During the latter half of 2000, the EU/ESDP and NATO could be said to be moving on parallel tracks; but as in Euclidean geometry, moving in a similar direction, not converging. The former followed what, in EU terms, is the inexorable logic of implementing decisions already made—i.e., reducing them to bureaucratic practice. These focused on the four working groups set up with NATO, where “WEU-NATO relations have paved the way for the EU’s relationship with NATO. And the European Union is now close to defining its proposals on cooperation with NATO”;¹ the building up of formal contacts between the two institutions—as they circled one another warily; the EU’s seeking to gain the benefits of association with NATO but at minimal compromise of “autonomy”; and especially reaching the moment at which the members of the European Union would make formal commitments of the forces they would provide to a notional Headline Goal Task Force, as it was to be developed in the period to 2003.

The key event took place on November 20, a so-called Capabilities Commitment Conference of EU defense ministers in Brussels—defining for the long term what at NATO would be called “force generation” at a time of preparing for military action. This resulted in creation of a “Force Catalogue,” providing for “a pool of more than 100,000 persons and approximately 400 combat aircraft and 100 ves-

¹WEU Secretary General Javier Solana, WEU Council of Ministers’ Session at 21, Marseille, November 13, 2000.
This catalogue included potential contributions from 14 of the 15 EU states (Denmark did not take part). There were also commitments from 6 other countries, including 4 of the countries aspiring for EU membership (see Table 2). Among other things, this last step was implicit recognition that the EU member states were not, even notionally, making available all the forces that could be needed.

In line with the decisions made at the Helsinki and Feira European Councils, member states at the Capabilities Commitment Conference...
Table 2
November 20, 2000, EU Force Catalogue (Extracts)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nation</th>
<th>Contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>13,500 troops, 20 ships, 93 aircraft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>12,000 troops, 15 ships, Helios observation satellites, 75 aircraft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>6,000 troops, one air-naval group based around an aircraft carrier, 40 aircraft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>12,500 troops, 18 ships, 72 aircraft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>2,000 troops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>1,500 troops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>3,500 troops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>100 troops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>5,000 troops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>2,000 troops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>1,000 troops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>6,000 troops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>1,000 troops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>1,000 troops, 9 ships, 25 aircraft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>No contribution by virtue of a derogation from the Amsterdam Treaty in regard to defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67,100 troops</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ence pledged to supply, on a voluntary basis, national contributions to meeting the rapid reaction capability identified for the achievement of the Headline Goal. They announced their initial commitments as indicated in Table 2 and also said that:

The above figures are provisional. . . . The pool is also likely to be supplemented by contributions from third countries wishing to play their part in an EU-led operation. At the Capabilities Commitment Conference, Turkey informed the Fifteen that it was prepared to offer the future rapid reaction force some 5,000 troops, Norway
pledged 1,200, the Czech Republic roughly 1,000, Hungary 450, Poland 1,000 (Framework Brigade) and Slovakia 350.5

But the Capabilities Commitment Conference did not just focus on a potential “wish list” of forces to be available for the European rapid reaction force—forces, of course, that in the main were the same ones that would be committed to NATO operations; it also took account of shortfalls. This was possibly in response, at least in part, to American criticisms. Thus, the conference identified

a number of areas in which efforts will be made in upgrading existing assets, investment, development and coordination so as gradually to acquire or enhance the capabilities required for autonomous EU action.6

And while “analysis” of the Force Catalogue showed that “by 2003” the EU would

be able to carry out the full range of Petersberg tasks . . . certain capabilities need to be improved both in quantitative and qualitative terms in order to maximise the capabilities available to the Union. . . . To that end, [the member states] will aim to identify as soon as possible the complementary initiatives which they may implement.7

This admonition to do better also revealed an ongoing tension between the potential use of NATO assets and gaining the capacity for “autonomy of action.”8 In general, the EU member states “commit-

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6Ibid., paragraph 3.

7Ibid., paragraph 4.

8Thus, regarding command, control and communications, the Member States offered a satisfactory number of national or multinational headquarters. . . . These officers will have to be evaluated further . . . so that the EU can, in addition to possible recourse to NATO capabilities, have the best possible command and control resources at its disposal. The Union pointed out the importance it
ted themselves . . . to continue taking steps to strengthen their own capabilities and carrying out existing or planned projects.”

They also recognized “the need for mutual reinforcement of the EU’s capability goals and those arising, for the countries concerned, from the DCI.”

This was to be part of a broader “evaluation mechanism” with regard to meeting the Headline Goal, while also recognizing that what the EU through ESDP did would have an impact on NATO. Thus, they committed to “take steps to ensure the coherent development of EU

attaches to the speedy conclusion of ongoing talks on access to NATO capabilities and assets (ibid., paragraph 4).

Another area where ESDP was very much dependent on NATO, but where independent capability could aid the goal of “autonomy,” was satellite imaging:

Some [EU Member States] undertook to improve the Union’s guaranteed access to satellite imaging, thanks in particular to the development of new optical and radar satellite equipment (Helios II, SAR Lupe and Cosmos Skymed) (ibid., paragraph 5).

In addition, an “evaluation mechanism” would need to be defined.

In order to avoid unnecessary duplication, it will, for the Member States concerned [e.g., NATO members], rely on technical data emanating from existing NATO mechanisms such as the Defence Planning Process and the Planning and Review Process (PARP). . . . In addition, exchange of information and transparency would be appropriately ensured [between NATO and the EU] . . . to ensure the coherent development of EU and NATO capabilities where they overlap (ibid.).

9Ibid., paragraph 5:

These projects as a whole relate to:

• improving the performance of European forces in respect of the availability, deployability, sustainability and interoperability of those forces;

• developing “strategic” capabilities: strategic mobility to deliver the forces rapidly to the field of operations; headquarters to command and control the forces and the associated information and communication system; means of providing the forces with intelligence information;

• strengthening essential operational capabilities in the framework of a crisis-management operation; areas which were identified in this context were: resources for search and rescue in operational conditions, means of defence against ground-to-ground missiles, precision weapons, logistic support, simulation tools.

10Ibid., paragraph 6(g).
and NATO capabilities where they overlap,” and that arrangements
with NATO include “transparency, cooperation and dialogue.”11

Also important, from the point of view of NATO and U.S. attitudes,
the Capabilities Commitment Conference delved into other areas.
One stands out. The conference explored the possibility of using
command headquarters separate from NATO’s, including separate
from NATO’s Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) headquarters, which
had been offered to WEU in 1996 and which has exercised in a WEU
mode since that time.12 Thus, the conference noted that the member
states offer “a satisfactory number of national or multinational
headquarters at strategic, operational, force and component lev-
els.”13 Some evaluation of these offers would be needed, however,
“so that the EU can, in addition to possible recourse to NATO capa-
bilities, have the best possible command and control resources at its
disposal [emphasis added].” It was important to complete talks with
NATO rapidly with regard to access to “NATO capabilities and as-
sets.”14 Thus, at the outset, the Europeans were building in the
possibility of some confusion about what “headquarters” would be
used in particular circumstances.

11Ibid., paragraph 6.

12For example, Joint Exercise Study (JES 01) from June 11–15, 2001, hosted by the
Netherlands Ministry of Defence was a WEU-led CJTF “exercise using NATO assets
and capabilities and in particular requiring a CJTF Headquarters, under the political
control and strategic direction of the WEU Council” (NATO Press Release [2001]081,
June 5, 2001). In addition,

A WEU/NATO Joint Crisis Management Exercise was held for the first time
in February 2000, to test ESDI-related concepts and arrangements for han-
dling WEU-led operations making use of NATO assets and capabilities
Security,” op. cit.).

13Ibid., paragraph B. This point should be evaluated partly in terms of the possibility
that the European rapid reaction force could act beyond Europe in areas where
“NATO”—i.e., primarily the United States—chose not to be engaged, potentially in
much of Africa.

14Ibid.