiencies - included:
  - Land forces: multiple rocket launchers, transmission, electronic warfare assets, armoured infantry and bridging engineering units;
  - Naval forces: improvements in naval aviation;
  - Aviation: improvements in combat search and rescue and precision guided weapons.
- Additional efforts are nevertheless required in most of these same areas, as well as in: force protection, commitment capability and logistics, availability, mobility and flexibility of ground forces and maritime medical evacuation.
- Improvements to strategic capabilities. C3I assets have been improved through the commitment of a number of headquarters and deployable communications units and some improvements have been secured in intelligence and in maritime strategic mobility.
- Additional efforts are nevertheless also required in most of these areas. No qualitative analysis of C3I availability has yet been conducted, but it is assumed that critical deficiencies still exist. Moreover, intelligence, surveillance and target-acquisition (ISTAR) facilities remain limited and strategic air-lift, currently limited to the UK's four C-17 *Globemaster* aircraft, depends crucially on the planned *Airbus A400M* (see below). Roll-on roll-off ships are also needed.
- European Capability Action Plan. It was agreed to rationalise member states' respective defence efforts, to increase synergies between their national and multinational projects (particularly with respect to co-production, financing and acquisition) and to implement a detailed monitoring and evaluation mechanism to ensure that remaining deficiencies are identified and rectified.

[7] The "Statement on Improving European Military Capabilities" appears as Annexe I to the *Draft Presidency Report on European Security and Defence Policy* which can be found at: http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/newmain.asp?lang=1. The "Declaration on the Operational Capability of the CESDP" is to be found as Annexe II to the Presidency Conclusions, pp. 27-9.

I.6. The Impact of 11 September on ESDP

A number of important changes (already under way before 11 September) were accelerated and accentuated by the terrorist attacks.

- The US military commitment to Europe will be relativised through the repatriation (AWACS) or re-assignment (combat forces and equipment) of assets which had previously been based in Europe. Politically, the US administration does not place Europe and its security high on its priority list, other than through the imminent enlargement of NATO, on which more later. On the contrary, Washington seems set to focus far more single-mindedly than hitherto on South Asia and the "East Asian littoral". In any case, as many American officials have made clear, the US does not consider "peace-keeping" and "nation-building" to be part of its global responsibilities. These are increasingly perceived as being specialisms which the EU will undertake, while the US concentrates on high intensity combat. In short, the military relationship between the EU and the US is going to change in substantial ways and this places a high premium on the EU carefully to define and rapidly to deliver its military capabilities.

- European "autonomy" at both political and military levels will become even more crucial, for three reasons. First, because the US military is likely to be concentrated elsewhere and can no longer be relied on to take over tasks of crisis management. Second, NATO, while almost certainly retaining a major combat capability linking the EU to North America, is nevertheless bound to become a very different type of instrument, with the emphasis on its political role, especially after enlargement. Third, because the prospect of terrorist-inspired crises within the EU will require instant political and security reactions on the part of the European Council. September 11 demonstrated that there are no national borders behind which a community can "hide" from the outside world. The integration of an autonomous EU capacity across the entire range of policy instruments is now an urgent task. It is no longer simply a political ambition, but a functional necessity. The rationalisation of the EU's policy-making institutions and procedures is therefore overdue.

- Coordination of this capacity with that of the US, already difficult prior to 11 September, will henceforth pose an even greater challenge. The military capabilities gap is set to widen considerably in light of the huge US defence spending increases adumbrated in the 2001 Quadrennial Defence Review (QDR) and provided for in the 2002 budget. The task now is not so much to close the capabilities gap as to manage it. The main objective should no longer be *interoperability*, since it is highly unlikely that the US military will be expecting significant inputs from allies, but *compatibility* along the entire mission spectrum from the strategic and mid-strategic levels for which the US army is planning, to the sub-strategic and "Petersberg" levels for which the EU is preparing. But such a new partnership will entail drastic force and institutional restructuring.

- However, the EU should maintain its current approach to international affairs based on constructive engagement, prioritising the carrot rather than the stick. If anything, September 11 suggests that such an approach is not only morally preferable to the more militaristic impulses of the USA, but also that, at a purely political level, it is the only approach which has any hope of eradicating the deeper causes of terrorism.

II. Policy Recommendations

II.1. Institutional and Political Rationalisation[8]

The most urgent task is to sharpen procedures at the executive level. Although the appointment of the HR-CFSP has gone some way towards providing Henry Kissinger's apocryphal "EU telephone number", from the perspective of the EU's major partners, there remain a number of competing claims to the switchboard: the rotating Presidency; the President of the Commission, the Commissioner for External Relations, certain high profile Heads of Government from the larger countries. The EU urgently needs unity of external representation. This should be achieved by enacting the following measures:

- Abolish the rotating Presidency in the fields of CFSP/ESDP. It contains many weaknesses. The six-month term is too short to allow sustained forward planning and detracts from CFSP/ESDP consistency. New and different priorities introduced by each successive presidency, however legitimate, do not constitute joined-up policy. In addition, the practice of constituting a *troika* of the previous, present and future presidencies (or even of the Presidency, the HR-CFSP and the Commission) for external missions and representation has been criticised - particularly in Washington - as confusing and irrelevant. It also exacerbates the image of the EU as internally divided. Moreover, the "less big" countries, whatever their other organisational qualities and strengths, simply lack credibility in the eyes of the world's major actors, especially at times of international crisis such as the outbreak of war in Yugoslavia in June 1991 or the events of 11 September. Prior to the terrorist attacks, the Belgian presidency was managing relatively efficiently to take CFSP and ESDP business forward. But after the attacks, the world's attention focused almost inevitably on the activities of Tony Blair, Jacques Chirac and Gerhard Schroeder. The sheer volume of business on the CFSP/ESDP agenda is now so huge that it makes little sense to change its official management on a semestrial basis. The original reasons for rotation – national "ownership" of policy and the generalisation of "presidential" experience - have been overtaken by history. Whether the abolition of the rotating Presidency in the areas of CFSP and ESDP would lead to its abolition in other policy areas, time and experience will tell. In reality, the Presidency assumes three distinct functions: presiding over meetings; political leadership; and external representation. The former function poses no real problem since it is largely an administrative task. The big question is to whom to attribute the other two functions. One candidate would be an upgraded HR-CFSP.

- Combine the posts of HR-CFSP and Commissioner for Relex. Having established the post of HR-CFSP, it makes sense to take the process to its logical conclusion. A single external face and voice for the EU are increasingly necessary concomitants of influence. It makes little sense to persist with two separate posts, one (attached to pillar two) for policy formulation, with a small staff and no budget and one (attached to pillar one) for policy implementation with a relatively large staff and a considerable budget. The combination of these two posts would also be the logical corollary to the abolition of the rotating Presidency in matters related to CFSP/ESDP. The new post would, in effect, be a form of European *Secretary of the Exterior*. The post-holder

[8] See, for further elaboration of some of these issues, Steven Everts, *Shaping a credible EU foreign policy*, London, Centre for European Reform, 2002.

would logically carry out the two main functions of the rotating presidency identified in the previous paragraph (political leadership and external representation)[9]. The creation of such a post would allow for cross-pillar coherence and would facilitate the deployment of the entire range of available foreign policy instruments. The precise status of the post-holder would be tricky to define. Such a high-profile function would logically be appropriate for a former head of government or at the very least a senior minister. Since the post would be attached to both the Commission and the Council, the incumbent would have to work smoothly both with the Commission President and with the General Affairs Council, driving their foreign and security policy forward, but at the same time remaining the servant of the member states. S/he would also have to work smoothly with the other "external" commissioners within the Council: Trade, Competition and Human Rights. The post-holder would be appointed by - and could be dismissed by - the European Council.

- Restructure the Council of Ministers. In order to ensure both legitimacy and efficiency for the new *Secretary of the Exterior*, the remit of the General Affairs Council should be redefined to cover exclusively foreign and security agenda items. The GAC should be renamed the *Foreign Affairs Council.* Moreover, the agenda of the GAC has now become so heavily charged that it can no longer efficiently carry out its duties. The creation of a Foreign Affairs Council would relieve the current burden borne by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs. All the other business of the GAC should be dealt with by a special *Council of European Ministers* (CEM) sitting permanently in Brussels. The CEM would be serviced by COREPER, with emphasis on the more "technical" issues currently dealt with by COREPER 1 rather than on those dealt with by COREPER 2. The meetings of the *Foreign Affairs Council* should be fortnightly, prepared exclusively by an upgraded COPS - comprising senior ambassadors - and chaired by the Secretary of the Exterior, whose primary function in that role should be to facilitate consensus within the Council. The agenda, unencumbered by the technical issues which currently occupy too much of the GAC's time, would become more focused and more manageable. The Secretary would be specifically mandated by the GAC to represent the EU externally, to negotiate and to sign agreements on its behalf. Furthermore (as was suggested by the Laeken European Council), a *Defence Ministers Council* should be instituted on a regular basis (at least every two months) to oversee the considerable military developments currently taking place. These meetings should also be prepared and serviced by the COPS and chaired by the *Secretary of the Exterior.* Finally, a *permanent conference* of senior officials from *Justice and Interior Ministries* should be established in Brussels both to "internationalise" thinking and culture within these notoriously introspective bodies and to coordinate concrete proposals to be submitted to the Justice and Home Affairs Council meetings. *Joint meetings* of the Council of Defence Ministers and the Justice and Home Affairs Ministers should be scheduled once a semester to oversee the integration of the civilian and military aspects of intelligence and security.

- Upgrade and coordinate COPS and the Policy Unit. Since its inception in 2000, the COPS has had to contend with the *de facto* hierarchical superiority of COREPER, exacerbated in the case of many representatives by the fact that their own governments

[9] This would be more acceptable to the majority of member states than some form of *Directoire* comprising three or four big states. However, most big states are unlikely to accept it without a fight. The problem of attributing to a body other than the rotating presidency these supremely important duties is one explanation for the continued existence of the rotating presidency.

chose to appoint to COPS mid-career diplomats rather than senior ambassadors, the better to keep them on a relatively tight leash. But COPS has already demonstrated its value, maintaining much closer and more coordinated control over CFSP/ESDP than was ever possible with the Political Committee, engaging in highly constructive dialogue with the North Atlantic Council, fostering and strengthening an EU-wide foreign and security policy consensus and generally carrying out its mandate in a highly satisfactory way. It should therefore be upgraded by more senior representation. It should also be encouraged to work more closely with the Policy Unit attached to the HR-CFSP, perhaps by double-hatting a number of officials currently working exclusively in the national permanent representations. In any case, the PU should be expanded from its current two dozen officials to around fifty or sixty. It is absurd that a single task-force is expected to cover Russia, Ukraine, the Caucasus, Transatlantic relations, the Baltics and Asia! A clear division of labour must be worked out between the Situation Centre belonging to the PU and the Situation Centre attached to the Military Staff (see below) and the work of the Security Studies Institute and the Torrejon Satellite Centre properly articulated.

II.2. Developing the Appropriate Military Capabilities

11 September posed several urgent new questions about EU military capacity. First, *what sort* of capacity ought the union to be prioritising – intelligence, particularly human intelligence, or high technology hardware? Or both? Second, *how big* a force should the RRF become in light of 11 September? Britain had previously thought in terms of low-end Petersberg, while France had always aimed high. Now the UK government appears to envisage a much more ambitious RRF than previously, and the German government has also crossed a "deployment Rubicon". Third, what is the appropriate methodology for creating an efficient RRF? – "bottom-up", relying on voluntary national contributions painstakingly and imperfectly knitted together; or "top-down", orchestrated by a Council of Defence Ministers acting on advice from the EU military committee? Several countries, including Germany, have promoted the latter course, but others, including France and the UK, resisted. Without some central, proactive, long-term and coordinated planning, it is difficult to see how the RRF could emerge as anything other than a second best.

- **The experts' verdict: continuing scepticism**

The optimistically worded "Statement on Improving European Military Capabilities" emanating from the 19 November 2001 General Affairs Council failed to satisfy most serious strategic analysts. Several major studies have recently been conducted[10], all of which broadly concur that Europe's shortfalls are more serious than is officially recognised.

- Manpower. The RRF aims to mobilise 60,000 troops. With rotation, this will require a pool of at least 180,000. Some studies put the figure at 220,000. Although the EU nations currently have about 1.7 million active forces, just over 500,000 are conscripts. A further 100,000 are deployed on ongoing missions, with rotation requiring a pool of 300,000. In other words, the troops required for RRF duty could amount to over 20% of the EU's available forces – a significant commitment.

[10] "Achieving the Helsinki Headline Goal", *Centre for Defence Studies Discussion Paper*, Kings College London, October 2001; International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, "The European Rapid Reaction Force", *The Military Balance 2001-2002*, Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 283-91.

Moreover, few of them are trained and equipped to the standards which would be required by a high-end Petersberg mission. **The aim** should be to generate by 2006 a pool of 250,000 highly professional, jointly trained and interoperable troops. In order to approach that target, all EU countries should prioritise professionalisation and – if politically feasible – phase out costly and inefficient conscription. Italy's recent decision to go this route should act as a model to other members states who are still nervous about ending conscription, either for political-cultural reasons (Germany) or for strategic reasons (Greece).

- Force projection. Even before 11 September, it was assumed that the RRF might be required for expeditionary missions up to 4,000 kilometres from home. It seems unlikely that the EU would need to engage forces independently of the USA any further afield. Nevertheless, in addition to the extra demands such force projection will make on training and standardisation, a 4,000 km range would require considerable resources in both sea-lift and air-lift. In both these areas, the EU is currently woefully under-provided. Sea-lift requires firm orders for EU-earmarked "roll-on-roll-off" (rapid entry and exit) ships. At present the RRF would be dependent on sub-contracting of commercial vessels. France and the Netherlands have proposed creating an EU maritime lift force and coordination cell involving seventy ships.

- The A400M. The contract for this $16 billion project involving orders for over 200 aircraft from nine countries should have been signed in Berlin on 15 November. But last minute German concerns over the unit price of $80m (already, after fierce EU bargaining, 10% down on industry's first estimate) delayed the signing. Then, in late January 2002, German Defence Minister Rudolph Scharping was forced by the German Constitutional Court to admit that he could only give firm budgetary commitments to purchase 40 of the 73 aircraft originally ordered, the remaining 33 to be financed by the new government after the 2002 elections. Such uncertainty over the German order, coming only days before the contract with Airbus was due to come into force, appeared to compromise the entire deal. The situation was made worse when Italy's order for 16 A400Ms was scrapped in the turmoil surrounding the forced resignation of foreign minister Ruggiero. This street haggling over the EU's only major joint procurement project should cease. The situation calls urgently for the European Council to adopt alternative, joint budgetary procedures for major procurement projects. This is precisely the kind of issue which should be examined by a Council of Defence Ministers.

- **The aim** should be to ensure that, by 2010, the EU is autonomously equipped with adequate naval and air assets to project 50,000 troops and associated equipment to a distance of 4,000 km. This should be seen as a collective priority. The Franco-Dutch proposals for a maritime lift force and the Franco-German proposals for a joint air transport command should be combined to generate an EU transport command as outlined by General Klaus Naumann[11]

- Operational support. The RRF would be weak in four key "force multipliers":

    - Headquarters. In both naval command headquarters and force headquarters, any RRF mission is likely to remain dependent on NATO support for the

[11] Klaus Naumann, "Europe's Military Ambitions", *CER Bulletin* June/July 2000.

foreseeable future. EU member states do not agree internally on the need to develop autonomous HQs. Yet any EU-led operation will need to have assured access to adequate headquarters, especially since there is currently no assured access to NATO facilities. **The aim** should be to ensure EU autonomy in both HQ and operational planning.

- Communications. Only Italy (*Sicral*), France (*Syracuse III*) and the UK (*Skynet-4*) possess dedicated military satellite communications systems. Problems of interoperability suggest an urgent need to rationalise technical specifications for any RRF mission. **The aim** should be progressive integration of EU military communications systems.

- Intelligence, Surveillance and Target Acquisition (ISTAR). Although the SOSTAR-X system (France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Spain) and the UK's ASTOR/RISTA system are under development, few believe the RRF could benefit from a true European battlefield surveillance capacity before the end of the decade. In unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), the EU will remain dependent on the US. In space-based imagery intelligence, France's *Helios* system could be upgraded, but no firm Europe-wide plans exist. **The aim** must be to achieve maximum synergies between these existing systems and to plan a common replacement system for the 2010s.

- Air power. Although the EU's state of the art combat aircraft (*Eurofighter* and *Rafale*) give the RRF the potential to ensure air superiority, serious European deficiency exists in most related areas: airborne early warning (AEW); suppression of enemy air defences (SEAD); precision-guided munitions, particularly those guided by Global Positioning System (GPS); air-to-air refuelling systems; aircraft carrier groups. France, Italy and Spain all have just *one* aircraft carrier when all military experts agree that a minimum for credibility is two. The UK is building two carriers. **The aim** should be to coordinate the activities of these carrier groups and to equip the EU with a minimum of six such groups – if indeed the European Council, advised by the Defence Ministers Council, decides that carrier groups are a necessary element of the EU's military power.

- Defence spending. Although some EU ministers claim that the 1990s decline in defence spending has been arrested and even in some cases reversed, interpretation of the figures is controversial. Most impartial analysts consider that, in real terms, particularly when calculated in constant US dollars, all countries – including those often stated to be increasing their defence budgets (UK, France, Netherlands) – are in fact still trimming defence expenditure. One relatively conservative costing of *additional* EU equipment needs over the next decade comes to $25 billion, equivalent to the entire annual defence budget of Germany. Currently, no EU government – even in the light of 11 September – is making a political case for major increases in defence spending. Strident warnings from sources as authoritative as Javier Solana and George Robertson have so far fallen on deaf ears. Yet opinion polls in early 2002 suggested that the public in many countries (including, surprisingly, a large majority in Germany) would be prepared to see an increase in defence spending. **The aim** should therefore be to establish a benchmark of 2% for each member state's defence spending (those already spending above this level to guarantee not to reduce their budgets) and

to establish, via dedicated meetings of the Council of Defence Ministers, ways and means of establishing synergies, economies of scale and rationalisation of current expenditure. The concept of "defence budget" might appropriately be replaced by that of "security investment budget".

Without meeting such targets, it is difficult to see how the EU's RRF could meaningfully be declared "operational" in 2003. The problem is compounded by the psychological dangers of overstating the reality. As the universally respected International Institute for Strategic Studies recently noted, "in December 2003, when expectations of the EU as a military actor are found largely to lack substance, there will be a '*capabilities and expectations collapse* (my stress)'"[12]. In the view of IISS and similar organisations, an EU RRF will not be ready to assume high-end Petersberg tasks before, at the very earliest, 2010. The challenge of creating an efficient, state-of-the-art RRF at the service of the EU, already considerable prior to 11 September, is now much more severe. Although governments have taken some small steps to rectify deficiencies, too little attention has been paid to process and methodology, to the definition of needs and to the means of delivery.

- **The overall aim** must be to institutionalise bottom-up EU-wide defence planning via regular meetings of the Defence Ministers' Council leading to an extraordinary meeting of the European Council in early 2003 with an agenda exclusively focused on defence and security issues. Regular meetings of the Defence Ministers Council were suggested in the Presidency Conclusions to the Laeken Council in December 2002 and the proposal is being actively pursued by the current Spanish presidency. The extraordinary meeting of the European Council should take decisions based on formal policy papers addressing the following issues:

    - The *Methodology* of EU Capabilities Commitment
    - The place of *Military power* in the EU's range of policy instruments
    - A review of *Threat assessment* in light of 11 September
    - A review of *Capabilities requirements* in light of 11 September
    - The establishment of an EU *Intelligence Unit*
    - Harmonisation of provision for an *Early Warning & Situation Centre* (currently duplicated in EUMS, PU and Council Secretariat)
    - The setting of minimum EU *Research and Development* targets
    - Further cooperation in the field of *Armaments cooperation*
    - The drafting of an EU *Strategic Concept*

But all of these developments will have to be conducted hand in hand with a renewed effort to establish a viable division of labour, within NATO, between the EU and the US.

II.3 A New Partnership with NATO[13]

The EU and NATO have cooperated closely since the Nice European Council, holding joint meetings of the COPS and the NAC, the two Military Committees and a variety of ad hoc working groups. They also cooperated well in managing the developing crisis in Macedonia

[12] IISS, *The Military Balance* art.cit. (f/n/10), p. 291.

[13] I am indebted to Dr. Julian Lindley-French for some of the ideas in this section, which are drawn from his as yet unpublished Chaillot Paper*: The Retreat from Engagement: 11 September, the paradox of American power and its impact upon transatlantic relations.* Paris, EU-ISS, forthcoming 2002.

and southern Serbia, notably through the close working relationship between George Robertson and Javier Solana. However, this cooperation has tended to focus on immediate, practical necessities. What is now required is substantive agreement on much longer-term working arrangements which will allow the Alliance to resurrect itself in a new, more balanced and more cohesive shape. This will involve the EU deciding that it wishes to and intends to deliver on the Saint Malo project of "the capacity for autonomous action backed up by credible military forces". And it will involve the US accepting that the emergence of a credible and militarily autonomous ESDP will in fact be in the broader interests of the US and of the transatlantic relationship. The Clinton administration's project for a "global NATO" is moribund. The Bush administration seems to have accepted a global division of labour whereby the EU will look after its back yard and the US will project stability practically everywhere else. Such a division of labour violates the task-sharing principle on which NATO has hitherto been based, but the growing disparity between US military power and ambition and that of the EU renders it practically inevitable. In order for this division of labour to be concretised, EU-US agreement will be necessary on the following issues.

1. Constructive Duplication

The agreements reached in 1996 at NATO's Berlin ministerial summit whereby an EU force preparing for a military operation in which NATO as a whole would not be engaged might have guaranteed access to NATO planning facilities, assured access to other NATO assets and capabilities and a dedicated European chain of command within NATO (known in the jargon as the "Berlin Plus" process) were, in part, intended to ensure that the EU did not engage in "duplication" of assets available to NATO or the US. Such duplication was regarded by all US administrations as highly prejudicial to alliance solidarity. However, the Berlin Plus process subsequently fell victim to a variety of unforeseen obstacles.

- The Turkish veto on transfer from NATO to the EU of planning or other assets unless the EU agreed properly to include Turkey in ESDP decision-making procedures;
- The definition of "NATO assets" beyond those permanently assigned to SACEUR;
- The reluctance of the US military to agree to the transfer to the EU of state of the art US weapons systems without clear agreement on how those systems might be recalled by the US if a higher priority mission developed;
- The difficulty of agreeing on which organisation (NATO or the EU) would be the most appropriate for a given mission and how a hypothetical NATO "right of first refusal" might operate;
- The problem of whether NATO/US assets might be available to the EU even if non-EU NATO allies were opposed to a potential EU mission;
- The implications for NATO of an EU mission going wrong;
- The growing divergence between the US and the EU both in terms of weapons procurement, R&D, and the "revolution in military affairs", and in terms of the types of military operations each is planning to engage in.

September 11 exacerbated some of these issues by accentuating the likelihood that key US assets (not always in unlimited supply) might simply not be available for transfer to the EU since they were likely to be required by the US military for active service in non-European theatres. In the medium term, hypothetical EU missions are likely to be heavily dependent on NATO assets and questions over their availability will constitute a significant weakening of EU credibility. **The aim** in the longer term must be to reach agreement between the EU and the US on "constructive duplication" allowing the Europeans to develop their own weapons

systems in order to underpin their military autonomy[14]. The precise definition of those weapons systems will be a function of the European's Council's strategic judgment as to the EU's long-term needs. The US must respect the EU's autonomy of assessment in this matter.

2. The EU must develop autonomous planning facilities

The problem of EU "assured access" to NATO planning facilities at SHAPE has already been noted. This is not just a question of the Turkish veto. The US military also has severe misgivings about the reform and the Europeanisation of SHAPE. And yet if a significant EU-led military operation were denied direct access to the assets and facilities available through SHAPE this would have extremely negative implications for the Alliance as a whole. Yet access to SHAPE is only the first part of the challenge for ESDP. **The aim** must be for such access to be successfully negotiated with the US administration and military authorities as the necessary price for the resurrection of the Alliance. This will also involve agreement to "denationalise" the post of SACEUR and to accept that, in certain types of EU-led missions, US troops will be placed under European command. Finally, in the hypothesis of EU-only missions, an EU operational planning facility (compatible with SHAPE) will have to be prepared based on British or French joint service headquarters. Such a facility was catered for in the Nice Presidency Conclusions, but has, to date, been held up by political and military objections from some of the major actors involved.

3. The EU should progressively replace NATO as the stabilising agent in the Balkans

The EU now provides 80% of the ground troops and 80% of the finances for stabilisation efforts in former Yugoslavia, particularly in Bosnia and Kosovo. Since, at the Laeken European Council in December 2001, the EU declared its forces "operational" for certain types of Petersberg tasks, it seems timely to put this military autonomy to the test. The EU appears prepared to assume sole responsibility for police operations in Bosnia, as US troops are progressively withdrawn. The Spanish presidency has furthermore called for the EU to take over from NATO sole responsibility for peacekeeping operations in Macedonia. Some EU member states are reluctant to cross this Rubicon so long as NATO is still present in the area and until there is greater evidence that EU "operationality" could cope with such a mission. In addition, NATO secretary general George Robertson, faced with widespread predictions that NATO is finished as a *military* alliance is eager to retain as much operational responsibility as possible. However, in view of the inevitable US concentration on operations outside the European theatre, and in view of the Bush administration's clear support for the EU to assume responsibility for stabilising Europe's near abroad, the case for the EU assuming greater responsibilities is strong. **The aim** should be for the EU progressively to assume direct responsibility, under ESDP, for Balkan stabilisation. This ought to be considered as the minimum operational remit of an effective ESDP. If the EU does not have the political courage or the military wherewithal to assume such a mission, then it surely needs to ask itself what precisely ESDP is for.

4. Armaments cooperation

Recent moves towards rationalisation of the EU armaments industry must be intensified and accelerated. The problems of duplication which have bedevilled European efforts to achieve economies of scale and maximise synergies (of which the *Eurofighter/Rafale* story is possibly the most absurd) must be resolved through a collective and integrated approach to procurement, funding and auditing. This should be a constant high priority for meetings of the Defence Ministers Council and an important agenda item for the proposed extraordinary

[14] On this, see Kori Schake, *Constructive Duplication: Reducing EU reliance on US military assets*, London, Centre for European Reform, 2002.

European Council meeting in 2003. **The aim** in the short term should be to adopt European preference as the default position, with exceptions (such as the recent Dutch preference for the US *Joint Strike Fighter* over the French *Rafale*) becoming rarer and rarer. Such an approach would create a more favourable medium term context in which to negotiate with the USA a mutually beneficial opening up of the transatlantic defence market. This would involve US concessions on sensitive issues such as technology transfer and export controls – which many industrial constituencies in Washington DC and across the USA already see as both desirable and inevitable – but it would have the advantage of guaranteeing Americans access to European markets and vice versa. It would also lead to more transatlantic joint ventures with all the advantages that would bring for economies of scale and synergies, at the same time avoiding the creation of two mutually hostile and exclusive defence industrial "fortresses".

These developments would help ensure that ESDP becomes a success story and that the Atlantic Alliance re-emerges in a healthier, more balanced and more effective guise to assume the entire spectrum of missions which the 21st century will require of it.

Conclusion

Both the EU and the US have been traumatised by the implications of the structural shifts in their relationship involved in meeting the three basic challenges outlined at the beginning of this paper. Those challenges were the logical corollary of the end of the Cold War. Both sides recognised that these changes are necessary and desirable, but both have feared their consequences. Attempts to negotiate a way forward via the WEU floundered because that route failed to take account of the most significant change of all: the emergence of the EU as a conscious political actor. Saint Malo represented a crossing of the Rubicon on that front and all of the discussions and developments since December 1998 have been predicated on the reality of the EU's aspirations to actorness. Progress has been slow because of internal political divisions among the fifteen, not least on the question of future relations with the USA. But progress there has been. However, two new factors have created a new context which cannot but further galvanise movements towards both an ESDP and a new transatlantic relationship. The first is the qualitative leaps forward made by the Bush administration both in terms of defence spending and in terms of a division of security responsibilities across the globe. The second is the emergence of new asymmetric threats which have broken down previous concepts of strategic space and security guarantees. The EU really has no alternative but to harmonise and integrate its security and defence policy. At the same time, it is in the EU's interests just as much as it is in the US's interests to ensure that that process is done in harmony with the renewed transatlantic alliance. The proposals made in this report should facilitate both developments.

****

Jolyon Howorth
Paris, 14 March 2002.

Notre Europe

Notre Europe is an independent research and policy unit whose objective is the study of Europe – its history and civilisations, integration process and future prospects. The association was founded by Jacques Delors in the autumn of 1996, and consists of a small team of researchers from various countries.

Notre Europe participates in public debate in two ways. First, publishing internal research papers and second, collaborating with outside researchers and academics to contribute to the debate on European issues. The reports are intended for a limited number of decision-makers, politicians, stakeholders, academics and diplomats in the various European Union countries.

The association also organises meetings and seminars in association with other institutions and publications. In accordance with the statutes of the Association, the European Steering Committee meets at least two times a year. The members of the Committee are of various nationalities and diverse political and professional origins.