

**NATO, ESDP AND THE RIGA SUMMIT:
NO TRANSFORMATION WITHOUT RE-EQUILIBRATION**

SVEN BISCOP

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ROYAL INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (IRRI-KIIB)



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NATO, ESDP and the Riga Summit: No Transformation Without Re-Equilibration

SVEN BISCOP

Introduction

If NATO at the time of the 2002 Prague Summit assertively shook off the limitations imposed by the ‘out-of-area debate’ and looked forward to an ambitious worldwide role, the Alliance in 2006 seems to have lost confidence. The nervousness concerning the lack of a civilian crisis management dimension, especially evident when compared with the civilian dimension of ESDP, the compulsion to enhance its profile by participating in ever new types of missions in ever new parts of the world, and the permanently strained relationship with the EU appear to be symptoms of an existential unease and a loss of direction. Even the most avid Atlanticists – or they in particular – have noticed. Consider the introduction to a high-profile report by a Spanish think tank presided by former Prime Minister José María Aznar:

What really endangers the cohesion of the Alliance and provides the key to whether the organization really has a future is the loss of the organization’s *raison d’être*, the lack of a mission that can be shared by all of NATO’s members (FAES 2005, p. 11).

Under the heading of ‘NATO transformation’ two Summits of Heads of State and Government, one in Riga on 28-29 November 2006 and one in 2008, are to provide a remedy. A ‘global partnership’ embracing democratic States from all over the world, common funding of operations and capabilities, and a role in civilian crisis management and peacebuilding are all on the agenda. Yet the question is whether these Summits can give a renewed sense of direction and confidence to the Alliance without addressing the real cause of the loss of a common purpose. That root cause is a new structural factor in transatlantic relations and the world order: the emergence of the EU as a strategic actor in its own right, with its own policies and priorities, and with ever growing ambitions and capabilities.

The EU and NATO already have 19 out of respectively 25 and 26 members in common and, collective defence apart, have the same functional and geographic scope: peace support operations (PSOs) – or ‘Petersberg Tasks’ and ‘non-Article 5 operations’ – across the globe. As long as the relationship between them has not been settled, no ‘NATO-to-NATO’ summit can provide a lasting answer to the questions which the Alliance is facing, and every initiative, including the upcoming summits themselves, will be seen in the light of EU-NATO competition. This paper proposes one model for a re-equilibrated transatlantic partnership: a two-pillar Alliance.¹

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Permanent Debate on Structural Change

Competition is the inevitable consequence of the functional and geographic overlap between the two organizations if the relationship between them does not take into account the structural shift in the transatlantic balance which increasing EU 'actorness' represents. The EU's required degree of autonomy in the field of foreign and security policy is at the core of the debate.

This debate goes straight back to the foundation of the EU and its second pillar, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), by the 1991 Maastricht Treaty. The very creation of the CFSP was to a large extent motivated by the concern that after the end of the Cold War the US – and thus NATO – could no longer be relied upon to automatically take upon itself the resolution of every security issue with which Europe could be confronted. The eruption of civil war in former Yugoslavia proved as much. It was only after it became disastrously clear that for lack of foreign and security policy structures 'the hour of Europe' had not yet come, that the US intervened after all, whereas Washington initially saw the conflict as a European problem to be solved by the Europeans. When in 1997 Albania descended into anarchy, Washington again made it clear that neither the US nor NATO would volunteer as 'global policeman', assuming – correctly – that Europe should bear first-line responsibility for peace and security in its own backyard. In the absence of automatic American intervention, a capacity for autonomous EU action is a necessity. In combination with the obvious shortcomings of existing European capabilities, as evidenced in Kosovo in 1999, this was the motivation for the creation of the CFSP and, in 1999, the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), which replaced the now near-defunct Western European Union as the EU's own military arm.

An autonomous capacity instead of relying exclusively on an American-led Alliance and on the US itself also becomes a necessity when US intervention is no longer automatically considered legitimate and opportune. Of this the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which was rejected by a number of key EU Member States and by public opinion almost throughout the EU, provides an evident example. In the wake of the invasion and the upsurge of global terrorism that it has provoked, there is a lingering fear that a US administration that considers itself engaged in a 'long war' (DoD 2006, p. v) could draw its Allies into further risky adventures with negative consequences for the security and the image of the EU. Linked to that is the concern that NATO would be instrumentalized in function of a US policy that is not shared by all Allies, a fear to which the recent tendency to put all NATO activities under the heading of the fight against terrorism, even

when the link is not very obvious, might be seen to lend credibility. Europe does not feel at war.

These fears highlight the fact that the post-Cold War period has indeed produced a strategic divide between the EU and the US, whose interests, policies and priorities no longer always coincide. This is made clear by a simple comparison of the 2003 *European Security Strategy* (ESS) and the US *National Security Strategy* (NSS) in its 2002 and 2006 editions (the latter being a slightly toned-down but essentially similar version of the much debated 2002 document). Even though it devotes more space to such issues as democracy, human rights and trade, the NSS instrumentalizes all these dimensions of foreign policy in function of the single overall objective of the fight against terrorism and proliferation. It puts great emphasis on the use of the military instrument against these threats, including, if necessary, 'pre-emptively' or *de facto* even preventively, 'before they are fully formed', as stated in the covering letter to the 2002 NSS. The US pictures itself as the pillar of a unipolar world, reserving the right to act unilaterally and via ad hoc coalitions, and operating via the UN only when it is in its interest. The ESS on the contrary advocates a holistic approach that seeks to integrate all instruments, from aid and trade to diplomacy and the military, into a structural policy of prevention and stabilization, operating through partnerships and rule-based, 'effective multilateralism' (Biscop 2005a). In such an approach the use of force is an instrument of last resort, which in principle can only be reverted to with a mandate from the UN Security Council.

Clearly the EU and the US view the world differently: according to the US, the world is dangerous, according to the EU, the world is complex, as a European diplomat worded it. That the ESS was adopted in itself is the clearest indication of the dilution of the consensus on a common purpose between all NATO Allies. The ESS sets forth a very ambitious agenda: redrawing the multilateral architecture in order to assure effective global governance and, within that framework, stabilizing states and regions via intrusive bilateral partnerships. It resolutely opts for the EU as a global rather than a regional actor. As the ESS states, the EU with 25 Member States, over 450 million people and a quarter of the world's GNP is inevitably a global player. Whether it will also be a global *power*, i.e. whether it will proactively influence the world, depends on the strengthening of its emerging strategic culture: the political will, including in demanding situations, to take decisions true to its strategic objectives and to put to use all necessary instruments to implement them. During the Cold War and before Maas-tricht, the idea of Europe as a power in its own right was irrelevant, as all Allies fundamentally subscribed to NATO's strategy in view of the dominating threat of the Soviet Union, while the EEC and WEU lacked the capacity anyway to play such a role (Cohen-Tanugi 2003, p. 73). Since then however, the EU has not only

increasingly fostered the ambition, but is also continuously developing its capacity to be a global strategic actor, especially since the creation of ESDP. That constitutes a new structural factor in transatlantic relations. But because this development coincided with NATO's reorientation towards global PSOs, it is also the core of a permanent debate, which haunts policy-making ever since the early 1990s.

Because today's missions, PSOs, are in effect operations of choice, depending upon a political assessment, rather than defence against an existential threat as during the Cold War, this strategic divide has immediate operational consequences for NATO. It is difficult to see e.g. in which scenario all Allies would agree on deploying the NATO Response Force (NRF) for a high-intensity operation, which is its primary purpose. Differences and disputes between Allies are manageable as long as they are addressed within the framework of genuinely shared strategic objectives, but in the absence of such a framework they have the potential to become debilitating (Council on Foreign Relations 2004, p. 8).

A Blurred Debate

Until today the way in which the transatlantic relationship in general and NATO in particular are organized does not take into account this structural change. The issue of autonomy continues to cloud relations and policy-making. From the beginning it was envisaged that 'where NATO as a whole is not engaged', the EU can act, either with the use of NATO assets as provided for by the 'Berlin Plus' arrangement, or without. Actual initiatives to provide the EU with the necessary capabilities for the latter scenario have always caused friction however. Among the EU Member States, the UK especially has always been very fearful of ESDP duplicating or undermining NATO. Even though in 1998 London, together with Paris, was instrumental in launching ESDP, its motivation was to enhance the performance of European military capabilities, which the British acknowledged for the other Member States was only possible through European cooperation, both for budgetary and political reasons. When it came to political decision-making however, London was much more reluctant, preferring enhanced European military capabilities to be used in a NATO framework rather than by an autonomous EU, although inevitably – as the British soon found out – ESDP evolved in the latter direction (Biscop 1999).

Although it is not explicitly expressed in the ambiguously worded 'Berlin Plus' arrangement, there still is an often found view on the US side, and a corresponding concern on the European side, that NATO enjoys a 'right of first refusal'. If interpreted strictly, this means that the EU can only act when NATO formally adopts a decision not to. This rigid mechanism does not answer well to all contingencies, nor is it possible to lay down so rigorous a set of procedures as to preclude different interpretations of what each organization is permitted to do (Brenner, 2002, p.75; Burwell *et al.* 2006, p. 22). Operation 'Artemis', an EU operation without the use of NATO assets, proves as much. The decision to launch the operation (5 June 2003), the project of which apparently was the object of fierce US criticism at NATO's Madrid summit two days before, was taken following a request by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. In such cases, the spirit of the Alliance calls for transparency, and the EU did offer other Allies the possibility to participate, but making such operations conditional on formal NATO assent would inordinately detract from the autonomy of both the EU and the UN. Furthermore the US was not interested in contributing to peace support operations in Central Africa in the first place and had voted in favour of the mandating resolution in the Security Council. NATO does not exercise a right of first refusal with regard to national operations undertaken by the Allies, and should not do so vis-à-vis the EU either. The fear of the exercise of a de facto

‘right of first refusal’ can only stimulate European Allies not to consult, to the detriment of the cohesion of the Alliance.

Operations in Darfur since the summer of 2005 provide another example. Following requests by the African Union, both NATO and the EU mounted missions in support of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), alongside each other, a scenario which ‘Berlin Plus’ does not provide for. Darfur can also be seen as an example of the negative effects of EU-NATO competition. It is after all a fairly limited support mission, providing airlift, training, and advice at HQ level, but no front-line forces. From a military point of view and in the light of scarce resources, it is unnecessary, inefficient, and probably even less effective to divide it between two organizations, even if effective staff-to-staff contacts have been established. But for political reasons, key players in each organization wanted both of them to be visible through a mission of its own. A new arrangement, allowing for more flexibility and thus defusing the antagonistic relationship between the EU and NATO, is in order.

But if the need to re-equilibrate the transatlantic partnership is evident, the debate is being blurred by ambiguous attitudes on both sides of the Atlantic.

The US on the one hand wishes to preserve the primacy of NATO as the forum for decision-making on security and defence. It even appears to seek to widen the remit of NATO as a political forum, by moving beyond the Euro-Atlantic area and beyond the politico-military sphere. Issues such as the rise of China would then also be discussed in the North Atlantic Council (NAC). The ‘global partnership’ initiative can be seen in this light. Bringing such countries as Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, India, and perhaps even Pakistan, Colombia and Israel (FAES 2005, p. 44; Kamp 2006, p. 10) into NATO’s orbit could in fact be seen as leading towards the creation of an alternative centre of power next to the UN. This again can be linked to earlier ideas on an ‘international organization of democracies’ (Brecher 2003), ‘association of democratic nations’ (Hoffmann 2003), or ‘coalition of reasonably democratic states’ (Buchanan and Keohane 2004) that could legitimately proceed to use force if a Security Council mandate would not be forthcoming. This obviously contradicts the EU idea of ‘effective multilateralism’, with the Security Council as the sole arbiter on the use of force, and would leave little room for an autonomous EU strategy. The US further promotes NATO as a vehicle for the transformation of the armed forces of its European Allies, with the aim of increasing their ‘usability’, and continuously urges Europeans to spend more on defence. The concepts of transformation are to be fed into European thinking by Allied Command Transformation (ACT), which is itself largely inspired by its American counterpart, US Joint Forces Command (JFCOM), with which it is co-

located in Norfolk (Virginia) and which has over 11000 employees as to ACT's 700 (De Neve and Mathieu 2005, p. 134). The actual implementation is to happen by rotating successive forces through the NRF, with a certification phase leading to a six month stand-by period followed by 'standing down'. With 21,000 troops in each phase, the NRF requires a total of 63,000.

At the same time when it comes to actual military operations the US seems to prefer ad hoc coalitions of the willing over NATO-led operations. The aversion to 'warfare by committee' goes back to US complaints over cumbersome decision-making during the Kosovo campaign.² As a senior Pentagon official explained, 'If anyone thinks that the US is ever going to use the North Atlantic Council to run another major military campaign, they must be smoking pot' (quoted in Grant 2004, p. 67). The initial operations against the Taliban in Afghanistan are a case in point. Even though after '9/11' the Alliance for the first time in its history invoked Article 5, a highly symbolic gesture that was very much welcomed in Washington, US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld declined any direct military support. This rejection, under the motto 'the mission defines the coalition', badly damaged the cohesion of the Alliance. The March 2003 invasion of Iraq was undertaken by a coalition of the willing as well, which was expanded afterwards for the stabilisation force. Again the US requested political support for the intervention, notably in the Security Council, but, in February 2003, only indirect military support from NATO, a request which led to a deep rift in the Alliance. The transformation of European forces is therefore rather to contribute to turning NATO into a comprehensive toolbox, from which coalitions of the willing can be generated according to needs. That the US itself does not contribute to the NRF seems to confirm this. The NRF is primarily a – very useful – capability development mechanism, serving to enhance the toolbox and to guarantee interoperability, rather than an operational force. In that light it does not really matter if strategic differences between Allies would block its deployment for high-intensity missions, for which the US prefers coalitions of the willing anyway. Only in the post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction phase (S&R) and for other lower-intensity operations are NATO operations envisaged, e.g. in Afghanistan, where NATO took over command of the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

Enhanced European capabilities thus do not result in an enhanced share in decision-making. On the one hand the US seeks to maintain control over EU operations via the lingering idea of a 'right of first refusal' and to guide all decisions

2. The FAES report seems to agree with this choice: '[...] America knows that the War on Terror can be waged more effectively if it does not need to negotiate through collective decision-making mechanisms [...]' (FAES 2005, p. 17).

on security and defence issues to the NAC, where it rejects any idea of a European caucus, rather than to the Council of the EU. On the other hand the NAC itself is being sidelined, as certainly for high-intensity missions Washington prefers to operate via directly controlled coalitions of the willing. The US thus promotes NATO, as opposed to ESDP, and denigrates it at the same time. As Lebl (2006, p. 120) notes, ‘many Americans increasingly refer to NATO as “them” instead of “us”’.

That this ambivalent situation has been able to last is due to the fact that the EU is very much internally divided (Dassù and Menotti 2005) and therefore remains ambivalent itself. In spite of the aspirations expressed in the ESS, no real choice has yet been made on the nature of the transatlantic partnership and on the level of ambition and the degree of autonomy of the EU as strategic actor vis-à-vis NATO and the US. The real intra-European divide over Iraq did not concern the substance and principles of policy. Based on an assessment of past policies, it can safely be argued that all EU Member States agree that in principle the use of force is an instrument of last resort which requires a Security Council mandate. The real issue at stake was the nature of the transatlantic partnership. If the US reverts to the use of force in a situation in which the EU in principle would not do so, or not yet, what then has priority for the EU: steering an autonomous course, based on its own principles, or supporting its most important ally? As long as in a crisis some Member States will look to Washington and others to Brussels before deciding on the action to be taken, it will differ from case to case whether the EU as such will be a player. This divide also translates into uncertainty regarding the scope of the operational capabilities of the EU. Although the ‘battlegroups’ e.g. have been configured to deal with the full range of Petersberg Tasks, i.e. including crisis management, senior officials of certain Member States deny that they will ever implement high intensity operations. The EU thus continues to swing between Atlanticism and ‘Europeanism’. This *perpetuum mobile* remains the fundamental obstacle to a fully cohesive and resolute CFSP/ESDP.

Re-Balancing the Alliance: Two Pillars

A more flexible arrangement within NATO ought to be able to reconcile these divergent trends, satisfying both those who want to maintain the cohesion of the transatlantic Alliance and those who seek room for an autonomous role for the EU – and for the US. There are now two main pillars within NATO: the US and the EU. This is a logical consequence of the development of the EU as an ever more deeply integrated entity, and is reflected in the establishment of formal EU-NATO relations. It might not please those who are a member of neither – the non-EU European Allies certainly perceive an ‘ESDP-ization’ of NATO (Knutson 2002; Missiroli 2002) while a Canadian diplomat once described the Alliance as ‘US-dominated euro-centrism’ – but it can no longer be denied. A re-balanced NATO must therefore be a two-pillar NATO (Biscop 2005b).

Rather than some sort of ‘right of first refusal’, each pillar should have a ‘right of initiative’. As global strategic actors in their own right, each equipped with the full range of foreign and security policy instruments, the EU and the US are the first-line policy-makers. If they judge a ‘non-Article 5’ situation or a request from the UN or another actor requires a certain military response, they should have the authority – within the bounds of international law of course – to initiate that. In view of the spirit of solidarity and transparency, they should inform and consult their Allies before taking action. A NAC-PSC meeting (Political and Security Committee), where NATO and the EU sit as equals, could be the forum. Article 4 of the NATO Treaty, containing the obligation to consult, thus acquires a pivotal role (von Plate 2003, p. 21). But this consultation should not be considered a request for authorization. Rather if both pillars agree on the assessment of the situation and the required response, *and* if both agree to contribute substantially to the actual military operation, the mission can be implemented under the NATO flag, via the existing political and military structures of the Alliance. If however they do not agree on the action to be taken, or if one pillar prefers not to contribute to the action, the other pillar simply maintains its initial authority to launch the operation autonomously under the EU or US flag. A very similar view is taken by the Atlantic Council of the United States in a recent report:

When European Allies that belong to both NATO and the EU decide, after full consideration of US views, that the EU is the more appropriate lead institution – and when the mission does not require a significant or sustained US military contribution – the United States should accept the result. [...] When a mission is expected to involve a major sustained US combat contribution, NATO will be the natural lead institution (Burwell et al. 2006, p. 22).

In view of the flexibility that would thus be created, a two-pillar constellation would not require enhanced common funding of operations.

For its autonomous operations, each pillar if required could still request the use of NATO assets according to pre-arranged mechanisms, such as 'Berlin Plus'. The US would thus also have to agree a 'Washington Plus' with the Alliance. A pillar can still choose to invite other individual Allies to participate in its autonomous operations. As far as the EU is concerned, the existing mechanisms for participation of non-EU members of NATO in EU operations could remain valid, i.e. they will be automatically invited to participate in operations making use of NATO assets; for EU-only operations it belongs to the discretionary authority of the Council to invite them or not. In both cases the States concerned will take part in the daily running of the operation on an equal footing with the EU Member States, but political control and strategic direction will remain with the Council and the PSC.

One could deplore such an ad hoc approach, but because of the complete functional and geographic overlap between the EU and NATO, a fixed division of labour is simply impossible. The often suggested 'soft-hard' division of labour e.g. (Moravcsik 2003), which is implicitly present in many critiques of the EU, would be unworkable in practice. The EU as well as the US needs the whole range of instruments in order to effectively respond to multi-dimensional contingencies. Besides, there always is a risk of operations at the low end of the scale of violence evolving into effective conflict as the situation on the ground changes; the initiating pillar must then have the means to respond. And an EU 'hard security' capacity is needed to be able to act in cases when NATO/US assets are unavailable. Without a 'hard' capacity, the EU would have to count on the willingness of the US to solve all of its problems, which it cannot, and should not, do. Nor should the EU automatically do the 'mopping up' after a 'hard' US intervention, especially if it did not agree with the need to intervene in the first place. Such a division of labour would easily lead to resentment on the US side as well, which would have to face much greater risks and assume a much larger share of the burden than the EU; it would thus prove politically divisive, also because Europeans and Americans would less frequently share common tasks and experiences (Council on Foreign Relations 2004, p. 12). Another option, to do away with the consensus rule and allow operations under the NATO flag by a selected number of Allies, as was suggested in some American circles following the 2003 crisis (Michel 2003), would reduce NATO to a mere toolbox for utterly ad hoc coalition-making and would ultimately lead to the irrelevance of the Alliance.

A two-pillar constellation implies a pragmatic attitude, choosing the framework that is most suitable according to the situation at hand. The advantage would be that non-participation in a non-Article 5 operation initiated by the other pillar, e.g. because of political objections like in the case of the invasion of Iraq, would no longer need to give rise to accusations of breaching transatlantic solidarity. Much mutual recrimination could thus be avoided, such as the US Senate resolution recommending the President to look into the possibility of establishing a procedure to suspend the NATO membership of Allies which ‘no longer comply with the NATO principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law’ (Michel 2003, p. 4). The NATO emblem could only be used for operations that all Allies consent to. At the same time, mere ad hoc coalition-making would be avoided. Building in the necessary flexibility would prevent divergences between Allies on issues of ‘day-to-day policy’ from endangering the organization as such, while the Alliance as a community of values expressed in a collective defence commitment would be preserved. Solidarity in the event of an effective Article 5 situation would naturally still be complete and unquestionable. Article 5 should be interpreted strictly though, so as not to detract from the value of this ultimate security commitment. NATO would thus remain the foundation of collective defence and the ultimate guarantor of the security of all Allies.

The EU and the US are the real policy-makers, each with a global policy of their own across the range of international relations. In the politico-military sphere, NATO is the forum at their disposal to consult and, if they agree, to act jointly. Because of its very nature, i.e. a military alliance, NATO’s remit is necessarily limited. It is therefore less suitable as a forum to discuss multidimensional issues with implications way beyond the politico-military sphere, such as the role of China and India, relations with the Arab world, or Islamic fundamentalism (Flanagan 2005). NATO does not have the instruments to deal with such issues, while using NATO as the main vehicle to address them might send the wrong message to third countries, which perceive NATO strictly as a military alliance. In that light, and in view of the necessity to safeguard and to strengthen the authority and effectiveness of the UN Security Council as the legitimate core of the collective security system, a ‘global partnership’ does not appear a priority for the NATO and would probably detract from its core business, unless perhaps it would focus only on military dialogue in view of potential ad hoc operational cooperation. Existing partnerships, notably the Partnership for Peace and the Mediterranean Dialogue, can continue as effective instruments of ‘defence diplomacy’, complementing the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

The forum to discuss wider multidimensional issues is direct EU-US dialogue. The ‘transatlantic gymnich’, which informally brings together Ministers of Foreign Affairs from all EU and NATO countries and is mostly NATO-driven, is a useful supplement to that core partnership, and serves as a platform where non-EU Allies can input their views. But as the core partnership is that between Washington and Brussels, it would only be logical that at the ‘transatlantic gymnich’ and indeed in NATO itself the EU speaks with one voice. Such would be the natural evolution of CFSP/ESDP. Therefore the Atlantic Council recommends, ‘the United States must prepare for the prospect of a more unified approach among EU members in NATO’ (Burwell *et al.* 2006, p. 20).

Forces and Headquarters for the EU Pillar

The issue of autonomy does not just impact on the strategic level, but also clouds the debate on capabilities. This is especially true with regard to the command & control structure, because it is intimately linked to the degree of autonomy an actor can achieve. As long as the use of NATO operational headquarters under 'Berlin Plus' is the only option available to the EU for larger-scale operations, EU autonomy remains under the control of the US (and the other non-EU Allies), for even though the arrangement 'guarantees' access, the NAC has to approve the actual use of NATO assets on a case by case basis. There is therefore no certainty that NATO assets, which furthermore are not unlimited either, will always be available when the EU requests them (EUISS 2004, p. 109). This is why the 'chocolate summit' proposal by Belgium, France, Germany and Luxembourg (29 April 2003) to set up an EU operational HQ provoked such sharp reactions from the Atlanticist side of the spectrum that seeks to maintain this control. In the end a compromise was brokered, providing the EU with three options: NATO assets under 'Berlin Plus', for which purpose an EU cell has been set up in SHAPE; one of the national HQs made available by the UK, France, Germany, Italy and Greece; or if no national HQ is identified, the Civilian-Military Cell that has been added to the EU Military Staff (EUMS).

This compromise does not present a lasting solution however. Providing for the 'multinationalization' of national HQs for the duration of an operation demands a lot of energy and resources. Additional space and facilities have to be provided at each of these HQs and a large pool of officers from the 25 has to be trained to function in all of them, in order for them to be able to work effectively from the first day of an actual operation. Furthermore there is a risk of proliferation of national HQs, because of the associated prestige and influence, which creates a new intra-EU duplication problem. At the same time, their effective availability remains questionable, as is demonstrated by the EU response to the UN request to mount a 'deterrent force' during the elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2006. As both France and the UK declined to lead the operation, Germany in the end could not but assume the burden, but did so with extreme reluctance. The availability of the EU-owned asset, the Civilian-Military Cell, is guaranteed but rather than a fully-fledged HQ it is a small core that has to be built on for each specific operation, which creates an additional training requirement. With an Operations Centre of just five permanent staff, even as a core its capacity remains limited to small-scale (battlegroup-sized) operations.

Inevitably, the 'HQ debate' will resurface. The most efficient way to provide the EU with a guaranteed command & control capacity would clearly be to increase the permanent element of the Civilian-Military Cell. A fully-fledged EU operational HQ would offer all Member States, including those incapable of setting up a national structure, the chance to participate, stimulating the harmonization of doctrine, a sense of joint ownership, and the emergence of a European *esprit de corps*, while avoiding additional unnecessary intra-EU duplication. This solution does constitute duplication with NATO, in particular with SHAPE, but not an unnecessary one, in view of the need to safeguard EU autonomy. Besides, one also has to look at the numbers employed by SHAPE and the NATO command & control structure in general: although very effective, efficiency seems low, in spite of ongoing reforms.

If EU-NATO duplication as well has to be overcome however, 'thinking out of the box' and in the context of a two-pillar configuration other solutions can be imagined. Objectively, the US does not need SHAPE: its national command & control structures allow it to undertake all operations autonomously. It is the Europeans who need a multinational command & control capacity, in view of the limitations of scale and budget at the level of individual States. One could therefore envisage e.g. a merging of existing EU and NATO capabilities into a jointly owned 'EU-NATO Operational Planning and Command Centre' (Lindley-French and Algeri 2004, pp. 40-42). Or one could even imagine a scenario in which NATO's 'whole European command could be placed under the authority of the EU' (Lanxade 2004, p. 18). Rather than a NATO-owned SHAPE, which the EU can use if the NAC authorizes it, an EU-owned SHAPE would place the capacity where it is really needed, providing of course for permanent involvement of the US and other non-EU Allies for operations undertaken under the NATO flag. The alternative proposed by the Atlantic Council, to combine the two Military Committees and elements of SHAPE and the EUMS under the aegis of NATO (Burwell *et al.* 2006, pp. 16-17), even if political control would alternate between the NAC and the PSC according to the case at hand, would seem to underestimate the importance of the strategic divide and the need for more flexibility and autonomy for each pillar in order to overcome it. A two-pillar system at the political level must be reflected in the command & control structure. In all of these scenarios therefore, the Europeanization of NATO's command structure should be put on the table again.

Because each country has but a single set of forces, there is much less debate on the armed forces themselves, contrary to the strategic debate on when and how to deploy them (Binnendijk, Gompert and Kugler 2005, p. 3).

All countries agree that transformation from territorial defence to expeditionary operations must continue, and that it will automatically strengthen both ESDP and NATO, as these national capabilities can be deployed for both, as well as in a UN, national or ad hoc framework. Making Europe more capable thus certainly will not be at the expense of NATO as some observers fear (Cimbalo 2004). Because of the functional overlap between them, NATO and the EU have obviously identified the same shortfalls that have to be filled in order to achieve transformation. ACT and the European Defence Agency (EDA) thus try to steer countries in the same direction. Evidently, the Europeans have the longest way to go. The military effort of the EU Member States should not be underestimated, as it often is.³ If contributions to operations in all of the frameworks above are taken into account, the 25 together permanently deploy 60 to 70,000 troops, including on some high-intensity operations. At €180 billion their combined defence budget is the world's second largest, equivalent to the net six put together (China, Russia, Japan, Saudi Arabia, India and South Korea) (Howorth 2004). After the US, the EU is the biggest military power.

There is a gap however between this effort and the total armed forces of the 25, a consequence of the fragmentation of these €180 billion over 25 Member States, which results in huge inefficiencies. The 25 have almost 2 million men and women in uniform, but only about ten per cent of that total is estimated to be deployable and only one third of that again can be deployed at any one time, in view of rotation. As shown above, these are the numbers of troops that the Member States are effectively deploying today. But the formal objective of ESDP also remains limited to the capacity of deploying a maximum of 60,000 troops, as per the original 1999 Headline Goal. Together the five 'illustrative scenarios' as well, on which the EUMS bases the definition of capability requirements, concern only 200,000 troops. Setting aside this quantitative limit, and abandoning the customary comparison with the US, though in consultation with it and other non-EU Allies, the political objectives of the ESS should be translated in a realistic military level of ambition, based on the full military potential of the 25 and on the responsibilities of a global actor of such weight. Which forces do the 25 want to have available at any one time for rapid response in crisis situations? Which forces do they want to contribute to long-term peacekeeping operations, on the Balkans and in Afghanistan, but also at the request of the UN, e.g. in Africa? Which over the horizon reserve does that require? Which capacity for territorial defence must be maintained? The long-term vision which the EU Mil-

3. Dobbins e.g. appears to ignore the considerable contribution from certain EU Member States in Iraq: '[...] the United States cannot count upon substantial European support in any of the actual or potential major conflicts that preoccupy American defence planners' (2005, p. 39). Lebl even states that 'the very real possibility exists that most European militaries will abandon any serious war-fighting capability' (2006, p. 121).

itary Committee (EUMC) is drafting should offer a first response to these questions in 2006. Essentially however this is a political choice.

On the basis of that choice, capability requirements for a comprehensive military capacity at the aggregate level of the 25 could be drawn up by the EUMC; the EDA could then guide the Member States as to how to meet those (Biscop 2005c). No longer would each Member State separately have to invest in a wide range of capabilities organized at the national level, often in small and therefore inefficient quantities. Within the EUMC framework, top-down coordination by the EDA would allow those that are willing to opt for specialization, i.e. abandoning certain capabilities altogether, and pooling, i.e. offering a capability only through contributing to a multinational formation. Only the larger Member States, which have a sufficient scale by themselves, should logically continue to offer a broader range of nationally organized capabilities. A three-tier set of forces would thus emerge: capabilities which each Member State continues to organize on a national basis, e.g. infantry battalions; capabilities organized nationally only by the large Member States and in a number of multinational clusters, e.g. fighter squadrons; and capabilities organized at the level of the EU25, e.g. space-based assets. Top down coordination is the only way to end the fragmentation of and useless duplications within the European defence effort and generate more 'usable' forces within the current combined budget of the 25.

Such far-reaching integration is only possible in the framework of the wider political project of the EU, not in the exclusively intergovernmental context of NATO, although the integrated capabilities could of course still be deployed for NATO operations. This fact has implications for the configuration of a two-pillar Alliance.

First, enhanced common funding of capabilities is recommendable in the framework of the EU, where deeper integration can potentially generate optimal efficiency, rather than in that of NATO. Second, the EDA would have first-line responsibility for guiding the EU Member States towards the capability requirements defined by the EUMC. ACT would continue to coordinate Alliance-wide interoperability and could remain a useful forum for the mutual exchange of lessons learned and best practices with regard to transformation. For the purpose of NATO defence planning however, which would constitute a second tier, ACT would have to deal with the resulting integrated European capabilities as a whole. In order to coordinate, the EDA and ACT should establish a direct relationship instead of having to operate via the general EU-NATO Capability Group, the current rather sterile forum for overall coordination between the Alliance and ESDP. It should be noted that the EDA combines the authority for capabilities, procurement, R&T, and the defence market, and therefore poten-

tially can have a larger impact on States' decisions than ACT. Ultimately, both the EDA and the ACT face the same problem: how to convince States to forego exclusively national decision-making and take into account supranational guidelines?

Finally, the position of the NRF would have to be assessed. Currently, the rotation schemes for the NRF and the EU 'battlegroups' are coordinated so as not to conflict. The question remains however whether the forces on stand-by in the framework of the NRF can during those six months not be called upon for operations in any other framework. If a crisis would occur in which NATO as a whole would not intervene and the EU would, but would then not be able to call on its Member States' forces in the NRF, the EU would be deprived of a relatively large portion of its most deployable capabilities. Presumably a pragmatic solution would be found though. Besides, it should not be forgotten that even during the stand-by phase there is no automatic transfer of authority to NATO: if the NAC decides to deploy the NRF, each Ally with forces on stand-by has to authorize deployment individually (Quille et al. 2005, p. 43). Some authors recommend that the US should start to contribute to the NRF (Binnendijk, Gompert and Kugler 2005, p. 7), which would make sense from the perspective of the effectiveness of NATO-led operations. If however the US would not contribute in the future either, in a two-pillar constellation the NRF could just as well be made answerable to the EU (EUISS 2004, p. 102) and merged with the 'battlegroup' scheme.

Civil-Military Integration

In the meantime the EU has taken the lead in building integrated civil-military crisis management structures in which both the Commission and the Council Secretariat are represented, notably the Situation Centre and the Civilian-Military Cell; furthermore a concept for civilian-military planning has been elaborated. Efforts are underway to improve the availability of police, civil protection, magistrates, and other civilian experts for civilian ESDP operations. As a consequence of its leading role, EU expertise is increasingly in demand, e.g. for the monitoring mission in Aceh, which became operational on 15 September 2005. The next challenge for the EU is to forge the link between the progressively integrated crisis management capabilities in the second pillar and the long-term policies in the first pillar, such as aid and trade, notably in the post-conflict phase of stabilization and reconstruction, and to defuse potential tensions between ESDP missions, e.g. in the area of security sector reform (SSR), and Commission-run capacity-building missions.

The clearest indication of the EU's success in this field is perhaps the desire by some in NATO and the US to recuperate its achievements and gain access to EU civilian and civil-military capabilities. Faced with the necessity that even high-intensity military operations must incorporate a civil dimension from the start, to which is added the fact that many interventions currently in demand are of a primarily or even exclusively civilian nature, the Alliance has realized that it will need to adapt or risk obsolescence. In their *Strategic Vision: The Military Challenge* the Alliance's two Strategic Commanders stress 'the need for a concerted and co-ordinated political, military, civil and economic approach' (NATO 2004, p. 4). ACT is developing a concept for the Alliance's role in peacebuilding or 'stabilization and reconstruction' (S&R) and in its *Understanding NATO Military Transformation* calls for an 'effects-based approach to operations' that

[...] encompasses all of the instruments of political, economic, civil and military power that can be brought to bear by the Nations of the Alliance, and potentially beyond in partnership with other international organizations and agencies [...] (NATO 2005, p. 6).

The in itself very welcome relief operation in Pakistan following the earthquake of 8 October 2005, including airlifting supplies and deploying medical units and engineers from the NRE, must also be seen in this light. The same holds true for the NATO Katrina Support Operation in September 2005, following the hurricane that struck New Orleans, which also saw the deployment of NRF capabilities. As a military alliance, NATO is limited however in what it can do in this area.

The idea has therefore been raised to create an ‘inverse Berlin Plus’ that would give NATO access to the EU’s civilian and civil-military capabilities (Flournoy and Smith 2005, p. 70). ‘It is time, therefore, to stop asking what NATO can do for the EU, and begin asking what the EU can do for NATO’ (Dobbins 2005, p. 47). In any case, such an arrangement could only cover the crisis management capabilities under ESDP; the development and trade competences of the Commission cannot be delegated. First however, NATO should decide on its role. Given the nature of the Alliance and the availability and expertise of other actors, it would not appear efficient for NATO as well to launch itself into an entirely new field and take on primarily or exclusively civilian operations. What has to be provided for therefore is the incorporation of a civilian dimension in NATO-led military operations. Just like the armed forces, the deployable civilian capabilities are national assets; what the EU has done is creating the concepts and (integrated civil-military) structures at the EU level that allow these assets to be deployed on EU missions. If the Alliance seeks to deploy itself civilian capabilities complementing its military operations, it would therefore need to appeal to individual Allies to put those at its disposal and either create its own civilian-military command & control structure or have recourse to that of the EU under an ‘inverse Berlin Plus’. The latter option does not seem recommendable: the added value of the EU structures is their integrated, civil-military nature; given their configuration, putting them at the disposal of NATO to run NATO-led civilian missions alongside a NATO military HQ would be difficult to organize. The first option would raise a whole new ‘inverse’ duplication debate.

Rather than from an ‘inverse Berlin Plus’, the Alliance would benefit from a partnership agreement with the EU. When the EU and the US decide to jointly launch a military operation under the NATO flag, and thus jointly decide the desired end-state, such an agreement could provide for close collaboration with the relevant EU bodies from the initial planning of the mission, in order to incorporate from the beginning the civilian activities required during and after the operation, which could be implemented on the ground by EU-led civilian capabilities, i.e. an EU civilian operation alongside the NATO operation rather than individual states’ contributions. In a two-pillar framework, a similar partnership could in effect be concluded with the US. The rejection of a soft-hard division of labour has implications for the US as well: while the US possesses the most effective war-fighting capacity in the world, important capability deficiencies will have to be addressed with regard to lower-intensity missions and the civilian dimension of operations.

Conclusion

NATO still has a role to play. The Alliance is based on a community of values. The principles enshrined in the EU Treaty – liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law – are common to all Allies. It is logical therefore that the sense of community that is thus created, and which has been strengthened through mutual contributions to one another's security in the course of history, continues to be translated into a collective defence commitment, as a long-term insurance against threats to the very survival of any of these like-minded States, even when no such threat is imaginable in the near future. Europe and North America can thus be said to constitute a true 'security community'. It is because of the communality of values that even though not all EU Member States line up behind the US on every occasion, Europe still remains the US' most solid ally (Cohen-Tanugi 2003, p. 54); the motivations of other States who join ad hoc coalitions of the willing are often more of a tactical or opportunistic nature and therefore less steadfast. Secondly, NATO has proved its efficacy as an operational organization for non-Article 5 missions; it is therefore the obvious – and most efficient, for permanent – framework to use when all Allies agree on the need to intervene militarily. Thirdly, NATO is an instrument for the permanent enhancement of military capabilities in terms of usability and interoperability.

But the existence of a community of values does not in itself guarantee an effective partnership and Alliance. And without political transformation, the defence transformation sponsored by NATO is unlikely to succeed (Binnendijk and Kugler 2004). The Riga Summit and its successor may lead to important decisions, but they will not be sufficient to give the Alliance a new sense of purpose and renewed confidence. A flight forward within NATO might on the contrary damage relations even more. The Summits must therefore address the root cause of the current unease. That requires a re-equilibration of NATO, in order to take into account the structural change that has taken place in the transatlantic relationship: the rise of the EU as a global strategic actor.

The ESS rightly notes that the transatlantic relationship, of which NATO is 'an important expression', is 'irreplaceable', but emphasizes that 'our aim should be an effective and *balanced* partnership with the USA' [author's emphasis]. Burden-sharing and power sharing are inextricably linked (Hulsman 2000). In its December 2000 strategic document, *Strengthening Transatlantic Security – A US Strategy for the 21st Century*, the Clinton administration recognized that 'development of a foreign and security policy for the EU is a natural, even an

inevitable, part of the development of broader European integration’, and expressly stated that ‘real cooperation requires a two-way street’. The US cannot expect a greater defence effort on the part of the EU Member States without allowing them a greater say in the running of the Alliance, and vice versa. In the end, increasing the performance of Europe’s military capabilities will unavoidably change the political constellation, especially in view of the EU’s enhanced international actorness. A two-pillar Alliance would at the same time put to value European capabilities and provide for the flexibility that would allow for the EU – and the US – to play its proper part on the international scene. Introducing the two-pillar notion could be the subject of a revision of the Alliance’s Strategic Concept, which at the same time could be amended so as to do away with the vague references to NATO’s out-of-area role in favour of an unambiguous statement of Alliance missions. First and foremost however, it is up to the EU to live up to the ambitions of the ESS and overcome its internal divides – the strong pillar that a unified EU de facto constitutes cannot then be ignored.

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