

EURO-DEFENSE

**A FRENCH INSIGHT INTO ITS IMPLICATIONS ON TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS : IS
THE EU CHALLENGING AMERICA, NATO, OR JUST ITSELF ?**



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Prologue

As the year 1999 has created a momentum towards the establishment of some genuinely European military tool of foreign policy, the choice of such a topic as Euro-defense for a research paper in the course of a Fellowship at the Harvard University's Weatherhead Center for International Affairs was self-evident for a French practitioner of defense diplomacy concerned with both the making of Europe and the future of the transatlantic security link. The air war over Kosovo, a result of the fourth conflict initiated since 1991 by the Serb leader Milosevic, has captivated the European mind to the extent that any other security topic would have seemed out of place. But my personal conviction on the need for a European defense had been forged since 1995, and my deep motive was epitomized by a name: that of the small Bosnian city of Srebrenica. Who in Europe can ever forget the dramatic course of events that unfolded in this Muslim enclave of eastern Bosnia, throughout one full week of July 1995?

This small town's name, as those of Gorazde and Zepa, recalls the martyrdom of seven thousand innocent Bosnian Muslims, murdered by the Serb "ethnic cleansers", mostly from the Drina corps of the Bosno-Serb army. They were acting under the orders of General Radislav Krstic and under the direct control of General Ratko Mladic, their "commander in chief", who was personally active in this slaughter. Srebrenica was the largest single mass murder in Europe since World War II. It was perpetrated in the face of 370 European UN peacekeepers, who were overwhelmed by the Serbs and knowingly abandoned the people they were supposed to protect to their fateful end.

The Europeans had by then not fully broken with a self-defeating, purely "humanitarian" policy that was alien to the defense of justice. Yet, under the prodding of President Chirac, a tri-national Rapid Reaction Force had already been set up to "bomb the bombers" of Sarajevo. Mr. Chirac, on a visit to Washington DC (on 06/14/1995), had also demanded a new policy, breaking with the misguided mandate of UNPROFOR. NATO's involvement, in the air as on the ground, was strongly called for, and, after three devastating years in Bosnia, Mr. Chirac made it clear that short of a strong American commitment, the US primacy in European security would become meaningless and NATO a thing of the past.

A shift of policy was taking place out of a feeling of shame, anger and frustration: a mid-July call from Paris for a joint military operation to retake Srebrenica remained unanswered; Which European land forces could have ventured into the conflict (even if France sustained the illusion that it could field 20,000 troops for the purpose)? The US finally took the lead and several weeks of bombings from the air ensued, together with a tougher posture on the ground. The use of coercive diplomacy backed by

military force brought, in the end, the Dayton conference and "an end to a war", as American chief negotiator Richard Holbrooke characterized it. It was a major American achievement, one that combined political will, military might and tough diplomacy. In the aftermath, NATO deployed an International force (IFOR and then SFOR), allowing a fragile status quo between non-war and non-reconciliation.

On 15 November 1999, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan published an act of contrition-like report, pointing to the moral and political responsibilities of the United Nations and the world community for not preventing the tragedy of Srebrenica: an "inadequate, impartial or neutral political stand" from the UN leaders, their "inability to grasp the moral cause of the aggressed party", their "reluctance to counter the Serb aggressors with air strikes" and "the great powers' lack of political will to forcefully stop the Serbs exactions" are mentioned as decisive factors that brought about this "tragedy that will haunt our History forever". And it will.

Never, never again! The weaknesses and the ambiguities of European defense are too well epitomized by this failure of the Europeans and their consequent frustrations. Their painful contrition and awakening to their responsibilities stirred a quest for some measure of coercive diplomacy of their own. Only after much pondering of its own interests had the United States finally engaged its unique military power to bring the transatlantic community together again and to uphold its leadership. By contrast, the lonely path that Europe had followed since the spring of 1991 and the breakout of the war in Yugoslavia had shown that the Europeans had no authority to commit NATO on their own, and no capability without their American ally of straightening things out in their own backyard. What if anything, would come out of this?

Introduction

Once a dream, soon a reality? Euro-defense has been a myth or a daydream - especially for the French - since the inception of a unified Europe. Again, it has become highly topical, since St Malo, Cologne and even more since Helsinki... Might it, in the end, shadow the paramount issue of NATO enlargement?

This topic has had different titles over the past few years. Should we still speak of ESDI (European Security and Defense Identity)? This was the somewhat "psychological" term forged to express the European yearning for a visibility of their own inside the Alliance, but this introverted phase of awakening is now passé. The European goals have been set in broad strokes, the design has been written in ink into formal documents, the institutions and means of the new policy are being built up. Therefore, my choice of the alphabet-soup name for the topic is ESDP (European Security and Defense Policy). Let it be known, however, that the issue is no other than the future of European defense in both the European Union and the transatlantic contexts.

This existential problem, as the Europeans experienced in Bosnia, had persisted since the fall of the Berlin Wall, and even for decades prior to that, if one remembers the defiant policy of France towards NATO during the sixties. And at Srebrenica, the EU seemed to be a long way from behaving as a relevant security actor. But 1999 galvanized a new European momentum not seen for decades. The Helsinki summit was the landmark, and the Europeans now have a design in the field of security.

At Helsinki (10-11 December 1999), the European Council took the bold step of equipping the European Union with a new 60,000-strong crisis reaction force of its own within two years. This is a modest quantitative venture; a beginning that is by any standard no match to the primacy of the "First among the Allies". Furthermore, this army corps, both independent of the Alliance's chain of command and capable of being merged into it in most foreseeable crisis scenarios, also aims at bringing full logistic support as well as command and control or staff headquarters, under the political umbrella of European intergovernmental cooperation. This in turn requires some new institutions, still to be tested.

But ESDP will also be faced with major uncertainties: Will the new millennium deliver on the Europeans pledge to themselves? Many hurdles still stand in the way of a credible Euro-defense, reasonably limited in scope, but proceeding from a European strategy for the “Old Continent” and from the European Union’s collective sovereignty. Ambivalence is part of the essence of transatlantic relations, and the United States is not convincingly supportive of its Allies’ emancipation. Decision-making, because it is difficult to share as the Europeans would want, remains the bone of contention that bars a real adjustment to the post-Cold War realities. Will the Alliance be undermined by a duality of strategies and policy tools between the two components of NATO? Are we in for new strife with diverging security concepts between the two shores of the Atlantic, resulting in retrenchment into our respective home and regional turfs, as if the quarrels the French have pursued with Washington over the past decades had taught us nothing?

This paper aims to point out that a balanced partnership of equals between NATO and the EU is the only way to safeguard and revitalize the transatlantic partnership into something more adapted to European realities than it is now. As a duality of purposes and defense institutions is materializing, there is no way back for the Europeans; which also makes it worth considering how large the cost of adjustment for the US and for NATO will be.

But, the emergence of Euro-defense is not necessarily a divisive issue, even if it is a sensitive one. The challenge is not, in fact, aimed at America. To the contrary, Euro-defense’s eventual fulfillment could be rewarding to all. Critical challenges have faced NATO since the end of the Cold War. Is the “congenial hegemony” over Europe of the only military superpower still fully justified when no major enemy, bloc or coalition is confronting the Europeans? Are the new threats to the stability of the Old Continent of such a nature that *only* a massive and frontal use of military force can tackle them? Are the tools of security developed autonomously over decades by some of the EU countries to remain, as a matter of principle, irrelevant, or at best some subset subordinated to a leadership that de facto refutes any concept of European sovereignty?

A new equation of duality arises; a complex security architecture, in fact, might emerge in West European security with superimposed European, American and NATO roofs resting on asymmetric or alternative pillars. How will the applicant-countries to both institutions fit into the dual construction? Will it bring an erosion of the Alliance, its revitalization into a partnership, or simply some strife between the two shores of the Atlantic?

Chapter I opens with a view into how the NATO leadership has responded reluctantly since the end of the Cold War to the efforts of its European members to assert their share of responsibility in the functioning of the Atlantic Alliance. In doing so, the EU countries have created their own forum on security issues, stressing their motives for building up their Union as a full-fledged partner in the transatlantic community and a legitimate and largely sovereign major actor in the pan-European context.

Chapter II describes how the Europeans reached the conclusion that they could not really politically “exist” in NATO, and therefore had to exert outside influence over the Alliance from their own powerhouse, while remaining committed to the transatlantic partnership. Does the act of political will performed in Saint Malo in December 1998, when the British and the French decided that all Europeans would get their acts together, bode well for the successful accomplishment and sustainability of their difficult endeavor? Confronted with trouble spots in its close vicinity, the EU possesses assets of its own to provide stability, but also displays limitations in doing so. This leads one to venture into issues such as: “Are there more built-in ambiguities than common synergies among the Europeans? Are they ready to tackle the military, institutional, political and financial hurdles that lie in the way of their design?” Finally, after pondering how viable and how acceptable to the US the European project might become, I shall suggest some scenarios resting deliberately on French assumptions that give a clear priority to the historical experience of the Europeans and the lessons drawn from them.

Chapter III is devoted to the American side of the picture. It starts with a look at where exactly Europe stands in the “grand chessboard” of Washington’s national interests. A direct incidence of

this is to be found in the ways the “benevolent hegemony” has altogether managed, and in fact contained, the need for drastic adaptation and changes in the European security system, since the collapse of the Soviet threat.

My European bias, *assumed throughout this essay*, will focus on the clear ambivalence in the US alarm at any perceived split of a NATO-led architecture as it now stands. Is there any alternative to the prevalent vision that tends to counter almost every component of the European initiative (starting with its deep motives)? What is the challenge aimed at: the self-image of the US, or the “unequal” practice of decision-making that prevails within NATO? The balance of transatlantic relations generates cyclical trends of mutual accommodation and adjustment, especially when the Europeans are cohesive in their goals, but it also inevitably generates recurrent disputes that make mutual compromises more difficult to reach.

As the main European powers claim their will to take a bigger share of the burden and the United States also realizes that it has over-extended its involvement in world security as the global – be it, also, reluctant – sheriff, on which side will this balance tilt in the near future. Will they seize a window of opportunity to reshape their ambivalent relationship into a more fair and balanced partnership? This question will highlight the year 2000, a year of self-challenge for the EU, and a year of electoral effervescence in America. This in turn will lead me to venture a number of projections in my conclusion.

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CHAPTER I: FRANCE SEES EUROPE AS A POTENTIAL GEOPOLITICAL PLAYER

To grasp European aspirations and hesitations, there is no need to trace their expression back to the French experience throughout the Cold War of an epic quest for an alternative to the concept of an American-led alliance. Nevertheless, it still weighs in the background, with the use of the term "Alliance" pointing clearly, in the European perception, to a relation of protection between a hegemon and its vassals or tributaries (e.g. the request for a directorate of three over NATO; the quarrels over French accession to nuclear power status and deterrence doctrines; the half-reconciliation with Washington ending "Kissinger's "Year of Europe" at Ottawa in 1974). French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine has often pictured the EU as "a power constituting a factor of equilibrium", sometimes even as a "counterweight" to the American "unilateralist temptation". Defining "Europeaness" by "differentiation from the American national interests" generates a recurrent source of tension within NATO.

A/ The "European Pillar" and "ESDI" concepts, as groomed In NATO
(Post-Cold war attempts to confer on NATO a "more European look")

History abounds with examples of successful alliances destined to become casualties of their own success. NATO seems to be an exception to this rule, even though the glue of a common threat no longer holds it together. NATO's adaptation to this new geopolitical period has been pursued through different channels: new, wider scopes of missions and congenial dialogue between democracies, resulting in nominal concessions to the concerns of the Europeans and extension of American leadership to a new sphere of Allies and tributaries from the former Warsaw Pact. But as much as NATO's obituary was premature, the competitive impulse gained momentum between an unfettered celebration on the American side of the new "unipolarity" of the world embodied in the vision of a NATO with almost global tasks and, on the European side, a new assertiveness in the definition of Euro-defense as a new field of continental integration.

Deterrence, under its different national forms, has indeed waned as a bone of contention between Allies: since the declaration of the Ottawa Atlantic Council of 14 June 1974, the US has recognizes the specific French and British contributions to Western European nuclear deterrence, thus extinguishing the nuclear quarrel. In Article IV, the declaration courteously recognized a specific European contribution to the collective defense of the Allies: "The European countries generate three-quarters of the conventional potential of the Alliance in Europe, and two of them control nuclear forces enabling them to play a deterrent role of their own, thus contributing to reinforcing the global deterrence of the Alliance". In parallel, the indispensable part played by the US was enhanced...but nowhere, at that time, could the issue of shared leadership have conceivably been mentioned.

With the new strategic deal following the reunification of Germany, deterrence had far less relevance either as a foundation of French foreign policy or as a major defense option. A shift took place in French strategic thinking, focusing it essentially on the collective action of the Europeans, taking into full consideration their strong attachment to the Alliance's structures. This rapidly became reflected in the French policy, which meant an always-increasing crossfertilization of concepts, behavioral culture and national interests among the "12", who became the "15" in 1995. It also implied a more relaxed view of security cooperation with Washington, as the logic of blocs gave way to a more flexible approach to regional crisis, for which France and the United Kingdom - the only European nations with significant military projection capabilities - proved to be the best prepared and most active allies on the side of the US.

1. **The Gulf War** found the Europeans in the midst of their reflections on devising a new perspective of common security, which led to the Maastricht Treaty. But France, like the UK and other EU members, went along with the logic of coalition. Overall American command was adopted because of the unique technological and strategic ability of the US to project and control of a joint force sized in the hundred thousand magnitude. It also established some jurisprudence about the out-of-area role entrusted to NATO. Paris engaged its troops under the American leadership, partly to test their interoperability with the US armed forces - the bulk of the coalition - partly in the expectation that it

could play a more substantial role in the postwar diplomatic settlements. The French military set a useful precedent of operating as a team with their great Ally and learned much, in the process, about their wide technological deficiencies in such fields as intelligence, all-weather offensive air support and command and control. Nevertheless, the French combined forces, including the Daguet Division, took in fact a rather limited part in the operations against Saddam Hussein's Army.

The aftermath of "Desert Storm" saw the US hastily launching a makeshift reform of NATO, limited in substance to some kind of European window dressing, as a way to pre-empt a French or European initiative in this field. In Copenhagen (6-7 June 1991), the rather theoretical concept of "European Security Identity", and of a European role in NATO consolidating the fundamental transatlantic link, was inked. The Alliance and its chain of command remained the warrantor, while the role of the Europeans hinged between that of "contributors" and "subordinated actors", creating the idea of a mere reinforcement. France and its European allies had bowed to the "out of area" and "out of collective defense" policy track that was soon to be endorsed as the new strategic concept, without getting anything in return.

2. The 1991 strategic concept versus the European FSPS

At the **Rome** North Atlantic Council of 8 November 1991, a new strategic concept was adopted, very much in the face of French reluctance. It greatly expanded the Alliance's area of responsibility for non-collective defense operations (non-Article 5 missions), but it also took into account the principles and developments of the European Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), a conciliatory move that improved the prospect of Europe-American joint operations out of the sphere of intervention and the type of missions delineated in the Washington Treaty. This was largely a response to the EU Maastricht negotiation aimed at the creation of a political union among the Europeans, stressing that they keep the possibility of establishing a "Common Defense Policy" open. NATO's new non-Article 5 missions encompass goals no less than "to participate in barring instability and maintaining balance in Europe, bringing a contribution to dialogue and cooperation throughout Europe through confidence building activities, including those enhancing transparency and communication and to taking part in the

monitoring of arm control agreements”. Additionally, the Allies could be called upon to “contribute to peace and stability by supplying forces for UN peacekeeping operations”.

Through this decision, the collective defense apparatus of the Alliance established a monopoly on the future of peace and stability of the whole continent, though the EU was not invited to share any form of authority or have any say in this venture, regardless of the huge stake and investment it was already devoting to this design through non-military means. NATO just “took note” of the development of the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy. However, this was not enough to make a fair deal.

In the previous months, the Maastricht conference had adopted the principle of upgrading the Western European Union (WEU) into the “defense tool” of the EU¹. But, through a contradictory clause meant to appease NATO, it was also stated that “the policy of the EU does not affect the specific character of the security and defense policies of those states which are members of the North Atlantic Treaty. It is compatible with the security and defense policy adopted in this framework”. Clearly, under these conditions, no particular authority could be given to the WEU, “the only European authority competent in the field of defense”. Any move on its part would have to go through a process of first checking its priority obligations towards NATO.

3. The difficult first steps of the Euro-corps

In the wake of the Maastricht Treaty, France and Germany were unsuccessful in having their new Euro-corps endorsed by the European partners as a core element of the European defense identity. Moreover, it stood out too distinctively from the European pillar within the Alliance to get much support in SHAPE headquarters in Mons (in fact, it received a frank negative reaction from Washington, DC). Still, in 1993, both countries concluded an agreement with NATO to place the new force under NATO’s authority for purposes of collective defense and, when deemed necessary, for peace support tasks in time of crisis. This was clearly a choice to keep their initiative tightly linked and mindful of the Alliance.

¹ Title V Art. J4, par 2: “The Union requests that the WEU, as an integral part of the development of the EU, shares and implement the decisions and actions of the Union that impact on defense matters In agreement with the WEU institutions, the Council adopts the relevant practical modalities”.

Nevertheless, at the 4 June 1992 Oslo NATO summit, the need for absolute cohesion in the Alliance was strongly affirmed, and the WEU was warned, “to see to it that forces under its oversight would keep, as their main task, the collective defense mission under the terms of the Washington Treaty”. The upgrading of the 1988 joint French-German brigade had just been announced as the building bloc of a larger Euro-Corps, under the WEU as well as the EU². It coincided with the well-publicized creation of an Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) within NATO, under the command of a mainly British combined staff.

4. ESDI : materializing the European Pillar in the Alliance

As the idea of the pillar itself was giving way to the parent concept of a “European Security and Defense Identity”, it made some strides within NATO from the June 1994 Brussels meeting on. But no concrete application of the concept could be tested in the frame of NATO SFOR force in Bosnia. The WEU was also pushed aside as a potential actor. In line with the development of the Partnership for Peace (PfP), flexible arrangements allowing for modular forces endowed with specific mandates were made possible through new organizational tools such as the Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTF), defined as “separable but not separate” from the main chain of command. The possibility for some European countries to manage some of their own operations within the Alliance was thus theoretically opened in the framework of ad hoc coalitions for peacekeeping and other non-defense aims.

For their part, the WEU members, through their Kirchberg declaration of May 1994, announced their intention of increasing their partnership with NATO and extending it to the neutral EU countries and non-NATO Eastern, Baltic and Balkan participants in the Partnership for Peace. The idea of an autonomous WEU operation supported by some assets borrowed from NATO was also mentioned as an option in principle. Their availability for the assigned tasks would be assumed but not guaranteed; presumably, a vote would have to take place inside the North Atlantic Council (NAC) for that purpose.

The Berlin summit of June 1996 went somewhat further than the previous one in Brussels. It devised, inside SACEUR's (Supreme Allied Headquarters in Europe) chain of command, a pre-

² “The French-German Security and Defense Council having decided to set up a large size military unit with a

arranged string of European staff officers under the authority of the European Deputy SACEUR. This European sub-chain of command could be activated in an operation when and if the “Alliance as a whole” (meaning the US) decided not to commit itself. More political leeway was given to the WEU, which would be encouraged to assume political control and strategic conduct for such operations, eventually with some of the Alliance’s means and capabilities.

These steps towards the materialization of a European pillar were in any case hailed by the Europeans, and most especially in Paris, as a major “breakthrough”. Much care was given to define the adequate technical procedures: the ensuing experience has been that they largely remained window dressing for a European pillar devoid of any political substance, and that no CJTF under the Deputy- SACEUR, not to speak of a WEU-led chain of command, has so far ever been established.

Inherent to the ESDI concept was the paradox of establishing a "European identity" while not designating any European authority to lead it. The WEU was far from being able to provide a coherent and dynamic leadership; militarily, it would have been inclined to discharge its planning and conduct tasks on the integrated structures of the Alliance. Thus, in the fall of 1997, when the Albanian government asked for Western assistance in quelling the prevailing domestic disorder and anarchy, SHAPE (i.e. Washington) reneged on the Berlin promises and London balked at involving the WEU. Consequently, an ad hoc and totally autonomous coalition had to be hastily shaped under Italian national lead. Neither the notion of “right of first refusal” (non-participation of the US coupled with a veto on the use of NATO assets) nor that of a “European autonomous capability” were conceivable at that time. NATO consistently resisted resorting to these new tools, considering them cosmetic concessions given to the most “unruly” European players (notably, France), which should not affect the unity of the Alliance around its American-led chain of command.

5. Enlargement without reform

As a result of its past solitary path, France has long had limited leeway in stirring up any European caucus from within the Alliance. In these circumstances, NATO focused on the agenda of its

enlargement. This push towards the East brought with it the cost of greatly alienating the Alliance from the Russian Federation by always pushing the new security border of Europe closer to it, contrary to the promises given at the time of German unification. It also brought the enormous benefit of expanding the US tool of influence on European matters – even by anticipation of hypothetical new additions – to the much greater sphere of Pan-European democracies.

In fact, most of the applicants to NATO feel unconditionally dependent and supportive of the American primacy on the Continent, if only as a counterweight to Russia. The climax came with the decision taken in Madrid in July 1997 to admit the three new members (Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary).³ A problematic choice now looms ahead: how to cope with chain accessions or traumatic discrimination among the twenty-seven countries taking part in the Partnership for Peace. Many are betting their future and that of their democratic governments on their prospective entry into the Alliance, notwithstanding the patent – and justified – reluctance in the American Congress and in many political circles to thoughtlessly extending the Article 5 defense guarantee of the Washington Treaty to a considerable number of partners, some of whom foster latent or historical animosities and disputes with their neighbors. But if the strengthening of European security were the prime objective of NATO enlargement, it could also be asked why the US is not likely, either, to endorse a new wave of membership from some of those states in dire need of security guarantees, be they decent democracies (the Baltic Republics) or the troubled and threatened neighbors of Serbia (Macedonia, Albania, Croatia, Slovenia...).

The priority given in Washington to gaining wider influence by utilizing NATO as a political tool of integration has undoubtedly evolved in the wake of the main mission the EU has assigned to itself, since Jacques Delors' speech of July 1989 (and probably since the initiatives of Jean Monnet in the 1950s): To make Europe one and whole by launching bridges of reform and adaptation eastward, across the largest possible spectrum of policies.

The Alliance's insatiable greed for new missions outside the field of defense has given the EU countries a limited set of options: one could be to retract the European cooperation back to its initial

Mitterrand–Kohl declaration of 22 May 1992.

base, mainly that of trade and economic policies; the other would see the EU asserting its role as the central actor of European unification and the main depository of the political concept driving it, which means going counter to a “distribution of tasks” (American-led defense and political influence; European-led economic policy and cost burden)⁴. Having made the wise choice to strengthen and reform its institutions, before concluding accession negotiations with the new “eastern” democracies, the “15” are now trying to safeguard their path to another form of “European primacy in Europe”.

Meanwhile, the Alliance has made very little headway on its parallel objective of internal reform, one which was and still is less clear and palatable in the perception of US interests. This ambivalence about ESDI was soon to stall the bargaining pursued between Paris and Washington around the intertwined issues of France’s re-entry into the Alliance’s integrated structures and the increased “Europeanization” of the latter.

6. France moves step by step towards NATO... to reach limits

Drawing the lessons from the Gulf conflict, Paris soon afterward launched a string of structural reforms to re-establish as much interoperability as possible with US forces. The French Air Force, for instance, was beefed up with programs to achieve an all-weather strike capacity and precision targeting (which it did not have), some intelligence satellites (Hélios) were sent into orbit in partnership, and all the sensitive command and control functions grouped in a joint forces organism, with links to new directorate for defense intelligence (D.R.M. in French). More importantly, studies were undertaken in the following years to professionalize the forces by gradually phasing out conscription - a decision finally taken in 1996 - and downsizing the forces (presently at 400,000, from the initial total of 580,000).

³ *Incidentally, their entry into the Alliance took place twelve days before the first NATO strike on Belgrade.*

⁴ *A third option halfway along these was included in the April 1999 NATO summit, under the “Berlin + ” motto through which NATO transferred to the EU the rights of access to its assets previously offered to the WEU. The attached condition was naturally that the decision-making process would remain in the purview of the Alliance. It came out too late and was too restrictive, as the Saint Malo French-British summit of December 1998 had already decided to confer authority on the EU.*

The overall goal is to turn the bulk of the forces into a mobile, deployable capability which, by 2002, would be self-supporting and fully operational, under either a NATO or specific European command ⁵.

Still, long after the high-handed initiatives of General de Gaulle, the US (and, to some extent, the UK) remained rather suspicious of any continental initiative in the field of European defense. Any French or German request which arose within or outside NATO in that respect was inevitably regarded as an attempt to weaken collective defense, or at splitting the Europeans from NATO. Many of France's attempts at propping up the WEU were interpreted as creating a counter-NATO "European fortress" of a kind. Wishing to dispel these long-lasting suspicions in the wake of the election of President Chirac in June 1995, the French government called for rapprochement with NATO, in terms of a "gentleman's agreement" with the US about the conditions for its re-entry. Paris had the intention of fully reintegrating the decision-making bodies and possibly the planning apparatus. It therefore decided to resume its regular attendance at the Defense Ministers meetings⁶ and at the Military Committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

4 France never went away from the Foreign Affairs Ministers meetings or from the Summits, holding the view that these highest political echelons represented the authority of the Alliance rather than its military structures.

5 Presently, France projection capability amounts to 30 000 Army personnel sustainable for one year in extreme (hostile) circumstances. By the end of the 1997-2002 Military Program Law, this capability is to be doubled to 50,000 / 60,000 deployable in the framework of a NATO or ESDP regional operation or, simultaneously, 30,000 for one such operation of one year and 5000 for a long term deployment of several years in a remote and hostile operation theater. The next six-year budgetary Law (2003-2008) will focus on the equipment acquisition for the fully professional armed forces.

But the French request for a fairer distribution of responsibilities between the US and the Europeans and the reallocation of NATO regional commands was doomed to stall on American intransigence on the decisive issue of the Southern command in Naples (the dissociation of the American fifth fleet command, a US national asset, from the mostly European NATO collective assets of the Southern Command was anathema to the US. So was the suggestion that the Naples Command could be entrusted to a European general in a more distant future).

Pursuing such negotiations became impossible, once the letters containing personal appeals from the French president to his US counterpart had been leaked to feed the sarcasm of the Washington media. In addition, general elections in France in the spring of 1997 resulted in a setting of "cohabitation" between President Chirac and the new government under Mr. Jospin. The new French two-headed executive could only agree to be more guarded in the future... A window of opportunity had been missed. With the Amsterdam European Treaty, the path was looming ahead for a de facto EU policy that neither confronted NATO nor humbled itself to ask for permission.

From the fall of the Berlin Wall to the outbreak of the Kosovo conflict, the European group in NATO has persistently been seeking a stronger definition of its role, entailing more responsibilities and access to decision-making. On its part, the American side as the sole superpower has often described its own policies as geared, by definition, "for the best interests of the West". It may be said that each European move towards more autonomy was clearly balanced or anticipated and in any case pre-empted by the symmetrical decision to deny the Europeans a role of their own.

Furthermore, the tragedies in the Balkans triggered by Milosevic's autocracy made it clear to the Europeans that the Western democracies' best recourse against dictatorships and the suppression of human rights could only be in joint action. Autonomy should not mean a temptation to separate. The debate that led France to slam the door on NATO in March 1966, while staying active within the Alliance, could not but re-emerge. The relationship of subordination and dependency that was central to the unity of command remained basically intact, breeding the same old resentments.

The issue of sovereignty, that of Europeanism versus Atlantism, also raises the point of whose preponderance should prevail in the adaptation of the Alliance to the disappearance of its founding goal. Throughout the fifties and even more so through the sixties, the transatlantic diplomacy of Washington was all about supporting the making of Europe⁷, while retaining for itself the benefits of an integrated, American-led overall command. The principle of this Cold War-like centrality at the top is well epitomized by the unique scope of SACEUR's authority on all military matters and his exclusive direct link with the US Presidency and security establishment in Washington.

The reality of the US strategic nuclear "umbrella" stretched over the European Allies is another sacred and unquestionable postulate, even if some feelings of irrelevance have been expressed at times⁸. It remains a supreme justification for the imperial privilege, however paradoxical the effectiveness of the global nuclear shield may now seem, as is also the case with the smaller French "force de frappe". Both remain, in the same way, tools of status that eventually fuel resentment within the community of Allies.

One obvious tactic to muster discipline among the Allies has been to keep the French at bay and to magnify their difficulties with the Imperium as an example of "self-punishment" falling on the villain in the Alliance. This has a great impression on NATO's new applicants, but hardly has any impacts at all on France's influence and power of initiative inside the EU. Slightly flattered to be given such a specific role as "scarecrow", the French have somewhat learned to live under constant US suspicion. Among all the West Europeans, they have become the least inhibited in assessing US foreign and security policy in a frank and direct manner.

⁷ cf. the endorsement of the European Defense Community until its fiasco (1950-54) and the promotion of multilateral frameworks within NATO to galvanize the Europeans; the Multilateral Force – MLF of the Kennedy-Johnson era; the New Atlantic Charter of Dr. Kissinger.

⁸ About the logical limits of this nuclear "umbrella" over Europe, president Mitterrand stresses in his book *"Réflexions sur la politique extérieure de la France: "* Does the US see itself committed to the extent of engaging immediately all its forces at the first perception of a threat against one of its allies? This is the question raised since the conclusion of the Atlantic Alliance, to which no answer was given or, rather, to which any answer would only create more concern. Not only had Henry Kissinger warned, in September 1979, in Brussels that: "Our allies should not always ask us a array of strategic assurances that we cannot give them or, should we give them anyway, that we would not want to honor at the cost of destroying civilization".

As a simple case in point, what, if not a lack of self-esteem, should impair the Europeans from forming their own transatlantic policy in their own interests? The biggest economic and trading actor in the world is now asserting a political identity of its own and is gradually shaping up as a strategic player, especially in its own part of the world. The EU should naturally reach the stage when it cannot only conceive a design of its own in the field of defense, but also invest the necessary authority to implement and keep it under its political hand. This is, indeed, what the "European idea" is all about...

B / The rebirth of the European idea within the EU

1. The quest for European unity: Western Europe only, or the whole of Europe?

Unprepared as France and the UK might have been for the fall of the Berlin Wall and the fast pace towards reunification of the German nation, Paris felt that the future of peace and stability called for a stronger and more cohesive European Community to sustain the Eastern economies in transition. A strong commitment of the West Europeans to "deepen" their integration – rather than a hasty opening to new applicants into a much looser set of common institutions and policies – was the prerequisite, and it gave birth to the **Maastricht "Union Treaty"** in 1991 and to the march towards the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). The Cold War was reaching an end and the Soviet threat vanishing with the breaking up of the Soviet Union itself. At the outset, the sense in Paris was that NATO would probably merge itself into the more inclusive European security architecture, the CSCE giving a roof, norms and conflict prevention mechanisms to the reunified European house. The other half of Europe, freed from the bounds of the Warsaw Pact, felt that it was "hovering in a strategic limbo", but in fact the negotiations on conventional forces reduction across Europe (CFE) were unfolding in Vienna, Paris, and the OSCE summit in Budapest was devising new mechanisms of conflict prevention, democracy-building and rights for ethnic minorities, bringing hopes for a new era of stability in Europe.

The somewhat controversial project of a “**European Confederation**”⁹ launched by President Mitterrand in December 1989 was formed upon these assumptions. Conceived in the broad European CSCE perspective as a forum for gradual integration, it offered, strangely enough, nothing really attractive to the emancipated brothers in Central and Eastern Europe but a collective security approach and the potential for a long and uncertain preparation for EEC membership. Skepticism was so high in Warsaw, Prague, Budapest and elsewhere (as also among some European partners of France) that the Confederation project headed in the exact opposite direction: a rush of the new democracies towards NATO membership that was not really in Washington’s plans nor in line with the promises given to Moscow in the course of its acceptance of a reunified Germany remaining in the western Alliance.

2. Enlarging the EU versus enlarging NATO?

a. WEU moves down from the only “European defense authority” to a minor partner of NATO

Since 1984, the French had been trying hard to revitalize the WEU through the inception of new common assets (a situation/crisis center, a planning staff, a satellite center, an Institute for Security Studies) and by vastly increasing its exchanges and joint activities with NATO. These were useful links to preserve the French contribution to NATO, with the lopsided effect of making the WEU think and work more and more as a mere sub-organ of the Alliance. However, NATO soon denied the European organization any role in the vast field of peace support operations.

In 1995-96, the WEU was given the oversight of a newly created flexible system of forces deployed over the Mediterranean theater, the Euroforces. Aimed at securing a European outreach in the area (taking into account the presence of important expatriate communities in North Africa and the Middle East), these forces are primarily a strategic asset on the European southern flank. They are made from flexible and variable groupings of land forces (Eurofor, with headquarters in Florence) and naval forces (Euromarfor, with rotating international coordination and command), drawn from national resources of the participants: Italy, Spain, Portugal and France, with Greece as an

⁹ *It included the Soviet Union but, strikingly, not the US.*

applicant). They have so far been deployed cautiously to induce the governments of the southern rim to engage in military cooperation with them. As a strategic tool the Euroforces play a role in the follow up of the Barcelona Euro-Mediterranean conference of November 1995 that forged trade, cultural and security links between the "15" of the EU and their 12 southern neighbors. A NATO initiative followed a year later to launch a security cooperation of a consultative nature with the same Arab countries.

b. Artificial competition for membership

Another unwanted effect was the impression of unruly competition between the European grouping and the Alliance in vying for influence and leadership over the newcomers. It was much easier for the 1997 Madrid NATO to open the Alliance to three new members than it would have been for the EU to integrate them into a fully opened market and society. In fact, joining the EU is a far more demanding endeavor than entering NATO, where the selection process reflects a political and geographical choice and only military matters are dealt with. However, the Union cannot afford to be - contrary to some beliefs in American officialdom - a waiting room for all NATO applicants, although it can prepare EU new members to act as stable and running democracies in the midst of the Alliance.

In any case, the Union cannot handle at the same time both the integration of newcomers and the settlement of old border or ethnic disputes they still might be entangled in. The perspective of joining is thus used as leverage to induce them to patch up relations within their national communities or neighborhood, so as not to "import" these problems into the Union. Candidate countries then have to deal with considerable national stakes to prepare for the shock of competition with highly developed and integrated economies, which can hurt their weak sectors at a time when they also have to adjust to the multitude of legal and technical requirements commonly called the "community achievements" ("l'acquis communautaire") in thirty different areas of policy. The EU has already taken upon itself the challenge of absorbing 13 new applicants, starting in 2003, once they are prepared. The early "informative" stage of the negotiations has been opened with six of them since the October 1997 Luxembourg EU meeting.

Since February 2000 the process has been extended to the twelve candidates deemed to satisfy the "Copenhaguen criterions" epitomizing a commitment to a democratic state of law (Turkey being the only applicant still far from the desired threshold). Altogether, these countries account for more than 110 million inhabitants, but their aggregate GDP hardly reaches that of the Netherlands; expressed per capita it is in the range of a quarter of the average current EU income per inhabitant. Although the Union is providing enormous financial and technical assistance to the aspiring states to help them in the process, the amount of structural assistance would surpass its entire budget if the next rounds of membership were to set as ambitious aims of economic homogeneity in the medium term as the previous enlargements had. In any case, the next memberships are going to take an enormous financial investment from the EU. It is bound to take much time and effort before the extended unified market of 500 million consumers will really be able to function as it does between the "15".

Precautions stemming from geopolitics or home politics also fall clearly into the picture. It is not desirable that the EU or the Alliance establish clear-cut borders to the east or to the south, creating conditions of exclusion and resentment. On the contrary, concentric spheres of cooperation are being organized so that every applicant or partner can have a political dialogue and preferential cooperation with the Union. These involve various types of status; in order of declining intensity, they are: membership, applicant member, associate country (within a free trade arrangement or a common custom area), partnership. A strategy has been designed since 1999 to engage the Russian Federation. Others are soon to follow, such as the Mediterranean (most of North African and Near-East partners having already concluded free trade "association" agreements with Brussels including a potential integration in a common custom area), Ukraine and the Balkans.

In the long - and hypothetical - run, the EU sets its goal on activating a free trade, common rules, global market, from Morocco to Kazakhstan, encompassing slightly over one billion consumers. It may even include four hundred million more people, if it is ever extended to the four regional groupings of sub-Saharan Africa (ECOWAS, SADC, IGAD and CEAC). From there, steps

would naturally be taken to merge this "Grand European" market and cooperation galaxy to the "All America Free Trade Area" (AFTA), envisioned since the 1994 Miami summit of the Americas, and with the emerging regional structures in Asia, like the ASEAN free trade area.

Keeping in mind the many hurdles on the road to these consecutive "enlargements" that the EU should endeavor to promote, the European vision of a vast web of economic and social integration undoubtedly has the potential to foster and consolidate the interdependence, and thus the prosperity and stability of a vast area over three continents. This not only underlines the Union's role as a catalyst of globalization and as a major world actor but, more interestingly in the context of security, its capability to foster stability around its own space, through wide-scale resort to non-coercive tools. The EU is far from considering the use of force as the single or most proper way to solve regional problems. As the first provider of market access and main contributor of public aid¹⁰, it holds a unique card to play in order to make Europe "whole and one", peaceful and prosperous.

3. The tough lessons learned in the Balkans: Europe in Bosnia not up to the challenge

When war broke out between the antagonistic components of the Yugoslav Federation in 1991, the Europeans felt some difficulties about addressing the violence in the Balkans in a united way. It took them time to approach the issue in terms of a conflict between actors under international law. At the same time, the US showed reluctance to turn their new NATO "out of area" strategic concept into a commitment to step into the Balkan crisis. EU members, having forged a soft political consensus, rallied under the UN aegis to tackle the Bosnian conflict. The attempt at resolution was a mix of geographic apportionment over maps, coupled with a face-saving and pathetic attempt to rescue – but not really defend – the civilian victims, while maintaining an embargo on arms shipment (to the advantage of Serbia), making the trial last even longer for the victimized Bosnian Muslim and Croat populations.

Since the endorsement of the "European pillar" within the Alliance was institutionalized at the Brussels and Berlin NATO meetings, the initial concept of a "European Security and Defense

¹⁰ *i.e. 50 % of the world total.*

Identity” (ESDI) had not made great strides in the field of operations or in the Alliance’s HQs. One reason was the lack of collective ability displayed by the Europeans to act politically and militarily in Bosnia to bring about the conditions of a settlement.

The Europeans’ participation in UNPROFOR on humanitarian grounds deprived them of any actual role in stopping the bloodshed of ethnic cleansing, struggling for justice, or even preserving their dignity as soldiers. The UK and France finally stood up to their responsibilities. By the summer of 1995, they hit back at the aggressors and asked NATO and American air power to step in. This was a reaction of dismay and an admission of European weakness. Dayton was consequently an essentially American achievement.

Again in the "Alba" peace and order enforcement operation in Albania was launched only after the Western European Union had been rebuked. The "defense arm" of the European Community missed a crucial opportunity to assert its role. This lack of European collective determination to plan and implement military actions of their own clearly reflected their junior position in NATO and European geopolitics.

4. In Kosovo, things came out much better, although it took a bit of luck. First, because the Europeans, realizing their lack of capabilities, called Washington for help at the outset of the humanitarian disaster, where they found a supportive echo in the Clinton Administration. By the same token, they were determined to mobilize their assets to go to war. If a measure of doubt still remains, it is about how much public support there would have been for the long and destructive land attack the Allies would have faced, had the combination of air power and economic and political pressure against Belgrade not prevailed so fortunately.

Even though some uneasiness was felt on the European side that "Allied Force" could not be endorsed by an explicit mandate of the UN, this was partly made up for by the clear condemnation of

the Serbian exactions of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo in two UN resolutions voted in the fall of 1998¹¹. The Europeans invested great effort in keeping the Security Council as cohesive as possible on Kosovo, engaging Russian diplomacy to bring pressure on Milosevic, and moving quickly after the air operations to gain the endorsement of the overall action of NATO, through resolution 1244 a few days after the 6 June military settlement signed in Kumanovo, Macedonia.

An implication of the European multilateral "legalism" was to push forward in the UN the highly controversial concept stressing "a duty of humanitarian intervention" for the international community. Such a duty was emphasized on 20 September 1999 in Kofi Annan's speech at the opening of the 54th UN General Assembly. At that time, the Kosovo jurisprudence was very much being applied to the East Timor crisis.

Moreover, the recourse to the CJTF became at last effective in the deployment of KFOR in Kosovo, giving the Europeans more flexibility in the organization of their sectors of responsibility.

Nevertheless, upon victory, few congratulations were swapped among the Allies. Coalition operations made the work all the more complex for the militaries. Furthermore, the public relations and communications of the Alliance did a rather poor job in convincing and mobilizing large segments of European public opinion (but the national governments made up for it), and **classic irritation** concerning European politicians' interference in the planning of operations and split chains of command flared at times in the integrated headquarters. For their part, European staff officers showed concern for unilateral and secretive US operations involving the most sophisticated weapons. Those experiences probably carry lessons to be drawn to improve the teamwork between the Allies, but they certainly are no reason for continued grudges.

Overall, the Europeans and Americans arrived at a good assessment of each other's contribution and a stronger will to perfect their interoperability. The huge **technological gap** perceived in the field of air operations should not lead either side to underestimate, however, the

¹¹ *Respectively, resolution 1109 of 23 September, limiting the level of the Serbian military and paramilitary forces in Kosovo and, on 24 October, another decision inviting NATO to take "appropriate measures" to constrain Belgrade in respecting its obligations.*

sustained level of resources that the main European powers (certainly the UK and France) had been allocating since the Gulf War, to the development of new high tech capacities, in their determination to catch up the proper level of interoperability. Thus, the most advanced European command and control system - Syracuse-Stradivarius - was tested by France and the UK in a transatlantic link on the very occasion of the April 1999 Washington summit. The cruise missiles "Scalp/Stormshadow" developed by both countries were already in the procurement phase. At least the Europeans had striven to take a greater and increasing share in the defense efforts, as they had been legitimately requested to do for several decades.

The "**division of labor**" has, in fact, improved incredibly from Bosnia to Kosovo: the French Air Force alone carried out 1261 offensive missions in Balkan airspace; that is, 12% of the strike missions and 21% of the reconnaissance flights. As the lead country under NATO command, France also assembled and fielded a brigade-size "Extraction Force" to protect the OSCE monitoring teams dispatched to Kosovo at the early stage of the crisis. Furthermore, it took a large part in the "Allied Shield" rescue of Albanian-speaking refugees and, under KFOR, it assumes responsibility for one of the sectors of deployment along the Serb border. Its contribution amounts to 5,200 personnel, smaller than the British and German contingents, but comparable in size to the American detachment.

In fact, there is a clear European lead in the operations following on from the air campaign. As contributors of 80 % of the financial aid for the UNMIK (UN Mission in Kosovo) and reconstruction and stability pact for the Balkans and the main operators of KFOR, the Europeans have to devote their efforts and resources to the achievement of a lasting peace in the Balkans. Reconstructing social and ethnic links in this mosaic of people, re-creating the rule of law, providing security and justice and binding the former protagonists in a common network of economic interests is a huge challenge that the EU will have to take over for decades to come. Achieving this might again require conflict management or coercive diplomacy. Meanwhile, in the long term, the credibility of EU policies in the

Balkans will very much rest on its rehabilitation efforts, up to their final goal: the integration of the troubled region of south-east Europe into the Union itself.

Chapter II: THE BOLD STEPS TOWARDS IMPLEMENTING EURO-DEFENSE

European defense is almost always discussed in the US in relation to NATO, the transatlantic link, and the burden-sharing debate. Sometime it is also quite logically perceived through the prism of priorities in American national interests and from the vantage point of the benefits of stability unilaterally provided by the “benevolent” US leadership.

Europeans do not find fault with this way of thinking. They all agree that NATO is the cornerstone of the common defense and that the concern about burden sharing makes sense. However, to grasp their vision of Euro-defense, it is essential to understand that, for them, European defense has both deeper roots and wider implications. The initiative has, therefore, returned to the EU camp. The Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 foresaw the possibility of an “enhanced cooperation” taking place among an ad hoc circle of voluntary member-states, and points to the field of defense as a development of the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy. At first, it seemed too hypothetical to reverse the tide of inhibition. However, in the months to follow, it was to provide a more solid ground for a new European defense initiative.

A / The Europeans have motives to assume a major role in the stability of their continent

As President Chirac stated in his speech of October 19 1999 in front the North Atlantic Treaty Association in Strasbourg, “ the Alliance is Atlantic by the indissoluble link that binds the US to Europe...If the Europeans prove convincing in shouldering their responsibilities, their defense capability will complete the other means of action – political, economical and humanitarian - now available in the European Union and which it alone has the capacity to harness....Europe must do this with its American Allies, within the Alliance, whenever they are prepared to get involved on the ground. But it must also be capable of conducting such actions on its own, when necessary”.

1. The missing link in the construction of Europe

Since Maastricht and Amsterdam, the Europeans have decided to focus on the strengthening of their Common Foreign and Security Policy. Although it emerged later than the diplomatic and economic components of this policy, ESDP is an integral part of this picture. As a matter of fact, after

having integrated trade, agriculture and now its currencies into the Euro (the single currency entailing an important pooling together of states' sovereignty) and having developed to an ambitious extent its common foreign policy, the EU had to acknowledge defense as the missing link in its quest for a flexible form of confederate statehood. Community law has chipped away at national sovereignty in most fields of legislation, but the most strategic and symbolic attribute of sovereignty is evidently defense. Although it falls in the purview of responsibility of the member-states rather than in the integrated field of authority, it is meant to be a crowning achievement for the EU, short of any move toward full federalism. It will also create the momentum to sustain the EU quest for world-actor status, even if this goal is not yet shared to the same extent among European public opinion.

To start with, the EU has succeeded in establishing a state of "eternal peace" and a remarkable pole of stability. Building on the idea that their common economic development was a guarantee for stability after a century of devastation and war, the six founding members built an area of prosperity and interdependence by piling up common policy projects. It is also true that this was greatly encouraged by successive American administrations since the Marshall Plan of 1947, which have invested in its economic revival and ensured a secure defense environment for it.

This state of sustained peace in Western Europe, established through the movement of European integration and so well illustrated by the French-German reconciliation, was not achieved fortuitously, but through a political vision in terms of collective interests, permanent give-and-take and mutual respect. It entails an unshakable faith in the amicable settlement of inevitable differences. This is the experience that the EU wishes to share with the rest of Europe and its neighborhood, and is a founding motivation for its Foreign and Security policy.

2. Aiming at peace and stability in the European periphery

The next issue is what constitute the **threats and the challenges** that ESDP is to confront. After the Cold War blocs were dissolved, the European continent is often compared to its pre-World War I picture of fragmentation and tensions: there are about fifty states or nations intertwined by centuries of differences over land, population movements, ethnic strife and prejudice. Minorities

remain everywhere encircled by people with whom they share neither language, culture, religion nor even a comparable level of economic and social development.

The “**Stability Pact**” approach of this issue, launched in 1994 by the EU from an initiative of the French Prime Minister (Mr. Edouard Balladur), has been a good attempt at preventive diplomacy. From the three regional round tables convened in Paris, the Central-European one, dealing mainly with the rights of minorities in Hungary and Slovakia, has been the most effective. With the encouragement of the Strasbourg-based Council of Europe, the Baltic States’ exercise on good neighborhood has also progressed to a fair extent, but implementation is subject to the good faith of the bilateral parties.

The failure of preventive diplomacy in the Balkans pointed to the inadequacy of this mild approach in the higher intensity conflicts, and the necessity of backing diplomacy with some use of force. The more recent project of a stability pact for south-east Europe (July 1999) will have to be implemented along an extended timeline.

In eastern Europe, ethnic issues, still pervasive in their traditional appeal among the citizenry, have a strong potential to erode democracy and to stir cross-border conflict. The EU will therefore need to resort to the largest possible spectrum of incentives and resources. Monitoring means and tools of a police, political and military nature are required to implement a stability policy. A properly functioning ESDP will help in this ambitious process.

As to the “**Where?**” question, the areas of potential instability on the doorstep of the EU are unpredictable, but three of them will most probably require sustained attention:

- The Balkans: a part of Europe that has only known peace when vigorously enforced by a dominating empire (Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian or Soviet, with the local variant of Yugoslavia’s Tito autocracy). The general weakness of the smaller governments, notably with regard to the activities of clans and mafias, makes the centuries-old ethnic strife and border quarrels almost unmanageable without outside mediation. The Stability Pact and, beyond, the perspective of one day joining the European

Union, involve long-term strategies that will have to be complemented by sequential crisis management in the short term.

- The Mediterranean: while there has been considerable progress since the end of the Cold War, there are still many foci of tension at these crossroads of Asia, Africa and Europe. It is a region plagued with persistent poverty and income inequality, extensive unemployment among the young (up to 30 %), rancor towards Western opulence and "lax culture", and fierce confrontations between authoritarian regimes and religious and political insurgencies, deeply rooted in cultural traditions (cf. the Algerian case).

To defuse some of these time bombs, the EU established the Barcelona process in November 1995, patterned after the OSCE model: three baskets pertaining respectively to economic cooperation and free trade; training of human resources and dialogue between cultures; and confidence building through common security programs and enforcement of the law (terrorism, corruption, illegal immigration). The massive exchanges of working people and tourists between the two shores of the Mediterranean (as for France, 3 million North Africans are permanent residents on her territory) very strongly link the security of the North to that of the South. The 1985-86 (Syrian inspired) and 1995 (Algerian GIA) spates of bombings in Paris sadly point to this reality.

- Russia and its fringes: nothing will be resolved by subjecting this great country, already traumatized by the humiliation of the Soviet collapse, to even further frustration when the US and its NATO Allies do not resist the temptation of neglecting it. We have already inflicted the first enlargement of NATO upon Moscow, with open contempt at its alarm when we came to use air power in Kosovo. On the top of it comes the US threat of an abrogation of the ABM Treaty.

ESDP should not become another tool of pressure on Moscow, even if it is a major mission of EU foreign policy to point out the accountability of the Russian regime, when basic rights are trampled or war crimes massively committed as is the case in Chechnya. As experienced in Bosnia and Kosovo, Russia can work with the Allies – even, with a thought of balancing them off – in the management of crisis in its vicinity or its former sphere. As it is not about collective defense, ESDP

should encourage Russia, whenever possible, to be part of the solution rather than of the problem and look for inclusiveness.

In the grim hypothesis of a resurgence of Russian aggressiveness and confrontation with the West, the political weight and possibly the military role of the Europeans should naturally fall under the NATO banner. Europe's share in the burden should also be more commensurate to the EU countries' stake in the crisis. In the most extreme situation, the holding of medium-rank deterrent capabilities by France and the UK should be opened to some coordination between them and Washington (as tends to be the case), and also to some forms of inter-European consultations to shape concerted scenarios of deterrence, as was envisaged between France and Germany (but not implemented) a few years ago.

B / 1999: the year the Europeans decided to get their acts together

Against the background of recurrent crises in the Balkans, it took only a few steps through 1999 for the Europeans to put their ideas into practice.

1. The Saint Malo and Cologne upturn

a. At the early stage of the Kosovo crisis in December 1998, the call by France and the UK at their Saint Malo summit for credible "autonomous European capabilities" in line with the Amsterdam Treaty created a momentum for such a project. Prime Minister Blair's new and fresh approach to European Defense from within the EU and his impeccable credentials with NATO quickly convinced Germany and the other European Allies that the European defense caucus long advocated by the French would become acceptable to all; furthermore, as the British would see to it, EU's military norms and capabilities would naturally fit into NATO's. This breakthrough also made it possible to simplify the Euro-defense institutions, as the WEU superseded by a stronger EU was losing its *raison d'être*.

In the process, Paris and London also accepted a measure of long-term ambiguity between their positions. These pertain to the remote possibility of setting up a purely European operation,

though eventually borrowing some NATO assets, in case involvement of the Alliance “as a whole” were possible or necessary.

b. In the last days of the Kosovo air war, against the background of much better European performances to quell the crisis, the Cologne European Council of 4-5 June 1999 endorsed the design as EU policy and decided that the details of the new defense institutions to be placed under the CFSP and elements of forces would be fixed during the second semester of 2000 under the French presidency of the Union, with a timeline of implementation stretching to 2003. The Cologne declaration states that “the Union must control an autonomous capability, supported by a credible military force. The EU must assure the availability of adequate means and capabilities, on the basis of existing ones, be they national, bi or multi-national. We commit ourselves to increase the efficiency of European military capabilities”. In addition, the Presidency’s report lists the necessary structures to create an adequate chain of decision.

As a first step, the “15” picked Javier Solana, then Secretary General of NATO, as their choice for the newly created position of High Representative (or Secretary General) for CFSP, with a particular purview on defense and NATO matters, and close ties with the Alliance HQs. This was a wise investment in future coordination, and a token of good harmony between the two institutions.

Priority was then assigned to the building of capabilities that could be projected along with their logistical support, and to the gradual closing of the technological gap in interoperability with the US armed forces, through the restructuring of the European defense industries and the launching of new acquisition programs.

c. Meanwhile, the disbanding of the West European Union was formally announced (cf. 2/a), as the Union decided to directly cover the defense agenda and consultations with NATO. The idea had arisen to merge it into the EU, while keeping the bridge it provided towards the non-EU allies, the EU neutral countries with observer status, and the East-European associate-partners. However, the Union ruled out the simple “absorption” of WEU structures, assets and mechanisms as a separate policy, as it would have amounted to keeping a strong status distinction between allied and non-allied members

within the EU and between “soft” and “hard” security policies, thereby hampering forceful decision-making. Such a recipe would not have helped establish the authority of the leading European powerhouse in the field of defense, in the eyes of its citizens or in those of its NATO partners, who were very much used to seeing the WEU as a simple liaison organ with NATO. The goal of autonomy in partnership called for new structures to be set up in the EU itself, for the sake of more leadership and legitimacy.

d. In the wake of the Cologne summit, France, through the voice of President Chirac, ultimately proposed to its partners an action plan to meet both capabilities and institutional goals¹². The most ambitious feature in the French plan was the establishment of a broad array of analysis, planning, decision-making and reviewing mechanisms that would ensure the autonomous functioning of the strategic and political echelons of ESDP. It would start from pooling military intelligence and political analysis (as done under the CFSP) in order to sustain a permanent European security and crisis situation center under Mr. Solana (Political and Security Committee PSCO, or COPS in French). This early-warning and options-setting structure would provide the High Representative with the authority not only to report to the existing Foreign Ministers Council but, at the same time, to a Council of Defense Ministers and to a Military Committee of Joint Heads of Staff, both to be established with the same European officials participating in equivalent Alliance's bodies. When the need arose, it would propose optional political military courses of action and would follow up plans and policies adopted under the aegis of the Union, at the summit or ministerial levels. Upstream, existing strategic planning headquarters working to NATO norms will produce advance and follow up scenarios that could be forwarded to NATO, to be fine tuned there. The French-British bilateral summit of 15 November 1999 in London produced a first arrangement of this nature and opened the French Centre Opérationel Interarmées (COIA) and the British Permanent Joint Headquarters to officers from other EU countries' defense headquarters.

¹² " *Time has come for the EU to equip itself with institutional means and military capabilities allowing it to take action whenever necessary; be it with the Atlantic Alliance or in an autonomous way....the transatlantic link is of an indefectible nature, but opposing the Alliance to the making of Europe would be an historical nonsense*". (Jacques Chirac's speech at the European Parliament, Strasbourg, 19 October 1999).

While these highly sensitive but informal arrangements were only slightly touched upon in the Helsinki summit conclusions of the Presidency, they still very well epitomize the quest for substantial autonomy. Though such modest dispositions cannot pretend to create an alternative to the vast intelligence and planning resources of the Alliance, they would translate into clear and operational terms the options and scenarios favored by the Union and confer military credibility and quick feasibility to its decisions, if it had to lead an operation within or even outside NATO.

2. The Helsinki summit: security established as a European policy

The 10-11 December 1999 Helsinki European Council has endorsed the quest for an autonomous decision capability, very much as it was devised in the Cologne Presidency declaration and further detailed in the French action plan. It was decided to establish the new chain of decision rapidly under a provisional status, pending a review of EU institutions, and to endow High Representative Javier Solana with the task of coordinating it. The Helsinki policy package comprises three parts:

- a headline goal for available capabilities by 2003. This would not take the form of a standing structure of forces, but would allow for specific formats and combinations of forces to be assembled from the member-states' national forces at any given time, within the assigned global ceiling.
- the setting up of some permanent structures to ensure the political control and strategic direction of these capabilities.
- the need for sound and transparent mechanisms of consultation with the non-EU allies and NATO.

a. Headline goal of forces

An autonomous military capability has been made the common commitment of the "15". They have pledged themselves to being able to deploy a corps-level military operation – meaning 60,000 troops – within 60 days and to sustain it for at least a year. This implies an overall reserve of 120,000 to 150,000 troops to back up and relieve this force. A civilian package of crisis management is also to be devised as a rapid reaction facility in parallel with this deployable Army corps of 15 brigades.

The civilian tool of crisis management, like the military, will fit into a larger objective of forces, or headline goal, on which each member-state will have to commit its contribution, in a way comparable to the procedure of "force generation" in use within NATO. On the basis of the audit of WEU assets carried out in February 2000, and from the assessment of national contributions of forces and NATO availability of assets, by December 2000 and the end of the French presidency of the Union, a conference in Paris will formalize the volume and composition of the military reserve of rapidly deployable forces. It will have to be joint service, with the appropriate air¹³, space and sea components, and quick to project logistics. The various elements will be drawn from forces under national control – or at least not assigned permanently to the Alliance - like the Euro-corps, which forms its present nucleus, as Berlin and Paris have agreed in the preceding weeks to transform it into a Rapid Reaction Force. The flexibility embodied in their concept of use implies that these forces, the nature of which is similar to the CJTF, could be placed under SACEUR, engaged within a coalition, or that they could operate on their own, depending on the decision of the European Council.

On the logistics side, several projects of resource-pooling have been presented to the partner-countries on the basis of bilateral initiatives. They include the establishment of a common strategic air lift command from the existing nucleus of the French-German air transport pool, the enlargement of the French-British European Air Group (covering a variety of air missions), the setting-up of a Strategic Maritime Transport Cell from a Dutch and French initiative, the sharing of a satellite-based command and control system between France and Germany (similar to what has been developed by France and the UK), and common designs and interoperable armaments for the next generation of navy frigates deployed by the Royal Navy and "la Royale", so as to allow more systematic combinations of ships in each other's aircraft-carrier battle groups. The headline goal is thus making some progress through multiple but discreet initiatives from the military establishments, with the blessing of their governments.

The civilian component will have to be composed of a 3,000 to 5,000 person quickly deployable police force (most probably of the Gendarmerie, Carabinieri and Guardia Civil type) specialized in peace support operations (crowd control, protection of the vulnerable communities, small arms

¹³ *The air component should comprise around 500 aircrafts, the majority of which are for air support purpose.*

control) and apt to work closely with the military and of other civilian peace makers trained to re-establish the basic functions of government: judges and legal experts, administrators, tax collectors, etc.

This field of intervention falls under the integrated "third pillar" of the EU policies (Justice, Police, Immigration) and will draw directly on the managing skills and finances of the European Commission. Although it implies some mix of intergovernmental action (for the military tool is in the "second pillar") and communitarian management, in practice a mechanism of coordinated decision and engagement will be devised by the Commissioner for External relations, Chris Patten, and his "intergovernmental" colleague from the Council, the High Representative for CFSP, Javier Solana. The draft has been put on the agenda of the Lisbon European council of 24 March 2000, in order to be approved by the Feira (Portugal) summit, at the end of June. By then, the Council is to establish a Committee for Civilian Crisis Management.

. b The political-military package and the issue of institutions

The exact format of the new permanent political and military bodies to ensure rapid and effective decision-making for the day-to-day management of military operations is to be fixed by the next summits. Temporary organs have been established in an initial phase, starting with a permanent Political and Security Committee under Mr. Solana. Since 1 March 2000, the Committee has integrated its (pre-existing but reinforced) civilian component with its new interim military body, which is going to provide the EU political authorities with military analysis and advice more directly than through the previous WEU channel. It will have also its say in the elaboration of a sound and transparent channel of consultation with NATO. The Military Committee, which, I assume, is already meeting will see to it that there is an adequate level of military expertise provided and that it conforms to NATO standards.

The new Council of Defense Ministers has, since Helsinki, met several times (Sintra, 28 February 2000, and at the end of March, before the Lisbon Council). It has maintained the momentum of Helsinki and the quality of the consensus among the "15". It has solemnly reaffirmed each time

that "NATO remains the cornerstone of collective defense", that "the EU will act only when NATO as a whole is not engaged" and that, before ESDP is put to the test, "there will be ample consultation and cooperation with NATO".

A new chapter of the Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) on the reform of the EU institutions opened on 14 February 2000, focusing on the adaptation of the decision-making process to a much wider membership beyond 2003. Although it is not clearly stated by the Amsterdam Treaty, the decision-making process of ESDP could be affected by changes adopted on other major issues. It will also have to deal with the balancing of member states' quota of voices for each decision voted by a qualified majority, as it becomes common rule in the Council's procedures. The extent of authority delegated to the new High Commissioner for Security and Defense Policy and his capacity to deal with NATO partners "over the heads" of the Foreign and Defense Ministers might also be discussed.

Other changes, less prone to impact on security issues, entail the number of European Commissioners, the distribution of their tasks, the coordination with the Council, and the authority endowed to European Commission president, Romano Prodi, in these different bodies (Mr. Prodi made it clear he wants to have a say in the development of the defense dimension of the Union and that he sees ESDP as a cement of EU unity).

The merger of the WEU into the European Union by the end of the year 2000 will imply a legally complex transfer of assets. Another major institutional issue is the accountability of the European Executive to the European Parliament, whether the Strasbourg Assembly develops a competence of its own in the field of defense or "borrows" it from the present WEU parliamentary assembly (retaining the later as a specialized committee of the European Parliament). Both the executive and the legislative branches of the EU will need to draw much democratic support from the citizenry if they are to engage European soldiers under the European flag. For the time being, and certainly for the years to come, the most obvious source of legitimacy will rest upon the national institutions of government.

However, this does not ensure the cohesive and collective nature of European decisions in a field as sensitive and symbolic as security and defense, especially when such decisions imply probable sacrifices and loss of lives. If we think of two precedents, the European Defense Community (EDC) of 1952 and the Plan Fouchet of 1961, the making of a military union is usually matched by a political one. The federal model was favored by Jean Monnet, whereas General de Gaulle thought of pooling existing governments closely together in a way which fits the present trends of integration better.

While one can foresee a long transition from the confederate to the federalist pattern, the legitimacy of the "collective echelon of government" could be enhanced through the election of a "President of the Union", who would not be the head of state or government of the country assuming the six months rotating Presidency of the Union, but a well-known and respected European statesman, proposed by his peers, who could assume his elected office with a continuum of several years, as *primus inter pares*, within a collegial European Council. The "European Federation" concept proposed on 12 May 2000 by German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer at the Berlin Humboldt University opens another promising track, with the proposed creation of a common federal government, replacing the present Commission and Council, and of a European Senate representing the constitutive member states in the overall framework of a European constitution.

The strengthening of the European Parliament's power should also go beyond the important addenda to its authority decided in Amsterdam, notably its power to censor the Commission and to co-legislate with the Council. Furthermore, to strengthen the democratic dimension of the Union, political parties should structure themselves more along European political dividing lines and go further than working in broad coalitions inside the Strasbourg Parliament.

However complex it may be, the institutional construction should not altogether alter in a substantive way the running of ESDP institutions, as long as the political consensus displayed in Helsinki persists.

b. The most spectacular achievement of Helsinki was in fact the high level of convergence among Allied and non-Allied Europeans, as shown by the strong involvement of the Finnish hosts. The advocates of “active neutrality” showed an impressive commitment to the EU military engagements under the so-called Petersberg missions and to the establishment of new institutions, short of the purview of Article 5 (collective defense), which is still taboo to them and will have to be enshrined outside ESDP common institutions. None of them, in this field, objected to a closer and institutional partnership between the EU and NATO, although some malaise is perceptible among the political classes, notably in Sweden, and a debate could be rekindled on the controversial issue of relinquishing neutrality and joining NATO. However, with the entry of the extremist and generally anti-European far right FPÖ in the Vienna government in February 2000, the awkward position assumed

by Austria could also bring a discordant note to this European unanimity, though Chancellor Schüssel

has, so far, displayed no intention of departing from his European convictions¹⁴.

But as the adepts of both systems of defense so far prefer to think in terms of their collective interests, the dividing line between them seems to blur into an abstract limbo of "European patriotism". Indeed, when circumstances conflict with constitutional obligations or waivers to European treaties, the opting-out clause will be available, in the case of Denmark or the neutral countries. Except for that, the trend and mood goes towards more homogeneity with the Allies. The five leading European military powers (France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy and Spain) left no ambiguity on the extent of EU autonomy and interoperability they wanted to achieve, and with unanimity of thought they reiterated their strong commitment to a revitalized and strong partnership with the United States.

Even as the implementation of the Helsinki package is to be driven by the Portuguese and then the French presidencies alongside a group of willing members, great care will be taken neither to re-create a "Gaullian" type of directorate in the shaping of policies nor to ignore the important role of the Commission, as the Plan Fouchet did. In fact, it will take full European unity of mind to make the prospect of a new transatlantic balance convincing and acceptable to Washington. Facts have to materialize before their advantages can be measured. After all, it was in practice that doubts about the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) - that was to "destroy the international monetary system" - were dispelled¹⁵. It can make Europe both more attractive as a partner and more irritating, as a negotiator who knows where it wants to go.

C. Consolidating ESDP into a working tool of foreign policy

Are the yields of Helsinki strong and solid enough to turn the tide of Euro-defense definitely away from its previous contradictions?

1. Consolidation work is needed

¹⁴ Interestingly, under its presidency, in 1998, Austria took the initiative of convening the first meeting of the EU Defense Ministers and its military cooperation with the Allied partners and the PfP is quite active.

¹⁵ So, with the single market of 1993, once supposed to have created a "fortress Europe".

Implementing the Helsinki package entails many challenges. One major question about its future lies with the process of enlargement. The landmarks of Saint Malo, Cologne and Helsinki were made possible through the determination of a core group of European powers, rallying other members' consent around the political economy of ESDP and attracting their closest partners in the process: Spain, as it is already part of the Euro-corps and the Mediterranean forces and has a defense industry closely linked to that of the main other producers; Italy, because of its major stake in south-east Europe and the Mediterranean; and the Benelux countries, out of their strong preference for integrated policies.

A prerequisite to venturing into the field of defense should be a bold strengthening of the Foreign and Security Policy by providing it with a more streamlined and integrated chain of analysis and policy making (as such, the new position of "Mr. CFSP", pioneered by Mr. Solana, is a good start) and with strong backing from the Parliament as well as the public. But it is clear already that when the EU faces future choices to operate through NATO military structures or on its own – while paying a price for it – not all its members will want to get involved in the toughest part of peacekeeping. As the Amsterdam Treaty allows, "enhanced cooperation" will then develop within smaller circles of countries willing to assume the tasks.

However, even if the consent of the non-participants is assumed, the ensuing loss of cohesion might produce internal paralysis when the 15 become 27 or 28. By that time, a choice would have to be taken between a coherent defense capability shouldered by a limited number of national contributors (taking into account their respective geopolitical stakes and military role according to the varying crisis contingencies) or taking the bold step to set up a supranational European Army of the European Defense Community (EDC) type. This would require very careful steps, as such a design could only come under the authority of a supranational European executive.

Such political disruption would gradually curtail the role of existing national governments to menial tasks of regional governance. Let me stress a doubt that the French – as most of their neighbors – would be ready in a matter of years to advocate the disappearance of the nation-state for the sake of

an efficient common defense. They would not. Nevertheless, in an enlarged European Union, implementation of collective decisions will have to be delegated to coordinators. When it comes to ESDP, one imagines that a "lead" country or countries could be designated and empowered, along with the common security institutions, with the responsibility of shaping ad hoc coalitions of actors and leading them or bringing them under NATO command.

2. Settling the Balkan crisis is a prerequisite to taking of new commitments

The unsettled situation in the Balkans will remain both a concern and a source of challenges for the Europeans for many years ahead. No answer has been found so far for the persistent refusal of reconciliation expressed by community leaders in Bosnia and now in Kosovo. Internationally monitored elections usually play into the hands of the ethnic extremists. Both crises, in fact, are still unfolding, with a negligible proportion of the Bosnian refugees having been resettled in their homes and ethnic confrontation becoming the rule in Kosovo as well. War and ethnic cleansing can be rekindled, even as the interposition of the peacekeeping forces does a lot to shield the protagonists from each other, as weeks of violent clashes have shown in the spring of 2000 in the northern Kosovo city of Mitrovica¹⁶. As some countries have reduced their presence, KFOR troops have dropped from 42,000 to 37,000, and police forces, at 2,000, are only half what they should be¹⁷.

Meanwhile, nationalistic feelings run higher than the general hope for peace and reconstruction. The work of rebuilding a broken nation requires more means and time than just stopping the fighting. The financial shortage experienced by the UNMIK to just meet the end of month payment of wages for the interim civil service of the province has to be filled by on-the-spot cash injections from the EU members¹⁸. So it is too with the dearth of police forces or magistrates able to impose a minimum of respect for the rule of law.

¹⁶ *It brought about a need for reinforcement: at General Clark's request, two French and one Italian battalions (1200 troops) were dispatched by mid-March). Only the British, Italian and French forces can be deployed anywhere in Kosovo.*

¹⁷ *To make up for it, the French Army contingent, which includes 240 gendarmes, has trained several hundred soldiers in anti-riot police work.*

¹⁸ *As the Union itself cannot legally provide finances for this type of current expenses, but only for projects.*

Nor can clear and practical implications be drawn from the "substantial autonomy" granted to the Serb province by resolution 1244 for the future status of Kosovo, as the Albanian-speaking majority will not settle for something less than independence and might even turn against UNMIK and KFOR as "foreign occupants". As long as Serbia remains isolated under the iron fist of its present regime, uncertainties are high about the fate of the democratic leadership of Montenegro (under the dual control of president Milo Djukanovic and the Serb military), its power of nuisance being even more potent in the Republika Serbska. In the Muslim communities, unstated ambitions for the creation of a "Greater Albania" still hang like the sword of Damocles over the integrity of Macedonia and Kosovo. New upsurges of Albanian guerrillas are reported on the Serbian side of Eastern Kosovo near the Albanian-ethnic city of Presevo, prompting intervention of the US contingent to seal the border.

In short, the western Balkans remain a powder keg. In the long term, only integration into the mainstream of western Europe will ensure the economic development and the social stability of this region and bring it into the 21st century.

This assumption was behind the EU initiative, at Germany's instigation, to launch a "Stability Pact for South-East Europe", very much in the spirit of a new Marshall plan. Since it was announced in July 1999, the 2000-2006 first phase of the project implementation has not yet reached its cruising speed. A coordinator was appointed - Mr. Bodo Hombach - but his authority over the many agencies operating under the Pact is not easily established. The raising of the 5.5 billion Euros earmarked for this first phase will be effected with some delays. The viability of the project requires sustained attention and effort from the EU. While the contributor meeting convened in the last days of March 2000 has done much to rationalize and coordinate the success of the Pact, it is still far from being achieved¹⁹.

Is it realistic under these conditions, some will ask in America, for the Europeans to launch a defense initiative, thus loading more and more their heavy external agenda? My view is that ESDP,

¹⁹ 1.7 billion \$ were raised for the initial phase, including 1.03 B \$ from the EU and its members and 0.2 from the World Bank.

and even more so, the civilian rapid reaction utility projected in Helsinki, will be crucial assets for the implementation of the Stability Pact. If these new policy tools were to be dispersed in some other far away regions of the world, the squandering of resources would make no sense. Used in the western Balkans, however, they will enhance the capacity of the EU to fulfill its commitments²⁰.

3. Unfinished business: the status of non-EU NATO members

Although Euro-defense is gaining some self-confidence, it is still more potential than real. The ESDP tools and institutions have to run effectively before they can deal with NATO. It is hoped that these "modalities will be developed for full consultation, cooperation and transparency between the EU and NATO, taking into account the need of all EU member States".

The "15" have committed themselves to ensuring that appropriate measures will be put in place for regular consultations and cooperation with NATO and the non-EU Allies²¹. On the American side of the Atlantic, it is however a very sensitive issue. But it was high on the Helsinki agenda and the following European Feira Council at the end of June 2000, which is set to deliver agreed principles for the establishment of the revitalized transatlantic link. Real testing of the institution-to-institution dialogue, at different levels, should take place in the following months.

Hence, the short-term priority is to build the EU political military chain of command, from the level of the heads of state and government down to that of the military headquarters. A new defense culture will have to be instilled in the EU, and it will have to be fiercely protected from the inroads and managerial ambitions of the surrounding "Eurocracy"²². Once the new chain of command becomes

²⁰ *On the defense cooperation side, the Balkan countries which have been supportive of NATO – Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Roumania and Slovenia – have been invited by the Alliance to take part in a "19 + 7" Forum. This initiative, like the "admission plans", in fact, only duplicates existing activities of the enhanced Partnership for Peace.*

²¹ *On 19 April, the new Political and Security Committee's 15 permanent ambassadors have officially launched a first round of consultation that took place with the representatives of the six non-EU European allies (Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Norway, Iceland and Turkey). They have started discussing "security arrangements and exchange of intelligence" and forces' objectives. They have been granted a "privilege association to decision shaping. Institutional issues will be addressed at a later stage.*

²² *With due excuses to my good fellow and friend, Herbert Ungerer, from the European Commission, whose sense of humor and brilliant lucidity, I know, can be relied on in this matter.*

distinct from other EU channels and meets the prerequisites of defense, it is agreed that non-EU members will be invited to play a part in the shaping of the new institutions and their policies.

So far there is no ready-made formula, but a clear promise, solemnly delivered by the Defense Ministers of France, the UK and Germany, that the partnership status retained in the ESDP framework for those associate-partners in the WEU would in no way be less favorable than their previous one. All these countries will be given the possibility of sustaining a permanent relationship with the EU when an operation is planned. When the European Council takes the decision - as the Treaties provide - to engage forces under its authority, the partners that will become involved will enjoy the same rights on the political and military plan as the "15". In simple terms, the mechanism will not provide for Turkey to influence any EU decision about the use of force from the outset, but it will allow the Turkish political and military authorities to act from there on within the EU, as if Ankara were a member.

4. The level of financial effort (as it gauges credibility)

Regarding the core commitment on capabilities, one would tend to wonder how the EU will be able to achieve, in such a short time frame, something that the Allies have struggled with in NATO for many years, most recently with the Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI), encompassing a set of 58 specific objectives. ESDP and DCI aim at similar goals and should go hand in hand, to start with. But there is no magic recipe, as the allocation of economic resources is ultimately a hard choice to be made at the national level, by the governments. However, the more the European citizens and taxpayers feel involved in Euro-defense as an asset of sovereignty, the more ready they will be to contribute.

A different momentum could be established from that of NATO forces planning mechanisms, where goal objectives are not often met. It is no secret either that the only NATO member aside from the US (and to a lesser extent, the UK), that consistently meets or comes very close to the 3% of GDP for "defense spending benchmark" was the only one which has no part in the integrated

military command and the Defense planning process: France²³, which has actually narrowed its spending gap with the US over the last years.

As European and American defense spending remain apart, the respective military missions their forces are assigned are also absolutely not of the same nature and magnitude. Europe's contribution to the peace of the world is far less channeled through military capabilities than that of America. Much of it goes through economic, humanitarian and public aid policies. Moreover, it may be puzzling from a European standpoint that the American Congress insists on spending more tax money on defense than the Pentagon asks, at a time when the country is stronger than ever and unchallenged in military terms (the threat from the "rogue states" being magnified, for this purpose, in a rather unconvincing manner); at a time too, when the social, educational, health and welfare systems of the country are cruelly deficient and in need of resources, in spite of ten years of unprecedented economic growth²⁴.

Without venturing too far into these partisan matters, the reasoning that points to a "duty" to spend for defense (proportionally) as much as America does can be interpreted on the other side of the Atlantic as an "ideological" inclination for less social well-being and an increased level of "militarization" of European societies.

As enhanced capabilities should in my view imply increased responsibilities, these increased responsibilities will in turn translate into a greater sense of entitlement and, therefore, greater emulation among EU taxpayers. Converging defense spending criteria could as well be set to influence governments' budgetary choices, as was done in the run-up to the EMU. But it is misleading to equate defense efforts to purely financial data.

²³ *The amount of French defense spending in converted currency of 1990 has been almost constant since the Cold War: 30,4 Billion Euro in 1980; 33,8 in 1990; 35,5 in 1990; 33 in 1995. 32,3 in 1999. The French defense budget represents 11,4 % of the US one in 1990 and 13,3 % in 1999. In proportion of the GDP, it has diminished, since the cold war from 3,8 % of the GDP to 2,8% whereas, in the same period the US defense budget slumped from 6% to 3 % of the GDP).*

²⁴ *At the initiative of Senator John Warner, Chairman of the Senate Armed Forces Committee, a non-requested appropriation of 4 billion dollars was added to the Defense budget for 2001, on 29 March 2000.*

The important issue is not necessarily spending more, but spending better. Among the European armed forces there is a huge untapped potential for rationalization and pooling of assets. If the EU members, which spend two-thirds of the American defense budget, could get in return 60% of the American actual capabilities, they would become over-armed and excessively powerful but not necessarily better in crisis management. The UK and France have actually decreased their defense spending over the last ten years (in 1999, it amounted to around 2,8% of French GDP and about 2,7% of the UK's), but both countries have substantially increased the military capabilities that they can effectively project and sustain in a hostile theater.

5. Differences of focus and style among the “main three”

A more homogeneous approach is desirable between Paris, London and Berlin.

The natural tendency of Paris is to express the autonomy goal of ESDP with a bit of high- style rhetoric. Wisely, it has restrained itself from doing so, of late. The French government knows too well that its keen interest in the development of a European political-military posture stirs, on occasion, unwanted irritation from Washington. It thus expresses its choices primarily on the basis of their technical coherence. Paris in general tends to take the process of ESDP on a clearer but more ambitious path than Berlin and London. It has set a more exigent target for the new rapid reaction corps than was foreseen at the outset, and has called for reinforcing it in the years to come with six or seven more battalions, substantial air force capabilities (up to 600 aircraft, for strike and lift purposes). It also envisions a strong link with the other existing European multilateral forces (EUROFOR, EUROMARFOR). It calls for the improvement of the European chain of command inside NATO and for the “multinationalization” of European headquarters. The French are very much focused on the concept of ‘autonomy’; meaning, to them, more and easier interaction with NATO and tighter cooperation with the Americans, but consented subordination, according to needs and circumstances.

In this logic, France aims at lessening European reliance on NATO/American assets, when and where they would accentuate political subordination (intelligence, C3I, planning, etc.)²⁵. In fact, she sees ESDP as a way to re-integrate NATO and participate in decision-making in a strong European caucus without giving up on its claim to Europeanization of the structures, and while skipping the whole issue of its quarrel on the sharing of the Alliance's regional commands. On the other hand, Paris does not spare its efforts in reassuring Washington that its involvement in ESDP will strengthen France's participation in NATO, and will create a resounding “comeback effect” after

²⁵ cf. French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine (12/14/99): “Sooner or later, Europe had to claim its legitimate status, to have its own capacity of assessment, its own decision-making capability and - that is where things get more complex - the ability to take action”.

almost forty years of mutual estrangement. This would also limit the odds of purely European operations being initiated because of transatlantic disagreements.

Germany is very straightforward in her acceptance of the new responsibilities the Bundeswehr has taken in Bosnia and on a much larger scale in Kosovo. But in no way would the Federal Republic risk a quarrel with the US Congress that could backlash in the form of American troop reduction on its territory. Operating under heavy budgetary constraints and with a format of armed forces still relying on conscription, the German defense establishment is more often the target of Washington's criticisms. Berlin still brings an important contribution to the new capabilities in the making and, through its close cooperation with the French armed forces, stimulates and eases Paris rapprochement with NATO.

It is understandable that in a longer timeline Germany as the most powerful EU country – and the most courted by the US– cannot feel comfortable with the French and British European duopoly of nuclear armaments. A “concerted” policy of deterrence was proposed by Paris in the last years of the Kohl government: it would mean pre-established crisis scenarios involving threats to the vital interests of both countries and agreed or concerted (if time allowed) strategies of response.

Bonn/Berlin has so far not taken up the offer. In fact, one can wonder if this well-intentioned initiative has not been received as a resurgence of “benevolent hegemony”, drawing on the lessons of the aborted Multilateral Force (MLF) promoted by Washington in the early 1960s. Borrowing the MLF political philosophy of sharing decision shaping and pre-established scenarios among Allies, it would as well leave the ultimate choice and technical control of the weapon system to a single actor. Whatever the collegial dimension in the conduct of the crisis, such an imbalance is politically uncomfortable. Merging the French and British nuclear forces into a unified European deterrent for the collective benefit of the EU seems even more premature, as it would require a powerful federal executive to harness it.

London is much keener to handle the whole ESDP process in a more discreet bilateral or multilateral, step-by-step approach and shuns conceptual rhetoric. As a well-advised “consumer of common assets”, notably in the field of intelligence and advanced technologies, the UK still has a

stake in safeguarding as much as possible the privileged links it keeps with the US in NATO. As to how far an all-European operation could go, London is wise enough to leave the detailed blueprints in the limbo of constructive ambiguity. It is true, after all, that the future of ESDP will have much to do with empirical adjustment to circumstances. Much of the UK commitment to Euro-defense rests on the thoughtful and personal dedication of Prime Minister Blair to the project, and the country's political credit on the Continent has been substantially enhanced in the process. In the eyes of the other two partners, this, as well as the perceived opportunity for inducing Britain in specific fields of European integration for which it stands in a leading position, justifies the pace and scope of the project not being pushed farther than London can actually carry it.

Will the UK commitment be pursued in the long term? This may not be absolutely sustainable, should the UK indefinitely skirt around the single European currency, or if the new policy prove to be a liability rather than an asset to the transatlantic relationship. The pressure of public opinion, still largely suspicious of whatever the European machinery produces, would then bear on the Government. In sum, it will take ESDP, on one hand, some reasonable achievements, attributable in part or in whole to London's leadership, and, on the other, a lasting peace with Washington, to keep the UK firmly on board. But these requirements do not depart significantly from the expectations of London's main partners in the Euro-defense project.

6. The WEU Article V, "soft power" and the commitments of neutral countries

The European concept is foreign policy-led. In other words, its first ambition aims at conflict prevention; only if this fails, will it entail crisis management, at the lowest possible level of force. We are venturing here into the domain of security, not into that of defense, which would involve the most vital national interests. In fact, ESDP should be spelled with a small "d", downgrading its defense content, as the Petersberg missions are primarily security and foreign policy oriented.

The "softer" missions of ESDP apply, instead, to complex and lasting, ethnic, political, cultural conflicts that may grow in intensity into real wars, with a destabilizing effect on neighboring countries,

such as the conflicts we face in the Balkans. They are not essentially military in nature, but their management through a large array of “civilian” tools of intervention remains ineffective without the contribution of the military. These can take the “soft” forms of humanitarian emergency assistance such as search and rescue, interposition between protagonist forces, peacekeeping or peace enforcement, protection of threatened communities, and police work to re-establish law and order.

All EU members have agreed to “mutualize” these functions. The opening steps consist of monitoring the emergence of crises, sharing intelligence and analysis, shaping a common assessment of what the EU should do, and, when necessary, making the decision for engagement, as early as possible and at the lowest necessary level of intensity. At this stage, the military tasks will have to be integrated into an overall European plan of conflict resolution and closely coordinated with the “civilian tasks”, under close civilian political control, something the EU should be well equipped to ensure.

The stress put on conflict prevention through the setting up of a Committee for Civilian Crisis Management, coordinating a wide range of means and resources in parallel with the military ones, owes much to the neutrals’ penchant for using the resources of “soft power” diplomacy as part of an exhaustive resolution of all the crisis factors. Even members that would opt out from high intensity warfare will actively contribute to shaping and implementing the process.

But soft crisis management can creep into some high-intensity peace enforcement when the “soft” use of force is no match for the worsening challenges. Such turns of events should always be part of the initial contingency planning and make it necessary for ESDP to foster real, projectible, flexible and interoperable capabilities of its own, including common headquarters encompassing all functions of the military chain of command and control. That is what the EU members are preparing themselves for.

Be it, then, an ESDP-only operation (respecting an American decision to let it be led by the Europeans) or a NATO non-Article 5 operation (with full American participation), the neutral countries would have all the elements of decision in their hands to opt either for going along with the tougher

options or not. Regardless of a certain reluctance on their part about a so-called militarization of the EU, let us guess that they will, like the other EU members, act out of their political and moral convictions and sense of solidarity.

Defense as a collective commitment is indeed a different matter. For the EU allies, it has been and will continue to be fulfilled by NATO. For the EU neutral countries, the core issue is in the international recognition of their specific status in times of belligerence. It is not the EU intention to interfere in its members' choice of a system of defense, or to integrate this field of sovereignty. Thus, the development of ESDP will take place, as the report of the Finnish Presidency stated, "without prejudice to the commitments under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty and Article V of the Brussels Treaty [establishing the WEU], which will be preserved for Member States party to these Treaties".

Transferring Article V into the EU would unnecessarily pressure the EU-neutral countries into a type of commitment highly unacceptable to their public opinions. Thus, abolishing the WEU will mean transferring its Article V commitment of mutual military assistance to another institution. Transferring this into NATO would be a practical step, but it would not conform to the essence of ESDP, which is to enhance the spirit of defense and the political solidarity among the Europeans. But in a more Europeanized NATO, the symbolic would not be lost, and such a gesture could be appealing to the non-EU partners. It seems worth envisaging in the future.

7. Mixed feelings among the East Europeans

Exposed to the arguments of both the American and the EU sides, the East Europeans tend not to commit themselves in the debate. As could be perceived from their participation in a Paris symposium of the Institut des Hautes Etudes de la Défense Nationale (IHEDN) in late November-early December 1999, their worst concern would be the eruption of a destructive competition between the two institutions they wish to join. To them, defense is not separable from integration, and the idea that security also falls within the purview of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, although well accepted, should not play against the Alliance supremacy in this field.

They are also worried that they would have to "pay twice" for the modernization of their defense. Although they would like to see the EU cohesive and united, they still hold bitter memories of past power rivalries in Western Europe and would, to some extent, feel more comfortable under the shield of a distant, benevolent and single protector. They sought reassurances from the EU that ESDP would not venture into the field of collective defense, for which NATO should remain the cornerstone. They, indeed, received them.

On the political plan, they could very well accept that EU foreign policy may work as a major impulse to NATO decision-making. In fact, most of the applicant countries already align their stance in international affairs with the CFSP positions. They also shared their EU counterparts' uncertainty about the "eternity" of the US commitment to Euro-defense in all circumstances, but do not intend to ruin their credit in Washington by raising the subject.

The future of strategic relations between America and Russia (and with Ukraine) is of paramount importance to them, contrasting with the fact that ESDP is of no concern to the Russians. But when it comes to integrating Moscow into a cooperative sphere, they would rather rely on the non-confrontational approach of the EU. Finally, they admit readily that, once they join the EU, they will contribute to ESDP as a valuable asset; they also wish to be invited to shape it, at the earliest possible stage with the "15". Poland, in particular, shows a will to be active in this field, whenever circumstances give Warsaw the opportunity.

8. The need for a European Defense industry power house

This goal was also mentioned in the Helsinki summit conclusions, but it is addressed in most of the bilateral documents issued between European partners. With a future perspective in which there is no major conventional force threat, it is difficult to imagine a logic of cooperation in the defense industrial sectors of Europe and North America. There is no cooperative portfolio of activities; instead, they are engaged in unmitigated competition in markets across the globe. The US has rarely felt any economic, political or military incentive to consider cooperation with the Europeans and seldom perceived any advantage in buying from them. Obviously, a huge gap²⁶ has deepened across the Atlantic between the respective level of research and development invested, and the sizes and potential for innovation of the two industrial textures.

The high-tech hiatus between some of the systems operated by the US armed forces and that of their European Allies again rang the alarm bell for the latter during the Kosovo war. Differences of standards in combined military operations still plague the transatlantic defense link, putting the Europeans in the position of junior partners. This makes the US Defense Capabilities Initiative an important step in addressing the issue. Still, the Europeans remain wary that this would mainly amount to another endeavor to promote purchases of US defense equipment. A precedent of the sort has been and is still unfolding with the impressive effort of conviction and assistance applied to the new Allies and potential new Allies of Eastern Europe to get them to update their qualifications under NATO standards (the so-called "entry ticket") through massive absorption of American technology, leased, sold or given, but always with the ensuing strings of technical dependence. But European producers undoubtedly feel they have to take up the challenge.

On the European side, there cannot effectively be any autonomy without the existence of a national – and increasingly European – defense industry. The process has taken place in stages, starting with a group devoted to common specifications in the frame of the WEU (GEAO). Since the major progress achieved in the field of inter-European defense industry cooperation was the creation in 1996 of a joint procurement organization, called the Joint Organ for Cooperation in Armament

²⁶ cf. Samuel Huntington remarks in "Foreign Affairs" October 1997 issue: "America balances between capacities and commitments. [With the end of the Cold War], the danger of a gap has vanished and, instead, the US appears to have a defense surplus".

(OCCAR, in French). It is managed by the four leading industrial powers (France, the UK, Germany and Italy) and develops such integrated programs as the “Tigre” strike helicopter, “Cobra” radar, and a wide range of missiles. This was meant as a first step towards setting up a European Armament Agency, as a useful tool to rationalize and standardize procurement policies and generate economies of scale. A hurdle on this road comes from the disproportion of size and the extreme fragmentation of the European industrial capacities, which cannot be viable in European and world markets without merging their best-performing sectors into transnational-sized corporations, very much under the same pattern that generates concentration in the counterpart American industry. Six countries are now moving with the standardization of regulations to help with the restructuring of industries. This framework will soon have to be enlarged and transposed into the European Union. European armament manufacturers have already undergone major restructuring. An important British and American pole has been created around BAe and GEC-Marconi, which ranks second in the world behind Lockheed-Martin. Another European giant has been formed around Aérospatiale and Daimler Aerospace (EADS – European Aeronautic Defense and Space Co). Furthermore, Thomson-CSF has taken over Racal, and other mergers in this strategic sector will continue to thrive in the near future.

But this rationalization in no way imposes the creation of two blocks, two fortresses on either side of the Atlantic. Rather, leading to a better balance, it should permit the development of a stronger transatlantic partnership through greater openness. Over the next few years, it is to be wished that cross shareholdings or common programs organized around joint ventures will increase mutual access to military markets, while securing the European defense industry position and degree of independence it wishes to preserve.

One particular hindrance to cooperation stems from the restrictive practices established by the US Congress in the field of technology transfer. US high-tech licenses are, thus, made available only to “Allies which can be trusted” – meaning the UK and to a lesser extent, Germany, the Benelux countries... but such transfers are denied to “less reliable” Allies. France as the first European arms producer and exporter, often competing against US suppliers in third markets, being the archetype in this unofficial category. Intelligence sharing follows the same discriminatory pattern among “good” and

"less good" Allies. The whole story of the development of the military nuclear capabilities by the UK and France in the late 50s-early 60s already showed one ally being assisted and the other being countered by the American Executive. The natural bent of the French to be autonomous and to develop policies and technologies on their own has roots in the last five decades.

Chapter III: AMERICAN PERCEPTION OF ESDP: CHALLENGE TO LEADERSHIP OR MORE WORKABLE PARTNERSHIP?

In the Cold War American perceptions of the defense of Europe, the cohesiveness of NATO in confronting the Soviet threat was of greater priority than simply sharing the burden more equally. Since the European policy of Henry Kissinger aimed at defining the respective strategic responsibilities – and consequently the respective share of the burden – the lingering sentiment of distinct interests on the European side has grown over the years. To some American political thinkers, Europe still means a shared culture and a community of values. but to many other it is not much more than the small appendix of Eurasia, as it appears to be on the geo-strategic chessboard.

In 1992, the same Henry Kissinger, contemplating the dissipation of the Soviet threat, reflected on the forging of a European defense identity. Thoughtfully, he perceived that the European self-image would no longer result from a threat perception, but rather from a growing ambition to foster and express a specific geopolitical perception of global issues. This inevitably would challenge the US supremacy. European unity, unfortunately, “induced a cost for America to pay, although the Americans have, so far, never accepted the idea”.

The development of ESDP as a concept and a policy makes Kissinger’s forecast even more relevant. The only way out is to find amicable compromises to lower this cost and to minimize these differences. Courtesy usually remains the hallmark of inter-Ally relations. But as America, followed by NATO and the Europeans, publicly advocates crafting workable solutions, deeds like words reflect, in fact, deeply entrenched doubts and suspicions.

A / The American objectives in Europe before the Helsinki summit

1. The historical vision of integrating Europe, as a brainchild of the US post-war involvement.

a - Parenthood makes authority non-divisible

From the European-minded Eisenhower administration to the “European-friendly” Clinton administration, American leadership has usually been convinced that NATO actually made European integration possible and that, to a great extent, today’s EU is the child of post-war American policies towards Europe. Much understanding for the European identity issue has been expressed in

Washington, entailing the patient conversion of President Eisenhower to the EDC, the Multilateral Forces project (MLF) under President John F. Kennedy, and the new Atlantic Charter proposed by Dr. Henry Kissinger, although all these initiatives have foundered on the lack of European cohesion.

More recently, President Clinton has invested an impressive amount of political credit in the two major NATO operations in the Balkans²⁷ and envisioned his hosting of the Washington 50th anniversary NATO summit as a climax of revitalizing and adapting the Alliance (though circumstances in the Balkans made the event less resounding). The encouragement given to ESDI was part of the Washington package, essentially with a view to instill more self-confidence in the European pillar and, thus, a greater impetus in its capability-building. One of the headlines was renewing the terms of the contract between Washington and the Europeans to help the latter feel more in charge of their own destiny, in ways more commensurate with the present weight of the EU in world affairs. It did not, however, entail a more collective style of leadership, regardless of the democratic virtues of the countless debates held in this forum.

b - Leadership is about architecture and division of tasks

The wide picture of Europe in the American strategy was described at the end of 1998 as the “**triple crown**” paradigm, enhancing the complementary and distinctive functions of the three European institutions devoted to stability: to NATO would be given the prime responsibility for security and defense, with all the political and foreign policy implications²⁸; to the EU would go the responsibility for economic integration and the diffusion of prosperity; to the OSCE would be given the

²⁷ *The US involvement in the Balkans was well formulated in a speech delivered by President Clinton to the San Francisco Society of Newspapers Editors on 15 April 1999: “The US intervention in Kosovo was a moral but also a strategic imperative. During the Cold War, America has mistakenly assessed the world situation through the prism of communism and anti-communism. That did not work any longer: America has to face a great battle between the forces of integration and those of disintegration, between those of globalism and those of tribalism or those of oppressive arbitrary powers. America was engaged in Kosovo because it is attached to the multi-ethnicity of the post-Cold War world”.*

²⁸ *NATO must continue to be a strong and effective instrument of security for the Euro-Atlantic area, and the principal forum for **political** as well as military **cooperation** in security matter” statement to the Senate Foreign relations Committee by Assistant-Secretary of defense for international Security Affairs, Franklin D. Kramer – 9. March 2000.*

²⁸ *In the New York Times of 3 January 2000, Dean Joseph Nye of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government envisions the “democratization of NATO as an accomplishment of a soft power” approach of foreign policy. “Americans do not want to turn inward but neither do they want to be the world policeman. What is needed is an acknowledgment of something Ronald Reagan understood well: American soft power. It is an ability to get what we want through attraction*

task of providing a framework for the “soft” components of security, such as democratization, conflict prevention, post-conflict rehabilitation.

This view conflicts somewhat with the Europeans’ perception of the distribution of roles. Not only would they resent having their soldiers “muddle through” in the dust while American air power exhibits technical prowess in the high skies, they would also set the EU as the core and engine of the European great design, which has to come from their own vision. In this regard, NATO would stand as a powerful technical institution, endowed with essential tasks of implementation, but not as the political brain devising the future of the Europeans. These conflicting views of the two institutions set different loci of the power of initiative, one of which goes against European sovereignty in the making. While Brussels would aim at a central position in the European architecture, Washington would rather bank on the experienced benefits of American leadership.

Meanwhile, as the Europeans are equipping themselves with military and police tools to project “soft power”, the Americans are not really extending their “strong arm” security policy into the non-military or lower intensity aspects of crisis management. If they do not, this will add European handicap in terms of its military capabilities to the American inability to deal effectively with of the human dimension of conflicts.²⁹

5. The enlargement dialectics: semblance of competition between the EU and NATO

a - The American vision provides a coherent political framework and a causal link between NATO’s enlargement and that of the EU: the Alliance would provide the security-related component of the assistance to the new members, if only through the integrating processes of the Partnership for Peace and its PARP planning mechanism. By contrast, the EU could easily be upbraided for “not delivering in due time” on its own pledge for economic integration.

rather than coercion. A source of soft power is our values. Soft power also works through international organizations like the IMF, NATO and the Inter-American Human Rights Commission’.

b - This vision conceals a major ambiguity in the priority given either to accommodate the wishes of the new eastern democracies – the new tributaries – or to placate Russia's ill feelings, as Moscow remains an indispensable strategic partner. Both aims clearly conflict with each other. Washington also overlooks the huge disparities of nature and of legal and economic-financial constraints between the two enlargement processes.

c - The EU process is nonetheless moving on as shows the pledge take at Helsinki to complete and bring to fruition the membership negotiations with each of the twelve new applicants and possibly Turkey. Nevertheless, there remains an artificial sense of competition and lax coordination between the two powerhouses. Which will really address the Russian question that might well be our paramount concern in the near future? Which will be able to exert its attraction more strongly over the other half of Europe? Will the Central-East European, Baltic and Balkan States be confronted with a dilemma of priority, resource allocation and, finally a choice of loyalty to NATO or the EU?

A new wave of memberships in NATO would certainly contribute to consolidating the central authority of the US in the Alliance, but at the expense of an even more unbalanced sharing of the burden, considering the critical lack of defense assets of the newcomers. It would also infuriate Moscow. Is there, under these conditions, a temptation to concede Mr. Putin a share of the strategic US primacy over Europe – the much vaunted anti-ballistic shield – to appease the Russians and revitalize a “condominium-type” or bipolar management of the European nuclear deterrence, that ensured stability in the past. By strongly urging the EU and NATO to open themselves to Moscow. During his 3 June 2000 visit to Rome, President Clinton certainly did not have this particular consequence in mind. But Mr. Putin, also in Rome, jumped on it to launch the initiative of a Russian NMD over Europe, to the dismay of the Europeans. This idea, as a result, points to the looming prospect giving Russia back some political and military control on European affairs.

Conversely, as ESDP aims not at collective defense and should stay distinct from Article V of the Brussels Treaty, the American side has a justified motive to warn the EU against spreading the fallacious impression that new members' inclusion in ESDP could bring with it an indirect collective

defense guarantee, “on the back of NATO”. It would not work that way, as the ensuing confusion of roles between both institutions would seriously damage the transatlantic relationship. Only in the case of the Baltic Republics, *the admission of which to the Alliance is still perceived in Moscow as a casus belli*, could the Europeans devise with their NATO counterparts the provision of some lower-status “security solidarity” within ESDP.

In the same way, a hypothetical “all EU military operation”, if it ever materializes, should be carefully designed and conducted so that it never degenerates into a collective defense emergency. It could otherwise backlash onto NATO’s main field of responsibility and trigger the unwilling Alliance’s backdoor involvement in a European-built crisis. Instead, Europe longs to be a credible, reliable and predictable ally of the US and co-leader of NATO, even if its intentions are not necessarily appreciated.

3. The American response to ESDP

Washington’s response is marked by profound ambivalence, to say the least, ranging from benign skepticism to outright alarm. These emotions are more striking than was the case with previous issues of European integration.

At the time of Saint Malo, the new momentum of the European debate caught the Clinton administration unawares, while at the same time feeling compelled to reiterate its long-standing support of principle for the idea of more European participation in NATO. Worries were dominant in the inter-agency assessments of this breach of the prevailing status quo, and a reserved mood emerged in Washington against any European move to build up an autonomous decision-making center in the field of defense and security.

The first response of the American diplomacy was presented at the Washington NATO 50th Anniversary meeting, in which a sense of irritation and fatalism was well illustrated in Secretary Albright’s advice to her Turkish colleague: “If we do not agree with what they want, they will do it anyway, without our agreement”. It was in fact regrettable in her view that the Europeans proceeded from the WEU to ESDP, in full conformity to the European Treaties, without humbling themselves for

American permission. To some extent, the wish to magnify the new strategic concept pushed on its allies on this occasion seems devised to retrieve a European supremacy from the EU. For instance, the new non-military missions vested to the Washington Treaty – like counter-narcotics or counter-terrorism – stride right into the purview of the EU third pillar (justice-police cooperation).

Furthermore, “red lines” were to be drawn, beyond which the integrity and supremacy of the Alliance in its own field would have to be protected, starting with the policy-shaping process. One would be to set a sequence of decisions in which, as a rule, NATO’s deliberations on a crisis would take place upstream, before the EU puts the issue on its own internal agenda. That in turn confronted the European general view that the EU should not function as a subset of NATO.

Moreover, a real question lays in the distribution of tasks between the two institutions: assuming it is well understood that the modest ESDP format and its limited 2000 km or so radius of intervention would make it unable to offset the high intensity, wide scale combat potential required from the US force, would ESDP still attempt to compete with NATO for a bigger share of its new range of missions (those related to non-collective defense, also defined by the Europeans as the “Petersberg’s missions”)?

The other bone of contention would be the status and rights granted to non-EU Allies. The Alliance’s bargaining chip to support its case would be the “presumed access” to NATO assets, in the case of an all-European operation. This restriction was soon to be formulated into a ‘right of first refusal’, which the Europeans (at least the French) consider to be a somewhat abstract and paradoxical argument between Allies (not to say friends) who are supposed to share political goals and values.

Conversely, the Europeans are not banking on a “right of first decision” for themselves. In real-life situations such as Kosovo, decisions are taken in close and constant consultation between the Allied capitals, and one would be hard put to conceive of a platoon of Eurocrats in Brussels secretly plotting to spring a surprise decision on the NATO military staff – or vice versa. The quality of dialogue

the Allies are aiming at should not be precluded with pre-set constraints and formal obligations, regardless of the realities they might be confronted with.³⁰

From the outset, the administration coated the Saint Malo design for “autonomous European defense capabilities within the EU” with a code of three caveats (the 3 Ds) or mistakes to be avoided: non-decoupling of the transatlantic link, non-duplication of assets, non-discrimination among allies.³¹

Commitments under the Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI) were again stressed, as the only priority task. A clear preference was expressed for a transfer of the WEU’s military functions into NATO (but a dilution of the European defense identity that would not have delivered the intended political signal), and ample warnings were given to the European interlocutors about the way Congress could misperceive the move: an excuse for it to disengage part or all of the 100,000 troops stationed in Europe or, with the same result, to widen its scope of intervention to the global sphere of US interests, notably in the Far East, letting ESDP wrestle alone in its own backyard. On Capitol Hill, as far as it is perceived at all, the issue is dealt with in a stern negative light.

The French diplomatic mission in Washington has received warnings from a few eminent legislators that a truly autonomous European capability would be an incitement for the US to disengage troops from Europe. Thus, the long-term commitment taken through the 1949 Washington Treaty has dwindled into a mere, reversible political option or so, the French are invited to understand. The bipartisan stance to support the presence of American forces in Europe is becoming conditional and circumstantial. It could be reversed as a result of a show of force between the administration and Congress. In the longer run, the impression prevails that such a US disengagement could result from a successful establishment of Euro-defense within the EU as well as from a failure to develop more European capabilities within NATO. One could hardly blame the

³⁰ *But pragmatism is on the rise. At a meeting with the US media in December 1999, French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine stated that “we shall be able to go quite far through political dialogue with the United States. It is what actually happens that will decide what works and what does not. We should better not hope for too many crisis in which to try all this out”.*

³¹ *In this respect, Deputy- Secretary of State Strobe Talbott said in London (10/07/99): “We do not want to see a NATO-generated ESDI which would develop outside NATO and finally would drift away: this would mean a duplication of NATO and eventually a competition against NATO”.*

political class for questioning the cost and the validity, in the post-Cold War context, of an institution created for a different epoch and for different purposes.

In its public report of September 1999 devoted to the security agenda of the 21st Century, the US Commission on National Security did not mention Europe, but addressed in its item number 13 the future of alliances in Eurasia:

‘Political changes abroad, economic considerations, and the increased vulnerability of US bases around the world will increase pressure on the United States to reduce substantially its forward military presence in Asia and Europe. In dealing with security crises, the 21st Century will be characterized more by episodic crises of the willing rather than the traditional World War II-style alliance systems. The United States will increasingly find itself wishing to form coalitions but increasingly unable to find partners willing or able to carry out combined military operations’.

As former-Under-secretary of State and Harvard scholar Robert Zoellick stated (*The New York Times* of 13 December 1999.) “The longer Europe falls short on defense, the more impatient US politicians will become at having to bear a disproportionate share of the burden”.

Congress has already passed a unanimous resolution bemoaning the “significant shortcomings” in Euro-defense capabilities and urging the EU to rectify the “overall imbalance” within the Alliance. When it came to supplementing the budget appropriation for the US contingent of KFOR, a motion of the House of Representatives, which would have forced the administration to start withdrawing troops unless it could certify that the European NATO Allies shouldered their share of the cost for international police, humanitarian assistance and economic reconstruction, was shortly defeated. However, the chairman of the appropriation Committee, Senator Gregg, then, on his own authority, blocked the supplementary funding of the American component of KFOR on the same conditions. Thus, American participation in military peacekeeping as well as its quasi-absence from 'soft power' missions generates Congressional suspicion of a European "free ride".³²

Whatever the Europeans achieve will in fact be disliked by the American legislature. The instinctive French reaction to this suspicion would be to ignore it. This would be shortsighted tactic however, and the French, like their European partners, are willing to work in good harmony with all

branches of government starting with the administration...though the latter often overemphasizes its dependence on Congress to incite foreign governments to plead their cause directly on the Hill.

b. The Cologne summit, which translated Saint Malo into a truly new dimension of European integration, increased the state of alarm in Washington. Its coincidence with the Kosovo air operations has led the American side to believe that the new assertiveness of the Europeans resulted from their disillusion or criticisms about the functioning of NATO at war. The three Ds were buffered with strong arguments: ESDP would be the antithesis of what the collective action of NATO, under a unified integrated chain of command had achieved in Kosovo; a split of decision-making between the two institutions would stir competition between them and damage transatlantic solidarity, especially in the absence of clear standards of task assignments to NATO or to the EU/WEU, according to the nature of the crisis. The suspicion that “all European” limited operations would become the EU’s favored scenario was at its climax, regardless of the European Council assurance that such a hypothesis “should not bear prejudice to actions undertaken by NATO”. Leaving the burden of fulfilling Article 5 only to the Alliance, while the Europeans conducted peace-keeping, would open a straight shortcut towards delinking the Allies.

c. The difficult experiment of coalition work in Kosovo might have brought some tension between different political and military cultures. Viewed as a whole, however, it was a stunning success, with most of the participants rallying around a common set of goals and values, realizing their interest in investing in greater interoperability (meaning a major European effort in acquisition in the future) and in securing for themselves easier access to planning and decision-making. The Europeans were proud of having played their part – large or small – on the side of the American Air Force as well as the other services. The credibility of NATO has been enhanced in the eyes of most Allies, and as a result of these lessons learned in the Balkans, any wishful thinking about ESDP as an alternative to the Alliance – if it ever existed – has shrunk back to its initial size: that of a mere

³² This 219 to 200 vote in the Congress came on March 30th, ironically the day following the Brussels meeting of the donor countries for the Balkans, on which occasion the EU and its member-countries had pledged 85% of an extra 2.4 billion dollars earmarked for the Stability Pact.

substitute to the involvement of NATO as a whole; a clear scenario in which, should the US decide it is not its wish to intervene, it would not obstruct the European pillar from doing the job.

As Secretary Cohen put it nicely in his introductory message to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff upon publication of the Kosovo/Allied force-After action report:

“Our NATO Allies were crucial partners and contributors throughout the operations. Our European Allies’ aircraft that were committed to the operation were roughly as large a part of their total inventory of aircraft as was the case for the United States, and they flew a very substantial number of strike missions, facing the same dangers as the US air crews. In addition, European nations had substantial ground forces deployed in Albania and Macedonia. European facilities providing communications, intelligence and logistic support similarly were necessary for the campaign’s prosecution. Europeans provided the majority of the humanitarian relief supplies, particularly in adjacent countries such as Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia , which was critical in limiting the human cost to the many Kosovo refugees. Finally, it is the Europeans who are shouldering the major share of the peacekeeping effort.”

European national assessments of the operation speak no less favorably of the teamwork accomplished in Kosovo, with a firm determination to improve it further by the time a similar challenge might arise. There is no hidden thought, therefore, to inflame a sense of competition, when complementarity and inclusiveness are all that matter. However, beyond the nice words and a sincere expectation of some “coming of age” for a more responsible Europe, deep feelings still seemed to range, from outright irritation that NATO ‘s integrity might be damaged, to a frank distrust or skepticism about the ability of the Europeans to successfully complete such a project.

B / The post-Helsinki refinements of the US and NATO position

On the administration’s side, the response to the Helsinki package has shown a further move towards pragmatic accommodation and a general switch for a more constructive public expression of its lingering concerns. For the press heading, one recalls Strobe Talbott’s peremptory affirmation in Brussels (14 December 1999) that: “We are not anxious, we are for it [ESDP]... a Europe that can effectively act through NATO or on its own...period, end of debate”.

In fact, as could be witnessed during the visit of Lord George Robertson to Harvard (4 April 2000), the terms “Europeanization” of NATO or “leadership-sharing”, like any mention of the “internal reform of the Alliance” are not only off the agenda, but also considered as “bad taste”, although quite

unexpected in relation to the French specificity on these issues³³: the UN has been requested to

reform itself, the EU Commission has thoroughly reformed itself in the first months of 2000... but the 50-year-old NATO is the only international organization that first took the decision to reform its decision-making process, only to later make the subject taboo.

1. Inclusiveness as a rule

On one hand, the Helsinki conclusions clarified what the Deputy-Secretary of State has retrospectively called “the misunderstanding from Cologne”. By this he meant stretching the word “autonomous” to imply choosing an independent course as the first resort. The suspicion was aimed very much at the French. In this respect, Helsinki steered the European enterprise in a direction that was explicitly more NATO-friendly: If the decision on the new reaction force was welcome in principle, a point of clarification was paramount in stressing that the EU would only be “preparing to conduct operations in which NATO as a whole would not be engaged”. This would narrow the range of envisioned **scenarios** to three:

A stronger European contribution to NATO operations with a coupled claim for a bigger share of decision making: the “15” made it clear that they would not claim exclusive rights on specific threats on European security for themselves, and that the circle of concerned Allies or partners would remain open to all those willing to contribute. The logic of ad hoc coalitions, as pursued in the Balkans, would not be questioned in the future.

b) The capacity of European members of NATO to take the lead in some situations either “when it is judged that NATO is not required or when there may be political constraints affecting a decision of the United States to participate”. This formulation, crafted by the US and endorsed by NATO at the 15-16 December 1999 North Atlantic Council in Brussels, states in convincing terms that the duality of defense schemes is also useful to adjust general commitments and policies to conjectural variations in the domestic political scenes on both sides.

c) In the same situations, when NATO’s assets are not needed or not available, to act outside the Alliance in a purely European format.

2. The remaining uncertainties over the “home front”

a / On both sides of the Atlantic, the commitment to defense is greatly influenced by public perceptions and the “civic mind”; in other words, by the level of support that is available in the political arena.

The disengagement of the US from Europe is in no way a perceptible trend in the administration’s security policy. But, as we have seen, the benevolent “unilateral” contribution to Europe’s security as it has been carried over the last five decades meets mounting opposition from broad sectors of the legislative branch and the political class. During the Kosovo campaign, support in public opinion for such a European “backyard” operation was feeble and might have totally collapsed as the cost in human casualties rose. Rather than devising choices between stronger US unilateralism to pressure the Allies and a slowly unraveling transatlantic relationship of the “amicable divorce” type, ESDP could inject an element of flexibility in wrestling with limited crises. It can build up a European capacity to act on its own, and an American freedom of choice. Politically, it is no small matter that the American administration could become freer to pick causes, with possibly more attention being paid to its national interests and to the expression of public opinion.

b / What about Euro-defense in the presidential election campaign? So far, it has not been a public issue, and that is a good thing. There were no ill feelings expressed by Vice-President Al Gore and Governor George W. Bush towards the European Allies, quite the opposite. But Europe as such does not stand high in their foreign policy agendas (in fact, its impact on the public mind is negligible compared to that of China). So far, there is only limited awareness of Euro-defense and European issues in general. The two leading challengers pledge themselves to increasing US defense spending substantially, which would make them more prone to criticize the “shortcomings” of the Europeans regarding burden sharing. Both also support some form of National Missile Defense that would de-link the American nuclear sanctuary from Europe’s and fuel an atomic arm race in the rest of the world (although Governor Bush’s project goes a long way further on this road). Rightly or

wrongly, the European governments also fear that such issues of prime importance to them will not be addressed in the first months of the new administration, regardless of who is the next president.

Europe is primarily perceived as an “unfair” trader and economic competitor (in the same way the Europeans perceive the US as “unilateral” in its policies), and the texture of transatlantic relations, packed with disputes, panels, arbitration and mutually accusatory press campaigns, creates a very unfavorable background for publicly addressing security concerns, without merging them into the “grand Atlantic quarrel”.

3. If you cannot stop it, channel it in a safe direction

Meanwhile the perils of the three Ds (de-coupling, discrimination and duplication) have been rephrased by the administration in a more positive tone with a three “I” motto: indivisibility of the transatlantic security; inclusiveness of all European Allies; improvement of European capabilities. No blame is put on anyone, but a set of rules for all...In remarks delivered on 5 February in Munich regarding the ESDP, Secretary William Cohen developed the implications of these three “I”s for the Europeans: to start with, indivisibility, inclusiveness, and improvement of capabilities are the three requisites to be met by the Europeans so that their project can be endorsed in Washington. This means that ESDP should be solidly embedded and contained within NATO, which should remain “whole and intact” as the solid foundation (the “bedrock”) of transatlantic security. Both institutions can grow “stronger” if they grow together, not apart.

Secretary Cohen addresses the burden-sharing issue with a lot of skepticism, from the vantage point of the faltering records in the achievement of the European Allies “force goals” over the last years. Would not ESDP end in another case of European bureaucracies “wiring together”, rather than proceeding from the political will and ability to act claimed by the European leadership? Can countries that are constantly cutting their defense budgets commit themselves seriously to building new capabilities? Has security really returned to the forefront of their political agenda? Will the deeds match the words that have been spoken so passionately?³⁴

The level of trust in the efficient implementation of the European project is clearly at its lowest ebb, and the counsel is unambiguously for the EU to refocus on the Defense Capabilities Initiative and its “old” and more urgent commitment to re-establishing a normal course of social and institutional life in Kosovo and to rebuilding the economy and social stability of the Balkans: “we cannot accomplish a broad agenda in the future if we fall short of meeting the clearly defined responsibilities in our hands, today”.

4. “Coexistence” of two defense institutions in Europe

Lingering concern undoubtedly continues to remain and will remain on the American side about the ways in which political authority could ever be shared between the two fora, rather than disputed over between them. To start with, the need for separate command structures, and therefore a limited redundancy with NATO, is not seen to make any sense, even though ESDP could not otherwise sustain a scenario of a peace-support operation outside of NATO – a possibility now (reluctantly) acknowledged by Washington. The European argument on this point would be that such a duality is already prevalent with the running of the WEU’s military organs. Furthermore, the small ESDP headquarters with about sixty officers (the equivalent structure in NATO is staffed by 385 officers) would allow for quicker coordination between the two institutions, and put the Europeans in the position of engaging their forces on a more equal footing and with a sharper perception of the responsibilities they have to shoulder.

Another noteworthy precedent, which has nothing to do with the Alliance, is the East Timor peacemaking operation, led by the Australian armed forces between September 1999 and March 2000. Canberra had called for American participation, but Washington chose not to send ground forces, only to lend needed assets (intelligence, transports, etc.). Actually, with good motives, the US supported the Australian operation “from outside” and quite naturally trusted the Australian leadership. This is the very kind of trust that the Europeans would like to be honored with. The present generation of European leaders – in France as well – is more inclined to pragmatism than to theological approaches.

To them, Europeanism and Atlantism are not conflicting visions. This is not unknown on the American side of the Atlantic. Without neglecting the issue of the participation of non-EU NATO Allies in crisis-management efforts, priority should go to the question of institutional links to be established between the EU and NATO as such. Starting with the French presidency of the EU, four joint working groups will meet regularly. Obviously, more interaction is needed, both at the working and political levels between these two institutions which are headquartered in the same city but rarely speak to each other.

The EU still limits overall political EU-US dialogue to semiannual political consultations and great numbers of sectorial negotiations. What is needed, when it comes to defense, is a permanent and pro-active mechanism. Kissinger's idea of a new Atlantic Charter retains some relevance as an overlaying stratum to the Washington Treaty of 1949. In a more informal way, new rules of partnership can be agreed upon. The parties to it could only be the US and the EU.

C / Perspectives: ESDP's future as a common achievement or a contentious issue in the Atlantic community

1. The pessimistic view: the tense bargaining over loosening ties we should avoid

So ESDP is not denied but largely disregarded. In a way, the little credit it is given in the US and Canada is a healthy reminder to the Europeans that they have taken a challenge upon themselves, and that they will have to match their words with convincing means and deeds. Recurrent irritations come naturally on and off the complex Euro-Atlantic agenda. Trade disputes surge one on top of another, inflaming feelings every month or so: the "banana war" preceded the hormone beef and the genetically modified food disputes. They were followed by mutual blame for the fiasco of the November 1999 WTO meeting in Seattle that was to launch the Millennium Round. Then came litigation over the untaxed American Foreign Sales Corporations and the Airbus industrie-Boeing classical dispute around subsidies.

In most cases, the US resorted to unilateral sanctions, creating a sense of estrangement between the public opinions on both sides of the Atlantic. The 1996 Iran-Libya (d'Amato-Gilman) Act

and the (Helms-Burton) Cuban "Libertad" Act – the implications of which were fortunately subjected to presidential waivers – are perceived as the sword of Damocles over the security of European trade and investments. Foreign policies constantly diverge on Iraq and Iran (one side pointing to inefficient and inhumane policies of strangulation, while the other suspects dubious trade interests driving EU policies). Little coordination seems achievable in the Israel-Arab conflict or in the Mediterranean. Diverging strategies are taking shape concerning Russia and China.

To make things more complex, only a few months after their common success in Kosovo, the Allies were involved in two major quarrels on security matters. First, the refusal of Congress to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) is poisoning the French-US dialogue and leads Paris to believe that it has shown some naiveté in having heeded, in good trust, American pressure and dismantled its nuclear test site, its military fissile fuel facilities, and the whole land-based component of its deterrent. Secondly, the announced development of National Missile Defense (NMD) gives the European Allies a sense that the nuclear shield extended over their continent is soon doomed to be crippled, thus creating a distinctively lower European status in strategic security. ESDP and NMD, as the most pressing concerns of each side, are usually mentioned in parallel by American officialdom, giving the impression that both the project that enhances European security and that which belittles it could be linked in the same bargaining.

Not mentioning the European outcries over the stern implementation of the death penalty in some States (notably, Texas), or over the suspicion that followed revelations of the "Echelon" American-led spy satellite network eavesdropping on billions of private and corporate communications around the globe, or the rough treatment inflicted on the initial European candidature to the position of IMF executive director (Mr. Caio Koch-Weser, in March 2000³⁵), the texture of the transatlantic fabric seems to be woven in a perpetual thread of friction, contradictions, and suspicions. These transatlantic irritants over trade, arms control, US-Russian or US-Chinese policies could always bring back the European pretenses on the forefront of controversies and turn the

partnership project into an election-driven display of American commiseration towards the Europeans (or a display of European “resistance”)...

If the transatlantic leadership quarrel were to be exposed in the open, the problem of the hierarchical relations between the two organizations might remain deadlocked on matters of principle, which could gradually lead to more frequent separate actions. Threats of larger cuts from troops stationed on the old continent, as sometimes expressed on Capitol Hill, would risk triggering a hasty, premature build-up of ESDP as a minimal tool of collective defense. Confusion of tasks and allegiances would then be brought into NATO. Ultimately, a feeling would arise that de-coupling would take place as a result of a looser US commitment and that ESDP, far from being a panacea, would have become a last resort and poor alternative to real collective defense, for the abandoned Europeans. Would not then clashes of political interests be inevitably resolved through sheer balance of force or display of political will? The US, as a more cohesive and powerful actor, may enjoy at first a marked advantage, while being an unwilling catalyst to a more nationalistic European identity build-up, at the very cost of a quickly withering transatlantic link. That scenario would surely be a disaster for all. Unfortunately, it is not against all odds, as only a strong will of partnership and a sober and discreet handling of dialogue can supply the antidotes.

2. The reasonable partnership scenario: good will and empirical wisdom

To be fair, the administration tackles Euro-defense not with a view to block its development – a tactic that would probably backfire – but from the conviction that it can contain it to the realistic and affordable ambition of a European pillar, well anchored within NATO and nowhere else.

Washington has given the Europeans real incentives to effectively make use of their new or future capabilities in a partnership. The green light has been given – and the good offices played – by Washington to make it possible for the Euro-corps staff officers to relieve, since April 2000, their comrades of the Landcent Command at the head of the KFOR. The new headquarters staff is commanded by Euro-corps commander-in-chief, (Spanish) General Juan Ortuno, and reinforced with officers from EU and non-EU allies (the UK, Italy, but also Norway and Turkey). It is a good

example of both encouraging and testing the Europeans on the task. This will be the first time that NATO endows such a responsibility to an outsider, which is normally no part of its chain of command. It will also be the third occasion in a row in which the American contingent in KFOR serves under a (different) European general at the operational level.

From the three prospective scenarios (whole NATO operations, European-led operations in NATO, and a purely European framework), the second scenario will be the most useful to test the transfer of responsibilities and the viability of the new partnership that is called for. The first one will be useful to gauge the progress of Euro-defense capabilities and interoperability under the classical (American) chain of command and the commensurate progress of the coalition culture of decision. The third one should not come up at a premature time and will be limited to the handling of a local or regional minor trouble spot. It will have to be seen as a minor matter that the US will be well informed of but not really committed to.

Some sense of adjustment to European aspirations has undoubtedly taken place in the last year of the Clinton administration, and the Europeans would be well advised to seize this window of opportunity.³⁶ On the other hand, the political tension of a US presidential campaign calls for a pragmatic and even low profile in negotiation. It seems wise to focus on pragmatic and achievable goals in the coming phase of the project to keep it European, in conformity to the treaties, and acceptable to the non-NATO (neutrals) members. This would in any case imply a strong inflection of the Alliance along the guidelines of the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy, entailing quite an evolution in the political culture of the Alliance. Anchoring ESDP and NATO in a new transatlantic link will require a lot of self-confidence on both sides, and the EU should hasten to technically (militarily and politically) prepare for a new deal founded on equal partnership.

CONCLUSIONS

1. No drama – no big deal either !

Offsetting greater European responsibilities and assertiveness in the EU backyard against a more equal balance of burden sharing in the common sphere of defense will only emerge through incremental change, adjusting to a Europe in flux in an unpredictable world. This will involve no “big bang” in the geostrategic dimension that could create a multipolar world order, something anathema to US policy. Nor will it take any sensational “Grand Bargain” or fierce competition that would jolt the transatlantic cohesion: I speak of a partnership of equals, belonging to the same community of democratic nations that have known for decades that adjustment to each other was necessary, permanent and healthy.

Responsibilities can be distributed in different sets and according to different scenarios. In a prospective Rand Corporation scenario painting a picture of the transatlantic link in 2010³⁷, a more balanced division of labor is envisaged: the EU is seen increasing its stake and presence in security, diplomatic engagement and assistance along with the American partner in the Mediterranean (with a leading role in the Maghreb and south of Sahara), the Black Sea and the Gulf. The stabilization of the Balkans and the border/ethnic minorities disputes in Europe would fall, more than they do now, under the purview of the EU. Turkey’s status between NATO and its potential accession to the EU could become a concerted goal. Dominant US tasks would remain encouraging Russia to play a constructive role in security (a view one may not concur with totally, given the “inclusive” dimension of the EU strategy vis-à-vis Russia) and in other fields, such as the settlement of conflicts in the Caucasus and the Caspian area, the double containment of Iraq and Iran, the protection of the sea lanes to the Gulf, theater missile defense, and the security of Israel.

Whatever the contingencies and the relevance of these forecasts, specialization of tasks, tools and geographic areas may be required between partners. There is, as well, a need to anticipate potential disruptions and to counter them, if possible one at a time, without overextending respective NATO and EU commitments – which are heavy enough – hastily and in an unruly way.

2. Are the three scenarios realistic?

Will we see Euro-defense within NATO under US primacy; in NATO under European lead; or Euro-defense independent from NATO? The set of options results from prevailing constraints on each side of the Atlantic, and not from preferences of doctrine or political theology. One has to admit the inherent ambivalence of the European approach when it comes to the prospect of a systematic contribution of the US to any crisis in Europe in the future. Might it be realistic or even healthy in the long run? Nor can it be overlooked that the Europeans are pushing themselves into a dilemma: calling for American military support in every contingency they might need, while at the same time preparing themselves for a sagging American commitment to their security and the prospect of having to go it alone.

Whether this evolution from cooperative autonomy to a form of sovereign military capability is wished or feared by the Europeans – whether they see it as a coming of age over a long period of time for the EU, or as a looming scenario of abandonment by the Americans that they should ward off at any cost – will be reflected in the underlying differences of perception between the European capitals about the nature, evolution, and management of the transatlantic relations in the long term. If there is to be a transition, let us wish it to span a long stretch of time – no less than ten years – and to be embedded in some mutually agreeable timeframe, encompassing flexibility and concerted efforts. Only in those conditions could the new partnership be sustained under any of the three scenarios. In fact, the consensus seems to be that, rather than a “take it or leave it” approach that would antagonize their Allies, the Europeans will ensure that NATO meetings, be they scheduled before or after those of the EU, will remain venues for building consensus and common purpose.

This also implies that the development of the CFSP will not diminish, but determine the role of NATO; and finally that, short of a humiliating veto on ESDP action, the US should always make room from the outset for prior, thorough consultations, before it formally decides if it is prepared or not to go along with a European initiative. The US will remain the most eminent European Security actor as long

as it wants to. However, the future hinges on whether the transatlantic partners are able to remain attentive to each other's changing intentions, capabilities and constraints.

3. A "win - win game".

Identity versus leadership still entails delicate aspects of self-perception and self-confidence on both sides of the Atlantic as well as a challenge of will and means. Let it be resolved in a pragmatic way. First, it may take a decade for ESDP to establish its viability. This is a long enough timeline to gradually adjust to new perceptions of each other, especially if we stick to a clear common code of partnership and attribution of tasks.

a - The greater challenge is the one the EU countries have set for themselves: to deliver a viable and up to date combined capability that will gain credit within Europe and in the eyes of the American partner. A Euro-Atlantic cultural revolution is on its way and will have to pervade NATO: Can the Alliance become flexible and collegial enough to accommodate alternative modes of decision-making or shared authority? The challenge of a reformed and more European NATO hinges on what kind of European Allies Washington will want in the long run. It will be met when America swaps its claim for unquestioned leadership for a more conciliatory partnership with its European Allies, in a way "sub-contracting" upon them tasks within their military reach and their immediate sphere.

b - Coaching the Europeans in their new and modest military dimension would be for America the best way to maximize its influence on them and draw benefits from a lighter or more fairly shared burden. The challenge to Washington is all about shielding ESDP from sterile transatlantic quarrels and prevailing in the end as the politically wise, generous and mature partner in a revitalized Alliance of equals. A slightly less unipolar world may be in the making, but not as a result of a tilted balance of forces among Western powers; rather, through a stronger cooperative practice of diplomatic and military action, based on a community of values and combined capabilities.

Pervasive differences in the transatlantic community do not make sense, as both America and Europe are confronted with a rapidly increasing number of disruptions. In addition to the Balkan-type of conflicts stemming from extreme nationalism and racial hatred, there are also drug trafficking,

organized crime and terrorism, and massive emigration resulting from the widening North-South wealth gap. The unstable international environment calls as much for police cooperation or coordinated foreign economic assistance as for purely military joint actions. The Western democracies, making up presently 20% of world population, will represent hardly 10% of it by 2050. They should beware of not letting cultural clichés govern their perceptions of each other. To be instrumental to transatlantic success, both pillars will have to shed their respective stereotypes.

4. France as a model partner in both NATO and ESDP?

The road to such an accomplishment seems so bumpy and plagued with so many hurdles that one can hardly predict that it will be pursued all the way. In the worst-case scenario, ESDP could remain – as the WEU – a mere show window of European chimera, and a renewed source of mutual transatlantic resentment. Doing away with infantile systematic anti-Americanism (in Europe, but especially in France) that could in turn trigger isolationism in the US, and nurturing more American trust and respect for the European project would not harm the process at all. A sober and pragmatic French approach, open to the views and concerns of its EU partners, will help round off angles with some sectors in Washington, as it is clear that, to them, the most contentious aspect of ESDP lies precisely with whatever influence the French will hold in the process. Needless to say, there has been too little understanding in matters of defense between the two countries since they traded cutting remarks and condescension during the 1960s and 1970s. The old wounds have been healed, but their memory sometimes re-emerges when new controversies arise.

The ultimate contribution of France to the opening of a more serene chapter in the transatlantic saga would be for Paris to re-integrate the NATO military structures. That is in both capitals' interest, as soon as the ESDP materializes and is well established as the European pillar in the Alliance. Such a return into the fold of NATO would highlight a sound proximity of mind between the protagonists of EU sovereignty and those of a single supremacy in the Alliance. The extinction of half a century of bickering between Paris and Washington over leadership issues in the Atlantic community augur well for the reconciliation of Europeanism with Atlantism, even if thirty-four years of French absence leave

the question open as to what positions of responsibility could be reattributed to Paris that would reflect its contribution to the renewed partnership without chipping away rights or privileges from other European Allies. A prerequisite would be met through a discreet but honest resumption of the defense dialogue that was underway between Paris and Washington in 1995-96 and which is still latent.

Another would be for Paris to not too obviously spearhead the Euro-defense move, especially in Washington, but to anchor its stand in the European consensus, thus favoring ample occasion for advocacy and sometimes accepting to be lead by its partners. They have no less a stake than Paris in it. The catalyst of the most decisive move at Saint Malo was the British government, which also presently has well-prepared forces for these tasks. Paris should prevent any suspicion of an intended French "small hegemony" over the new European policy too. The lessons of the Gaullian era – quests for alternatives to NATO ending in ever-more French estrangement from its partners – clearly point to moderation and openness to the concerns of all as the only realistic approach.

France has a sense of duty in this regard. Holding the rotating Presidency of the European Union and the WEU from July to December 2000, Paris intends to push through the various institutional issues. One guesses that Paris is also to seize the opportunity to adopt a dispassionate approach to Washington about the dialogue and cooperation to be established between the two leading defense institutions in Europe. Let us wish this can be done, first to allay any perception of France and the EU 's strategy as one of competition with America; and, secondly, to lay down a roadmap for the above-mentioned full return of the French armed forces to the Alliance's integrated structures, as a token of renewed trust in the transatlantic relationship./.

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