

ESDP as an Act of American Hegemony

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Introduction

What is the nature of ESDP? It is hard to think of a more hotly debated question. While in the past the foci of research interest have been on the constitutive nature of the EU and its consequent role in world politics (the normative / civilian versus military power debate¹), on the innovatory potential of normative power Europe in the foreign and security policy field², and on the effects of the institutional and conceptual development of ESDP on the member states (Europeanisation³), today more and more scholars are trying to discern what the driving forces behind this integration project actually are⁴. Although ESDP has evolved quickly – in the past 10 years, the Member States of the EU have not only managed to construct the

¹ Manners, Ian (2000), Normative power Europe: A contradiction in terms?, Copenhagen Peace Research Institute, Working Papers 38/2000; Schlotter, Peter (Ed.) (2003), Europa – Macht – Frieden? Zur Politik der ‚Zivilmacht Europa‘, Baden-Baden, Nomos-Verlagsgesellschaft; Bailes, Alyson J.K. (2006), The EU and a ‚better world‘: what role for the European Security and Defence Policy?, in: International Affairs, 84:1, pp.115-130.

² Manners, Ian (2006), European Union 'normative power' and security challenge, in: European Security, 15:4, pp. 405-421; Diez, Thomas (2005), Constructing the self and changing others: reconsidering 'Normative Power Europe', in: Millennium, 33:3, pp.613-636.

³ Irondelle, Bastien (2003), Europeanization without the European Union? French Military Reforms 1991-96, in: Journal of European Public Policy, 10:2, pp.208-226; Rieker, Pernille (2006), From common defence to comprehensive security: towards the Europeanization of French foreign and security policy?, in: Security Dialogue, 37:4, pp.509-528; Dover, Robert (2007), Europeanization of British Defence Policy, London, Ashgate Publishing.

⁴ Toje, Asle (2008), America, the EU and strategic culture: renegotiating the transatlantic bargain, London, Routledge.

institutional structure of ESDP, its decision making process as well as raise civilian and military forces; but, 23 military, civilian as well as civil-military missions staged on three separate continents have also been carried out. However, despite this activity the EU, in the context of security and defence policy, still seems to lack both internal coherence and the growth of a European strategic culture.⁵ Moreover the construction of a military and defence capacity still fails to meet up to the Franco—British declaration of 1998 in Saint Malo that “the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them and a readiness to do so.”⁶

The main focus of this paper is ESDP’s relationship to NATO. Clearly this focus, or more specifically how the Atlantic Alliance has influenced EU efforts to develop a security and defence policy makes perfect sense, not only because, 21 of the 28 NATO states are also EU members, but also because the question of ESDP’s relationship to NATO has, for decades, impeded efforts to develop a stronger, autonomous EU in the context of security and defence. For instance, the two most important European states in terms of security and defence policy – France and Britain – have been on opposing sides: while France has sought to achieve as much autonomy for the EU from NATO as possible; the U.K has opposed any initiative that would question NATO’s primacy in matters of European security. A compromise between both states was therefore only possible, after France began, under the presidency of Jacques Chirac, to ease relations with NATO, and British Prime Minister Tony Blair simultaneously began to strengthen ties with Europe.⁷

Earlier investigations of this relationship have produced contrasting results. For instance, Hofman characterized NATO and the EU as “overlapping institutions”, which “do not engage much with each other on a strategic-political level,”⁸ but rather influence each other with respect to their “institutional design and the broad understanding of security” – EU structures were set up as a mirror of NATO; NATO’s ‘comprehensive approach’ is borrowed from the EU’s success with civil-military missions.⁹ Whereas Ojanen concludes that while both organisations are still independent from each other, they do however, compete for supremacy

⁵ Rynning, Sten (2003), *The European Union: towards a strategic culture?*, in: *Security Dialogue*, 34:4, pp.479-496.

⁶ Joint Declaration on European Defence, Joint Declaration Issued at the British-French Summit, Saint-Malo, France, 3-4 December 1998, <http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/news/2002/02/joint-declaration-on-eu-new01795>.

⁷ Kempin, Ronja (2005), *Französisch-britische Zusammenarbeit in der Sicherheitspolitik, Möglichkeiten und Grenzen*, SWP-Studie 2005/S 07, http://www.swp-berlin.org/common/get_document.php?asset_id=2056.

⁸ Hofman, Stephanie C. (2007), *Institutional Overlap in the Realm of Security: The Case of NATO and ESDP*, <http://www.princeton.edu/~smeunier/HofmannOverlap.pdf>, p.1.

⁹ Hofman, Stephanie C. (2007), *Institutional Overlap in the Realm of Security*, pp.5,7.

in the field of collective defence. As a result, their relationship depends significantly on how both of them develop in the coming years, for example, “whether both organizations develop essentially separately in different directions or whether they are ‘fused’”.¹⁰ She identifies the possibility of an amalgamation, for example “EU-NATO relations have started taking shape largely based on the heritage of WEU-NATO ones.”¹¹ If this were to transpire, NATO would have “supremacy over the EU in central questions of security and defence, providing it with assets and capabilities, but most importantly [the] planning for operations and guidelines for armaments policies.”¹² The rumoured willingness of the European NATO members to make substantial concessions to Turkey on membership of the EDA and opening new accession chapters at the recent Strasbourg /Kehl summit in return for Turkey dropping its objections to Rasmussen taking over the leadership of NATO, show vividly how entangled NATO and EU politics actually are.

While many have expressed some scepticism about whether ESDP is meaningful as a provider of security when it continues to operate in a strategy-free zone, so far the most “radical” position held in relation to ESDP would without doubt be that of Frédéric Mérand, who asserts that “ESDP is not a policy, and it has little to do with defence. Enshrined in the 2001 ‘Treaty of Nice’, it is first and foremost a decision making structure that enables the EU to launch crisis management operations and pursue its foreign policy objectives.”¹³ The question has to be why the EU seems satisfied with this state of affairs.

We share Mérand’s assessment that ESDP has yet to evolve much beyond this decision-making structure, and moreover contend that ESDP is not really an autonomous European project but rather, in its current form, can helpfully be understood as a representation of continuing U.S. hegemony. We wish to make the argument that the US remains the world’s only military superpower, and that it acts therefore as a hegemon in military affairs. One of the key conduits for its influence is the Atlantic Alliance. We suggest that this has a pervasive effect on the way in which ESDP has developed, particularly because of cross-membership in the EU and NATO, and that if ESDP is to gain strategic meaning, that it become rather more

¹⁰ Ojanen, Hanna (2006), *The EU and NATO: Two Competing Models for a Common Defence Policy*, in: *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 44:1, p.71.

¹¹ Ojanen, Hanna (2006), *The EU and NATO*, p.70.

¹² Ojanen, Hanna (2006), *The EU and NATO*, p.72.

¹³ Mérand, Frédéric (2008), *European defence policy: beyond the nation state*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p.29.

than Mérand's decision-making structure for crisis management operations¹⁴, then the EU must emancipate itself from military dependence on the US.

We contend that US military hegemony currently emerges in ESDP in four influential fashions: military doctrine, technology, security organisation and threat analysis. Arguably this statement already undermines claims that ESDP is proof of the EU's growing autonomy vis-à-vis the US. However, it would not preclude the possibility that ESDP might indeed develop a more independent security culture as socialisation towards ESDP norms occurs¹⁵. We argue though that this can only happen if the three big military powers in Europe; Britain, France and Germany; can concur on the purpose of ESDP and thus its policy aims. In other words, the ESDP needs a motor but has yet to find one. As Anthony King stated:

“Above all else, a coherent ESDP depends upon the development of a binding sense of mutual obligation between France, Germany and Britain. These nations need to commit themselves to collective defence goals.”¹⁶

Why these three? In the field of EU defence and security only these three states possess the qualities that agenda setters in the EU require for success: ability to mediate interests, preparedness to compromise and relevant capabilities to negotiate with.¹⁷ The capability to mediate between interests is about the ability to broker compromises and to include the broadest possible spectrum of political preferences in the eventual solution. Preparedness to compromise means that the actor is prepared to compromise in order to bind its chosen partner closer into the EU solution. Relevant capabilities are necessary, because a leading group will only be accepted by the wider EU, if their pooled resources suffice to convince other EU members that it is in their interest to accept the leaders' agenda. Schwarzer and von Ondarza make a convincing case that only the combination of Britain, France and Germany could work in the case of ESDP.¹⁸

However, the big three have not found themselves in a situation where they have been able to successfully deploy this formula. Back in 1974, the Economist quoted an anonymous British junior minister as wearily commenting “We feel that Britain, France and West Germany can

¹⁴ Mérand, Frédéric (2008), *European defence policy: beyond the nation state*, p.29.

¹⁵ Paul Cornish, Geoffrey Edwards (2001), *Beyond the EU/NATO dichotomy: The beginnings of European strategic culture*, *International Affairs*, 77:3, pp. 587-603.

¹⁶ King, Anthony (2005), *The Future of the European Security and Defence Policy*, in: *Contemporary Security Policy*, 26:1, pp. 44-61, here p.46.

¹⁷ Daniela Schwarzer and Nicolai von Ondarza, *Drei Zylinder für einen neuen Integrationsmotor*, pp.13-14.

¹⁸ Daniela Schwarzer and Nicolai von Ondarza, *Drei Zylinder für einen neuen Integrationsmotor*, pp. 13-14.

only talk profitably together in pairs”¹⁹. This still holds true today. The extent of panic in German political circles about the 2008 apparent rapprochement between Britain and France, and what it might mean for ESDP, is hard to understand. Similarly, Britain is almost neurotic on the subject of the Franco-German motor²⁰. The three states often share bilateral but rarely trilateral aims in ESDP. Moreover, as Schwarzer and von Ondarza point out, the US’s bilateral relations with all three are ever-present in every major ESDP decision, and this hinders rather than helps the three to overcome their genuine differences on key policy decisions on the future role of NATO, EU security culture and the forms of security cooperation.²¹ Above all though, we suggest that their collective capability to take on the leadership in the development of ESDP is constrained by the fact that Britain, France and Germany continue to define security in terms of their bilateral transatlantic relationships.

The USA as a Hegemon in ESDP

Before we develop our argument further, it is essential to explain what we understand by hegemony. We are not making the case that the contemporary security and defence relations between the European Union and the United States are the same as those during the Cold War. Cafruny and Ryner make a useful distinction in a discussion of EU-US economic relations between *integral hegemony* and a *minimal hegemonic strategy*. They argue that under integral hegemony, the United States was willing to make “material concessions to its European allies and to sponsor massive material support” in order to ensure the stability of the capitalist system²². A parallel existed within NATO during the Cold War whereby, particularly in the early days of the Alliance, the US provided massive military aid to its European allies allowing them not only to rearm but to re-establish armaments production capabilities²³ as well as providing troops for Western European defence and a nuclear shield. The US made concessions, not least in accepting considerable political and diplomatic independence from the Europeans as examples such as Ostpolitik show, and tolerated free-

¹⁹ Economist, *The Decline of Dogma*, (London, 23/2/1974) p39

²⁰ Edward Foster and Peter Schmidt, ‘Anglo-German Relations in Security and Defence: Taking Stock’, *Whitehall Paper Series 1996*, (London, RUSI, 1996)

²¹ Daniela Schwarzer and Nicolai von Ondarza, *Drei Zylinder für einen neuen Integrationsmotor: Voraussetzungen und Herausforderungen für eine britisch-deutsch-französische Führungsrolle in der ESVP*, (Berlin, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik Diskussionspapier, 2007) p.20.

²² Alan W Cafruny and J Magnus Ryner, *Europe at Bay: In the Shadow of US Hegemony* (Boulder, Lynne Rienner, 2007) p.8

²³ Keith Krause, *Arms and the State: Patterns of Military Production and Trade*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992) p.128

riding from its European partners in order to ensure that Western Europe remained a non-communist bulwark. As Chalmers notes though, the US gained many advantages from its hegemonic role in European defence, using its position to gain trade and political benefits²⁴.

Since the end of the Cold War the situation has changed. Again speaking of economic relations, Cafruny and Ryner argue that the contemporary relations are better understood as a phase of minimal hegemony, whereby the US pursues a narrower policy which aims to externalise domestic problems. They argue that the system though remains hegemonic, “since structures and intersubjective norms compel subordinate social forces to consent to the prevailing order”²⁵. In other words when applied to security relations, under a system of minimal hegemony, the US continues to set the security agenda, which responds to its own security priorities while the continued existence of NATO, and the norms that have developed within that relationship, mean that the Europeans follow, or at least consent not to meaningfully oppose, this security agenda. We can also observe that recent US governments have been much less willing to defer to its European allies²⁶.

If we are to make the case that the US continues to act as a hegemon in EU-US security relations, then we must consider how it exercises its leadership. Arrighi and Silver argue that a hegemon leads in two different ways. Either by *virtue of its achievements* the hegemon “becomes the ‘model’ for other states to emulate and thereby leads other states onto its own path of development”, or “a dominant state leads the system of states in a desired direction and, in so doing, is widely perceived as *pursuing a general interest*”²⁷. We would argue that both are true for ESDP. We would also contend that the power of the hegemon means that individual EU member states still construct their security policies in response to the hegemon, and that this ‘centre nation – periphery nation’ interaction undermines the possibilities of further integration between the EU member states²⁸.

To understand how this works in practice we need to consider three loci of transatlantic interactions: NATO, EU-US relations and bilateral relations between the US and individual member states. Firstly, NATO – within NATO, there is little question that the US is the dominant state and that its security ideas shape the procedures, *raison d’être* and operational

²⁴ Malcolm Chalmers, The Atlantic Burden-Sharing Debate – Widening or Fragmenting?, *International Affairs*, 77:3 (2001) p.573

²⁵ Cafruny and Ryner, *Europe at Bay*, p.8

²⁶ David Calleo, Transatlantic Folly: NATO vs. the EU, *World Policy Journal*, 20:3, (2003) p17

²⁷ Giovanni Arrighi and Beverly Silver, *Chaos and Governance in the Modern World System*, (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1999) p26-8

²⁸ Johan Galtung ‘A Structural Theory of Imperialism’, *Journal of Peace Research*, 8:2 (1971)p.83

doctrine. NATO has also been, as Mérand points out, the site where officers of NATO states have been internationalised in their operational thinking and where substantial operational experience has been gathered²⁹. EU-US relations in general are also of note: while in the field of defence Western Europe has been allied to the US, general EU-US relations have often been characterised by rivalry. If Mérand is correct to argue that ESDP is essentially a fusion of two existing structures; NATO and CFSP³⁰; then elements of rivalry seen in CFSP are likely to be carried over too. Finally, the individual bilateral relations between the US and EU member states also have an impact so long as countries allow those relationships to override their common interest in finding a purpose for ESDP³¹.

How does the US act as a model? Firstly, there is clear evidence that US designed NATO structures are copied within ESDP. The EU's permanent institutions responsible for running an autonomous ESDP include the Political and Security Committee (COPS), which parallels NATO's North Atlantic Council (NAC), the EU Military Committee (EUMC) as well as the EU Military Staff (EUMS). All these committees comprise of Ambassadors from the Member States, their Chiefs of Defence or military representatives, whom are "usually double-hatted to sit on NATO's own military committee."³² Indeed, the fact that these institutions parallel NATO equivalents so closely can be traced back to the then German EU Presidency's leading role in designing them. Berlin apparently was keen to follow the NATO model. Secondly, we suggest that there is a tendency to regard the US's own defence policy as an ideal type. Particularly in European Commission documents there is a general acceptance that US defence spending is something to be emulated and envied, despite many US economists questioning the extent of the budget and how it is spent. Thirdly, in the last decade NATO has consistently pushed an expeditionary warfare model and the only option for modern armed forces. While the impact on old NATO members has been mixed, NATO enlargement conditions have had a strong impact on the newer EU and NATO members³³. Moreover, NATO's new command structure makes the role of the USA as NATO prototype in matters of doctrine and force transformation even clearer. It is therefore hardly surprising that US decisions on doctrine and capabilities are little challenged by the European members of NATO and thus are carried over into ESDP.

²⁹ Frédéric Mérand, *European Defence Policy: Beyond the Nation State* (Oxford University Press, 2008)

³⁰ Mérand, *European Defence Policy* p.120

³¹ Schwarzer and von Ondarza, *Drei Zylinder für einen neuen Integrationsmotor*

³² Mérand, Frédéric, *European Defence Policy: Beyond the Nation State*, p.33.

³³ Anthony Forster, *Armed Forces and Society in Europe*, (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) p.138.

The US also acts more overtly as a leader. It has pioneered military technology developments, known as the revolution in military affairs, such as network centric warfare and ‘smart’ weapons that have been sought after by European states to keep up with the US. One of the major driving forces of ESDP has been the shame felt by Britain and France in particular at the extent of their reliance on the US during the Kosovo campaign. Moreover, while Europeans have disagreed with individual American actions, most notably the invasion of Iraq, on the whole, as Serfati argues, major changes in US security policy, such as homeland security, could almost serve as preannouncements for near identical changes in the EU³⁴.

What does this mean for ESDP? Our introduction suggested that the major critique of ESDP was that it was not really a policy but instead a decision-making structure for peacekeeping operations: that in essence it lacked strategy. Ojanen has suggested that while ESDP was always going to involve some sort of NATO-EU fusion, if this results in NATO retaining supremacy over the ESDP in key questions of security and defence, then there is unlikely to be any real European integration in the field of defence³⁵. By considering two case studies in depth: capability generation and threat perception: we intend to show how US hegemony is manifested and how this prevents the sort of strategic debate that is needed for ESDP to become a real EU policy field.

Capability Generation

Military capabilities (or the lack thereof) have been at the heart of the development of ESDP since the Saint Malo Declaration, and thus, this issue is ideal as a case study to show how US hegemony is playing out within ESDP, why this might be problematic and how leadership by the big three is needed.

Europe’s military inadequacies are well-known: despite numerically large armed forces with few exceptions, member states are unable to deploy the majority of their soldiers and collectively Europe lacks key military assets for crisis intervention such as strategic air lift. Improving Europe’s military capabilities could be described as the glue holding the Anglo-

³⁴ Claude Serfati, *Impérialisme et militarisme: actualité du XXIe siècle*, (Lausanne, Éditions Page Deux, 2004) p.161.

³⁵ Hanna Ojanen (2006), The EU and NATO: Two Competing Models for a Common Defence Policy, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 44:1 p. 72.

French compromise on European security together³⁶: France wishes to increase European military autonomy from the US, whereas Britain wants Europe to remain a viable military partner for the US in NATO, but both agree that military capabilities need to be improved. Moreover, a strong push to strengthen Europe's military capability emerged from the experience of the war in Kosovo. European NATO allies struggled to contribute significantly to NATO's air war. European military planners were particularly concerned that information gathering through satellites – the basis for targeting in the air war – was exclusively in US hands.

In the absence of a strategic discussion on what ESDP should be, capabilities generation has proved a useful focus for the EU's activities in the field of security, even if, thus far, results have been less than impressive. To give a flavour of the flurry of activity, since 1999 we have seen the Headline Goal 2003, Headline Force Catalogue, the European Capability Action Plan process, Headline Goal 2010, the establishment of the European Defence Agency (EDA) and its Long Term Vision and Commission activity in the fields of security research and defence procurement law³⁷. Given this level of activity, one might expect that this is an area where the EU would have begun the socialisation process and created a distinctive culture, but this section will argue that in fact the reverse seems to be true. Firstly, it will consider the field of NATO-EU interaction, then US leadership of the force transformation agenda and the propensity of both the European Commission and the EDA to view US defence spending as an ideal model. It will then argue that this is in fact counter-productive and look at the reasons why the big three fail to offer sufficient leadership in this field.

NATO-EU interaction

In the field of capability generation, interaction between NATO and the EU is inevitably high. Both organisations have been trying, without great success, to improve the military capabilities of European states. Within NATO this is driven by the transformation agenda or, as Bell argues, agendas:

³⁶ Jocelyn Mawdsley, *The Arming of the European Union: Explaining the Armaments Dimension of European Security and Defence Policy*, *Perspectives: The Central European Review of International Affairs*, 22: Summer (2004): pp.7-21

³⁷ Critics would argue that all of this has not in fact produced any actual armaments. This is true but the cross-institutional vigour that this agenda is being pushed by is remarkable.

“These are the Prague Agenda, initiated by former Secretary General Lord George Robertson in 2002 in response to the "lessons of Kosovo and 9/11" and focused on changes in *capabilities, missions and structures*; the Norfolk Agenda, initiated by current Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer in 2004 in response to the "lessons of Afghanistan" and focused on changes in *defence planning, force generation and common funding*; and the Munich Agenda, initiated by German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder in 2005 in response to the "lessons of the Iraq crisis" and focused on changes in NATO's role (or lack thereof) as a venue for genuine transatlantic *strategic consultation and decision-making*.³⁸”

NATO has a well-established defence planning system, basing its work on the Comprehensive Political Guidance (CPG), which provides an analysis of the strategic environment and acts as a framework for all NATO capability issues, planning discipline and intelligence for the next 10 to 15 years. This process led to the 1999 Defence Capabilities Initiative, which identified shortcomings in the following areas:

- Deployability and mobility: getting forces to the crisis quickly;
- Effective engagement: improving forces’ cutting edge capacity;
- Consultation, command and control: giving forces maximum awareness and control;
- Survivability: protecting forces;
- Sustainability and logistics: supporting forces in the field³⁹.

However, progress was limited and in an effort to overcome this member states were asked to make individual commitments in 2002 in the Prague Capabilities Commitment. The Prague summit also saw the establishment of the NATO response force. The EU’s activity has followed along similar lines. The initial plans to set up the Rapid Reaction Force to carry out the Petersberg Tasks involved an audit of the capabilities required. NATO’s original Defence Capability Initiative process included 59 detailed decisions which corresponded to capability shortfalls, of which 70 per cent were recognised as relevant to the Helsinki Headline Goal even at the lower end of demand for Petersberg Tasks. Both the EU and NATO capability assessments highlighted that European armed forces have capability shortfalls in key enabling areas, which are important to some extent, even for lower end Petersberg Task missions.

³⁸ Robert Bell, NATO’s Transformation Scorecard, *NATO Review* (Spring 2005): <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2005/issue1/english/art3.html>

³⁹ http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-EF18028F-A39F2869/natolive/topics_49137.htm

While the EU has avoided NATO-style commitments to capability generation, instead allowing states to join projects aimed at filling the gaps on a voluntary basis, neither process has been very successful at overcoming the basic problems⁴⁰.

What we have seen though is constant interaction between NATO and the EU on the issue of capabilities. There is a joint NATO-EU capabilities group, which was established in May 2003 to ensure the coherence and mutual reinforcement of NATO and EU capability development efforts, which despite many difficulties caused by Turkey's veto, official discussions are held. However, NATO has a much greater impact on ESDP and capability generation than this formal link provides. Mérand is correct to suggest that NATO's defence planning cycle has facilitated the development of a common defence and security culture within NATO. The military officials working on EU capabilities generation have almost without exception been involved in this process, and thus have been socialised within the transformation agenda and its assumptions⁴¹. The EU (with the partial exception of the EDA's Long Term Vision document) has been attempting capability generation without a similar defence planning system and thus has not developed a common culture to challenge that of NATO in this field.

The US as a driver of transformation agenda

The collapse of the Soviet Union left the USA as the sole military superpower and without competition in terms of deployability and military investment. There are very clear limits to US military power as Iraq and Afghanistan have shown, but as Wallace argues,

“The long timescale of military research, development and deployment implies that no serious challenger to the United States is likely to emerge in the next fifteen to twenty years – at least in terms of the provision of conventional, organised forces⁴².”

Because of this singular status, American changes in doctrine, developments in weapons technology and changes in force structure have great influence within the alliance. Many European states have adapted their armed forces to fit the US-sponsored expeditionary warfare model. Indeed, the consensus on lessons learnt from Kosovo speeded up this process. Lindley-French suggests additionally that for the last decade the USA has actively pushed its

⁴⁰ Jocelyn Mawdsley and Gerrard Quille, *The European Security Strategy: A New Framework for ESDP and Equipping the EU Rapid Reaction Force, ISIS Report*, (Brussels, ISIS, 2003)

⁴¹ Mérand, *European Defence Policy* pp.60-62

⁴² William Wallace, *American Hegemony, European Dilemmas, The Political Quarterly*, 73:1 (2002): p.107

allies to transform their armed forces into smaller versions of the US army, feeling that this would be the best way to close the transatlantic divide⁴³. Moreover, NATO's new command structure makes the role of the USA as NATO prototype in matters of doctrine and force transformation even clearer. Allied Command Transformation (ACT) based in Virginia and charged with developing transformational military capabilities and new doctrine in NATO, as Burwell et al point out "works in close contact with the US Joint Forces Command, which is responsible for much of the US military transformation effort."⁴⁴

However, questions need to be asked about whether this acceptance of US doctrine is actually suited to what Europeans seem comfortable with doing in the field of security. US armed forces are largely configured to high-end operations, and as Lindley-French suggests are less well-suited to stabilisation and reconstruction missions⁴⁵. The US's own doctrinal changes tend to be driven by advances in weapons technology – their combat focus demands maximum lethality with least damage to self – but the EU's unique selling point was meant to be the ability to combine military and civilian crisis management capabilities, which suggests that it requires armed forces that can multi-task rather than those that are combat-focussed. Both big and small EU states are finding force transformation might not be the ideal solution to their military needs. Britain, France and Germany have all downsized their armies but all three are struggling to balance the need for American-style military technology to be able to fight alongside the US (or to have a comparable level of military prowess depending on the country) with overstretch and lack of troops to contribute to a growing number of military commitments. Lindley-French suggests that "the current transformation model is leading to a capability-capacity crunch whereby forces get ever smaller to become ever more lethal but then lack capacity to undertake constabulary and stabilisation and reconstruction tasks vital to overall mission success"⁴⁶. Germany has the additional problem, that despite having committed to ambitious military transformation plans, it is far from clear that there is the political or societal will to deploy the capabilities that are being developed. Meanwhile, smaller states are finding the demands to contribute to battle groups for the EU and the NATO response forces, are stretching their budgets, because of the need for such troops to be on stand-by on a regular basis. In turn this means that they have less money to spend on generating new capabilities. However, although one can argue that the US promotion of its

⁴³ Julian Lindley-French, British Strategic Leadership: Food for Thought, *Shrivenham Papers number 2* (Shrivenham, Defence Academy of the UK, 2006)

⁴⁴ Frances Burwell et al, *Transatlantic Transformation : Building a NATO-EU Security Architecture*, (Washington, The Atlantic Council of the United States, March 2006) p.2.

⁴⁵ Lindley-French, British Strategic Leadership

⁴⁶ Lindley-French, British strategic Leadership

model has not necessarily been positive for the Europeans; their own attitudes are also problematic.

EU-US Rivalry – le Défi Américain

Mérand's suggestion that ESDP is a combination of NATO and CFSP is also relevant to this discussion⁴⁷. Observers of EU-US relations can trace back to the 1960s, fears about what Servan-Schreiber called "le défi américain"⁴⁸. West Europeans first became concerned then about the implications of the growing military technology gap for the ability of the United States and Europe to effectively fight alongside one another in any conflict with the Warsaw Pact. Political arguments have raged ever since about burden-sharing and how Europeans might maintain a degree of strategic autonomy. The consequences of the transatlantic defence technology gap for European civilian scientific and business competitiveness has also been a concern. Europeans feared a "brain drain" of scientists and engineers to the US and were acutely aware of the growing transatlantic science and technology gap which was explained in large part by huge US spending on defence and space technology⁴⁹. The economic challenge posed by growing US dominance of the emerging post-war industrial sectors was also a source of worry. Countering this dominance has been a theme in Commission sponsored research programmes ever since

This legacy (or inferiority complex) manifests itself constantly in contemporary EU documentation. The EDA, for example, only compares European defence spending on procurement and R&D with that of the US, and so always unfavourably, despite the fact that many US economists view American defence spending levels as bad for the overall economy and technological development⁵⁰. The European Commission's security research agenda again often frames the programme in terms of rivalry with the US, suggesting US security spending should be emulated⁵¹. But given that the EU does not share the same military objectives as the US, is this fruitless (given the complete lack on impact on member states' defence budgets) comparison actually damaging? Firstly, American defence procurement and research spending appears to be poorly understood by the EU institutions – the reality is not a straightforward success story. Secondly, it is impossible for the EU to 'catch up' the US in

⁴⁷ Mérand, *European Defence Policy*, p120

⁴⁸ Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, *Le défi américain*, (Paris, Denoël, 1967).

⁴⁹ Salomon, Jean-Jacques "Science Policy Studies and the Development of Science Policy" In Ina Spiegel-Rosing and Derek de Solla Price (Eds), *Science, Technology and Society* (London, Sage, 1977)

⁵⁰ Andrew James, Jocelyn Mawdsley and Manuele Citi, *An emerging Defence R&D and Procurement Space*, in James A and P Laredo (Eds.) *Re-evaluating the Role of Defence R&D in the Innovation System*, (Edward Elgar, 2009)

⁵¹ http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/security/doc/gop_en.pdf.

defence spending – it would be politically impossible. But the sheer impossibility of this aim almost provides a convenient alibi for those EU states who contribute little to ESDP and who increasingly are opening up a burden-sharing debate within the EU⁵².

This section has suggested that US hegemony in the field of capability works in three ways. Firstly, capability generation initiatives are broadly similar in both ESDP and NATO and neither have enjoyed much success. We argue however, that the process within NATO is embedded within a comprehensive defence planning system and that the socialisation that this provides feeds into the EU process, because many of those working on ESDP have previously (or even simultaneously if double-hatted) worked on similar issues in NATO. As the EU has yet to develop a clear strategic agenda it is unlikely to diverge substantially from the NATO agenda. Secondly, we argue that the US's position as the world's only military superpower means that its military transformation agenda drives the NATO agenda. However, there is a mismatch between the US's own security aims and the military tools it needs to achieve them, and those that ESDP is meant to be representing. This is increasingly becoming problematic. Thirdly, we suggest that the EU too often portrays US defence procurement and research spending as something to be emulated for military, economic and technological reasons. It is a model. However, this is also perhaps problematic and potentially pushes the EU down a track that is unobtainable and takes it away from fulfilling its own aims.

Threat Perception

In the area of threat perception, the Member States of the EU have also been extremely active in recent years given that they have almost no previous track record. Within its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) since 1999 the EU has established five common strategies (Russia, Ukraine, Latin America, Africa and the Mediterranean). These strategies were introduced by the Amsterdam Treaty and set out the overall policy guidelines for activities with the aforementioned countries. Each strategy specifies its objectives, its duration and the resources that the EU and its Member States must provide. In 2004, the EU developed the “European Neighbourhood Policy” (ENP) in order to forestall the emergence of any new divisions between the enlarged EU and its neighbours and so strengthen the prosperity, stability and security of all concerned. The aim of this policy, which incorporates 16 countries, is to create a ring of countries with strong ties to the EU, without offering an accession

⁵² Nick Witney, *Re-energising Europe's Security and Defence Policy*, (London: European Council on Foreign Relations, 2008)

perspective. Finally, with the 23 civil, civil-military and military operations, which the EU has conducted since 2003, Brussels has been also active on three continents.

Just as in the area of capability generation, one could equally suppose, given the degree of activity mentioned above that, the EU has a clear and concise security policy agenda, which articulates exactly how it is to prevent emerging security challenges and meet present threats. However this is not the case. In order to decipher the reasons for this conceptual vacuum, the following analysis will primarily focus on NATO – EU cooperation in the area of threat perception. The role of the U.S. in the formulation of the European Security Strategy of 2003 will then be investigated.

NATO-EU Interaction

Security policy actors – whether states or international organisations – normally conceive their threat perceptions and the responses they wish to pursue in either “strategies” or “strategic concepts”, the aim of which is to meet the most important challenges of the day. NATO’s Strategic Concept, for example, aims to

”guide the Alliance as it pursues [its] agenda. It expresses NATO’s enduring purpose and nature and its fundamental security tasks, identifies the central features of the new security environment, specifies the elements of the Alliance’s broad approach to security, and provides guidelines for the further adaptation of its military forces.”⁵³

In the field of security and defence policy, the EU however, managed without such a strategic document for almost four years after the launch of ESDP, despite the fact that it was launching military missions (DRC, Bosnia and Macedonia). The aim of these missions often seemed to be based on the need to test the decision-making structures of ESDP rather than being based on a strategic or political rationale. The EU chose to act instead on the basis of the aforementioned “common strategies”, as well as numerous ad hoc political agreements, which for example articulated measures to fight the financing of terrorism.

In contrast to our observations in the area of capability generation, it is important to note that no direct or open interaction between NATO and the EU takes place on the subject of threat perception and response. Cooperation between NATO and the EU is subject to strict regulations. The agreement on ESDP made at the European Council Summit in Nice laid out

⁵³ The Alliance’s Strategic Concept. Approved by the heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Washington D.C., 24 of April 1999, Paragraph 6, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_27433.htm.

the basis for formal consultation and cooperation between the EU and NATO.⁵⁴ For example, the agreement dictates the minimum amount of ministerial level meetings – one meeting per presidency in normal times and an undefined number in times of crisis. On account of French pressure in particular, the decision-making autonomy of both organisations was ardently emphasized.⁵⁵ Turkey’s insistence that NATO information cannot be shared with EU states that have no formal relationship to NATO (Cyprus and Malta) also means the strategic discussions between the EU and NATO are inevitably very limited. Therefore it is impossible to reach any common strategic decisions as they can be taken in either NATO or the EU, but not as a joint decision. Thus this hinders cooperation. Finally, the doctrinal side of ESDP development has been stalled by the French, who have persisted in blocking progress in EU-NATO planning and operational cooperation, which leaders from both institutions had incidentally decreed via the ‘Berlin plus’ agreements

However, – despite this lack of direct cooperation between NATO and the EU in the area of threat perception – NATO has indirectly influenced the ESDP’s ‘conceptual gap’ in relation to its strategic policy goals and rationale. This is because “[o]nce a political fix had been found in 1999 for reconciling the interests of different members by focusing on the Petersberg tasks of crisis management inherited from the WEU, the ‘finalité’ of CESDP was either deemed to be obvious from the context – the lessons of the Balkans – or deliberately left vague in order to avoid confronting differences between those Europeans who did or did not contemplate moving one day to a ‘real’ European defence.”⁵⁶

The US as a ‘conceptual driver’

That in December 2003, EU Member States finally approved the first EU-Security Strategy – ‘A Secure Europe in a Better World’ – is, in the first instance owed largely to intra-European disagreements over military action against the Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein. The decision of the Bush Administration to take military action in Iraq without a specific UN mandate with the support of some, but not all EU members created rifts within both NATO and of course, the EU. In particular, this hit Franco-British cooperation. The two countries, who together, had previously pushed for the creation of ESDP, found themselves leading the two opposing camps. In the EU, while notional ‘common positions’ were drafted and executed, these

⁵⁴ Permanent Arrangements for EU-NATO Cooperation and Consultation, in: Presidency Conclusions Nice European Council Meeting 7, 8 and 9 December 2000, Annex VI. <http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cmsUpload/Nice%20European%20Council-Presidency%20conclusions.pdf>.

⁵⁵ Standing Arrangements for Consultation and Cooperation between the EU and NATO; in: Nice Presidency Conclusions, Annex VII to Annex VI.

⁵⁶ Bailes, Alyson J. K. (2005), *The European Security Strategy. An Evolutionary History*, SIPRI Policy Paper No. 10, <http://books.sipri.org/files/PP/SIPRI10.pdf>, p. 5-6.

positions were nonetheless undermined by unilateral decisions taken by either the pro- or anti-invasion camps. Thus CFSP processes were sidelined or bypassed. The Iraq crisis revealed how little serious discussion had taken place among EU Member States as regards the future direction of the EU's security policy. Therefore in order to demonstrate its capability to act in the area of security and defence policy, and in a concerted attempt to move beyond the intra-European disagreements, the Member States used the informal meeting of EU foreign ministers at Kastellorizo on 2-3 May 2003 to mandate Javier Solana to formulate a European strategy concept. Even though this decision was largely driven by France, Germany and Britain in an attempt to regroup after the split,⁵⁷ one has to concede in fact that “[t]he ESS was [...] driven – not by calls for reform from within the EU – but by outside influence in the shape of US unilateral action.”⁵⁸

Whoever thought that the formulation of the ESS would have served to finalise ESDP, including the overdue designation of a *raison d'être*, would have been deluded. The ESS, which was finally approved in December 2003 at the European Summit in Thessaloniki can be characterised “[a]s a largely [...] non-negotiated document produced within a highly legalistic institution.”⁵⁹ Despite deciding in June 2003, that the final document should encapsulate their interests as well as the priorities of EU citizens, the Member States only worked with Javier Solana on an individual basis. For instance, joint discussions did not take place, rather they were consciously avoided. Although EU Members States, or at least the big three – France, Germany and , in contrast to the run-up to the Iraq war largely agreed on the key security threats, their preferred responses continued to diverge, especially regarding the forum for implementation – NATO or EU – and the instruments involved, in particular the use of force. One of the reasons why the big three were content to avoid joint discussions, and establish common ground, was so that they could incorporate as many of their own national positions into the document as possible. For instance, the German government repeatedly lobbied the ESS to include a paragraph indicating that the use of military force should only be a last resort, and that it be in accordance with the UN Charter.⁶⁰ Robert Cooper, former foreign advisor to British Prime Minister Tony Blair and the main drafter of the ESS, included a greater EU commitment to humanitarian intervention in line with British policy. Britain was

⁵⁷ Bailes, Alyson J. K. (2005), *The European Security Strategy*, p. 11, footnote 34.

⁵⁸ Toje, Asle (2003), *The 2003 European Union Security Strategy: A Critical Appraisal*, in: *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 10, p. 120.

⁵⁹ Bailes, Alyson J. K. (2005), *The European Security Strategy*, p. 14.

⁶⁰ Irlenkäuser, Jan (2004), *A Secure Europe in a Better World – The European Union's Security Strategy. A German perspective*, in: Marco Overhaus et al, *The European Security Strategy: Paper Tiger Or Catalyst for Joint Action? German Foreign Policy in Dialogue*, <http://www.deutsche-aussenpolitik.de/newsletter/issue13.pdf>, p. 12.

also a prime mover behind the statement that distant threats – in particular the nuclear risks in North Korea, South Asia and the Middle East – are of concern for Europe.⁶¹

Since the big three were not eager to play a leading role in the establishment of a common position, the document, despite articulating a number of interrelated ‘key threats’ – terrorism; proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; regional conflicts; state failure; and organized crime – fell short of addressing, beyond a vague common commitment to ‘effective multilateralism’ and intervention, exactly how these perceived threats were to be managed. The ESS does not contain any ‘strategic objectives’ or ‘policy implications’. As a result, the document was, in political terms, restricted to re-building European unity. It had to stay broad-brush enough for all the EU members to read their favourite agendas into it, leaving them room to assert their special interests during the follow up. “Its laundry-list format and politically correct tone clearly were not designed to strike fear into the hearts of political adversaries.”⁶²

Because the big three chose not to jointly set the parameters of the ESS, the U.S. NSS of 2002, quickly became a point of reference for the ESS. For instance, Christopher Heusgen, former head of the EU Policy Unit stated that, “it was clear for us from the beginning that we wanted to write a document which compared with the 2002 US National Security Strategy.”⁶³

Thus, the aforementioned ‘key threats’ – terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction – feature in both documents, thus, illustrating that the U.S. continues to set the security agenda. Consequently, we should perhaps question the extent to which the threat perceptions of the big three actually converged, and rather attribute this convergence to continued U.S. hegemony and leadership in security matters. Moreover upon closer inspection, the character of the bilateral transatlantic relationships, each of the big three shares with the U.S. is equally apparent. For instance, the ESS reads, “the transatlantic relationship is irreplaceable. Acting together, the EU and the U.S. can be a formidable force for good in the world. Our aim should be an effective and balanced relationship with the USA. This is an additional reason for the EU to build up further capabilities and increase coherence.”⁶⁴ From a British perspective, the transatlantic relationship is certainly ‘irreplaceable’ and relations

⁶¹ Hill, Christopher (2004), Britain and the European Security Strategy, in: Marco Overhaus et al, The European Security Strategy: Paper Tiger or Catalyst for Joint Action? German Foreign Policy in Dialogue, <http://www.deutsche-aussenpolitik.de/newsletter/issue13.pdf>, p24, 27.

⁶² Schmidt, Peter, Geipel, Garry (2004), Forward again in US-European relations, in: Oxford Journal on Good Governance 1:1, pp.29-32.

⁶³ Christopher Heusgen quoted after Toje, Asle (2003), The 2003 European Union Security Strategy, p.120.

⁶⁴ A Secure Europe in a Better World, European Security Strategy, Brussels, 12 December 2003, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>, p.13.

should be 'effective', but more important is that the relationship be acknowledged in the context of European security, which the ESS does. Whereas from a French perspective, if European security is at all to have a transatlantic dimension, it is important that the subsequent relationship be 'balanced', so as to avoid a reliance on U.S. capabilities and allow for autonomous action. Thus, this requires the 'build up of further capabilities'; which London would equally acquiesce to so long as it does not undermine the role of NATO, and thus be 'coherent'. And finally, Berlin would prefer that the EU and U.S. 'act together', so as to avoid having to decide between one or the other as well as increasing its own capabilities. Hence, an act of U.S. hegemony as defined above, prevails in the considerations of Members concerning matters of security and so again undermines the ability of the big three to articulate a genuine strategy, and instead leads only to thin compromises.

Of course, NATO has not experienced this problem, by and large, because of American leadership and so since the end of the Cold War, NATO's Strategic Concept has been re-written on two separate occasions, 1991 and 1999. Moreover this looks set to continue, as at the Strasbourg-Kehl Summit earlier this month, NATO leaders launched the process to develop a new Strategic Concept. In contrast, the recent push in Paris for a review of the ESS during the French presidency of the EU in the second half of 2008, met with considerable resistance in both London, and in particular Berlin. For instance, the United Kingdom did not want the review to be done in France and for it to become "an iron clad law for the revision of European defence" and so criticized the concept of collective defence put forward by French President Nicolas Sarkozy.⁶⁵ Germany on the other hand, perceived the re-writing of the ESS as 'opening Pandora's box' and so proved unwilling to support the French ambition to formulate a new strategic document. Despite both countries coming under considerable criticism – Portuguese MEP Ana Maria Gomes stated: "If they don't want France to be the one making the decisions, others have to participate more. Germany should overcome certain reluctances for its foreign commitments. The UK should not content itself to be the USA's lapdog"⁶⁶ – both Berlin and London maintained their respective positions. Thus, the French EU Presidency was only able to present a report on the ESS's implementation.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Howorth, Jolyon (2008), *The Future of the European Security and Defence Strategy: Towards a White Book on European Defence*, Written Expertise for the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Security and Defence, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/committees/studies/download.do?file=20867>.

⁶⁶ White Paper on European Defence: Experts put forward concept of human security, in: European Information Service, March 14th, 2008.

⁶⁷ Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy - Providing Security in a Changing World, Approved by the European Council held in Brussels on 11 and 12 December 2008 and drafted under the responsibilities of the EU High Representative Javier Solana, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/reports/104630.pdf.

Where European threat perceptions are concerned, this section has made the case that US hegemony still plays a significant role. Although, this is not as direct as in the case of capability generation, it matters. Because Britain, France and Germany have not joined forces to agree what the strategic purpose of CFSP and ESDP should be, the drafters of the ESS turned understandably to the NSS for model. The response to the initial draft from the member states was not to sit down and agree what they felt the strategic posture of the EU should be but rather to insist on the addition of national priorities. Consequently, the ESS lacks an independent strategy or any sense of a way forward on the contentious issue of how to respond to threats and instead appeals to the lowest common denominator. American leadership moreover in NATO has been sufficient to allow that organization to redraft its comprehensive strategic concept on several occasions, thus ensuring the NATO remains the primary strategic actor in Europe.

Conclusions

Our paper started with the assumption that ESDP, rather than being proof of European autonomy in the defence and security field, can in its current form be seen as a sign of continuing American hegemony in the field of security and defence policy. We argued however, that we should not assume that current EU-US security relations are the same as in the Cold War. Drawing on Cafruny and Ryner's work we argued that two different concepts of hegemony can be distinguished: whereas integral hegemony is based on the provision of full material support to the hegemon's subordinates similar to EU-US security relations during the Cold War, minimal hegemony consists in conceptual superiority and on the externalization of domestic security political norms. This latter definition better conceptualises the realities of contemporary EU-US security relations. We began by asking what the "nature" of ESDP is. Throughout the paper we argued that it was influenced by a form of US leadership that can be understood as minimal hegemony, in that it consists of agenda setting and acting as an exemplary model.

Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the US and its European partners share almost identical threat perceptions. Terrorism, the proliferation of WMD and state failure featured in both the 2002 NSS of the United States and the 2003 ESS of the European Union. To many observers, the similarity of the two documents came as a surprise, especially as the EU is widely perceived, and indeed often perceives itself, as a normative power, acting first and foremost to prevent

conflicts and employing civilian, rather than military means, to manage international crises. Nevertheless, as our paper clearly showed, it was the US document that clearly served the writers of the ESS as an intellectual model. Most of the persons in charge of the document stressed, that their primary goal was to produce a document that would enable Europe to re-open a security dialogue with the US. Exchanges between the Western Allies had been strained once the Bush administration decided to go to war against the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein without a UN mandate. By renewing ties with Washington, EU member states clearly accepted US hegemony in the field of threat perception. Internal EU-discussion on the future development of ESDP or even on its *raison d'être* was voluntarily avoided. Thus, the example of threat perceptions clearly shows how much the EU accepts the minimal hegemony of the US: Intellectually as well as conceptually the US is perceived as pursuing a common interest in its security aims. The member states of the EU seem to prefer American hegemony over independent thinking.

Where capability generation is concerned, the other facet of hegemony comes into play. The EU states seem to accept American leadership in the setting of both military doctrine and the armaments required to meet these military goals, despite a seeming contradiction with what were thought to be the aims of ESDP; namely to offer a holistic security policy which drew heavily on civilian strengths. Ironically, the failure to question the US transformation agenda is increasingly leading to problems for Europe, as the autumn 2008 failure to deploy the on-duty battle groups to Chad showed. There seems to be an uncritical acceptance within the EU institutions that US defence procurement and research policies are something that the EU should strive (even if everyone knows it is unachievable) to emulate.

We have already pointed out that this state of affairs leads to a lack of strategic independence for the EU and that this risks ESDP lapsing into irrelevance, while NATO retains primacy in European security and defence matters. However, this is not inevitable. If the big three states finally could agree on the basic principles for European defence and security provision, then, they could form a formidable leadership group. Thus far though, they appear to have failed to emancipate themselves in terms of security policy from their bilateral relations with the US, which still hark strongly back to the days of the Cold War. It would be a pity if the emancipatory potential of ESDP is lost because of this weakness.