MEDITERRANEAN CHALLENGES TO THE COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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INTRODUCTION

There is a debate in the current literature about the European Union (EU)'s foreign policy: should we look at the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the Second Pillar of Maastricht/Amsterdam, or would we better advised to concentrate on the external relations of the First Pillar (e.g. trade and development and aid policies). Others suggest that the national foreign policies of the member states should serve as the basis of our understanding of EU foreign policy. This is an important debate because of the existing institutional dichotomy between the two pillars (which also implies different decision making procedures, different institutional balances, different budgets), and the implications for the level of analysis that is required (especially with regards to the foreign policy of a small or a big states, and the importance of domestic sources). Needless to say, to choose between these different approaches leads almost unavoidably to different emphases and to different conclusions.

The purpose of this paper is not to engage directly in this debate, but rather to test the efficiency (or otherwise) of the EU's foreign policy by concentrating on the CFSP and the Mediterranean (and more particularly on the Euro-

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Mediterranean Partnership i.e. EMP or 'Barcelona Process'). The main objective is to show that the reality does not match the CFSP's rhetoric on the Mediterranean. In other words, is the EU is a coherent and effective entity in international affairs (applied here to the Mediterranean).

The methodology used here consists of a set of hypotheses which are then empirically tested by two case studies² all situated geographically in the Mediterranean and therefore part of the EMP. The first part of the paper looks at the methodology before two cases studies are explored in the second part: the Middle East and in particular the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP), and North Africa and in particular the conflict in Algeria. The focus is on the CFSP and therefore we do not get into the details of each specific case-study but simply refer the reader to the existing literature on the subject.

PART I: THE THEORY

There is a number of approaches which are already available in the existing literature. We use a number of different frameworks of references, that is to say methods of assessment:

- * international actorness
- * expectation-capability gap
- * consistency between external relations and CFSP
- * consistency between national foreign policies and EU policy
- * consistency between the rhetoric and the reality of EU declarations and policy.

The last three are testing the CFSP record in practice, rather than the traditional approach which has over-emphasised in our view (see Stavridis, 1997) the institutional implications of the CFSP for European integration theory at the expense of really assessing whether the EU has been successful or not (defined here as achieving the expressed objectives).

The expectation-capability gap was first expressed by Christopher Hill in 1993 and re-appraised in 1998 (Hill, 1993; 1998). It basically argues that expectations were initially raised too highly in comparison with the actual capabilities of the EU when Maastricht was first agreed in late 1991. As a result

² The selection of case studies is always important. Other cases could have been chosen, for instance on EU policy towards the Cyprus Problem (and by implication Turkey) which are two countries included in the EMP. For more details, see Stavridis (1999).

a gap appeared and the reality of EU policies and actions was to disappoint many unrealistic expectations. Five years on, Hill argued that the gap had somewhat narrowed as a result of both more realistic expectations and more and better capabilities available to the EU.

As for the international actorness of the EU, we will expand this concept a bit more as it is the basis of all the other criteria we have just reviewed very briefly. Efforts to define the EC and the EU, especially with regards to its international role were usually rare in the past but they have tended to increase more rencently. One such isolated effort is now twenty five years old and was made by Johan Galtung in his book entitled *The European* Community: A Superpower in the Making (1993). A more recent one, though journalistic, was made by David Buchan in 1993 who concluded that the EC/EU was a 'strange superpower' (Buchan, 1993). In early 1997, Christopher Piening's conclusion was that the EU was a 'global power' (Piening, 1997). As for Whitman, he argued recently that the EU is neither a civilian power nor a superpower in the making, but simply possesses a distinct international identity (Whitman, 1998). Finally Zielonka (1998) argues that the EU should only be a civilian power. We do not expand on the concept of 'civilian power Europe' here (see Stavridis and Hutchence, 1999) but simply point out the number of different criteria used to try and explain the international role of the EU.

There is little doubt from the existing literature that the EU (and before it the EC) has now acquired an international role even if its legal status remains unclear (see Wessel, 1997; Whitman, 1998,157-184). There is in fact general agreement that all EU institutions have acquired an international role on their own. This is particularly true of the European Commission and the European Parliament, but generally speaking this is due to the emergence of the European Community/ Union as an international actor.

It is interesting³ to take as a starting point the conclusions of a study undertaken in 1976 by Gunnar Sjostedt on 'The external role of the European Community'. The double objective of that book was to find out 'to what degree the EC is an international actor at a given time' and 'to foretell to what extent the EC will probably be an international actor in the future' (Sjostedt, 1977,7). The main conclusion of this book was that, in 1977, the

³ What follows draws from Stavridis (1991, 22-27).

European Community was 'some sort of half developed international actor' (Sjostedt, 1977,112). As for future developments, Sjostedt presented a number of alternatives without committing himself to any particular option. He also warned quite correctly of the difficulties which are inherent in any prediction in social sciences (Sjostedt, 1977,133-136).

His definition of what constitutes an international actor is as follows: an <u>acting</u> <u>unit</u> in the <u>international system</u> which possesses the quality of '<u>actor</u> <u>capability</u>'. The latter was in turn defined as having a double characteristic:

- (1) the fact that the unit 'is discernible from the external environment', i.e. 'it has a minimum degree of separateness'.
- (2) the fact that the unit 'has a minimal degree of internal cohesion' (Sjostedt, 1977,13).

Sjostedt himself was the first one to admit the limitations of this definition and the lack of consensus on what constitutes an international actor. Sjostedt claimed that in the mid-1970's the European Community was only a 'half-baked' version of an international actor. Why? Because, he argued, the Commission's role in 'high politics' was non-existent and that there hardly ever was a 'common behaviour in the "high policy" field areas, to which foreign policy belongs par excellence (Sjostedt, 1977,14). There is no doubt that in the long run the Commission came to play an important role in EPC, if only by being represented in all EPC meetings (Nuttall, 1988,104-117). This is all the more so since the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty which has given the Commission a right of co-initiative, at least theoretically. Thus, the general agreement in the existing literature is that the European Community/Union has emerged as a distinct entity on the international scene:

'Whereas in the 1970's there was a belief that the EC was mostly reactive or more affected by international events than vice versa, the Community can now be described as becoming more active in the international field and attractive to other international actors' (Kirchner, 1989,11).

Roy Ginsberg goes even further than that and has argued that the number of European Community foreign policy 'actions' has increased over the years. He also claims that the new logic behind such actions is what he calls 'self-styled' actions as opposed to the previous logics of integration or interdependence (Ginsberg, 1989).

The Community/Union also possesses observer status in many an international organisation, starting with the United Nations, and many a non-member state has diplomatic relations and representation with the EC/EU: 147 foreign missions are accredited to the EU in Brussels which compare favourably to the 169 accredited to Washington - the highest in the world for a capital (Whitman, 1998,132). Moreover, from the perspective of third countries, they 'so often perceive the (then, now Fifteen) Twelve in EPC as being more united and stronger than the member states themselves are ready to admit' (Rummel, 1988,140).

Thus, both of Sjostedt's criteria (minimum degree of separateness, minimum degree of internal cohesion) seem to have been satisfied since he first used these terms in 1976. Needless to say, the CFSP (and EPC before it) is not the foreign policy of the European Union (Community before 1993). But it would be incorrect to assume that therefore the role of the CFSP in international relations can be ignored. Even if one takes a minimalist approach, it is definitely possible to identify a 'European' line on many international relations issues.

PART II: THE EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

The Barcelona declaration in 1995 which was signed by the Member States of the EU as well as twelve Mediterranean states aims to lead to:

"A STRENGTHENING OF DEMOCRACY AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, SUSTAINABLE AND BALANCED ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, MEASURES TO COMBAT POVERTY AND PROMOTION OF GREATER UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN CULTURES" (1995, 2-3)

We can see that the EMP fits well in the objectives and principles of the EU's CFSP.

Case Study (I): Algeria

The approach of the European Union to Algeria is an issue for the EU because of the tide of violence in the country since 1992. The violence may cause a rise in immigration into the EU as people flee the conflict; it may cause the downfall of the present government and replace it with an Islamist regime that is anti-European. Therefore the Algerian situation is a potential security threat to Europe's southern flank. In Algeria the FIS (Islamic Salvation Front)

has been banned since 1992 and its leadership exiled or arrested. Until recently the perception has been that extreme Islamic forces have been responsible for the rise in violence, but the situation is becoming increasingly unclear with massacres being visited upon supporters of the FIS by unknown forces. Whilst there have been elections since 1992, there has been no establishment of democracy in any real sense. The election of General Liamine Zeroual in 1995 has left the country in the hands of the military (Marginedas 1998, 205) and it is too early to assess the impact of Bouteflika's election to the Presidency in 1999.

One would have surmised that if the EU was attempting to implement the objectives of the Barcelona declaration that it would be using all the instruments at its disposal, including the CFSP, to encourage the Algerian authorities to bring in democracy, and to control the violence (if not to bring it to an end ideally).

International actorness

The two criteria put forward by Sjostedt seem to be met at least on an initial analysis of EU-Algerian relations. The EU is a discernibly separate entity to Algeria there is no doubting that and it does appear to have a basic internal cohesion in its policy towards Algeria as provided by the Barcelona framework which allows for dialogue between the two over political, social and economic matters with clear policy goals in sight. However, it is unclear whether there is in reality a unified policy towards Algeria that such internal cohesion would imply.

Whilst there are declarations issued condemning the violence in Algeria there has been little done in the way of pursuing the EU's stated aims. The EU has not attached any political conditionality to the aid, trade and financial relations it already has with Algeria.

Expectations-Capability gap

The expectations-capability gap is a concept which works in two distinct ways: firstly there is the gap between the means and ends of the CFSP. This gap functions in the way that the EU has often not established the aim of its foreign policy towards a third country, this may be due to the changing international situation or inability of Member States to agree. In the situation with Algeria the EU seems to have established a clear set of political aims in the Barcelona declaration which Algeria has also signed. These aims as set

out above show clearly what the EU's official policy is towards the Mediterranean basin is and towards Algeria in particular. The means or capabilities of the EU have also grown over the last six years. The formation of the CFSP has given the EU increased abilities in comparison with EPC, the previous foreign policy tool of the then EC. The CFSP is able to address all matters of security and it is able to take joint actions in areas that the Member States agree on. The EU has also grown in size recently to fifteen Member States thus increasing its diplomatic clout in world politics. As well as this the Barcelona process has meant that the EU has begun to agree new association agreements with Mediterranean states that include political and social issues as well as economic and trade matters. So in theory at least there has been a clear identification of the objectives of European foreign policy vis-à-vis Algeria and also an increase in the EU foreign policy capabilities to influence Algeria's behaviour. However there are some factors which have counteracted the increased clarity of objectives and foreign policy powers of the EU.

Despite the declared aims of the Barcelona process there have been other objectives that have muddled the waters of foreign policy making for the EU. There are those Member States within the EU that are relieved that the military and not a radical Islamist government in the shape of the FIS are in power in Algeria. They perceive that an FIS-led Algeria would be a greater security threat to their states (Blunden 1994, 144-145). There are a number of 'opt-out clauses' within the Barcelona declaration which allows this policy of supporting the status quo to have greater influence than those on human rights and democracy. The former commit the EU to respect the sovereignty of nation states and their rights to self-determination and support for the struggle against terrorism (Kienle 1998, 2). The EU has not completed its new association agreement with Algeria, but if it is anything like the agreements already concluded with the neighbouring countries of Tunisia and Morocco then they will be long on economic agreement and short on political content (Kienle 1998, 2-3). The opportunity to encourage Algeria to implement democratic principles and make further strides to deal with its human rights problem may be passed by.

The ambiguity of the EU's aims towards Algeria has hardly encouraged the use of the means at its disposal to influence Algeria. Therefore the capabilities-expectation gap in this area remains wide.

The second approach to the capabilities-expectations gap is the difference between the expectations of domestic and external actors and capabilities that the European Union demonstrates. This gap has narrowed in general since the early 1990s when expectations of the EC/EU ran high, however since the EU was seen to fail in its attempts to resolve the conflict in the ex-Yugoslavia these expectations have been damped down. The Algerian government itself does not wish to see the EU interfering in what they consider to be their 'domestic affairs', and although their are calls from the press for intervention after massacres occur, interest in Algeria seems to be intermittent. Expectations of EU intervention in Algeria have fallen as the general expectations of the EU as an international actor have diminished.

Consistency between external relations and CFSP

Since the beginning of the Algerian conflict there has been no interruption in the trade in gas between the EU and Algeria. This trade amounts to 20% of the EU's imports of gas. The EU is Algeria's largest trading partner (*The Economist*, 10/1/98). The EU is in the midst of re-negotiating an association agreement with Algeria. There is an existing association agreement which continues to operate under which Algeria benefits from EU aid and loans. Between 1996 and 1998 Algeria received over 60,000 MECU (Million ECU) out of a total committed aid of just of 231,000 MECU⁴(European Commission 1999). It would appear that these economic relations are not being made conditional on the Algerian government's pursuit of the Barcelona declaration on human rights and democracy. In the main they suit the economic needs of the European Union.

Consistency between national foreign policies and the EU

Due to France's historic ties with Algeria most of the Member States of the EU tend to follow France's lead in this area. France, whilst it claims that it does not wish to be involved Algeria's domestic policies, finds it difficult to stay out of them because 1 million out of 3 million French Islamic citizens have dual passports with Algeria or are of Algerian descent. Thus French domestic policy is strongly influenced by its foreign policy towards Algeria and viceversa (Spencer 1996, 132). Terrorist attacks on French citizens in Algeria and a bombing campaign in France have led to strong reactions from the French authorities. There appeared to be cooperation between the security forces

 $^{^4}$ It is common practice for EU aid to third countries to take time to be disbursed, thus Algeria has not received the total aid committed to it.

of France and Algeria when in November 1994 the two governments launched simultaneous crackdowns on terrorist suspects in both countries (Spencer 1996, 136). The following year France attempted to make initial diplomatic moves towards the Algerian regime to discuss the crisis, but these were met with a rebuttal from President Zeroual (Rich and Joseph 1997, 17). In spite of Algeria's political reluctance for outside intervention it is willing to accept France's efforts to get its international debt rescheduled. France also contributed \$1 billion in annual aid in 1995 and \$6 billion in credit (Rich and Joseph 1997, 16).

Of the other Member States it was notable that Italy has attempted to intervene by proposing that the EU should become more actively involved in helping Algeria solve its problems, but it backed down the same day and reiterated its policy of non-interference. As Rich and Joseph note there is a general division on policy within the Member States:

"The northern states tend to be more amenable to a negotiated solution between all the parties involved in the conflict whilst southern members, motivated by more direct security concerns, have tended to tacitly support the political alienation of the FIS. As a consequence, the EU as a whole has tended to take the path of least resistance, supporting a policy of neutrality, whilst leaving France to make more explicit statements" (Rich and Joseph 1997, 17).

Rhetoric and reality

The Barcelona declaration sets out clear principles in favour of the advancement of democracy and peace for the Mediterranean region. Within the Barcelona process there is the possibility of the EU using tools such as dialogue and economic measures to encourage Algeria into pursuing these aims more vigorously. However the situation in Algeria has deteriorated considerably over the years with massacres increasingly more brutal, and in the meantime the military in Algeria seem at least unable to protect their own citizens or at worst complicit in the violence. Meanwhile the EU stands by seemingly unable to intervene, whilst it appears to have increased its policy instruments and is in a position to exercise them it lacks the political will to implement them. This lack of political will is based on the EU's inability to reconcile its aims, on one hand the parts of the Barcelona declaration that relate to human rights and peace and on the other the reluctance of the EU member states to countenance an alternative FIS government in Algeria.

Conclusions: the CFSP and Algeria

The CFSP's response to the situation has been minimal. It has amounted to a number of declarations which have outlined the EU's disapproval of the current situation and its hope that things will change.

The Council called for greater transparency on the part of the government of Algeria about the situation, in which terrorist groups continue to perpetrate cowardly and brutal attacks on innocent citizens. The Council regretted that the Algerian authorities have felt unable to provide unhindered access for international organisations, NGOs and the media. The Council hoped that the Algerian authorities would feel able to accept a visit by Representatives of the United Nations in the near future. The Council continues to urge the Algerian authorities to reconsider these points in the light not only of the EU's approach but also of the support which this approach has received internationally. (European Union 1998)

This is the conclusion of the European Council in light of the visit of a troika of junior foreign ministers to Algiers to assess the situation in January 1998. Their brief visit has not resulted in any change of policy towards the violence in Algeria. Support for the government of Algeria in the struggle against terrorism was once again underlined. It is difficult to be positive about EU policy towards Algeria despite its issuing of declarations against the situation it has done little to use the substantial economic power it has to stop the violence and reinstall democracy.

Case-study (II): The Middle East (Peace Process)

International Actorness

The key concept in analysing whether the EU is demonstrating international actorness with reference to the Middle East is that the EU maintains a minimal level of internal cohesion in its relations with the powers of the region. Internal cohesion is descriptive of a unified EU approach to the Middle East. In this case the EU's policy is focused on the peace process and its wish to play as large a part in it as it can. There are variations between Member state approaches to the issue but they do converge around a point, the use of a joint action within CFSP to appoint M. Moratinos as the EU observer to the

peace process is an example of such coherence (European Union 1996c). Likewise the role of external relations in encouraging the peace process is in line with CFSP. The European Parliament has on one occasion blocked trade and financial relations with Israel because of its treatment of the Palestinians, but the action only lasted for one year (Hollis 1997, 19). However if the EU was being entirely consistent it would match the stated aims of CFSP and the Barcelona process, ie the pursuit of human rights as well as peace and democracy, with its external relations and this has not been done.

Expectations-Capability gap.

As is stated in the case study on Algeria part of the capabilities expectations gap is that between aims and means. In the case of Israel Palestine, since the early 1990s, the aims of the EU have been clarified in the Barcelona declaration, and its participation in the multi-lateral part of the Oslo peace accords. Not only has its aims been clarified but also its means to pursue these aims have been improved somewhat as well. Since the end of the Cold War the EU developed a close relationship with the Palestinians through aid, an association agreement, and the Barcelona process. Likewise Israel has signed up to the Barcelona process and has recently agreed another association agreement with the EU. Despite this clarification of political aims and the increase means to implement these aims there still appears to be a considerable gap between the two.

It is necessary to measure the expectation-capabilities gap over time to understand whether it has narrowed or widened at all. After the Venice declaration, throughout the 1980s and up until the Madrid Conference in 1991 it was unclear as to what role the EC could play in the peace process. Until that time Israel had kept the EC at arms length politically because it considered the EC to be too pro-Arab (Peters 1997, 6). Thus the negotiations between Israel and the Arab world were conducted entirely with the USA as the mediator. Therefore Israel did not have high expectations of the EC's role in the peace process in the early 1990s at the end of the Cold War. On the Palestinian side there was initial optimism after the Venice declaration, but when it became clear that the EC was not going to be involved in further independent action their expectations fell (Gomez 1998, 138). Europe's involvement in the Madrid conference and in the Regional Economic Development Working Group (REDWG), followed up by the Barcelona process, and the appointment of M. Moratinos as the EU envoy has increased the profile of the EU in the Middle East. However it is unclear that the EU has

any more power to influence the peace process than before. The involvement of the EU in these different structures does not take away from the fact that the main negotiations over the peace process are conducted between, Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the USA. Therefore the gap between the EU's capabilities and the expectations it inspires has not narrowed because the enlarged role that the EU has developed has not been used to significantly effect the peace process.

Consistency between external relations and CFSP

There seems to be a limited amount of consistency between the external economic relations of the EU with the CFSP. The renegotiation of the trade agreement between the EU and Israel has been largely dependent on the role that Israel has played within the peace process. The EU has dragged its feet when the peace negotiations were going badly and when they have improved the EU has allowed the trade agreement to move forward (Hollis 1997, 19-20). At present the EU-Israel Association Agreement has not been formally ratified, however due to an interim agreement its economic aspects have already come into force (Ahlswede 1999). At the moment the economic leverage of the EU is not being used to encourage Israel to return to the negotiation table. The EU has funded the Palestinians between 1993 and 1997 to the tune of 700.95 million ECU including EIB assistance and support for UNRWA (COM(97)715 final). This, in tandem with the agreement of a Euro-Mediterranean Interim Association Agreement on Trade and Cooperation between the EU and the Palestinian Authority gives the EU a strong economic interest in the Middle East peace process (Peters 1997, 15).

Consistency between national foreign policies and the EU

Despite some differences in policy it is apparent that the Member states of the European Union do "converge around a number of shared principles" (Peters 1997, 5). The main differences seem to be that over style and approach, the French appearing to want to lead the peace process from the front with high profile diplomatic initiatives whereas others such as the Spanish and the British do not see that as the correct approach wishing to adopt more of a low key engagement with the process (Hollis 1997, 17; Gomez 1998, 146).

This difference in approach should not disguise a considerable amount of agreement between the member states in their position on the Middle East. Joint actions such as the appointment of Miguel Moratinos as a special envoy

and assistance to the Palestinian Authority to counter terrorist activities within its own borders and regular démarches denouncing the contravention of international law, supporting UN Security Council resolutions and denouncing terrorism and the abuse of human rights show that at least at a certain level there is agreement between the Member States on the Middle East Peace Process (European Union, 1996a-1997c).

Rhetoric and reality

Claims that the European Union is now a major player in the Middle East peace process are hard to substantiate. Whilst in comparison with a decade ago there is an increased role for the EU, it is not at the heart of the peace process. Although it is true to say that:

- it has a higher profile than before and has a significant stake in the peace process
- it also has initiated the Barcelona process which both Israel and the Palestinian Authority are members of.
- this forum has kept meeting despite major disputes, even when the Middle East peace process has broken down.

However, this may indicate the low level of significance placed on the Barcelona process by the members rather than anything else.

The economic leverage that the EU has developed in the region has not been used to stop human rights abuse and support the fulfilment of UN resolutions. This is not consistent with the declarations that the CFSP has issued. This may be because the main aim of the EU's policy is to secure stability in the region to allow the peace process to work, rather than cause further instability by challenging the governments on human rights abuse. This fits with the strong anti-terrorist approach which features in the CFSP's documents and the Barcelona declaration. The EU when offering aid to the Palestinian Authority on policing has made it conditional on human rights training for the officers concerned. However, this approach is not significant in comparison with the EU using its considerable economic leverage to stop the human rights abuse which is already going on. Neither has Israel suffered any economic pressure from the EU to persuade it to withdraw from southern Lebanon or to halt its abuse of Palestinian's human rights. It appears the reality of EU policy on the ground does not match the rhetoric of its statements.

Conclusions

Our assessment of the EU's approach to the Middle East situation has shown that the EC/EU has been active in promoting a settlement of the situation for some considerable time. Its most notable policy statement on the matter was the Venice Declaration in 1980. However despite declarations concerning the situation between the Israelis and the Palestinians the EC/EU did not have any real practical role in the peace process until after the Oslo accords were signed in 1993 when the EU became involved in the multilateral dimension of the process (Peters 1997, 6). Through the latter and through the Barcelona process, in which Israel and the Palestinian Authority are involved, the EU has become the single largest funder of the Palestine Authority and thus plays a positive role within the peace process (Hollis 1997, 17). However despite its commitment to supporting the peace process and democracy it appears that the EU's promotion of human rights has not had the same priority. There has been some limited conditionality over aid provided to training Palestinian Authority police in human rights, but the majority of EU funding has not been made conditional on the implementation of human rights (European Union 1997a). Israel and the Palestinian Authority both have bad records on these matters (B'Tselem 1995). Israel also contravenes UN resolution 242 which call for it to withdraw from illegally occupied territory such as East Jerusalem. Despite the EU's statements and declarations which call for the observation of human rights and-UN resolutions the EU has not actively used its association agreement with Israel to push for changes in this area.

CONCLUSIONS

Our findings on the EU in the Mediterranean can be summed up (in a telegraphic style) as follows:

- it is undoubtedly an international actor;
- there is an important expectation/capability gap;
- there is clearly an inconsistency between its external economic policy and its CFSP (status quo versus democratisation);
 - there is little consistency between the national objectives of member states (especially big ones like the UK or France) and the European level especially in terms of style and when certain issues raise the importance of the domestic sources of foreign policy (migration, terrorism);

 there is little consistency, indeedthere is clearly a huge gap between the rhetoric of democracy and human rights and the actual results of the CFSP, the EMP, and EU foreign policy in general.

(text: 5,345 words)

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