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**Core Group, Directoire, Enhanced Cooperation?
Finding the Key to an Effective Foreign and Defence Policy for Europe**

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As a soldier I'm living very close to reality. I want to sketch out my opinion regarding the introductory note to this conference. The primary aim is to enlighten the question whether the introduction of an enhanced degree of flexibility, by enabling willing Member States to proceed further than others with the integration of decision-making and capacity-building, would enhance the performance and efficiency of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).

I will focus my speech on the military side of ESDP only. When we talk about ESDP capabilities, we have built up something formidable in the civilian field and I could not agree more with Ambassador Hunter. We are not making much of the fact that we have 5000 policemen at our fingertips, 2000 catastrophe helpers, 200 lawyers, and we are working hard on getting together a considerable number of administrators for the purpose of nation-building as well; they all can be deployed in 60 days or less.

As you can expect from a German soldier I fully support the flexibility promised by enhanced cooperation, as outlined for instance in the Franco-German or Franco-British proposals to the Convention. I will try to prove why initiatives along these lines are actually particularly attractive, as there is no real alternative in view of the scarcity of finances and other resources. We have to set out to create military capabilities under the conditions of the institutional framework of the EU, EU enlargement and also scarce resources, and under the condition that defence is still the exclusive domain of NATO and EU undertakes crisis management operations only where NATO as a whole is not engaged.

I presume that the first panel has already taken a closer look at these special conditions, since they apply not only to ESDP, but to the whole of the CFSP. This includes the prospect of an ESDP having to decide on the employment of military forces in crisis management, that means with all the risks associated to those being employed, but also to the politicians employing them. For instance a decision whether to continue leaning on consensus or venturing reliance on qualified majority vote gets a very sharp focus in my field of action.

When we discuss the future of ESDP in Brussels, you hardly find anybody who would not fully support this important project. Many of the longstanding experts in the EU even believe that defence policy is the most important integrative undertaking for the EU in the future. When you mention the term 'European troops' or 'common European forces' however, you immediately encounter diverging opinions and a lot of concern. This is quite understandable. Among the Member States there is a considerable number that has overseas commitments – Germany was lucky enough to lose its colonies early in the game. Others are still under the

impression of the times when the Warsaw Pact posed an immediate threat. Some have a tradition of neutrality, freedom of alliance or a mixture between them. Last but not least, one has to realise that any decision on the employment of armed forces touches upon the very core of national sovereignty. At this point, I ask the question: what can you expect? Will people really support you to the degree that some politicians claim all the time? A widespread conviction therefore is the assumption that the military part of crisis management will remain an intergovernmental process for quite some time to come. On the other hand, the Schengen agreement and the introduction of the common currency have proved the point that a group of Member States can indeed pave the way by demonstrating the confidence and mutual trust that are necessary to integrate further than others.

In the military field mutual confidence and trust are essential in many ways. NATO's successful history would not have been possible if there had not been a lot of these qualities, not only in the field, among the military, but also between countries and politicians. But in the situation that we are in today, from a military point of view, i.e. from the capabilities point of view, political agreement and trust will not suffice. Military capabilities are expensive. You cannot compete with defence budgets in elections. You always lose out in Europe at least against social programs, healthcare etc. And these resources are and will remain scarce. The forces of virtually all European countries still need to be adapted to their new tasks. Their well-known deficits must be corrected and we have a lot of initiatives going to do that. I believe that, like many others, tight finances by necessity eventually have to lead to very far-reaching decisions regarding the pooling of capabilities, joint ventures of all kinds and, over time, to a certain degree of role-specialisation as well. The absence of a classical external threat combined with emerging risks of a completely new nature gives the EU a chance, I believe, to turn to innovative measures. This is where for me enhanced cooperation as coined in the Treaty on European Union comes in to play.

From a German perspective, we have tried very hard for several years now to create projects where we are convinced that we will save resources for additional investments. Some of these ventures are already paying off. There is e.g. the transport coordination cell of the European Air Group in Eindhoven which paid off from the very beginning. This is only about putting your military transport demands on top of each other, comparing notes who is flying where and making the best of it. Another successful field is that of command & control. Because this conference is organized in cooperation between Belgian and Netherlands institutes, in this regard I am thinking in particular of the German-Netherlands Corps, a real success-story. These projects are costly, both with regard to personnel, and the necessary CIS-means. We couldn't have gone this far if we had not tried to do it together.

The future will probably see a lot more similar projects. This copying of existing ideas to get more people on board for existing projects was the underlying idea when the Netherlands proposed the European Capabilities Action Plan. Both the Franco-German and Franco-British proposals, which are very close by the way, the declaration of the 40th anniversary of the Élysée Agreement and the more recent Summit of the Four contain a number of, partially identical, ideas on what to take on next in this context. One of the more important ones is the creation of an EU Armaments and Procurement Agency which is already finding widespread support. I am afraid by the way, that it will not really fly if we don't manage to get a Defence Ministers Council for the EU, because so far we can only have informal sessions with the armaments directors. So there are a lot of things to do.

First I had somewhat expected that I would have to defend the Summit of the Four against Ambassador Hunter. Listening to his formidable speech, I rather reserve that for the question & answer period. I only want to say that the relationship between the US and NATO and the ESDP cannot be something that in the computer world would be termed a master-slave relationship. We really have to come to a partnership in crisis management across the board. We need a high-level sharing of the workload ahead. And who else than the members of NATO and the EU, with their traditions, culture, civilization, which possess the economic and military means, will be capable of doing that. In the long run, as a soldier I can be very optimistic. We will find solutions because the pressure of resources, of humanitarian and other catastrophes will hopefully show us early on in the game which way we have to go. It can only be a partnership. Thank you.