

T E S T I M O N Y

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The European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) and American Interests

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**THE EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENSE IDENTITY (ESDI)
AND AMERICAN INTERESTS**

Prepared Statement Of

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For A Hearing Before

The Committee On Foreign Relations,

Subcommittee On European Affairs

United States Senate

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Mr. Chairman. It is an honor to appear before the Committee today to testify on a subject as important as the European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI).

In my view, there are three important criteria for judging ESDI:

-- Does it strengthen overall security in Europe?

-- Does it help build a stronger and healthier Transatlantic relationship?

-- Does it strengthen NATO's ability to deal more effectively with crises in Europe *and* beyond its borders?

My answer to these questions is a qualified "yes". The final answer, however, will depend on how ESDI deals with six important issues.

First, will the Europeans really build the capabilities? This will be the litmus test of European seriousness about ESDI and defense more generally. There is a danger that the European allies will concentrate on institutions rather than actually building the military capabilities needed to help manage crises. At Helsinki in December, the EU decided to create by the year 2003, a 60,000-man rapid-reaction force that can

be sustained up to a year. In reality, this means raising a force of some 200,000 men because of rotation. At a time of declining defense budgets in Europe, there is some reason to doubt whether the Europeans will be willing to provide the funds needed to pay for the manpower and logistics support needed to sustain such a force.

Second, ESDI is meant to deal with the low end of the military spectrum -- the so-called "Petersburg tasks," which involve peacekeeping, humanitarian rescue, etc. But many of the crises in Europe, such as Kosovo, require more than peacekeeping. They require capabilities to conduct warfighting operations. Thus, there is a danger that we could end up with a two-tier alliance -- one in which the U.S. and perhaps a few European allies are able to conduct high-intensity operations while the rest of the allies focus on the low end of the military spectrum. This would not strengthen the Alliance, but weaken it.

Third, the link between NATO and the EU needs to be more clearly defined. At Helsinki, it was decided that the EU would act only "when NATO as a whole is not involved." But there needs to be adequate transparency in decision-making. The French, however, have been resisting establishing any clear link between EU and NATO. In a speech in Strasbourg in October, President Chirac dismissed such links as "premature" and "putting the cart before the horse." Without clear links, however, there is a danger that the two institutions will get bogged down in bureaucratic disputes over jurisdiction while a crisis escalates out of control.

Fourth, we need to ensure that ESDI does not lead to a duplication of capabilities. In theory, there is a possibility that the European allies could develop separate capabilities that enabled them to act without drawing on U.S. assets. However, given the decline in European defense budgets, it is unlikely that Europeans will have the money to create such capabilities. Thus they will be dependent on U.S. assets for some time to come. This gives the U.S. some leverage and influence over how these assets are used in a crisis.

Fifth, there is a need to ensure that ESDI evolves in a way that does not discriminate against members of the Alliance who are not

members of the EU, such as Turkey, Norway, Iceland and the new Central European members of NATO. They need to be consulted and brought into the decision-making process.

Sixth, if not properly managed, ESDI could undercut DCI. Many of the DCI programs are expensive and they could face competing claims from ESDI. Many European governments may be tempted to utilize existing forces for ESDI rather than create new capabilities. This is all the more true because many European countries may find it easier to mobilize public support for increased defense spending in support of an EU enterprise than for one within NATO.

Moreover, many of the forces and assets that will be required for ESDI already have NATO commitments. If these forces are restructured for ESDI-related tasks, and especially if EU planning for these missions is not done in close cooperation with NATO's defense planning process, ESDI could weaken rather than strengthen NATO. Indeed, unless full transparency and formalized institutional links are established between the EU and NATO, a situation could arise in which forces that are dual-hatted could face conflicting guidance from EU and NATO defense planners.

However, if our European allies develop an integrated capability that is able to plug into US/NATO systems but is also able to operate on its own, then there is no basic incompatibility between NATO and the EU. Indeed, this could strengthen the Alliance's capability to act more effectively in a crisis.

In short, a lot depends on how ESDI is managed. Done right, with close cooperation and transparency between NATO and the EU, ESDI could strengthen the Transatlantic relationship and the ability to more effectively manage crises. But done wrong, it could end up weakening the Transatlantic relationship. Hence, it is imperative to ensure that the project is managed well from the outset.

Two final caveats.

First, the U.S. should avoid overreacting. The fact is that there are very few crises where the Europeans will want to act without the U.S. if the U.S. wants to be involved. Moreover, some of the nightmare scenarios that worry US defense planners -- such as that France might

block a NAC decision for NATO to act in a crisis -- are implausible. France needs the support of its EU allies and it knows that it would not get this support if it consciously sought to prevent NATO from acting in a crisis in which the Alliance as a whole wanted to act.

However, the Europeans fear that there will be circumstances where the U.S. will not want to be involved -- and, quite frankly, looking at U.S. policy in Bosnia, they have some justification for their concern. If the U.S. wants a healthy Transatlantic Alliance, then we need to be willing to share the risks with our European allies, including putting troops on the ground if necessary.

Second, some members of the Senate have suggested that we should develop a new division of labor in which the European allies look after European security and the U.S. looks after security beyond Europe. In my view, this idea is wrong-headed and dangerous. It would seriously erode the sense of *common purpose* that is at the heart of the Transatlantic relationship and lead to a weakening of the U.S. role in Europe. Instead, we should be striving for a new Transatlantic Bargain in which we remain engaged in Europe while encouraging our allies to assume more responsibility for security in Europe -- *but also outside of it*.

ESDI could contribute to such a new Transatlantic Bargain -- but only if it is well managed.

Thank you.