

The EU and NATO: Towards a Joint Future in Crisis Management?

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Abstract

The European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are two major players in post-Cold War crisis management. With dissimilar strengths and weaknesses and a somewhat different focus, the two organizations tackle conflicts and crises around the world. Based on insights from expert interviews with EU and NATO officials, the following questions are addressed: How effective has EU-NATO cooperation in crisis management been so far, and how will or should EU-NATO relations develop in the future? In recent years, the cooperation between these two largely overlapping institutions has become difficult and was at times blocked. I argue that effective EU-NATO cooperation is obstructed by differences at the very top. Quarrels between NATO member Turkey and EU member Cyprus limit the scope of political dialogue. The resulting lack of consultation and coordination impedes cooperation at the military-strategic and operational levels and entails the risk of unnecessary duplication in capability development. The presentation and analysis of five future scenarios for EU-NATO cooperation leads to the conclusion that the EU should develop an independent Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), capable of providing security and stability in the region and of performing the whole spectrum of the Petersberg tasks, including high-intensity conflicts. A strengthened CSDP would benefit NATO in terms of additional European capabilities and the US with regard to increased burden sharing. However, it certainly will take some time until this vision materializes. Meanwhile, the EU and NATO should gradually increase the efficiency of what resembles an *ad hoc* division of labor in crisis management.

1. Introduction

"NATO continues to be attractive. [...] However, it is no longer the primary venue where transatlantic partners discuss and coordinate strategies."¹ These were the words Gerhard Schröder bluntly pronounced at the Munich Security Conference in 2005. Two years later, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, then Secretary General of NATO, referred to the relations between NATO and the European Union as a "frozen conflict".² David Keohane even went so far as to describe the EU-NATO relationship as a "civil war".³

What happened? Once upon a time, NATO used to be the overarching security umbrella protecting the Europeans from the Soviet Union. Since the end of the Cold War, the security environment has dramatically changed. The Soviet threat is gone and an increasing number of diffuse, inter-linked and ever more complex security challenges have come to the fore. Europeans soon realized that the focus of US security policy was moving away from the Old Continent, and reacted by creating their own security toolbox, the Common Security and Defense Policy.⁴ This does not mean that the EU has grown away from NATO and from its transatlantic Allies. With 21 common members the overlap between the two organizations is bigger than ever. The security threats and challenges the EU and NATO have identified are strikingly similar. Policymakers and diplomats have repeatedly underlined the importance of the 'strategic partnership' between the EU and NATO and emphasized their mutual interdependency.⁵

The topic of EU-NATO cooperation in crisis management has received increased attention in the recent past. The Americans, first skeptical of the EU's new security policy, have now fully embraced it and are asking for more rather than less CSDP. After more than four decades, the traditional Euro-centric nation France has in 2009 given up its ambiguous position towards NATO and reintegrated into its military

¹ G. Schröder, former Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, speech, 41th Munich Conference on Security Policy, Munich, 2 December 2005.

² J. de Hoop Scheffer, "NATO and the EU: Time for a New Chapter", Berlin, 29 January 2007.

³ D. Keohane, "The Roadmap to Better EU-NATO Relations", *CER Briefing Note*, London, Centre for European Reform, 2007, p. 7.

⁴ Since the former European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) has been renamed Common Security and Defence Policy with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the latter term shall be used henceforth.

⁵ For example: de Hoop Scheffer, "NATO and the EU", *op. cit.*

command structure. In November 2010, the Alliance is presenting its New Strategic Concept. Furthermore, the transatlantic partners are engaged in Afghanistan, in a theatre that has been labeled a 'litmus test' for the world's most powerful military Alliance.

But how effective⁶ has EU-NATO cooperation in crisis management been? What are the main obstacles to effective EU-NATO cooperation, and what implications for the future development of EU-NATO cooperation can be derived? I argue that effective EU-NATO cooperation has been obstructed by a Turkish-Cypriot double veto. Although blockades at the highest level are eventually circumvented through informal channels as well as at the operational level, the absence of formal decisions makes cooperation at all levels a complicated affair. While differences at the political level are often circumvented through informal channels and in the field, the full potential of cooperation remains unused. The strategic partnership is in need of a re-definition. I will present five future scenarios and evaluate them on the basis of three criteria: acceptability, realizability and sustainability. The analysis will show that none of these scenarios is likely to materialize in the foreseeable future.

Yet, the world is moving fast and the challenges of the 21st century do not leave much time for two major institutions to work out how they should relate to each other.⁷ The EU and NATO will thus have to 'muddle through' and find creative solutions for practical cooperation.

First, I will depict NATO and the EU in terms of overlapping role concepts and discuss notions of complementarity and competition. Second, I will provide an analysis of past and current EU-NATO cooperation that will differentiate between the political, military-strategic and operational levels. Third, I will present and evaluate five future scenarios. Finally, I will close with a short synthesis and present some policy recommendations.

⁶ In this paper, effectiveness is seen as a continuous variable. Institutional cooperation can range from completely ineffectual to highly effective arrangements, "which produce quick and decisive solutions to the problems at hand" (O.R. Young (ed.), *The Effectiveness of International Environmental Regimes: Causal Connections and Behavioral Mechanisms*, Boston, MIT Press, 1999, p. 2). Effective EU-NATO cooperation means that the organizations deliver a quick, decisive and appropriate response to shared security challenges.

⁷ de Hoop Scheffer, "NATO and the EU", *op. cit.*

2. Overlapping Role Concepts

During the Cold War, the EU and NATO represented two distinct forms of power. NATO was an organization created to project military power vis-à-vis the single most important threat, the Soviet Union. The then European Communities became known as a civilian power, a concept that was constructed around its economic strength and the absence of military instruments at the supranational level. After the Cold War, the EU and NATO both moved beyond their traditional roles. Parallel transformation as well as subsequent enlargement rounds resulted in an institutional and functional overlap. The question is: does this overlap entail complementarity or competition?

2.1 *NATO: A Military Alliance with a Comprehensive Approach*

2.1.1 Military Alliance in Transformation

When the Soviet Union collapsed and the bilateral threat scenario came to an end, NATO faced a dual challenge: it lost its initial 'raison d'être' and was confronted with a new security environment characterized by complex and diffuse risks and challenges.⁸ As a result, "analysts in Europe and the United States have confidently predicted NATO's destiny of irrelevancy, if not total collapse".⁹

Faced with this existential threat, NATO transformed and moved towards a more global role. As part of this transformation, NATO has opened its doors to twelve full new members from the former Soviet bloc. It has enlarged the group of global partners and engaged in closer cooperation and security dialogue with a large number of countries on four continents.¹⁰ During the last two decades, there has been a shift from collective defense and deterrence towards crisis management and humanitarian assistance. NATO's geographic scope has broadened and its focus has moved away from the European continent. In order to adapt to the new types of operations, NATO transformed its command structure and capabilities. At the Prague Summit in 2002, the Allies agreed on the 'Prague Capabilities Commit-

⁸ M. de Haas (ed.), "From taking stock to increased European defense cooperation", *Clingendael Discussion Paper*, The Hague, Clingendael, 2007, p. 18.

⁹ R.C. Hendrickson, "The Miscalculation of NATO's Death", *Parameters*, spring 2007, p. 98.

¹⁰ V. Nuland, speech, London School of Economics, London, 2 February 2008.

ment', reformed and streamlined the command structure and created a new rapid reaction mechanism, the NATO Response Force (NRF).

2.1.2 NATO's Civilian Capabilities Gap

The conflicts in the Balkans, in Iraq and Afghanistan have shown that "the usefulness of military power alone has serious limits".¹¹ In order to guarantee effective crisis management in the long term, civilian instruments like police forces, judges or civil administrators are of crucial importance. The Allies identified the importance of civilian security instruments very early in NATO's history. In 1956, the Report of the Three Wise Men on Non-Military Cooperation stated: "Security today is far more than a military matter."¹² After the end of the Cold War, NATO underlined the importance of civilian instruments in responding to the changing security environment in its Strategic Concepts of 1991 and 1999.¹³

NATO has been seeking to enhance the integration of civilian instruments through civil emergency planning, i.e. the coordination of the Allies' national planning activities. However, civilian planning and assets strictly remain under national control and there are often problems of internal coordination between the respective national ministries. National stabilization and reconstruction capabilities are rarely "organized into deployable assets that can provide cohesive, effective response options"¹⁴ and often assembled in an *ad hoc* manner.¹⁵ In places like Afghanistan, the lack of civilian capabilities forced NATO troops to take over civilian tasks. This is problematic since it can lead to a perceived militarization of civilian instruments.¹⁶

2.1.3 NATO's Comprehensive Approach

The Alliance was thus faced with a dilemma: on one hand, it acknowledged the importance of the civilian dimension in crisis management; on the other hand, the

¹¹ J. Howorth, *The Security and Defence Policy in the European Union*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 93.

¹² NATO, *Report of the Committee of Three on Non-Military Cooperation in NATO*, Brussels, 13 September 1956.

¹³ NATO, *New Strategic Concept*, Rome, 7/8 November 1991; NATO, *Strategic Concept*, Washington D.C., 23/24 April 1999.

¹⁴ H. Binnendijk & R. Kugler, "Needed – A NATO Stabilization and Reconstruction Force", *Defense Horizons*, no. 45, Center for Technology and National Security Policy, National Defense University, 2004, p. 1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ J. Shea, "NATO's Future and NATO-EU Relations: Are We Condemned to Be Eternal Rivals?", College of Europe (compact seminar), Bruges, 27 February 2009.

possibility of acquiring its own civilian means had been ruled out.¹⁷ This dilemma gave birth to the Comprehensive Approach Initiative formally put on the agenda at the Riga Summit. The goal of the initiative was to define a reference frame or codification of existing practices for NATO's cooperation with other actors and their civilian crisis management instruments.¹⁸ The main idea was that NATO needed to improve civil-military cooperation with partners, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international organizations, in particular with the EU and the United Nations (UN).¹⁹ The 2010 Report of the Group of Experts on NATO's New Strategic Concept reiterated the importance of the comprehensive approach and stated: "NATO efforts to operate with civilian partners remain disjointed".²⁰ The effective implementation of the comprehensive approach in peace operations like the ones in Afghanistan and Kosovo is an essential part of the current transatlantic debate "and will set the tone for future cooperation between the United States and Europe".²¹

2.2 *The EU: A Civilian Power with an Emerging Military Arm*

2.2.1 Civilian Power Europe

The concept of 'civilian power' was first introduced by François Duchêne and represented one of the earliest and most influential attempts to conceptualize the European Community's role in international affairs. According to Duchêne, the nuclear stalemate devalued pure military power and gave more weight to "civilian forms of influence and action".²² These include diplomatic, economic and cultural policy instruments, for example, "the Single Market, humanitarian relief and the single currency, not to mention enlargement".²³ The integration and enlargement processes were seen as the most prominent examples of the EU's 'civilizing' influence.

¹⁷ de Hoop Scheffer, "NATO and the EU", *op. cit.*

¹⁸ F.A. Petersen & H. Binnendijk, "The Comprehensive Approach Initiative: Future Options for NATO", *Defense Horizons*, no. 58, National Defense University, Center for Technology and National Security Policy, 2007, pp. 1-3.

¹⁹ North Atlantic Council, *Comprehensive Political Guidance*, Brussels, 29 November 2006.

²⁰ NATO, *NATO 2020: Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement - Analysis and Recommendation of the Group of Experts on a New Strategic Concept for NATO*, Brussels, 17 May 2010, pp. 41-42.

²¹ Petersen & Binnendijk, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

²² F. Duchêne, "The European Community and the Uncertainties of Interdependence", in M. Kohnstamm & W. Hager (eds.), *A Nation Writ Large? Foreign Policy Problems before the European Community*, London, Macmillan, 1973, p. 43.

²³ A. Treacher, "From Civilian Power to Military Actor: The EU's Resistable Transformation", *European Foreign Affairs Review*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2004, p. 51.

Meanwhile, the Union's economic weight enabled it to influence third countries through political and economic conditionality.²⁴

When the Cold War ended, the concept of civilian power had a renaissance. A number of academics argued that the exercise of power in international relations ceased to depend on military means and that forms of 'soft power' would prevail.²⁵ With this changed definition of power, the EU was to play a crucial role in providing non-military instruments and in promoting awareness with regard to civilian aspects of security.²⁶

2.2.2 Civilian Power Shows Teeth

The conflicts during and after the dissolution of former Yugoslavia painfully showed the limitations of civilian power. Once again, the EU had to rely on its Alliance partners in order to resolve a crisis in its own backyard. At the bilateral summit in St. Malo in 1998, France and the United Kingdom drew their conclusions from the experience in the Balkans and laid the foundations of the European Security and Defence Policy. The St. Malo Declaration insisted that "the Union must have the capacity of autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises".²⁷

In the following years, the institutional, capability-related and strategic foundations of the ESDP were put in place. On 12 December 2003, the European Council adopted the European Security Strategy (ESS). In its first strategy document, the Union stated it was "inevitably a global player",²⁸ and emphasized the importance of a comprehensive and preventive approach to crisis management.²⁹ The Lisbon Treaty in 2009 re-baptized the ESDP to CSDP and introduced Permanent Structured Cooperation (art. 46 TEU), a mechanism allowing willing member states to enhance military integration among them but within an EU framework. The Lisbon Treaty also

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ For example: J.S. Nye, Jr., "Soft Power", *Foreign Policy*, vol. 80, 1990, pp. 153-171.

²⁶ S. Duke, *The New European Security Disorder*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 1994, p. 228.

²⁷ Franco-British Summit Declaration, *Joint Declaration on European Defence*, St. Malo, 4 December 1998.

²⁸ European Council, *A Secure Europe In A Better World - European Security Strategy*, Brussels, 12 December 2003, p. 1.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

introduced a Solidarity Clause (art. 222 TFEU) and a Mutual Defence Clause (art. 42 (7) TEU).

2.2.3 The EU's Military Capabilities Gap

Taken as a bloc, the EU is the world's most important military power after the US. It has over 2 million men and women in uniform and a combined defense budget of over € 200 billion.³⁰ Since 2003, the EU has launched seven military CSDP missions. Though these figures sound impressive, they are misleading. In fact, only around 5% of the EU's 2 million troops are currently deployable in out-of-area operations.³¹ Taken together, European military spending does not even amount to half of the US defense expenditures. In addition, intra-European duplication and fragmentation lead to very low overall cost-effectiveness.³²

The EU can hardly be called a global military power. Nevertheless, the development of the CSDP has raised questions concerning the EU's status as a civilian power. According to a NATO official, the concept of civilian power is outdated:

It was used in order to show that the EU is a counter-weight to the US, that the EU shows the positive example of how to shape the world without military. But de facto the EU is striving to grow out of the civilian power and to become a military one. Japan and Germany were often cited as examples of civilian power, but they were only successful because somebody else protected them.³³

Today, the main question is how to connect civilian and military instruments in order to project 'comprehensive power'. If the EU wants to implement the comprehensive approach outlined in the ESS, it needs to be able to complement its civilian instruments with military ones. While it has acquired civil-military institutions and expertise, it is still dependent on other actors when it comes to high-intensity conflicts.³⁴

³⁰ S. Biscop, "The Ambiguous Ambition: The Development of the EU Security Architecture", paper presented at the colloquium *The EC/EU: A World Security Actor?*, Paris, EU Institute for Security Studies, 15 September 2006, p. 1.

³¹ A. Toje, "The EU, NATO and European Defence – A Slow Train Coming", *Occasional Paper*, no. 74, Paris, European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2008, p. 26.

³² Biscop, "The Ambiguous Ambition", *op. cit.*, p. 3.

³³ Interview with NATO official B, International Staff, Brussels, 24 March 2009.

³⁴ N. Pirozzi & S. Sandawi, "Five Years of ESDP in Action: Operations, Trends, Shortfalls", *European Security Review*, no. 39, 2008, p. 2.

2.3 The EU and NATO – Between Complementarity and Competition

"There is no stronger civil player than the European Union. And there is no stronger military alliance than NATO."³⁵ Both organizations face the challenge of integrating civilian and military instruments through a comprehensive approach, and of ensuring adequate procure-ment for crisis management. While NATO lacks civilian capabilities in places like Afghanistan, the EU is not able to address high-intensity conflicts autonomously. The obvious conclusion would be that the EU and NATO are complementary.

However, the EU-NATO relationship has often been viewed as a zero-sum game. Euro-centric nations like France portrayed the EU as a competitor of the US, potentially able to rival its power and influence. Atlantacist countries like the UK feared that the CSDP would undermine NATO and thus the transatlantic link. US policymakers observed the development of the EU's military arm with skepticism and underlined that the US did not want a CSDP "that comes into being first within NATO but then grows out of NATO and finally grows away from NATO".³⁶ These political dividing lines within the EU and across the Atlantic have often given rise to tensions.

Furthermore, EU-NATO relations are marked by inter-institutional competition. According to a NATO official,

The EU always considers itself a superior organization because it is built around the integrationist project. In NATO, there is just coordination and no integration. Some people in the bureaucracy of the EU do not accept the notion that NATO could be of equal weight. [...] The EU is seeing itself as the future and NATO is often seen as the past.³⁷

Finally, there is a potential for competition and duplication when it comes to capabilities. While both organizations are struggling to improve and increase the military capabilities of their member states, the respective capability goals set slightly different priorities. Considering that nations only have one set of forces and

³⁵ de Hoop Scheffer, "NATO and the EU", *op. cit.*

³⁶ quoted in P. Hughes, "NATO and the EU: Managing the *Frozen Conflict*: Test Case Afghanistan", *ZEI Discussion Paper*, C178, Bonn, Center for European Integration Studies, 2007, p. 7.

³⁷ Interview with NATO official B, *op. cit.*

taxpayers, and that the Europeans face difficulties in meeting their requirements on either side, setting different priorities does not make much sense.³⁸

The institutional overlaps between the EU and NATO as well as the mirror-inverted capability gaps create an important potential for cooperation. However, rivalling visions for the future, political dividing lines and inter-institutional differences might provoke competition. The EU-NATO relationship thus seems to be both complementary and competitive in nature.

3. Cooperation in Crisis Management: Rules of Engagement and Implementation

In the course of the years, the EU and NATO increasingly overlapped in terms of membership, competence and ambitions. It soon became apparent that an institutional link was needed in order to manage this overlap. This link was the 'Berlin Plus Agreement'. The question is how effective this institutional link was in guiding the cooperation between the two organizations and whether it still corresponds to the realities of today's EU-NATO interactions in crisis management.

3.1 Rules of Engagement

The political principles of the EU-NATO 'strategic partnership' in crisis management were set out in the 2002 NATO-EU Declaration on ESDP.³⁹ While acknowledging the different nature of the organizations, the declaration underlined the importance of mutual consultation, cooperation, transparency, and of the mutually reinforcing development of military capability requirements. It welcomed the EU's capacity to conduct crisis management operations, "including military operations where NATO as a whole is not engaged".⁴⁰

On 17 March 2003, the 'Berlin Plus Agreement' was concluded. The agreement constitutes the foundation of practical EU-NATO cooperation in crisis management. It sets out the terms of reference and procedures permitting the EU to conduct crisis management operations with recourse to NATO's assets, capabilities and planning facilities. Furthermore, it regulates the release of confidential information, restricted to

³⁸ Keohane, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

³⁹ EU-NATO, *Declaration on ESDP*, Brussels, 16 December 2002.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

nations that have a security agreement with the respective organization and establishes arrangements for cooperation in the field of capability development.⁴¹

3.2 Cooperation at the Political Level

3.2.1 Formal Meetings

The formal venues for political dialogue are the meetings between the Political and Security Committee (PSC) and the North Atlantic Council (NAC). In the beginning, a broad range of issues was discussed in these meetings. Non-allied EU members, like Finland, Austria, Ireland and Sweden attended the meetings and the exchange of documents was unproblematic since each of them had concluded security agreements with the Alliance in the context of NATO's Partnership for Peace program.⁴²

Problems arose when Malta and Cyprus, that were not members of the Partnership for Peace Program, joined the EU in 2004. Due to the fraught political relations between Cyprus and Turkey, the latter blocked the sharing of NATO security information with both of the new EU member states and refused to discuss matters of 'strategic cooperation' in their presence. Cyprus in turn rejected any discussions beyond the 'Berlin Plus' operations, when it and Malta were absent. As a result, NAC-PSC meetings take place without Cyprus⁴³ and formal discussions are limited to joint EU-NATO missions, of which there is currently only one, operation Althea. Other issues of mutual concern like Kosovo, Afghanistan, terrorism or piracy are not on the agenda. Even routine cooperation between the EU and NATO, including the exchange of documents or joint crisis-management exercises, has become very complicated.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), *Berlin Plus Agreement*, 2006.

⁴² S. Hofmann & C. Reynolds, "EU-NATO Relations: Time to Thaw the 'Frozen Conflict'", *SWP Comments*, no. 12, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2007, p. 3.

⁴³ Malta has joined the Partnership for Peace program in 2008. Currently, Turkey allows Malta to receive NATO information and to participate in some of the planning meetings (interview with NATO official B, *op. cit.*).

⁴⁴ Hofmann & Reynolds, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

3.2.2 Informal Meetings

In order to circumvent the restrictions and blockades at the highest level, informal channels of dialogue between the EU and NATO have emerged. Though infrequently, informal meetings take place in one of three constellations:

- NAC-PSC meetings
- EU-NATO Military Committee meetings
- EU-NATO Foreign Ministerial meetings/Transatlantic Dinners⁴⁵

Informal meetings are scheduled *ad hoc* and occur behind closed doors. There are no pre-determined agendas, no minutes and no press releases. Turkey and Cyprus can thus attend these meetings without (formally) acknowledging it.⁴⁶ The advantage of informal meetings is that a broad range of issues of mutual interest can be discussed. They can prepare the ground for future formal discussions and lead to the development of a common strategic perspective. According to Jamie Shea, this is the case for Afghanistan:⁴⁷ the EU and NATO meet informally and develop a common strategic vision. They then go back to their respective structures and implement this vision parallel to each other. This approach has, for instance, led to the EU's proposal to send an Election Observation Mission to Afghanistan for the Presidential and Provincial Council Elections on 20 August 2009.⁴⁸

However, there are clear limits to informal cooperation. First, it can also be obstructed by single member states. In the past, France has often blocked progress, arguing that the issues at stake were too important to be discussed in informal meetings. Second, without formal meetings there cannot be any formal decisions, which are often necessary for strategic and operational coordination.⁴⁹ For instance, in order to ensure the protection of the EU's civilian staff by NATO troops, a formal security agreement is needed. In the cases of Kosovo and Afghanistan, Turkey blocked such agreements and the protection of the EU's civilian staff depended on Turkey's willingness to turn a blind eye on bilateral security agreements.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴⁷ Interview with J. Shea, Director of Policy Planning in the Private Office of the Secretary General at NATO Headquarters, 24 March 2009.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Hofmann & Reynolds, *loc. cit.*

3.3 Cooperation at the Military-Strategic Level

Military-strategic cooperation is also (formally) restricted to 'Berlin Plus' operations. In order to facilitate cooperation and mutual information flows in planning, the NATO Liaison Team at the EU Military Staff (EUMS) and the EU Cell at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Power Europe (SHAPE) have been established in 2005. Within the agreed framework, cooperation is said to work "smoothly and evenly".⁵⁰ However, when meetings of the military committees in either organization go beyond the agreed framework (i.e. operation Althea), the respective liaison officers have to leave the room. At the military-strategic level, the mutual release of documents has also been obstructed by political blockades.⁵¹

These blockades are – once again – circumvented through informal channels. While both organizations have a very strong protocol on document release, Michael Kennedy, Head of the EU Cell at SHAPE, cautiously stated: "The general contents of documents may sometimes be released for reasons of practical cooperation."⁵² Informally, issues like Kosovo and Afghanistan are discussed on a weekly basis. However, informal discussions cannot provide the strategic guidance and the delineation of tasks that troops and civilian staff need on the ground.⁵³

3.4 Cooperation on the Ground

3.4.1 'Berlin Plus' Operations

Until now, two CSDP operations have been conducted under the 'Berlin Plus' framework: operation Concordia that took over the responsibilities of the NATO-led operation Allied Harmony in FYROM (31 March 2003-15 December 2003), and the ongoing operation Althea that took over the responsibilities of the NATO-led Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) on 2 December 2004.

The operational cooperation between the EU and NATO in the framework of the 'Berlin Plus' operations was hampered whenever the quarrels at the political-institutional level impacted on the operational level. Ahead of operation Concordia, Turkish-Greek differences prolonged the negotiations on the 'Berlin Plus' Agreement

⁵⁰ Interview with LtCol M. Kennedy, Head of the EU Cell at SHAPE, Brussels, 21 April 2009.

⁵¹ For more details, see: Hofmann & Reynolds, *loc. cit.*

⁵² Interview with LtCol Kennedy, *op. cit.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

and thus postponed the European takeover.⁵⁴ Ahead of operation Althea, negotiations were stretched since the US did not have enough confidence in the military muscle of the young ESDP. In reaction to the EU accession of Cyprus and Malta, Turkey prevented any meeting of EU and NATO military committees throughout the period of September 2004 to March 2005.⁵⁵

The problems at the political and military-strategic levels led to an unclear delineation of responsibilities between the EU and NATO on the ground. The declared aim of operation Concordia was to provide a safe environment in FYROM. This mandate overlapped with NATO's remaining consultant mission that was responsible for border control.⁵⁶ In BiH, the problems were similar: both the EU and NATO were, among other things, charged with assisting the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in the capture of indicted war criminals.⁵⁷ Finally, shortfalls in cooperation cannot even be processed in EU-NATO lessons-learned documents: any conclusion that implies 'victory' for one or the other organization must be left out or watered down.⁵⁸

Despite these obstacles, NATO and EU officials asserted that the operational cooperation within the framework of the 'Berlin Plus Agreement' worked very well.⁵⁹ The reason is that problems at the political or military-strategic levels were often resolved on the ground. In BiH, for instance, NATO and EU force commanders were charged with disentangling the respective mandates. After a satisfactory solution had been found at the operational level, it was formalized by an exchange of letters and endorsed by both the EU's General Affairs and External Relations Council and the NAC.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ J. Varwick (ed.), *Die Beziehungen zwischen NATO und EU*, Opladen, Barbara Budrich, 2006, pp. 190-191.

⁵⁵ F. Kupferschmidt, "Strategische Partnerschaft in der Bewährung. Die Zusammenarbeit von NATO und EU bei der Operation *Althea*", Berlin, *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP)*, 2006, p. 15.

⁵⁶ Varwick, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

⁵⁷ Kupferschmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁵⁸ Hofmann & Reynolds, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁵⁹ Interviews with EU and NATO officials.

⁶⁰ Hofmann & Reynolds, *loc. cit.*

3.4.2 Cooperation beyond 'Berlin Plus'

The 'Berlin Plus Agreement' was designed for situations where the EU takes over responsibility from NATO. But this is only one possibility out of a broad spectrum of EU-NATO interactions in crisis management. Contrary to assumptions in the 1990s, the EU and NATO are and have been engaged side by side in several countries.

The case of parallel NATO-EU engagement that currently draws most attention is certainly Afghanistan. NATO has been on the ground since 2003, when it took over the command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Since then, the Alliance has been expanding the outreach of the mission and has increased the number of troops from an initial strength of 5.000 to approximately 120.000 troops from 46 countries in 2010.⁶¹ In 2007, NATO as well as Afghans, NGOs, and an array of international actors on the ground called for an increase in the EU's civilian presence. The EU responded to these calls by launching the police mission EUPOL Afghanistan on 15 June 2007.

While both the EU and NATO have underlined the importance of a comprehensive approach for Afghanistan, the CSDP contribution was rather meager. EUPOL's initial mandate provided for 160 civilian staff, representing roughly one-tenth the size of the contingent deployed to Kosovo. In May 2008, the Council decided to increase the number of civilian personnel to 400⁶², but only 265 international experts were on the ground by June 2010.⁶³

While the EU is unable or unwilling to live up to its 'soft power potential' and to provide civilian staff, the US is doing 95% of the police work.⁶⁴ In 2009, NATO established a training mission in Afghanistan in order to reinforce the development of professional training for the Afghan police.⁶⁵ Whether this will lead to a duplication of efforts or "greater synergy"⁶⁶ between the EU and NATO, as called for by NATO Secretary General Rasmussen in April 2010, remains to be seen.

⁶¹ NATO, "NATO's Role in Afghanistan", *NATO Topics*, 2009.

⁶² V. Pop, "EU to boost civilian mission in Afghanistan", *EUObserver*, 31 April 2009.

⁶³ Council of the European Union, "Factsheet on the EU Police Mission in Afghanistan", *EUPOL Afghanistan*, Brussels, June 2010.

⁶⁴ Speech by US diplomat, United States Mission to the European Union, Brussels, 17 April 2009.

⁶⁵ NATO, "NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan", *NATO News*, 4 April 2009.

⁶⁶ NATO, "Secretary General calls for greater NATO-EU police training synergy", *NATO News*, 26 April 2010.

Although EU-NATO (or EU-US) differences with regard to Afghanistan are too complex to outline in this paper, it is clear to all sides that "stability in Afghanistan will not come through military means alone".⁶⁷ Afghanistan is thus not only a major test for the Alliance, but also for the credibility of the EU as a civilian actor in crisis management. In the end, Afghanistan will show whether the EU and NATO are able to cooperate in synergy in order to "advance the security interests of the West".⁶⁸

3.5 Capability Development

In 2003, the EU-NATO Capability Group was created with the goal to prevent duplication and to ensure mutually reinforcing efforts in the area of capability development. The Group focuses on initiatives such as the EU Battlegroups and the NRF as well as on areas where the EU and NATO face similar capabilities gaps.

Though the Group has increased transparency and is a platform for inter-organizational information exchange,⁶⁹ the cooperation fails to go beyond that. When NATO and EU capability experts meet, they present their concepts and results. Analysis as well as planning is done separately. The meetings of the EU-NATO Capability Group are generally scheduled *ad hoc* and are often cancelled. Meanwhile, the European Defense Agency (EDA) has still not been able to establish formal contact with the Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk.⁷⁰

In the field of capability development, NATO expects more burden sharing from the EU. More division of labor is needed in the areas of protection against improvised explosive devices, protection of vehicles, jamming devices, drones, and the upgrading of helicopters to make them deployable in Afghanistan. There are approximately 4000 helicopters in Europe, but only few are fully equipped and deployable outside of national territory.⁷¹

⁶⁷ NATO, *NATO 2020*, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁶⁸ Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁶⁹ Interview with J. Shea, *op. cit.*

⁷⁰ K. Olshausen, "NATO und Europäische Union: Wo bleibt die strategische Zusammenarbeit?", *Military Power Revue*, no. 2, 2008, p. 7.

⁷¹ Interviews with NATO officials.

3.5.1 The Future of 'Berlin Plus'

As the example of parallel engagement has shown, 'Berlin Plus' has not become the institutional link it was envisioned to be. The scheme 'NATO first – then the EU comes in', a model based on the experience of the Balkans, is no longer valid. Today, only operation Althea corresponds to the institutional design of the 1990s. Due to the narrow interpretation of the 'Berlin Plus Agreement', the termination of operation Althea will put an end to formal NATO-EU dialogue.

The more the EU and NATO moved beyond the Balkans, the more it became clear that a new agreement for EU-NATO cooperation was needed. One proposal was to establish a 'Berlin Plus Reverse', permitting NATO to formally request the deployment of EU civilian assets alongside its military operations. However, discussions on the establishment of 'Berlin Plus Reverse', or any other formal arrangement that would give NATO recourse to European civilian assets, have stalled due to political objections. Strong proponents of the CSDP are reluctant to cede the domain of civil-military cooperation, where the EU has a comparative advantage, to NATO. Furthermore, some EU members like France fear that the CSDP will become a 'toolbox' for US operations. They believe that the EU would lose its autonomy of decision in comprehensive interventions and that NATO's leadership would degrade the CSDP's role to the one of a "junior partner".⁷²

4. Future Perspectives and Scenarios

The prevailing opinion is that the transatlantic security partnership is in dire need of re-definition and that it is "time to thaw the 'frozen conflict'".⁷³ What will this re-definition look like? How will EU-NATO cooperation develop in the future? In order to approach these questions, five possible future scenarios will be presented.⁷⁴ They will be analyzed according to the criteria of acceptability (political will and tolerability on both sides of the Atlantic), realizability (capacities) and sustainability (i.e. whether a scenario could be sustained in the long-term).⁷⁵ I consider these interdependent

⁷² S. Hofman, "Debating Strategy in NATO: Obstacles to Defining a Meaningful New Strategic Concept", Paris, Institut Français des Relations Internationales, 2008, p. 10.

⁷³ Hofmann & Reynolds, *op. cit.*

⁷⁴ Parts of the future scenarios were inspired by J. Shea, "EU-NATO Relations", *op. cit.*

⁷⁵ See D. Mahncke, "A New World Order?", in A. Reinisch & U. Kriebaum (eds.), *The Law of International Relations – Liber Amicorum Hanspeter Neuhold*, Utrecht, Eleven International Publishing, 2007, p. 217.

criteria decisive for a comparable assessment of the likelihood, potential success and stability of the future scenarios of EU-NATO cooperation. Without political will, it is unlikely for a scenario to materialize in the first place. Without capacities, a scenario is unlikely to yield effective responses to common security challenges. The assessment of the sustainability criterion yields a prognosis on the stability of a given form of EU-NATO cooperation, once the other two criteria are fulfilled.

4.1 Back to the Bosom of Uncle Sam

The EU could decide that it does not need two big 'elephants' in its backyard and that NATO should become the major security provider in Europe. The Union would in this case admit that its capabilities do not match its ambitions, revert to its original status as civilian power and return to the 'bosom of Uncle Sam' in security matters.

However, the US is neither willing nor able to take over responsibility for European security. As mentioned earlier, there has been a paradigmatic shift in US views on the CSDP. While skepticism prevailed in the beginning, the CSDP is now seen as complementary to NATO. US policymakers see the CSDP as a vehicle for strengthening European military capabilities eventually leading to enhanced transatlantic burden sharing. This change in attitude was reflected by US ambassador Nuland's speech in Paris in 2008, in which she emphasized: "Europe needs, the United States needs, NATO needs, the democratic world needs – a stronger, more capable European defense capacity."⁷⁶ This new trend in US foreign policy is pursued by the current administration. During a press conference at NATO's Strasbourg/Kehl Summit in 2009, president Barack Obama renewed calls for more robust European defense capabilities and emphasized that the US does not want to be Europe's "patron"⁷⁷ but that it was looking for a strong partner.

Atlanticist EU members like Poland, Czech Republic or the Baltic countries would be in favor of a stronger US role within NATO and on the European continent. This is mainly due to their threat perceptions vis-à-vis Russia and their conviction that the US is the only ally able to protect their 'hard security interests'. This does, however, not mean that they favor a weaker CSDP. In fact, strengthening the CSDP is on top of

⁷⁶ V. Nuland, former US Permanent Representative to NATO, speech, "Presse Club and AmCham", Paris, 22 February 2008.

⁷⁷ M. Butcher, "Obama Wants Stronger European Defence", *The NATO Monitor*, 4 April 2009.

the agenda of the upcoming Polish Presidency 2011.⁷⁸ Documents like the ESS, the report on its implementation, and last but not least the Lisbon Treaty (art. 42-46 TEU), clearly reflect the common conviction that the EU should play a global role in security and further develop its military capabilities.

In the end, both sides of the Atlantic would oppose a re-Americanization of NATO. Considering the over-stretch of the US military in Afghanistan and the growing pressure from the domestic war opposition⁷⁹, it is also highly questionable whether such a scenario would be realizable. Thus, the necessary pre-conditions for the sustainability of this scenario are not met.

4.2 Twin-Headed Eagle

The relationship between the EU and NATO might also develop into a 'twin-headed eagle'. In this scenario, the two organizations would tie their 'bodies' together while keeping their own 'heads'. They would share the same planning structure, and capabilities would be at the disposal of either organization.

A 'twin-headed eagle' scenario implies that the EU and NATO have a common command and control structure. The two organizations could link the idea of a European headquarters with NATO and build a joint civil-military headquarters closely connected to SHAPE. While the British continue to oppose the idea of an autonomous European headquarters, such a proposal could satisfy them, especially if the DSACEUR stayed involved. For France, however, the headquarters question is a national priority. President Sarkozy must deliver a European headquarters if he wants to counter domestic criticism regarding France's reintegration. In addition, the French always disliked the idea to share the EU's comparative advantage in civil-military planning with NATO.

Another political obstacle to the development of EU-NATO relations into a 'twin-headed eagle' is the Turkish-Cypriot impasse. If Turkey blocks pragmatic issues of

⁷⁸ M. Dowgialewicz, Secretary of State for European Affairs at the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The European Union after the Lisbon Treaty", Public EXACT Lecture, Cologne, 21 October 2010.

⁷⁹ According to CNN/Opinion Research Corp. poll, the domestic US opposition to the Afghan war reached an all-time high of 57% in August 2010 ("Poll: U.S. opposition to Afghan war at all-time high", *CNN World*, Washington, 17 August 2010).

cooperation like security agreements to protect EU civilians, it is highly unlikely that any decision to combine structures would be waved through. The contentious issue is and will be Turkey's EU membership. The Europeans are divided on this issue and the odds for Turkish EU membership in the near future are quite low. So are the perspectives for Cypriot reunification. There is thus no solution to the Turkey-Cyprus issue in the foreseeable future.⁸⁰

Apart from these political obstacles, certain practical issues would render the implementation of a twin-headed eagle scenario difficult. There would be a need for strategic harmonization and increased interoperability between the EU and NATO. To name just one practical example: the two organizations have dissimilar approaches to planning. While NATO members commit forces to the Alliance, the EU approach is bottom-up and forces are contributed on a voluntary and *ad hoc* basis.

If political and strategic obstacles could be surmounted, the twin-headed eagle scenario might be relatively sustainable. It generally takes long to change organizational structures once they are in place. The question is whether such a scenario would be desirable. Common structures would lead to less duplication and thus to a rationalization of defense efforts. Moreover, inter-organizational socialization and closer personnel ties would possibly lead to a convergence of strategic perspectives. On the other hand, the twin-headed eagle would leave little flexibility for either organization to pursue its respective security priorities autonomously. An autonomous CSDP has the advantage that it can deploy in places like Georgia⁸¹, Palestine or Lebanon, where a NATO (and especially US) presence would not be welcome or appropriate. If the EU and NATO merged their structures, CSDP missions might directly be associated with NATO and this advantage would be lost.

⁸⁰ Interview with an official of the European Union Military Staff, Brussels, 23 April 2009.

⁸¹ A military NATO deployment to Georgia would have been perceived as a return to the Cold War era. The deployment of an EU civilian mission, conducted without the US – Georgia's closest ally – was politically less contentious.

4.3 Two-Pillar NATO

Several scholars have predicted that NATO will develop into a two-pillar Alliance with the US on one side and the EU on the other.⁸² The Alliance would be re-balanced permitting increased burden sharing across the Atlantic. This would result in a flexible and pragmatic division of labor: based on a case-by-case assessment, the most suitable framework for engagement would be chosen.

Europeans would have more leverage in the Alliance's decision-making process. Due to an increased burden sharing and division of labor, there would be a constant need for consultation with NATO. This would permit the EU to use the Alliance as a forum to restrain the US.⁸³ This facet would assuage fears of NATO becoming a 'toolbox' for US operations.

While the transatlantic link and the collective defense clause would be kept intact, both the EU and NATO would dispose of the whole range of crisis management instruments.⁸⁴ If an EU member state faced an imminent security threat, the Europeans would concert first and then decide with their allied partners on the operational framework. Such a vision might comfort the Eastern EU member states, since it would provide a 'double-insurance policy' in case of Russian aggression.

For the US, the main advantage of a two-pillar NATO would be the aspect of increased burden sharing. The US could expect its equal partner in the Alliance to provide more resources for operations like ISAF and use NATO to demand more civilian CSDP contributions within the framework of NATO's Comprehensive Approach.

A two-pillar NATO implies that there is a European caucus within NATO. Even if the Europeans wanted to be represented by a single seat in NATO, they would probably not be able to 'speak with a single voice'. The example of the Iraq war has shown that threat perceptions do not only diverge across the Atlantic but also within Europe. Depending on the political constellations and on the security challenge at

⁸² For example: S. Biscop, "NATO, ESDP and the Riga Summit: No Transformation Without Re-Equilibrium", *Egmont Paper*, no. 11, Brussels, Royal Institute for International Relations, 2006, p. 22.

⁸³ G. Press-Barnathan, "Managing the Hegemon: NATO under Unipolarity", *Security Studies*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2006, pp. 280-309.

⁸⁴ S. Biscop, "NATO, ESDP and the Riga Summit", *op. cit.*, p. 12.

hand, EU member states might represent diametrically opposed viewpoints. According to Sven Biscop, the intra-European divide is the main obstacle to a truly balanced EU-US partnership.⁸⁵

Another obstacle to a two-pillar NATO and to true burden sharing is the EU's military capabilities gap. EU defense spending is on the decline, intra-European duplication and fragmentation persist and efforts to pool resources are advancing at a slow pace. The EU does not have its own headquarters and is thus limited in its ability to autonomously deploy larger-scale military operations. Furthermore, the CSDP is still facing a strategic void. While the ESS has stated ambitious goals, there is no civil-military sub-strategy to complement it. Finally, there is no common vision on the level of military ambition that the EU as a whole wants to attain.⁸⁶

If the Europeans were able to 'speak with one voice' and to generate more capabilities, a two-pillar Alliance would probably not be sustainable in the long term. The US and other non-European Allies do not want to speak to a unified European bloc within NATO. "They prefer to talk to an organized EU in the EU and to a disorganized one in NATO".⁸⁷ Once the EU-27 find a consensus, it is very hard to negotiate with them. Sooner or later, the US would probably use its power and instruments to divide the Europeans.⁸⁸ This strategy became apparent during the Iraq crisis when former US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld exacerbated the intra-European divide by his rhetoric about the "Old" and the "New Europe". Although the Obama Administration has a different foreign policy approach than the previous one, it cannot be ruled out that it will rely on 'coalitions of the willing' in the future. Bilateral cooperation between the US and single EU member states could easily draw a European pillar apart.

4.4 The Dinner and the Dishes

The EU and NATO could agree on a division of labor. NATO would be kept as an exclusively military organization ensuring collective defense and responding to 'hard' security threats, including territorial defense and high-intensity conflicts. The EU would

⁸⁵ Interview with S. Biscop, Senior Researcher at Egmont - Royal Institute for International Relations, Bruges, 26 March 2009.

⁸⁶ Biscop, "NATO, ESDP and the Riga Summit", *op. cit.*, pp. 14-16.

⁸⁷ Interview with J. Shea, *op. cit.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

focus on lower-intensity conflicts and post-conflict reconstruction and specialize in 'soft' security challenges such as energy and cyber security. The US could be invited to participate in CSDP missions and other threat responses on a case-by-case basis.

Considering the transatlantic military capabilities gap, a functional division of labor between the EU and NATO essentially equals a 'soft-hard' division of labor between the EU and the US. This comes back to the famous notion of the US 'preparing the dinner' and the EU 'washing the dishes'. This simplistic approach is accepted on neither side of the Atlantic. The US would argue that it is doing the 'dirty job', while the EU takes credit for the rewarding part of post-conflict reconstruction. At the same time, Europeans do not want to be reduced to the clean-uppers or to a sort of "civilian agency"⁸⁹ for NATO. They are also aware of the fact that post-conflict reconstruction is often more costly and time-consuming than the actual military intervention itself.

The EU has unambiguously declared that it wanted to be a global player. The CSDP was designed to enable the EU to act across the whole spectrum of military operations. The objectives stated in the EU's military headline goals clearly indicate that the EU wants to be able to respond to high-intensity conflicts in the future. A formal 'soft-hard' division of labor would put an "artificial upper limit"⁹⁰ on the EU's ambitions.

Moreover, NATO's role would be reduced to high-intensity crisis management, collective and territorial defense. The Alliance would thus have to leave areas like energy or cyber security to the responsibility of the EU. Whether some of the Allies, especially the post-communist ones, would accept such a strict functional division of labor is questionable. Considering NATO's capacities in critical infrastructure protection, it is also doubtful whether such a reduction of NATO's role is desirable for the security of the transatlantic area.

Though politically controversial, we currently have an informal 'soft-hard' division of labor in places like Afghanistan or Kosovo. According to Jamie Shea, the kind of

⁸⁹ J. de Hoop Scheffer, "EU-NATO Relations", Paris, 7 July 2008.

⁹⁰ Hofmann & Reynolds, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

division of labor we are witnessing in Kosovo is a model for the future.⁹¹ In Afghanistan, the division of labor is rather asymmetric. The fact that the EU could hardly agree on deploying a total of 400 police to Afghanistan, while it sends around 2.000 to the much smaller Kosovo, reflects a certain hierarchy of security interests. While the stabilization of the Balkans is of highest priority for the EU, there is no clear 'CSDP focus' on Afghanistan.

The sustainability of a division of labor approach depends on a transatlantic convergence in security priorities and on a common delineation of each organization's tasks. In order to foster a common approach and to agree on the terms of a division of labor, the EU and NATO would have to engage in political dialogue. Since this political dialogue is not taking place, there is no common vision on the 'lay-out' of a division of labor, and tensions are likely to arise sooner or later.

4.5 Back to the Future

NATO's original purpose was to give the EU a frame to develop its own military instruments. However, the idea of a European Defense Community collapsed in 1954, and NATO became the predominant security actor in Europe. The EU could return to its original ambitions and strive for independence from the Alliance. The EU could maintain peace and stability on the continent and in its proximate neighborhood and engage in peacekeeping operations according to its priorities. NATO would remain in place as a community of values and a forum for political consultation. The collective defense clause would be kept intact, and NATO would remain the institutional lynchpin for a coordination of efforts and a delineation of tasks when there are common threat perceptions among the Allies.

An independent CSDP has long been on the agenda of Europeanist nations like France. However, traditional Atlanticist nations like the UK, the Czech Republic and Poland still advocate a strong link between the CSDP and NATO and are wary of duplication and possible competition. Paradoxically, the US seems to be more willing to accept a more autonomous CSDP than some of the Atlanticist EU members. The attitude of US policymakers has become pragmatic. They want a strategic partner that can take over burden from the US and are aware that a certain degree of

⁹¹ Interview with J. Shea, *op. cit.*

duplication is unavoidable.⁹² If the US is serious about its calls for a stronger CSDP, it could rely on the European Atlanticists to accept the permanent European headquarters, which is arguably a necessary condition for a stronger and more independent CSDP.⁹³

While headquarters might give the EU more planning autonomy, it is not a sufficient condition for an independent CSDP. The main obstacle for increased autonomy is the lack of military capabilities. If the EU wants to be able to maintain peace and stability in the region and to provide real 'added value' in peacekeeping in complex theatres like the ones in Africa, it has to acquire the capacities to respond to high-intensity conflicts. In the medium term, European governments are unlikely to substantially boost their military expenditures. In the long term, EDA plans for increased pooling and specialization as well as Permanent Structured Cooperation could gradually close the military capabilities gap.

Former NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer clearly encouraged the initiatives of the French Presidency to "develop more robust EU military capabilities in addition to strengthened planning structures".⁹⁴ Since NATO largely draws on the same pool of forces as the CSDP, it suffers from the lack of European military capabilities. If an independent CSDP proves to be an engine for capabilities development, it will also make the Alliance more capable.

In the Strasbourg/Kehl Summit Declaration, the Allies emphasized that the autonomy of the EU and NATO as security actors should be maintained.⁹⁵ It is thus unlikely that the EU and NATO will, in the foreseeable future, strive to re-Americanize NATO or join their structures in order to become a twin-headed eagle. A two-pillar NATO with a single European seat is likely to be opposed by non-European Allies and requires an important boost of the EU's military capabilities. Although there is no formal agreement on a 'soft-hard' division of labor, the reality of the operations in Afghanistan or Kosovo comes quite close to this fourth scenario. While this kind of transatlantic burden sharing is likely to dominate the picture in the coming years, its sustainability is questionable. On several occasions, the US has already voiced

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Keohane, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁹⁴ De Hoop Scheffer, "EU-NATO relations", *op. cit.*

⁹⁵ NATO, *Strasbourg/Kehl Summit Declaration*, Strasbourg/Kehl, 4 April 2009.

discontent about the asymmetric burden it is carrying in Afghanistan. Ideally, the EU would live up to the ambitions expressed in the ESS and develop an CSDP capable of securing its own neighborhood and of launching operations across the whole spectrum of the Petersberg tasks. NATO would remain as an insurance policy and would benefit from increased European capabilities for Alliance operations.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has analyzed how effective EU-NATO cooperation in crisis management has been so far, and how the EU and NATO will or should interact in order to cope with the changing security environment.

I have argued that while the current political constellations attenuate the risk of inter-institutional competition between the EU and NATO, obstacles to cooperation prevent the organizations from unleashing their potential for complementarity. Political dialogue stalled because Turkish-Cypriot differences limit discussions to the 'Berlin Plus' operations. The EU and NATO have moved beyond the 'Berlin Plus' framework and are currently engaged side by side in a number of theatres around the world. Although informal and operational interactions provide for a certain degree of practical cooperation, the blockade of important decisions at the top impacts on every working level and renders day-to-day cooperation highly complicated.

Five scenarios for the future development of EU-NATO relations were presented. The first scenario, 'back to the bosom of Uncle Sam', implies that the EU gives up its ambitions to become an international security actor and reverts to the old formula of relying on the US. In the second scenario, 'twin-headed-eagle', the EU and NATO would share the same command structure and capabilities. Third, a 'two-pillar NATO' would be a re-balanced Alliance based on the US on one hand, and on an EU caucus on the other. Fourth, the 'dinner and the dishes' scenario refers to a transatlantic division of labor, according to which NATO is responsible for 'hard' security tasks, while the EU takes over 'soft' security issues. Finally, the EU could go 'back to the future' and use NATO as a framework to develop a truly capable and independent CSDP.

Based on the criteria of acceptability, realizability and sustainability, the three first scenarios could be ruled out. The most desirable would probably be the 'back to the future' scenario. Since the US and NATO are asking for a stronger and more capable CSDP, this option would currently also be the most acceptable of the five scenarios. However, the EU would have to live up to the ambitions stated in the ESS and become "more active, more coherent and more capable".⁹⁶

While the EU might achieve these goals in the long term, we are more likely to see a division of labor in the foreseeable future. Formally speaking, there will be no soft-hard division of labor as depicted in 'the dinner and the dishes' scenario. A fixed division of labor would limit both the CSDP and NATO in their further development. Instead, we might see a flexible and *ad hoc* division of labor. Depending on the threat scenario, political priorities and capabilities, one or the other organization, or both, will intervene.

Despite favorable political constellations as well as the 'wind of change' following the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty and the Alliance's New Strategic Concept, there will be no immediate solution to the 'frozen conflict'. Rather than renewing the whole picture, the EU and NATO will have to be pragmatic and try to connect pieces of the puzzle. Several steps could be taken:

(1) Increased Political Consultation

At the political level, there should be more informal channels and meeting points in order to discuss topics of mutual concern. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer proposed: monthly NAC-PSC meetings on pre-agreed topics, informal bi-monthly transatlantic lunches or dinners at Ambassadorial level, or regular visits to NATO by senior EU officials involved in issues of common concern, and vice-versa.⁹⁷

In such venues, the transatlantic partners could exchange ideas throughout the whole crisis management process. When faced with a common security challenge, they could discuss the most suitable framework of engagement. In case of parallel engagement, they could delineate tasks and jointly identify operational problems and solutions. In the aftermath of parallel engagement, they could exchange their

⁹⁶ Council of the European Union, *A Secure Europe, op. cit.*, p. 11.

⁹⁷ De Hoop Scheffer, "EU-NATO relations", *op. cit.*

views on 'lessons learned'. Even if no formal decisions can be taken, such discussions could foster a common strategic vision that might translate into the respective structures. The bandwidth of informal political discussions will, however, depend on Turkish and Cypriot levels of tolerance.

(2) Cross-Representation and Liaison

There should be more cross-representation and liaison at the strategic-military and operational levels.⁹⁸ Since NATO wants to pursue a comprehensive approach it is interested to obtain deeper insights into the EU's civilian planning structures.⁹⁹ Increased and broadened cross-representation and liaison could ensure that civilian viewpoints are taken into account in NATO's planning processes. This would ultimately facilitate civil-military coordination at the operational level. The Civil-Military Planning Directorate, the EU's new civil-military planning body, could become a platform for increased cooperation.¹⁰⁰

(3) EU-NATO Cooperation Agreement

Civil-military cooperation in planning should be lifted to another level through an EU-NATO cooperation agreement.¹⁰¹ Such an agreement would provide for "full involvement of the EU in planning for scenarios in which NATO would lead a military operation and the EU would lead a concurrent civilian deployment".¹⁰² Sven Biscop believes that, unlike a 'Berlin Plus Reverse', such a cooperation agreement would be politically feasible.¹⁰³

(4) Capability Development

The EU and NATO have similar capability gaps. Considering the growing budgetary restraints in most of the organizations' member states, resources must be pooled. In order to prevent duplication and to create synergies, there should be more exchange between capabilities experts in the EDA and the Allied Command Transformation with the goal to establish a number of joint EU-NATO capability projects.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ The Report of the Group of Experts even recommended setting up a small civilian planning unit within NATO. NATO, *NATO 2020, op. cit.*, p. 42.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with LtCol Kennedy, *op. cit.*

¹⁰¹ Interview with S. Biscop, *op. cit.*

¹⁰² S. Biscop, "Preparing for the NATO Summit: From Allies to Partners", *Atlantic Council of the United States*, 2 February 2009.

¹⁰³ Interview with S. Biscop, *op. cit.*

In order to improve cooperation in crisis management, the EU and NATO will have to follow a 'gradualistic policy'. Whether this will, in the end, resolve the so-called 'frozen conflict' remains to be seen. In the meantime, pragmatic and informal ways of cooperation will enable both organizations to enhance their contribution to the comprehensive approach. If the two most important security actors of the Western hemisphere fail in their attempts to project 'comprehensive power', they will both lose their credibility. Enhanced cooperation will enable both organizations to attain their security objectives, while the existing obstacles diminish the power of both actors. Or as Keohane put it, "NATO and the EU will sink or swim together".¹⁰⁴ The two organizations are condemned to close cooperation and should work towards transforming this cooperation into the "truly comprehensive partnership"¹⁰⁵ they continuously announce.

¹⁰⁴ Keohane, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁵ NATO, *NATO 2020, op. cit.*, p. 24.

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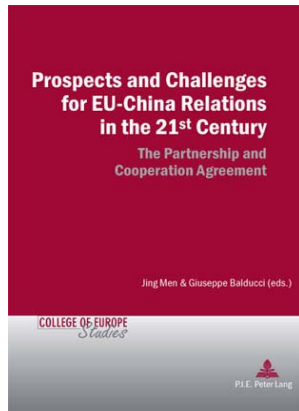
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