Whither Transatlantic Cooperation?: Where NATO and ESDP Collide

by

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INTRODUCTION

Transatlantic cooperation has been the pillar of North America's and Europe's pursuit of strategic interests in Europe. In the cold war era, the individual sovereign states from each continent had a common perception of the strategic environment. There was at least a shared understanding that cooperative mechanisms drawing upon the resources of all members of the transatlantic community were required to meet the overwhelming Soviet threat. US assets and leadership were deemed to be critical components of transatlantic security. As economic integration matured, however, the conduct of foreign and security policy remained largely the purview of the individual sovereign states. Most European states cast their lot with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as the vehicle of choice to achieve their collective defense needs.

As Europe moves forward on the path of integration into the post-cold war era, the pursuit of a common foreign and security policy (CFSP) has assumed greater importance. With monetary union on track, present day visionaries with their sights set on a united Europe capable of wielding superpower-like power in the international system have refocused their efforts on outfitting Europe with a defense capacity commensurate with its economic power. Meanwhile, the strategic environment has dramatically shifted from a context that demands the pre-eminence of a collective defense strategy to a more ambiguous threat environment that calls for repeated deployments of peacekeeping forces and ongoing efforts to prevent and manage small-scale, primarily intra-state conflicts and post-conflict environments.

The war in Kosovo upset the delicate balance between Europe and the US within NATO, because it drove home the undeniable reality that Europe is a junior partner toward contributing to its national security interests. Operation Allied Force illustrated that European defense establishments lack the capability to conduct significant out of area operations that require strategic airlift, "smart" weapons crucial for precision bombing, and the logistic train necessary to support forces in a forward theater of conflict. Many Europeans perceived their reliance on US military power as humiliating. Others perceived strategic dependency as a potential threat to the movement for European unity. At the very least, a consensus was building that American dominance versus true Euro-Atlantic partnership characterized the current state of the transatlantic relationship. In the end, Kosovo proved to be a catalyzing event. The war sparked

EU member states to begin the process of creating a separate defense capacity with independent institutions with the dual goals of forging a common foreign and security policy and restoring balance in the Euro-Atlantic partnership.[1]

However, there is great uncertainty about where the pursuit of an independent European defense capacity will actually lead. Observers agree that political ambitions for defense independence are out of sync with declining defense budgets. An overnight shift in relative US-European capabilities is out of the question, but history teaches us that seemingly unattainable goals in the European integration process have been gradually achieved through the methodical development of institutional processes and steady progress over time.

This paper offers a framework for measuring the threat of the emergent European Security and Defense Program (ESDP)[2] to the transatlantic link. There is a range of possible outcomes which have varying implications for the US as a global and European power. ESDP will emerge as either a strategic competitor to NATO that negates or significantly diminishes US influence in Europe, or alternatively, ESDP might emerge as a strategic partner to NATO that restores the strategic balance in the Euro-Atlantic partnership with a reinvigorated European pillar. With the concept just a little over a year old, it is still too early to tell exactly how ESDP will mature and what form it will take. As it develops, though, it is useful to have some measures to help evaluate the direction being taken, either continuing toward partnership or diverging toward competition. Three criteria – indivisibility, improvement, and inclusiveness[3] – are useful benchmarks for tracking the future course of Euro-Atlantic relations.

EVOLUTION OF THE EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENSE IDENTITY

ESDP began to get a lot of press in December 1999 when the European Council announced that its "Headline Goal" Rapid Reaction Force would be established by 2003. In fact, ESDI has been around since the early 1990s in one form or another. However the prospect of the creation of a European Army independent of the transatlantic link represented a new direction in ESDI. In December 1991, the Maastricht Treaty signaled a turning point where

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[1] Comments offered by Dr. Lutz Unterseher, Chief Advisor to Volker Kroning, MdB, the Social Democratic leader for defense policy on the Budget Committee of the Bundestag at US Army War College, 23 May 2001.

[2] ESDP is used in this paper to refer to the recent initiative to develop ESDI within the EU. ESDI is used in the paper to refer to the general concept of a European security and defense identity.

the European Community decided to go beyond mere economic union and pursue greater integration as the European Union (EU). As the EU expanded its integration beyond economic community and the common market, the natural evolution was the development of a common foreign and security policy as the military complement to the EU's economic prosperity. .

The next logical evolution is the military means to back up any such foreign policy. The 1991 Maastricht Treaty described development of the CFSP as , "including the eventual framing of a common defence policy which might in time lead to a common defence."[4] The treaty identified the Western European Union (WEU) as the focal point for any Community actions with defense implications. The WEU promptly invited members of the European Community to accede to the WEU, or at least become associate members, and also extended invitations to NATO non-Community allies to become associate members. (All full members of the WEU belong to NATO). The idea was to create a common forum for European countries both inside and outside of NATO to discuss security. Since then, the WEU focused on limited crisis response operations such as police activities in Mostar and de-mining assistance to Croatia in operations undertaken at the request of the EU, but coordinated closely with NATO.

The event that re-opened the dormant debate on European defense was the British-French Summit at St. Malo in December 1998. Anxious to generate positive energy toward a more robust military capability for the EU than the WEU, and anxious to take the leadership role, President Jacques Chirac invited Prime Minister Tony Blair to St. Malo. The French position was merely a continuation of de Gaulle's search for autonomy from the US in European security. For the UK, St. Malo represented a major break with previous British policy that had carefully avoided support for any sort of independent European defense capability that might threaten to weaken the transatlantic link. The precursor to this break came earlier in 1998 when the British government decided that the European Union (EU) was the appropriate framework to improve European defense capabilities.[5] Mr. Blair assured Washington that the issue was

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[3] Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright at the December 1998 NATO ministerial meeting in Brussels. For a review of American responses, see Stanley Sloan, "The United States and European Defence," *Chaillot Paper*, number 39.

[4] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "NATO Handbook: The European Security and Defence Identity"; available from <http://www.weu.nato.int/docu/handbook/hb10800e.htm>; Internet; accessed 16 January 2001.

[5] Francois Heisbourg, "European defence takes a leap forward," NATO Review 48 (Spring 2000): 8 [database on-line]; available from UMI ProQuest Direct, Bell & Howell.

improving capabilities, not weakening the transatlantic link.[6] French emphasis on independence and British emphasis on capabilities resulted in a declaration on European defense which stated the intention to pursue an autonomous military capability, favoring a rapid reaction force as the starting point. It remained conspicuously ambiguous about whether the capability would reside inside or outside of NATO.

Whether ESDI would develop inside or outside NATO has been a contentious issue over the last couple years. The first WEU declaration following Maastricht defined the WEU relationship with the EU and the Atlantic Alliance "the defence component of the European Union and as the means to strengthen the European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance."[7] The Americans welcomed this approach and the US position has been to keep the emerging EU defense identify anchored firmly within NATO. This position was first asserted at the NATO ministerial meeting in Berlin in 1996 and was reconfirmed as the NATO position at the Washington Summit in 1999.

Key provisions of the [Washington] accord include a stipulation that the Europeans build up their defense identity and capabilities within NATO and not separately under the EU. For instance the US was insistent that the EU not develop a military planning system independent of NATO. The agreement also gives NATO the 'first right of refusal' which means that EU leadership takes effect only after the alliance has declined to take on the mission - a step that effectively allows the US to pass up the opportunity to take political and military leadership of the particular crisis.[8]

However, just two months later at the EU Summit in Cologne, the report language indicated a drift away from the "within NATO" position. "It seemed to suggest that the Europeans were backing away from the bedrock principle that NATO, and not the EU, would remain the option of first resort in times of future crisis. When EU officials also seemed reluctant to formalize consultations between the EU and NATO, US officials immediately

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[6] Marybeth Peterson Ulrich, "NATO Since Kosovo: The Impact of the War in Kosovo on the Euro-Atlantic Security Community," 5-6; available from <https://wwwc.cc.columbia.edu/sec/dlc/ciao/isa/ulm02/ulm02.html; Internet; accessed 4 April 2001.

[7] Western European Union, "European Security and Defence: WEU's Role"; available at <http://www.weu.int/eng/info/role.htm>; Internet; accessed 23 January 2001.

[8] Ulrich, 7-8.

suspected the French of reverting to form and once again trying to keep the United States at arm's length on European security deliberations."[9] The report language described ESDP as a "capacity for autonomous action backed by credible military forces." Although "autonomous" does not necessarily mean "independent" nor does it make it impossible for it to act within NATO, it certainly makes it more difficult and less likely. At a minimum, elaborate consultation schemes have to be worked out between NATO and the EU.

The second resounding issue has been the so-called "capabilities gap" starkly illustrated throughout the Balkan crises. During the early part of the crisis, the Europeans could not arrive at consensus to take action. Once consensus was reached, the Europeans were unable to take the lead because they lacked necessary military capabilities to do so. The remaining critical issue is the question of sharing assets. Kosovo and the preceding Balkan crises illustrated that the Europeans do not possess the capabilities to effectively prosecute crisis response operations.

The obvious source to turn to for these capabilities is NATO, or more specifically, the US in NATO. As early as 1993 when the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) concept was launched, NATO promised to give the WEU assets for WEU-led operations. This "separable but not separate" principle was reiterated at the Washington Summit, this time for EU-led operations. These assets include the full gamut of capabilities, notably NATO planning capabilities. With the WEU, there was never any question that operations would be planned using NATO resources. That is not yet clear with ESDP.

An issue closely related to sharing NATO assets is consultation with non-EU NATO allies. For NATO, especially the US, it was inconceivable that the assets of NATO allies would be committed without consultation. The EU members of NATO voice their interests through the EU political apparatus where the commitment of forces is still a sovereign decision. ESDP proponents, on the other hand, would have to work out consultation schemes with non-EU allies before NATO could fully commit to sharing resources.

The current configuration of ESDP takes its shape in the plans for the Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) "Headline Goal" scheduled for implementation in 2003. The mission of this force is to respond to the so-called "Petersberg tasks," developed at the WEU Foreign and Defense Ministers' meeting there in 1992. These tasks include "humanitarian and crisis rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks, and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including

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[9] James Kitfield, "Will Europe Ruin NATO?" Air Force 83 (October 2000); available from

peacemaking."[10] The Headline Goal calls for a response force of 60,000 military troops, available within 60 days, and sustainable for up to a year. This force, as with all ESDP elements, will only be used in those cases "where the Alliance as a whole is not engaged."[11] With Kosovo still fresh in their minds, the EU leaders also recognized the necessity to address admitted shortfalls in command and control, intelligence, and strategic transport required in order to create a force with any real credibility.

Additionally, the December 1999 EU Summit announced that new political and military bodies will be set up within the European Council to include a Political and Security Committee, a Military Committee, and a Military Staff.[12] Although "new bodies," they were to be formed by absorbing the appropriate institutions of the WEU into the EU as the nuclei for the new organizations. The Feira Summit proposal in June 2000 rounded out the capacities of the EU crisis response capability. There, the Portuguese Presidency of the EU addressed the complementary requirement for civil response forces necessary for crisis operations. The report called for the commitment of a 5000 strong police force available for deployment by 2003, 100 of which are to be deployable within 30 days. Appropriate legal and juridical assets were also identified.

The most recent look at ESDP progress came during the December 2000 Nice EU Summit. French President (and EU President at the time) Jacques Chirac started off "by announcing that the rapid reaction force would need to be 'independent' from NATO, while still using NATO assets, but promoting a force with its own operational planning."[13] As noted above, this has been one of the most contentious issues surrounding ESDI and is still very much alive, given this announcement. As it turned out, "the summit's final communiqué was stripped of most statements on defence, apart from a brief reference to an EU report and annexes."[14] Essentially, the link with NATO was only generally agreed to, due to important differences of

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<http://www.afa.org/magazine/Oct2000/1000nato.html>; Internet; accessed 9 March 2001.

[10] Western European Union.

[11] European Defence: Resources and Links, "European Defence: A Chronology"; available from <http://www.usinfo.be/Issues/Eudefence/Eumilestones.htm>; Internet; accessed 17 January 2001.

[12] Western European Union, "Western European Union: WEU and the European Union"; available from <http:// www.weu.int/eng/info/eu.htm>; Internet; accessed 23 January 2001.

[13] Thomas Skold, "No Agreement on Proposal for NATO-EU Relations," NATO Notes 2 (11 December 2000); available from <http://www.cesd.org/notes25.htm>; Internet; accessed 18 March 2001.

[14] Anton La Guardia, "Euro-Force still cause of division," The Daily Telegraph, 9 December 2000, p. 11 (788 words) [database on-line]; available from Lexis-Nexis, Reed Elsevier.

emphasis between the EU Member States, notably France's continued desire for greater autonomy from NATO.[15]

The French Presidency did report unambiguous progress toward the Headline Goal announced at Helsinki a year earlier. The Summit reported out on the Capabilities Commitment Conference held in November that resulted in a "Force Catalogue" of over 100,000 forces, 400 combat aircraft and 100 ships committed by some 30 countries, representing virtually all European nations. Progress was also reported in terms of developing the decision-making apparatus for ESDP. While interim capabilities had been previously put into place, concrete plans for the EU Political and Security Committee, the EU Military Committee and the EU Military Staff were laid out, to include an initial operating capability for the Military Staff in 2001.

Perhaps the most significant development was the announcement that elaborate consultation schemes had been worked out with five non-EU NATO members (Iceland, Norway, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland). Equally significant was that the sixth non-EU member, Turkey, with NATO's second largest army, refused to agree to the proposal. Essentially, the EU welcomed the Turks providing forces, and agreed to consult with them, but would not give them a part in the decision-making process. With Turkey's application for EU membership a contentious issue, it appears Ankara intends to be a thorn in the EU's side over the ESDP issue by threatening to block EU access to NATO resources.[16]

There were a few other discordant notes at Nice. The NATO "right of first refusal" was obviously missing from the policy adopted at the Council, apparently replaced by "due regard for the two organisations' decision-making autonomy."[17] There also was apparent disagreement[18] over planning ESDP operations. Prior to Nice, French Defense Minister Alain Richard proposed that planning for EU-led operations could be done by EU headquarters, to include organic French headquarters as well as the Eurocorps. The US counterproposal, reinforced by Secretary Cohen as late as two days before the Nice Summit, proffers "a common defense planning process involving all 23 NATO and EU countries...and the need to assure the EU

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[15] "Defence: What's at Stake in the New European Policy," European Information Service, 9 December 2000, sec. 2551(1604 words) [database on-line]; available from Lexis-Nexis, Reed Elsevier.

[16] Matthew Kaminsky and Hugh Pope, "U.S. Presses NATO Allies for Security Deal with EU – European Strike Force is to be Complementary, but Some Don't Buy It," The Wall Street Journal (15 December 2000): A15 [database on-line]; available from UMI ProQuest Direct, Bell & Howell.

[17] French Presidency of the European Union, "European Security and Defense Policy: Presidency Report," (4 December 2000):1; available from <http://www.info-france-usa.org/EU2000/defenrep.htm>; Internet; accessed 14 February 2001.

access to NATO operational planning."[19] The resultant wording approved by the Council was "guaranteed permanent access (without case by case NATO authorization) to NATO's planning capabilities."[20]

Meeting just before the Nice Summit, the NATO defense ministerial was unwilling to offer guaranteed access to anything until the entire EU-NATO agreement was worked out. Of course, even with assured access to NATO operational planning, it is not clear that the French will not pursue their proposal of using EU headquarters for planning. All that being said, extensive instructions to continue working consultation mechanisms are also in the Nice Report. The UK Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, summarized: "In Nice we completed the project of getting the agreement within the European Union to the partnership with NATO."[21]

SECURITY IN EUROPE

THE TRANSATLANTIC LINK - NATO

The transatlantic link is indispensable for European security for the foreseeable future. Retired Army General Wesley E. Clark, former Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, stated it succinctly: "Both Europe and the United States need a strong transatlantic relationship, defined by 'shared risks, shared burdens and shared benefits.'"[22] Just before the recent change of American administrations, Secretary of Defense Cohen released a report called Strengthening Transatlantic Security: A U.S. Strategy for the 21st Century in December 2000. In it, he notes that chief among US "vital interests" are "the physical security and territorial integrity of our nation and those of our Allies ... In Europe these vital interests--and our enduring commitment to the principles of democracy, human rights, individual liberty, and the rule of law--are manifested in and defended by the NATO Alliance and the complex web of interlocking

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[18] Robin Cook, "'A Stronger Transatlantic Alliance and a Safer Europe'– Cook," 14 December 2000; available from <http://www.fco.gov.uk/news/newstext.asp?4514 >; Internet; accessed 4 April 2001.

[19] William S. Cohen, "Cohen on NATO-U.S.-EU Partnership, Joint Defense Planning," 5 December 2000; available from <http://www.useu.be/Issues/cohe1205.html>; Internet; accessed 4 April 2001.

[20] French Presidency of the European Union, 36 and 39.

[21] Cook.

[22] Wesley K. Clark, "Risking the Alliance," The Washington Post (8 December 2000): A 41 [database on-line]; available from UMI ProQuest Direct, Bell & Howell.

relationships and partnerships that define the architecture of European security in the 21st century."[23]

At the turn of the 21st century, ESDP is the crux of this European security architecture. The EU (French) Presidency Report clearly states that "the development of the ESDP [European Security and Defence Policy] will contribute to the vitality of a renewed Transatlantic link."[24] In Washington for the US-EU Summit shortly after the December 2000 EU Nice Summit, Jacques Chirac, addressed the transatlantic link.

> Aside from the strengthening of the European Union, the goal of having a new transatlantic partnership implies that the United States will continue to be involved in world affairs...It [the world] needs an America that is not tempted to turn its back on the world or be seduced by unilateralism and that plays its full role in the main international organizations...Everything favors a renewed transatlantic partnership anchored in shared values and destiny as one of the cornerstones of world stability.[25]

NATO is the linchpin of this transatlantic relationship, contributing over 50 years of experience. Yet, after the Fall of the Wall, the very existence of NATO was questioned, with both those inside and outside the Alliance wondering what purpose the NATO could serve. Reflecting on this question after the fact, NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson stated:

> Although the Soviet Union was gone, the need for defence and the need to manage security crises in Europe remained. In the fluid and unpredictable post-Cold War world, we still needed a transatlantic forum for consultation and cooperation on security matters...We needed to break down Cold War dividing lines and demonstrate to former adversaries that membership in European institutions was neither a dream nor a false promise. We needed to reach out a strong hand of friendship and cooperation to Central and Eastern Europe, and lock those countries into a solid framework of trust and cooperation. NATO was the answer to all those requirements.[26]

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[23] United States, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs), Strengthening Transatlantic Security: A U.S. Strategy for the 21st Century, (December 2000), 5; available from <http://http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/eurostrategy2000.pdf >; Internet; accessed 4 April 2001.

[24] French Presidency of the European Union,1.

[25] Jacques Chirac, "Hands Across the Water: Today's U.S.-EU Summit," The Washington Post (18 December 2000): A 27 [database on-line]; available from UMI ProQuest Direct, Bell & Howell.

[26] George (Lord) Robertson, "Rebalancing NATO for a strong future," The Officer 76 (March 2000): 27-29 [database on-line]; available from UMI ProQuest Direct, Bell & Howell.

NATO'S NEW STRATEGIC CONCEPT

The new Strategic Concept, adopted at the November 1991 Summit Meeting in Rome before the collapse of the Soviet Union, reaffirmed NATO's commitment to its fundamental principle of collective defense, while recognizing security risks of a broader nature to include proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, and regional crises.[27] Specifically, the concept called for the restructuring and reduction of military capabilities in order to move away from an emphasis on massive mobilization so that crisis management and peacekeeping roles could be fulfilled.[28] This new conceptualization of Alliance strategy accounted for the balance of power realities of a democratizing Soviet Union, but also projected a new role for the Alliance in the territory of its former adversaries. The Strategic Concept declared that one of the fundamental tasks of the Alliance is "to provide one of the indispensable foundations for a stable security environment in Europe, based on the growth of democratic institutions and commitment to the peaceful resolution of disputes, in which *no* country would be able to intimidate or coerce *any* European nation or to impose hegemony through the threat or use of force."[29] In addition, the new Strategic Concept called for the European allies to assume greater responsibility for their own security.[30]

Out of this analysis of the new security environment grew the notion of "exporting stability." Over time, it became "understood that 'exporting stability' involved helping to create the key conditions, such as economic growth and development that would be essential for

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[27] NATO Handbook, "The Alliance's Strategic Concept," www.nato.int/docu/handbook/hb103003.htm

[28] Jeffrey Simon, *NATO Enlargement and Central Europe* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1996), p. 12.

[29] North Atlantic Council, Strategic Concept (1991), paragraph 16.

[30] *NATO Basic Fact Sheet No. 12*, "What Is NATO?," June 1997.

democratic consolidation in the postcommunist region of Europe."[31] The NATO enlargement process served this purpose to some extent. However, "NATO pioneered this strategy with its Partnership for Peace (PfP) and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) and the special consultation arrangements with Russia and Ukraine."[32] These successful programs maintain their relevancy by continuing to grow and evolve based on the changing political environment.

The 50th Anniversary of NATO in 1999 was the occasion for the release of an updated strategic concept to reflect the profound security and political developments of the intervening decade. The new update committed the Alliance to pursuing "a just and lasting peaceful order in Europe" that entails not only ensuring the defense of its members but contributing to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic region.[33] The new concept decidedly shifted NATO's post-Cold War center of gravity toward exporting stability eastward. The new strategic concept also argued that the Alliance, "must maintain collective defence and reinforce the transatlantic link and ensure a balance that allows the European Allies to assume greater responsibility. It must deepen its relations with its partners and prepare for the accession of new members. It must, above all, maintain the political will and the military means required by the entire range of its missions."[34]

U.S. POLICY EVOLUTION TOWARDS AN INDEPENDENT EUROPEAN DEFENSE CAPABILITY

The new Strategic Concept supports the development of a European defense pillar based upon the provision that "it will continue to be developed within NATO"[35] and the understanding that the European allies will assume more responsibility for their national security. Although this NATO-wide policy largely reflects the US position on an independent European defense

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[31] Marybeth Peterson Ulrich, "NATO's New Strategic Concept and the Role of the Partnership for Peace Program: The Construction of a Security Regime in Post-Cold War Europe," Occasional Paper Series for the University of Missouri at Columbia, 11 August 1999, 14.

[32] Peter Schmidt, "ESDI: 'Separable but not separate?'" NATO Review 48 (Spring 2000):12 [database on-line]; available from UMI ProQuest Direct, Bell & Howell.

[33] NATO Press Release NAC-S(99)65, "The Alliance's Strategic Concept," 24 April 1999, http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-065e.htm

[34] NATO Press Release NAC-S(99)65, "The Alliance's Strategic Concept," (24 April1999): para 26; available from <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-065e.htm>; Internet; accessed 18 March 2001.

[35] Ibid., para 30.

capability, it is instructive to explore the evolution of US policy towards an independent European defense capability.

In reaction to the December 1998 St. Malo declaration, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright put forth her "Three D's," where ESDP must meet three criteria: no decoupling, no duplication, and no discrimination.[36] "No decoupling" simply means that the transatlantic link must be maintained; "no duplication" refers to Europeans optimizing their scarce resources and not duplicating existing NATO capabilities; and "no discrimination" captures the idea that non-EU NATO members must be consulted before NATO assets can be used for EU operations.

Less than two months after the EU Helsinki announcement, Secretary of Defense Cohen stated, "NATO is, and should remain, the principal foundation of transatlantic and European security...A coherent European capacity to act in its security interests should multiply NATO's power, not divide it. We [US] believe that every step toward an ESDI should meet that test." He went on to endorse NATO Secretary General Robertson's "Three I's Test:" indivisibility of transatlantic security; improvement of European security capabilities; and inclusiveness available to all European allies.[37] Essentially this is an evolution of Albright's "Three D's," although stated in the positive and a bit broader interpretation than "no discrimination" since all European allies, not simply non-EU NATO allies, are included.

Over the next few months, Secretary of State Albright reinforced essentially the same theme on at least three occasions. In March 2000 at the Lisbon US - EU meeting, she stated, "We look forward to a Europe with forces that are modern, flexible and prepared to operate as part of NATO, or separately where the Alliance is not engaged."[38] A month later on the occasion of the 51st birthday of NATO, she reinforced that "sound security links between NATO and the EU are essential" and that any European defense initiative compliment (sic) and not compete with the North Atlantic alliance.[39] Her last statement on ESDP came at the North Atlantic Council in December 2000 where she "set forth three tests for success of the project. That we should have a coordinated and coherent approach of both Europe and NATO; that

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[36] William Drozdiak, "U.S. Tepid on European Defense Plan: American Stand Vexes EU Leaders," The Washington Post, 7 March 2000, sec. A, p. A01 (1488 words) [database on-line]; available from Lexis-Nexis, Reed Elsevier.

[37] William S. Cohen, Speech at the Bayerischer Hof Hotel, Munich, Germany, 5 February 2000; available from <http://www.defenselink. Mil/speeches/2000/s20000205-secdef.html>; Internet; accessed 15 October 2000.

[38] Madeleine Albright, "Albright Says U.S. Supports European Military Mechanism," Xinhua General News Service, 4 March 2000, (139 words) [database on-line]; available from Lexis-Nexis, Reed Elsevier.

there should be assured access to NATO's operational planning capacity; and that there should be regular consultation between both institutions."[40]

Cohen's final pronouncement on ESDP came in a speech to NATO Defense Ministers in December 2000, just before the EU Nice Summit. He warned "that NATO could become 'a relic of the past' unless Europeans carry out their pledges to improve their military capability and link their new intervention force firmly to the Western alliance."[41]

The closest thing to a policy statement on ESDP from the Clinton administration is presented in Strengthening Transatlantic Security, a Department of Defense (DoD) December 2000 publication. Regarding ESDI, it states that the US seeks

> a relationship wherein NATO and EU efforts to strengthen European security are coherent and mutually reinforcing; where the autonomy and integrity of decision-making in both organizations are respected, with each organization dealing with the other on an equal footing; where both organizations place a high premium on transparency, close and frequent contacts on a wide range of levels, and on efforts that are complementary; and where there is no discrimination against any of the member states of either organization.[42]

The indivisibility theme is strong, although the issue of within or outside NATO seems to be conceded to extensive consultation. The improvement requirement is equally strong. Finally, inclusiveness is clearly evident, although limited to "members."

Early in the George W. Bush Administration there are no indications that this policy will change significantly. But, back on the eve of the change in administrations, "many European leaders, already uneasy with American plans for a nuclear-missile defense shield, interpreted the comments [Bush campaign suggestions that the U.S. pull out of Balkan peacekeeping] as possibly signaling a reduction in the U.S. role in Europe, or, even more worrisome in many European capitals, a more go-it alone approach to foreign affairs."[43] Time will tell.

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[39] Madeleine Albright, "NATO turns 51 with US, Euro vows to keep alliance relevant," Agence France Presse, 4 April 2000, sec. Domestic (1777 words); available from Lexis-Nexis, Reed Elsevier.

[40] Cook.

[41] Douglas Hamilton and Charles Aldinger, "EU Force Could Spell NATO's End, Cohen Says; He Warns Europeans to Focus on Alliance," The Washington Post (6 December 2000): A 28 [database on-line]; available from UMI ProQuest Direct, Bell & Howell.

[42] United States, 20.

[43] Kaminsky and Pope.

EVALUATION AGAINST THE THREE CRITERIA

This paper has attempted to develop the issues related to ESDP and its impact on the transatlantic link. We argue that US policy since the Helsinki announcement should evolve based on past and future developments in the "Robertson criteria" explored below.

INDIVISIBILITY

NATO's new Strategic Concept issued in 1999 stated that, "The security of Europe and that of North America are indivisible."[44] For purposes of this analysis, indivisibility is simply defined as maintaining the transatlantic link, more specifically NATO. The raison d'etre for NATO remains Article-5 collective defense, but NATO also has a role in crisis response as well as in exporting stability. These other roles are very important and cannot be neglected if the link is to be maintained.

The earlier discussion on the transatlantic link and European security made it clear that both sides of the Atlantic are committed to maintaining the Alliance. Both sides acknowledge shared values and interests, not the least of which are a strong economic and trade relationship. On the European side, there is the additional motivation of harnessing US unilateral tendencies as much as possible. And on a practical level, Lord Robertson said back in March 2000 that "realism tells us that European strategic independence is simply not feasible. The U.S. retains key strategic capabilities that are indispensable for all but the smallest contingencies."[45]

Then Defense Secretary Cohen suggested a number of ways to measure whether the European initiative was competitive or not. In December 2000, "he said alliance nations in Europe must commit more to improving their military capabilities as agreed, and that a 'cooperative, collaborative mechanism' must be established so that the EU force was not a competitor with NATO."[46] More specifically, he went on to say that "if we had a competing institution that was established that would be inconsistent with military effectiveness, if in fact there was any element of using the [EU] force structure in a way to simply set up a competing headquarters...then NATO could become a relic."[47] For Cohen, then, operational planning must be done using NATO planning capabilities; the creation of separate bureaucracies and planning

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[44] NATO Press Release NAC-S(99)65.

[45] George (Lord) Robertson, "Strategic independence for Europe 'not feasible,' Robertson says," Aerospace Daily, 1 February 2000, vol. 193, no. 21, p. 159 (625 words) [database on-line]; available from Lexis-Nexis, Reed Elsevier.

[46] Hamilton and Aldinger.

organizations runs the risk of weakening the link between the US, NATO and European security.[48] Even more importantly, mechanisms have to be developed to link the EU and NATO that are collaborative in nature and transparent to avoid misunderstanding.

The French EU Presidency Report, adopted at Nice in 2000, states that "the aim in relations between the EU and NATO is to ensure effective consultation, cooperation and transparency."[49] So, the right words are there, and have been since Helsinki. But, the devil is in the details and these details are far from worked out and bear watching. Wim van Eekelen, head of the Netherlands delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly, sums it up well: "There is no reason to believe that a break [in the Alliance] is inevitable, but there are contradictory tendencies of competition and co-operation which require careful management."[50]

If the mechanisms developed only pay lip service to the concepts and do not enable real consultation, then we might be seeing the development of a competitor. Regarding the issue of dual planning institutions, despite the assertion of assured access to NATO planning capabilities as reflected in the Nice Presidency report, the jury is still out. The French are likely to continue to pursue independent planning capabilities, which would not only violate the "improvement" criteria (by duplicating existing capabilities), but could be the harbinger of ESDP as competitor for NATO, thus weakening the transatlantic link.

There is growing demand from both sides of the Atlantic for the US to modify its approach to the developing EU-NATO relationship in a way that is free and open enough to enable true collaboration and consultation. First, the US needs to accept European autonomous operations.[51] Even so, it is difficult to think of a major crisis where the Alliance as a whole would not be engaged. The December 2000 report, Strengthening Transatlantic Security, puts it this way: "It remains overwhelmingly likely that, in any situation where military involvement on a significant scale is justified and where there is a European consensus to undertake a military operation, the United States would support a NATO role and would be part of the operation."[52]

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[47] Ibid.

[48] Cohen, "Cohen on NATO-U.S.-EU Relationship, Joint Defense Planning."

[49] French Presidency of the European Union, Annex VII.

[50] Wim van Eekelen, "The European security and defence identity," NATO Parliamentary Assembly Defence and Security for the 21st Century Article, 5; available from <http://www.atalink.co.uk/nato/html/p110.htm; Internet; accessed 4 April 2001.

[51] Sherwood McGinnis, "Will European Security and Defense Policy Strengthen or Weaken the Transatlantic Link?" Lecture in the Cicero Foundation Great Debate seminar, The European Security and Defence Identity: A Threat to the Transatlantic Relationship?" Paris,14 December 2000; available from <http://www.cicerofoundation.org/p4mcginnis.html>; Internet; accessed 9 March 2001.

[52] United States, 19.

Less involved operations like those the WEU has led over the last ten years are much easier to envision. As time goes on and the ESDP matures, some out of region autonomous operations would not be surprising (e.g., in Africa perhaps). The one disturbing note in this regard is that the Nice Treaty of December 2000 removed the previously accepted "right of first refusal" for NATO. The concern is that "any division of labour between NATO and EU that would relegate the alliance to collective defence only, while leaving crisis management to the EU, would marginalise the alliance and its non-EU members."[53]

The real bottom line on indivisibility for the US, though, is clearly stated in the conclusion of the DoD report referenced above: "While recognizing that America's unique political, economic, and military strengths will continue to ensure a preponderant role for our country within the transatlantic community...we need to be prepared to share responsibility and leadership."[54] Presuming that the US can share in this manner, then the EU will be able to pursue the ESDP as part of its expanded integration. If the US cannot share responsibility and leadership, that might force the EU into a competitive stance.

In December 2000, the Deputy Political Counselor to the U.S Embassy in Paris told a Euro-Atlantic audience that "the development of ESDP should result in new and improved military capabilities so that the European Allies can effectively exercise the greater responsibility they seek...If the European Union neglects these factors and focuses more on building autonomy for its own sake, then the effects could be serious: New frictions within the transatlantic community; a reduced capacity to manage crises; and, in the worst case, an increasing tendency...to reduce American engagement in European security."[55] Although not a threat, he raised the political possibility that the EU as a security competitor v. a security partner could hasten the demise of the transatlantic link that both sides agree is in the interests of all concerned.

IMPROVEMENT

Improvement is what US support for ESDI is really all about. Even Lord Robertson has said on more than one occasion that ESDI is about only three things: capabilities, capabilities, capabilities. In practice it is difficult to de-link the arguments about the Euro-Atlantic partnership and improved capabilities. Improving capabilities is the basic commitment that must be made

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[53] Schmidt, 3.
[54] United States, 63.
[55] McGinnis, 5.

on the part of the Europeans for them to be viewed as a partner. "Improvement " for purposes of this discussion goes beyond the earlier understanding of "no duplication." There has to be a commitment to "new and improved" capabilities. Security forces in Europe, as elsewhere, are a zero sum game. A country has one military and one defense budget, not one for the EU and one for NATO. Resources are limited; consequently, choices must be made.

There is plenty of room for improvement. "Ten years after the end of the Cold War, NATO's defence planning and review process has not led to the necessary and massive overhaul of the bloated European force structure inherited from the Cold War."[56] What needs to be done is to transform from a static defensive force to a mobile projection force to meet the new threat environment of a post Cold War world. These goals are clearly laid out in the Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI), launched at the NATO 50th Anniversary Summit in Washington, April 1999. It aims to improve Alliance capabilities in the five following areas: mobility and deployability; sustainability; effective engagement; survivability, and interoperable communications. The first major task taken on under DCI was to explicitly lay out the capability gaps within NATO; some 58 areas were identified. The challenge, then, is how to reduce those gaps. At the NATO defense ministerial, December 2000, a NATO official noted that "just over half of the defense requirements listed under the DCI have been met," but that NATO is "still falling short of those goals."[57]

Ideally, EU efforts to improve capabilities and reduce the gap would occur in close cooperation with NATO and DCI. Close cooperation in this arena would pay high dividends since the only way to really ensure that capabilities are complementary and interoperable is to coordinate it centrally. Strengthening Transatlantic Security goes one step further: "This cooperation should extend to the creation of a common, coherent, and collaborative defense planning review process, a complex area where NATO has proven tools and is willing and able to assist the EU in meeting its Headline Goal."[58]

Reforming and reshaping militaries will help improve capabilities, so will defense cooperation and consolidation. But savings alone will not achieve DCI, nor will reprioritization or more efficient spending. As Cohen put it to the December 2000 NATO ministerial, "ultimately,

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[56] Heisbourg, 3.

[57] Jim Garamone, "More Work Needed on Defense Capabilities Initiative," American Forces Information Service, 5 December 2000; available from <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Dec2000/n12052000_200012054.html>; Internet; accessed 31 March 2001.

[58] United States, 21.

there has to be a commitment of defense spending and increases in that spending."[59] In this he only echoed what NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson had been saying in capitols all over Europe since the Helsinki announcement in December 1999.

How does ESDP measure up against the improvement criteria? The EU made quick progress on identifying capabilities for the RRF. The WEU held a Capabilities Commitment Conference in November 2000 where over 30 countries pledged more than enough assets. Of course, these are assets already pledged to other missions, like NATO. No new, or improved capabilities were identified, strictly speaking. Otherwise, it is really too early to evaluate progress on EU capabilities improvement, whether in concert with DCI or not. While the French Presidency Report (December 2000) discusses that "the Member States agreed to pursue their efforts in the area of command and control, intelligence and strategic air and naval transport capabilities,"[60] and that there is a need for mutual reinforcement between the EU's capability goals and those of DCI, it is caveated by the repeated reassertion of "the Union's autonomy in decision making."[61] This may not be important, or, it may lay the foundation for selectively duplicating existing NATO capabilities if the EU deems that in its interest, which could prove competitive.

On the other hand, France, Spain and Italy are actively involved in professionalizing and downsizing their militaries. This will enable them to spend their defense dollars on a smaller, more efficient force instead of a larger, but less well-trained and equipped one. Less money will be eaten up by the huge overhead of a conscript Army. The catch is--as the US has seen with their own base closures--that although there may be savings realized in the medium and long term, "the up-front costs can be extraordinarily high."[62] Of course, many other European armies have not transformed, or, as in the case of Germany, are looking at options that downsize the force further but within the context of continually declining defense budgets. Savings realized may not necessarily be realized in improved capabilities.[63]

The European defense industry is another area that has seen some positive movement. Again, it is an area that is badly in need of improvement. "European defence spending is far less efficient than American defence outlays...Even though the euro and the dollar are now

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[59] Cohen, "Cohen on NATO-US-EU Partnership, Joint Defense Planning," 3.
[60] French Presidency of the European Union, 2.
[61] Ibid., 10.
[62] Paul Helminger, Draft General Report: "Defence Budget Trends Within the Alliance," NATO Parliamentary Assembly Report AT-253-ES-00-9, para 14; available from <http://www.naa.br/publications/comrep/2000/at-254-e.html>; Internet; accessed 4 April 2001.

roughly at parity, a euro of European defence spending typically purchases much less 'defence' than a dollar of American defence expenditure."[64] One reason is the needed transformation addressed above. Another is the character of the European defense industry, which has historically been very nationalistic (to include nationalized defense industries) and relatively unsuccessful with cooperative European defense ventures.

The last few years have seen a trend toward privatizing European defense industries (e.g. Thompson CSF and Aerospatiale in 1999) and the development of numerous joint ventures and mergers. There also has been a move toward defense acquisition cooperation at the inter-state level. The Western European Armaments Organisation (WEAO) has made some inroads into defense cooperation. L'Organism Conjoint de Cooperation en Matiere d'Armament (OCCAR) is a European defense cooperative organization established in 1996 with France and Germany as the core, and with the UK, Italy, and others joining later. This organization has shown more promise and resolve than its WEU counterparts and hopefully will be able to deliver more efficient acquisition cooperation. The Europeans have also begun to explore "pooling key capabilities such as air transport assets, in order to reduce the overhead costs and inefficiencies associated with having individual national armed forces."[65]

The US also has a role to play in terms of fostering transatlantic defense cooperation. America has been historically very protective of its defense industry and very unwilling to cooperate on a basis attractive to potential partners. The Defense Trade Security Initiative (DTSI) may represent a genuine change in US attitude. Announced by Madeleine Albright at the NATO Ministerial Meeting in Florence in June 2000, DTSI is a plan to reform US defense export controls by cutting down on the bureaucracy and allowing a freer sharing of technology within the Atlantic Alliance. Certainly it will take time to realize any benefits from this initiative, especially since Europeans would first have to set aside historic difficulties with European-US cooperation.

As noted by Secretary Cohen above, though, the bottom line is increased defense spending. Even "Javier Solana, the EU Foreign and Security Policy co-ordinator,...has publicly stated that it will probably be necessary in the short and medium term to increase defence budgets. Without resources, he recently noted there 'would only be paper promises and no real

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[63] Unterseher interview.
[64] Ibid., para 18.
[65] Heisbourg, 2.

improvement.'"[66] While NATO officials at the December 2000 defense ministerial indicated that "11 out of 16 European NATO members plan real increases in defense spending this year,"[67] it remains to be seen how much is actually realized. Politically it is very difficult to convince constituencies that increases in defense are necessary in a time of relative peace.

While the most significant evidence of improvement and real commitment to partnering would be absolute increases in European defense budgets, the more realistic measure may be evidence of increased savings and efficiency. Insofar as ESDP

> encourages European governments to generate the resources needed to upgrade military capabilities or at least inject greater co-operation into force planning and procurement, it could well prove a benefit to NATO...But vigilance is necessary. If capabilities improvements are not part of the package...then the entire exercise could prove militarily meaningless and politically damaging. In essence, this is a resource question, and Europe will have to engage in a high degree of rationalization ...to achieve the headline goals.[68]

INCLUSION

Pointing to the November 2000 Capabilities Commitment Conference where 30 different countries committed capabilities to the Headline Goal, British Defense Minister Robin Cook stated that "the European security project is inclusive."[69] Although that is a good start, much more is required. For the countries that made commitments, the conference provided an easy way to make a political show of support and demonstrate solidarity for an integrated Europe. The real test for that solidarity, though, is the mechanisms the EU puts in place for consultations with these countries and, beyond consultation, for participation in the decision-making process. As Secretary Cohen noted, "The danger would be if it [ESDP] should start to be exclusive. If it starts to discriminate against non-EU members, then you run the risk of having a line, a division, which can cause fragmentation and a loss of that cohesion which is so critical to having a unified position for NATO members."[70]

The goal of "exporting stability" has been a feature of both NATO and EU enlargement strategies. "In a move that to some extent mirrored NATO's outreach strategy, the WEU gradually developed a differentiated and far-reaching system of participation in its decision-making processes for states that are not full members...As a result, it...evolved into a

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[66] Helminger, para 49.
[67] Jim Garamone.
[68] Helminger, para 57.
[69] Cook.

comprehensive forum for dialogue."[71] With the absorption of the WEU into the EU at the end of 2000, it is not yet clear that the primary strength of the WEU--its consultative mechanism--will be maintained. ESDP also has less to offer prospective EU and NATO members in terms of meaningful partnership programs along the lines of Partnership for Peace.

Real inclusion and cooperation should include all European security players. DoD's report, Strengthening Transatlantic Security, explains it well:

> The four EU members who participate in PfP but are not members of the Alliance should have appropriate access to NATO's defense planning arrangements and a role in the decision shaping of NATO-led crisis response operations. This will enhance their capability as Partners to act effectively alongside the 11 EU members who belong to the Alliance in an eventual EU-led crisis response contingency. Similarly, the six European Allies who currently are not members of the EU should be invited to participate, to the widest possible extent, in EU preparations to meet its Headline Goal and, eventually, in the deliberations that must take place before the EU takes a final decision on military action.[72]

This aspect of ESDP is still largely undeveloped, despite the consultation agreements between the EU and the non-EU NATO members (less Turkey) announced at the Nice Summit. The French Presidency Report, 4 December 2000, addresses "arrangements concerning non-EU European NATO members and other countries which are candidates for accession to the EU." This is a great beginning, but the group that is left out of this equation is those countries that are NATO partners, but not EU candidates. These countries pose an issue because they participate in PfP and the Planning and Review Process (PARP), which means that their assets could be pledged to NATO which consequently means they could be indirectly available to EU-led operations. Obviously, then, they should be included in consultations as well.

"In terms of membership, the EU has admitted 13 states to its group of accession candidates. NATO launched a Membership Action Plan to help aspiring countries prepare their candidacies for possible membership and will review the enlargement issue in 2002. But we can assume that the number of EU members that are not part of NATO will continue to increase, perpetuating the lack of convergence between these institutions."[73] In other words, the divergence is realistically likely to increase, not decrease. How non-discriminatory the EU really

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[70] Cohen as quoted in "Defence: What's at Stake in the New European Policy."
[71] Schmidt, 2.
[72] United States, 21.
[73] Peter Schmidt, 3.

is in dealing with these countries on the periphery will be an important element in the evaluation of the inclusiveness measure. At a minimum, a starting point would include consultation between the EU and NATO's Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council that is the overarching framework for all aspects of NATO's cooperation with its Partners.

CONCLUSION

ESDP has not yet emerged as a concrete alternative to NATO for European states. Indeed, not most ESDP participants do not favor scrapping NATO. To date, the collective defense mission remains squarely within the confines of NATO's institutional apparatus. The Euro-Atlantic strategic partnership may be under strain, but the need to cooperate in ongoing operations and recognition that the procurement of improved European capability can only happen over a prolonged period of time limit how strongly Europe can presently play the strategic competitor card. As the logical outgrowth of the increasing integration of the EU, ESDP is first and foremost a means for the EU to give some teeth to its developing CFSP. From this side of the Atlantic, though, it also promises the first significant contribution to European burden sharing for its own defense. The evolution of the ESDP, especially the still contentious relationship with NATO (and by extension, the US) is evidence of the EU struggling with its emerging role beyond the economic sphere. The fact that the capabilities gap is so wide is probably the single most limiting factor to EU independence in the medium term. The challenge for the US is to capitalize on the contribution to burden sharing while encouraging developments in the spirit of strategic partnership.

A partner is usually thought of in terms of an association with another in some activity of common interest. It also implies a relationship in which each party has equal status and a certain independence as well as either implicit or formal obligations to the other. Both Europe and the North American allies share common interests in a prosperous and stable Europe. Allies on both sides of the Atlantic also recognize the primacy of exporting stability as a primary means of enhancing security. For the moment, the relationship between the EU and the US generally fits the partner mode, albeit with an uncomfortable degree of US dominance rooted in a real capabilities gap.

A competitor is one who competes, who strives or contends with another for a profit or a prize. In the economic realm, while Europe is a trade partner, she can also be seen as a competitor for world markets. So it is not incongruous to have aspects of both partnership and competition in the same relationship. In the security realm, the EU is currently at the weak end

of the partner spectrum, primarily because of her dependence on NATO and the US. As European defense capabilities develop, the potential exists for a competitor to rise in both the economic and military realms.

This paper suggested three measures to evaluate the ongoing development of ESDP: indivisibility, improvement and inclusion. Maintaining the transatlantic link is clearly the test for indivisibility. At the moment, both sides of the Atlantic are firmly committed to that link, albeit for their own reasons of self-interest. The primary indicators to observe for maintaining the link in a meaningful way are the mechanisms developed to ensure transparent cooperation and collaboration. One alert would be an insistence on developing dual planning institutions. In addition to being duplicative, multiple planning centers would inhibit transparency and would be inefficient except in the least ambitious operations. Any attempt to marginalize NATO into collective defense only vice a real role in crisis management would be another serious indicator. Again, the primary area to watch in terms of indivisibility is the NATO-EU links currently under discussion.

The real key to the success of ESDP for the EU and as a partnering effort is improvement. Without improved capabilities, there is no viable initiative. The primary indicator of improvement is undoubtedly increased defense budgets. Other ancillary, but ultimately less important indicators, are more efficient spending, restructuring for improved capability, and consolidated defense acquisition cooperation. Initial progress will have to be measured on the margins in terms of the ancillary indicators because those are the most likely targets for short- term progress. In addition, a genuine effort to extract the most efficiency from the process dictates that DCI be the umbrella. Real improvement is not possible, though, without increased European defense budgets. Even with increased budgets, improvement is a long-term process. Note that divergence from partnership to competition is likewise not possible without improvement.

Inclusion is the only measure that has enjoyed much activity so far. Progress has already been made with the non-EU NATO members, although Turkey is a notable and potentially serious exception. The apparent exclusion of the non-EU NATO partners is also problematic. The EU will have its hands full to finalize its own internal decision making procedures for ESDP in the short term. How the EU builds the consultation scheme for all of the European actors will be a primary indicator of partnership. A competitive stance might emerge if a tendency to exclude some countries for one reason or another becomes apparent.

US policy towards ESDP has been to support the burden-sharing aspects of ESDP while trying to anchor the initiative within NATO. While security independence is still not desirable, increased autonomy is another matter. There have been at least some indications that the U.S. may be willing to share some aspects of leadership. Future policy evolution will depend on the decisions the EU makes in the near term. Evaluating those developments in terms of indivisibility, improvement and inclusion will give consistent direction for US policy on ESDP.

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