
**PRACTICAL STEPS: BUILDING A TRANSATLANTIC
BRIDGE—NOT A BARRIER**

Even with these major qualifications, drawing the balance on ESDP for the United States produces a clear-cut answer. *The balance is strongly positive, provided that remaining problems—some of substance and process, some of perception—can be resolved effectively.*

“NATO FIRST”

There needs to be wholehearted, unambiguous European adherence to the principle of “where NATO as a whole is not engaged,” and political processes should be developed to ensure that no doubts arise about this point or about NATO’s ability, sufficiently early in a crisis, to make such a determination. Many Europeans will resist the notion that this implies “NATO first”: But as a practical matter, it is important for preserving cohesion of the alliance. Securing this goal, which is important to the United States, will probably have to come from day-to-day consultations, including close cooperation between the North Atlantic Council, the EU’s Political and Security Committee, and permanent, day-to-day liaison arrangements between the two; but it requires a shared vision and political commitment on all sides.

SHARED RISKS/NO DIVISION OF LABOR

At the same time, there needs to be reaffirmation—by all the allies, and at the moment especially by the United States—of the cardinal NATO principle that risks are to be shared by all allies; and that there must not emerge, formally or informally, a “division of labor” be-

tween NATO and the EU/ESDP or implicitly in regard to particular allies.¹ French Minister of Defense Alain Richard met this point head-on in a July 2001 speech in Washington:

Does the development of a European reaction force create the very situation we want to avoid? Does it open the way for a division of labor with the United States taking care of the high end of the risk and conflict spectrum, and the Europeans focusing on the fire brigade function of local peace restoration in their vicinity? I believe such a division of labor, whether intended or accidental, would damage transatlantic relations and reduce our overall capacity to deter and manage new crises.²

Avoiding a division of labor is not just about what the EU nations do in regard to ESDP and, especially, both the structure and practical operation of the rapid reaction force and collective attitudes toward the Petersberg Tasks. Also critical is U.S. willingness (and, by implication, NATO's readiness) to be engaged in operations that fall below the threshold of "Article 5 operations" or what is sometimes called the "robust" end of the overall conflict spectrum. Specifically, U.S. reluctance to be engaged in future peacekeeping or peacemaking in Europe—operations such as those in Bosnia and Kosovo in recent years—could, in practice, tend to leave such tasks to EU/ESDP and

¹As noted above, this applies to areas where interests of the United States and other allies are engaged, and where there could be collective military action appropriate to NATO. European-only actions in areas such as Africa would not pose a "division of labor" problem, so long as these actions did not conflict with simultaneous needs by NATO, lead to a shaping of European military forces that would not also be compatible with NATO requirements, or lead to a failure of full transparency of ESDP planning and operations.

²He continued:

A key objective for this period of review we are going through is to avoid our going down separate specialized paths and to come out of this process with trans-Atlantic solidarity preserved and enhanced (*Security in the 21st Century—a European Perspective*, statement by Minister of Defense Alain Richard at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., July 9, 2001).

Of course, Richard's implication was also that the European rapid reaction force would be able to engage with the "high end of the risk and conflict spectrum"—a debatable point about its future potential—as opposed to seeing the common effort as focusing on NATO.

would, *per force*, lead to at least a perception of a division of labor—and of risk—within the alliance.

How the George W. Bush administration develops policies toward (a) the Balkans and (b) peacekeeping/peacemaking roles for U.S. forces, in general, cannot be separated from its hopes for an ESDP that is compatible with its hopes for NATO. In short, *U.S. reluctance to share such risks and tasks, especially in the Balkans, the most serious area of instability in today's Europe, would be incompatible with an effort to keep ESDP as simply a second-choice option for dealing with crisis and conflict in Europe.* Indeed, compared with ESDP developments, far more is at stake for the NATO Alliance from the Bush administration's reluctance in 2001 to be equally engaged with other allies in a NATO-led Macedonian military peace force.

COOPERATIVE PLANNING

Approaches to operational planning must not put NATO and EU/ESDP at loggerheads. In parallel, methods of defense planning must be mutually compatible (this point argues for a single set of processes, such as that proposed by former Defense Secretary Cohen). Cooperation should include shared contingency planning, conducted by the Combined Joint Planning Staff at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), with full participation by the EUMS. In addition, simple military logic demands that there be only one methodology, for both NATO and EU/ESDP, regarding command, control, communications, and intelligence (C³I). At the same time, the EU should sort out potential command arrangements before crises arise. It would inspire considerable confidence by pre-designating NATO's Deputy SACEUR as force generator, strategic coordinator, and operational commander for all ESDP missions.³

³By contrast, the French minister of defense has argued that

In all probability this [operational commander] will be the Deputy SACEUR if the operation falls on NATO assets and capabilities, and a general officer from a member State when the operation does not use NATO assets (Alain Richard, February 3, 2001, *op. cit.*).

There would also be value in using Deputy SACEUR in the operational commander's role even for a military operation conducted beyond Europe, as in Africa; there, how-

DEFENSE SPENDING AND CAPABILITIES

European governments need to commit themselves to keep defense spending up or, where it is falling, to stop the slide (Germany is currently most important). Emphasis needs to be put on outputs, on capabilities relevant to well-analyzed future requirements, and on interoperability, not just as a matter of ESDP-NATO compatibility, but as a critical problem for the Atlantic Alliance as a whole. Even within existing budgets, efforts to promote the DCI must not slacken; however, by the time of the May 2001 NATO defense ministers' meeting in Brussels, the outlook was still less than bright.⁴ At the very least, priorities within the DCI should emphasize core NATO requirements, extending to doctrine, training, and style of operations as well as to force structure and equipment. Allies should avoid duplicating NATO assets available to ESDP where these divert defense money away from other critical areas; the A400M transport aircraft is perhaps the most egregious current example of a misplaced use of scarce funds.⁵ At the same time, if the United States wants ESDP to avoid "unnecessary duplication," it must find ways of reassuring the Europeans that NATO would, indeed, release NATO assets—the point of the language about "presumed access"—where this could include U.S. equipment operated by U.S. service members, especially large transport aircraft. From this perspective, the A400M would make sense only if there were circumstances—e.g., an African

ever, interests of a lead nation—most likely France, based on historical experience—could dictate otherwise for political as much as for military reasons.

⁴See North Atlantic Council, *Statement on the Defence Capabilities Initiative*, Meeting of the Defence Ministers Session, Brussels, NATO Press Release M-NAC-D-1 (2001)89, June 7, 2001:

2. Although progress has been made in certain areas, further efforts are required to achieve the necessary improvements. For example, a number of particularly critical and long-standing deficiencies exist in the areas of effective engagement and survivability of Alliance forces such as in the areas of suppression of enemy air defence and support jamming; combat identification; intelligence, surveillance and target acquisition (including the alliance Ground Surveillance system); air weapons systems for day/night and all weather operations; air defence in all its aspects, including against theatre ballistic missiles and cruise missiles; capabilities against nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) weapons and their means of delivery, and NBC detection and protection.

⁵Some Europeans would argue that the A400M will find major markets beyond Europe, thus becoming profitable in the long term.

ESDP operation—that would neither be of strategic interest to the United States nor where it would be willing to risk either aircraft or crews. The Europeans are right to expect clarity on this point. Of course, for the Europeans to buy some combination of U.S. C-130Js, C-17s, and Ukrainian AN-124s would still make better sense financially.⁶

INTEROPERABILITY

With this provision, the EU through ESDP needs to concentrate its force modernization on interoperability with NATO, especially within the DCI. This point and European defense spending are closely linked. It is critical, for example, that two levels of interoperability do not develop—one for the United States and a handful of key European allies (notably the U.K.), and one for the rest: This would be a sure recipe for bifurcation, an implicit if not explicit division of labor among alliance tasks—even worse if based in practice on differential risk-taking by high- versus relatively low-technology forces—and corrosion of the spirit of cohesion that has been a hallmark of the alliance. Furthermore, as noted above, interoperability is critical if the United States expects to be able to conduct out-of-Europe military operations with allies, either formally under NATO or as coalitions of the able and willing; here, in addition to shared responsibility to meet the goals of the DCI, the burden also rests on the United States, in terms of sharing high technology with allies, as a major priority. A “two-tier technology” alliance—certainly if there is not fully integrated C³ISR—is not an alliance that can conduct serious outside-of-area operations; a CJTF headquarters can help, but it is unlikely to suffice.

⁶The issue whether the United States is prepared to share potential combat risks with allies in the Balkans has a direct bearing on this point: whether Washington would be willing to risk large transport aircraft—C-130Js, C-17s—and their aircrews in ESDP operations beyond Europe of minimal interest to the United States—i.e., where it could not be plausibly explained to the American people that this was a useful “division of labor” “outside of area.”

NATO CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Meanwhile, NATO needs to develop means for being linked to a crisis management mechanism, paralleling the CFSP/ESDP relationship.⁷ There must also be prior agreement that discussion and dialogue between NATO and the EU will be deep, wide, continuous, and effective at all stages of any emerging crisis that could conceivably affect both bodies. Of course, there is significant overlap between NATO and EU (ESDP) governments, which will consult both within their own bureaucracies and bilaterally with other governments. Furthermore, unless a crisis develops suddenly, there will likely be numerous informal exchanges between NATO and ESDP bodies. But relying on this method fails to provide clear lines of communication and authority, so that different parties will understand what to expect of one another in actual policies and behavior.⁸ Where suspicion also exists—e.g., on Capitol Hill—about whether EU/ESDP is developing as NATO's competitor rather than complement, the question of when NATO becomes formally seized of a crisis could be significant. Even with NATO-ESDP cooperation over Macedonia in 2001, doubts about whether the United States would be willing to share risks with other allies in a peacekeeping force raised concerns about NATO's capacity to act as an effective crisis manager that could be relied upon to see matters through to the end.

⁷Notably, the EU also envisions a much more elaborate relationship with the United Nations than does NATO. It noted in June 2001:

Substantial progress has been made in building an effective partnership with the UN in the fields of conflict prevention and crisis management as well as development cooperation, humanitarian affairs, asylum policies and refugee assistance. *This partnership is further strengthened by the mutually reinforcing approaches to conflict prevention and by ensuring that the European union's evolving military and civilian capacities provide real added value for UN crisis management activities* [emphasis added]. The Western Balkans, the Middle East and Africa will be given highest priority in this reinforced cooperation (Göteborg European Council, *Presidency Conclusions*, June 15, 2001, op. cit., paragraph 53).

⁸Of course, one common aspect of crises is that each one almost certainly contains some new and unpredictable elements that will call for responses going beyond any tried-and-true template.

POLITICAL FOCUS: EU/ESDP AND NATO

There is a premium on the rapid completion of basic ESDP and CFSP institution building—even though political maturation is still many years away—so that attention, both at the EU and, by default, at NATO, can begin moving from the current intense focus on developing bureaucratic structures related to ESDP and toward the what, the how, and the how much (in terms of real capabilities) of European security.

POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC DIALOGUES

There needs to be solid, sustained political and military dialogue at all levels—institutional, national, and personal—between ESDP/CFSP and NATO, and between individual national governments and parliaments. This is especially true regarding the U.S. Congress. These dialogues should also extend to the full range of complementary NATO and EU activities, including geography (e.g., Central Europe, Russia, Balkans) and function (e.g., NATO/EU enlargement and efforts like NATO's PFP [Partnership for Peace] and the EU's PHARE [Poland and Hungary Assistance for the Reconstruction of the Economy] and TACIS [Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States] programs).

The transatlantic dialogue on burden sharing has often been poisoned by different definitions of the term: with the U.S. focus almost exclusively on military activity, and with the European demand for credit from nonmilitary contributions to a broader definition of "security." This difference of view is evident, today, in the Balkans. An open-minded, thoughtful, and intelligent dialogue on these issues across the Atlantic is essential if burden sharing (the analogue to risk sharing) is not to become an increasing irritant in transatlantic relations. Misjudged U.S. pressure on Europeans for burden sharing could translate, politically, not into added efforts to bolster NATO, but rather into incentives for increasing the role and influence of ESDP.

MANAGING RHETORIC AND AMBITION

The European Union needs to exercise restraint—and provide clarity—in its rhetoric about what ESDP is and what it is not, especially in dealing with the United States and even more particularly Congress. There is a risk that inflated declarations of ESDP aspirations will be taken for reality, where that is not justified, thus leading some Americans to believe that the United States can do less militarily in Europe than actual ESDP capabilities would warrant; alternatively, later shortfalls in ESDP, relative to declared aspirations, can intensify congressional criticisms that the Europeans are not pulling their weight. It is especially important that those members of the EU that most care about preserving the vitality and cohesion of the transatlantic relationship, as well as NATO's primacy, ensure that "autonomy" for European Union decision and action under ESDP not become the central focus of the European pillar; this aspiration needs to be kept in perspective in relation to other European security goals. A parallel risk is that some members of the U.S. Congress will read into excessive ESDP rhetoric more of a challenge to NATO's primacy—and to U.S. influence on the European continent—than any European leader really intends, thus deepening suspicions to no good effect. Preventing misperceptions, especially in Washington, requires EU discipline that is difficult to achieve in an institution made up of individual national governments that often have separate and somewhat different agendas and aspirations.

By the same token, the U.S. government needs to speak with as much of "one voice" as is possible for Washington. Certainly key officials should present U.S. support and aspirations for ESDP and concerns about its development clearly and consistently. President Bush's leadership on this issue needs to be followed throughout the bureaucracy. The administration also bears a major share of responsibility for ensuring that debates on Capitol Hill center on the facts of ESDP, not misperceptions about it.

DEFENSE-COOPERATION "CODE OF CONDUCT"

An effective transatlantic dialogue and a NATO-EU defense-cooperation code of conduct need to be developed for governments and industry. This code should focus on five principles: (1) make progress

toward opening up to one another, or keeping open, U.S. and European arms markets; (2) share as much defense high technology within the alliance as possible; (3) develop common standards and measures for protecting shared technologies; (4) emphasize interoperability within transatlantic defense cooperation, for both NATO and EU/ESDP; and (5) at a minimum, within limited European defense budgets, focus on at least ensuring “open architecture” (the design of new technologies to permit compatibility with other allies’ military equipment) to minimize the risks of a technologically two-tiered alliance. Furthermore, in time, there should be common NATO and ESDP acquisition planning to help harmonize requirements and responses.

USES OF MILITARY POWER

There needs to be a continuing, broad strategic dialogue within NATO about the purposes of military capabilities and defense spending. This last suggestion is in some ways the most difficult to implement, but in the long term it is perhaps the most important for NATO’s future and for the EU’s development of foreign policy and defense. For both NATO and EU/ESDP, building, training, sustaining, and exercising military forces must be clearly related to what they are actually expected, at some point, to do. (Both Bosnia and Kosovo helped NATO to find a sense of purpose—however limited and short run—when other purposes seemed very remote; Macedonia has proven in 2001 to be a test of how NATO and EU/ESDP, including crisis management and civilian operations, can work together.) These issues have long been put off—including at the Washington NATO summit, despite its adoption of a new Strategic Concept. But for democracies to continue spending significant funds on defense—and potentially to risk the lives of young men and women in military combat—strategic analysis, political vision, and dialogue among nations and institutions are indispensable.

LEADERSHIP

Finally, these recommendations for defusing possible disagreements within the alliance and across the Atlantic about ESDP need to be followed at the highest levels of government until key differences are resolved to the degree possible—that is, so that there is a productive,

mutually reinforcing relationship between NATO and EU/ESDP, even if not always tension-free. Allied and EU leaders should focus on six key “cooperations” between NATO and the European Union: (1) operational planning, (2) contingency planning, (3) defense and capabilities planning, (4) acquisition planning and a transatlantic defense-cooperation code of conduct, (5) North Atlantic Council–Political and Security Committee interaction that ideally also engages the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, and (6) joint crisis management.

NATO-EU/ESDP relations must also be viewed in the perspective of other critical issues facing the alliance. “Getting ESDP right” is a necessary goal on its own; that, as argued here, should be able to be obtained with sufficient leadership, understanding, and commitment on both sides of the Atlantic. But that goal cannot be achieved in isolation. It is also essential for the allies to “get right” other critical, less-easily resolved, disagreements and differences of opinion on such matters as threats to allied territories from beyond Europe, missile defenses, defense investments by European allies, the risk of a “hollowed out” NATO, NATO enlargement, fostering development of PFP and the Euro-Atlantic Cooperation Council, engaging Russia, stability in the Balkans, and the long-term perspectives both of European security and of U.S. relations with Europe—not least, U.S. relations with the European Union in all dimensions.