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*WEU: AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME?*

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...this time [the cat] vanished quite slowly,  
beginning with the end of the tail,  
and ending with the grin, which remained some time  
after the rest of it had gone.

Well! I've often seen a cat without a grin,  
thought Alice; but a grin without a cat!  
It's the most curious thing I ever saw in all my life

Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

1. INTRODUCTION

Like Alice's Cheshire Cat, the Western European Union (WEU) may be more than meets the eye, despite widespread skepticism in both Europe and the United States. A security organization born just before the Cold War began, even before NATO, the WEU has had at least a couple lives, a death, a resurrection, and perhaps a "second coming," as one commentator noted.<sup>1</sup> But more important to its success than resilience is the expanding purpose, indeed, utility of WEU in the evolving security "layering" taking shape in the Euro-Atlantic area.

The proposition set forth in this paper is that WEU, rather than in danger of being marginalized due to internal contradictions and lack of coherence, is seen by the major European members as an organization which is, again, becoming part of the established European security architecture precisely because it serves numerous, and sometimes very different, national and regional purposes. Moreover WEU, while continuing to

grow in structure and substance, is likely to remain more closely tied to the Atlantic Alliance than to the European Union for now, although that nexus, too, will develop as post Cold War security is redefined away from poles and pillars to cooperation and integration.<sup>2</sup>

The difficulty in analyzing the post-Cold War world and extant security structures like WEU, follows in part from the absence of a simple logic, an organizing principle like George Kennan's brilliantly simplistic concept of "containment." "Security" has taken on a much broader meaning than just "military." The corollary to a broader definition of security is that the role of defense, in its conventional, military context is being questioned, and challenged, and curtailed. Defense budgets are being slashed... and without even the usual gnashing of political teeth, and it's old news that many in the United States and elsewhere have asked the relevance even of, or perhaps especially of, NATO, the centerpiece of the Atlantic Alliance and the European security blanket. The axioms driving defense now are diminished defense budgets, and waning public sympathy for military issues. Even challenges to U.S. national security like domestic terrorism, so horribly executed in the Oklahoma City bombing, seem to have little relevance to the state-terrorism of Cold War days.

Quite recently, and surely unintentionally, however, Russia has done much to raise public consciousness about NATO's role and European security by challenging NATO's right to expand eastward into old Warsaw Pact territory. That boisterous debate culminated in the signing in mid-May of The Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation. It has also

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<sup>1</sup> Simon Duke, "The Second Death (or the Second Coming?) of the WEU" *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 34/2, (1996): 67 .

<sup>2</sup> Joseph I. Coffey, "WEU After the Second Maastricht" in *The State of the European Union*, Pierre-Henri Laurent and Marc Maresceau, editors, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publications, 1997). Coffey, has it right, in his insightful analysis of WEU and the IGC. Coffey argues that NATO will be the driving force behind changes in WEU, rather than the IGC. With the end of the IGC in sight, we know major changes to the European Security and Defense Initiative or the defense part of the Common Foreign and Security policy will not be adopted. One might add, however, that it's not the old NATO but a "new" NATO, or a NATO with a new strategic concept, and a NATO which is more responsive to European interests and initiatives, which is undeniably the sub-text of WEU decision-making.

helped validate NATO's new "Strategic Concept," and with it other elements of European security and defense like WEU, which are largely out of the public eye and esteemed somewhere between irrelevant and moribund.

The point here is that while NATO is being restructured, in this less-is-more atmosphere, WEU has been given a another and quite unexpected lease on life. The United States, always eager to have Europe pay a more handsome share of the European defense cost (burden sharing), has come to see WEU as a blessing-in-disguise. What was seen not long ago as divisive and threatening to U.S. leadership, the "Eurogroup," or European pillar inside NATO, is now perceived as legitimate, even desirable in helping enable European Allies shoulder more of Europe's defense, functionally and fiscally

Moreover the European Union, while seeking to give substance to its Treaty on European Union (TEU, or so-called Maastricht Treaty), at the Second Intergovernmental Conference (IGC), has highlighted its own inability to agree upon a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP, Pillar II). And buried in the debate over CFSP is the question of the EU's striking lack of a defense policy, and thereby its own role in defense.

The Western European Union is at the vortex of the evolution of the European Union and of NATO. Just as the EU is seeking to explicate its security policy through CFSP, and particularly its role in defense, and NATO is seeking to redefine its new role as Europe's anchor of stability, rather than as protector of the West, so the WEU, in conjunction with the EU and with NATO, is seeking to redefine its relation to the European Security and Defense Identity, (ESDI), set out at Maastricht and NATO's 1991 Rome Summit.

WEU, which is not itself the ESDI but which approximates the ESDI, is identified in the Treaty on European Union, Article J.4 and is addressed as follows:

The union requests the Western European Union (WEU), which is an integral part of the development of the Union, to elaborate and implement decisions and actions of the Union which have defence implications. The Council shall, in agreement with the institutions of the WEU, adopt the necessary practical arrangements.

Paragraph 1 of Article J.4 establishes the perimeters of WEU (ESDI's) role inside the CFSP. It is encompassing, indeed:

1. The common foreign and security policy shall include all questions related to the security of the Union, including the eventual framing of a common defence policy, which might in time lead to a common defence.

With such an expansive mandate from the EU, it is certainly appropriate to ask why WEU has not developed or has developed so languidly in building the “eventual” common defense policy which might in time lead to a common defense.

NATO Secretary General Javier Solana spoke to that issue in late November 1996. He noted:

The debate on ESDI has been with us... for a very long time. So long, in fact, that a false idea of immobility has gained ground. Of all the ideas set out at Maastricht and NATO's 1991 Rome Summit, the ESDI seems to have the least visibility and made the least progress.<sup>3</sup>

There are two reasons for ESDI (and WEU) obscurity, Solana asserted. The first reason related to the need to develop ESDI in different fora, specifically in the EU, in NATO, and in national capitals. Since members of both organizations EU and NATO, are not coterminous, the ability to develop a coherent approach was not possible, and both organizations, inevitably, saw the development of ESDI (WEU) from a different perspective and with different priorities.

The second reason, opined Solana “...is a certain lack of imagination.”<sup>4</sup> In 1991, many analysts had ceased to think strategically in terms of defense. Economics and diplomacy were the mantras of security analysis. Both the Iraqi War, “Desert Storm” and the Bosnian imbroglio were “wake up” calls indicating that military structures would continue to remain necessary for preserving peace and security in Europe. And at the Berlin ministerial meeting of the North Atlantic Council in early June 1996, the decision was taken to

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<sup>3</sup> Solana, Javier. “NATO and the Development of the European Security and Defence Identity,” address to the IEEI (Instituto de Estudos Estrategicos e Internacionais) Conference in Lisbon, 25 Nov. 1996, On line. Available: [natopress@ccl1kuleuven.ac.be](mailto:natopress@ccl1kuleuven.ac.be).

<sup>4</sup> When asked why WEU had not been able to assume more of the expectations of Article J4 in the Maastricht Treaty, Secretary General of the WEU Jose Cutileiro was less circumspect. He said bluntly, there have been no crises. Personal interviews conducted with officials of the WEU, 5 July 1996.

create a European Security and Defense Identity within NATO.<sup>5</sup> Solana continued: “We want to build that additional option [to NATO]—a European-led, WEU-directed operation—into our new structure.”

Finally, Solana noted that development of an ESDI required NATO to develop links with the Western European Union, and that the linkage between WEU and NATO is “the most obvious example of synergy.” In short, WEU has been, at length, warmly embraced overtly and conceptually both by NATO and by the European Union.

As detractors quickly point out, however, there are significant practical problems in implementing WEU which appear horrendous, and which we shall look at next. But the key to the challenges of developing and deploying WEU is national political will; whether or not it exists. Without it, organizational schemes remain just that. With the political will of the significant national actors in defense, the WEU is likely to have an auspicious future to append to a history that predates even President John F. Kennedy’s “2-pillar theory” of 1962, a European pillar and an American one, built around the economic superstructure of the European “Community.”<sup>6</sup>

But first the practical challenges.

## 2. THE CHALLENGES TO WEU’S SUCCESS

### 1) Overcoming its own heritage

WEU was created as the Brussels Treaty Organization (BTO) in 1948 by Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France and the United Kingdom. Its first secretary general (after the rebirth in 1985) Alfred Cahen noted that

“...at the very beginning the [WEU] had the defence structure necessary for carrying out its mission. However, with the signing of the Washington Treaty, its implementation and the subsequent

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<sup>5</sup> Underlining added

<sup>6</sup> Alfred Cahen, *The Western European Union and NATO; building a European Defence Identity within the Context of Atlantic Solidarity*, Brassey's Atlantic Commentaries No. 2, (London), 1989, p. 25. Cahen’s first-hand account is probably the most detailed and certainly the most authoritative. It reads like Dean Acheson’s *Present At The Creation*.

establishment of NATO, the Organization gave up these defence structures and transferred its military activities to the North Atlantic Treaty organization. No clearer proof could have been given of the commitment to the Atlantic solidarity of its Member States, or of the fact that they believed that their defence lay within the Alliance, or of their readiness to act accordingly."<sup>7</sup>

Although founded first, the WEU historically has been neither NATO's equal, nor even its sibling. And even after the BTO became the Modified Brussels Treaty Organization or WEU in 1954, with the addition of Germany and Italy, the WEU was an organization which went in search of a mission after NATO's creation. Among other useful roles, although not defense-focused, WEU linked the UK and the member states of the European Community, until Britain took the plunge in 1973. After 1973 the WEU lay dormant until revived in 1984 at the urging of France seeking to enhance its role as a third force between the superpowers. NATO and especially the United States looked upon this Trojan horse as certainly suspect and probably illegitimate, sackcloth the WEU wore until the United States in particular decided for domestic political and economic reasons to reverse its traditional opposition in the post-Cold War years following 1989.<sup>8</sup>

The 1987 Hague Platform, the first definition of a European security identify, specified and outlined WEU commitments to European defense, the criteria on which European security is to be based, and conditions for the East-West dialogue.

## 2) WEU relations to the EU

Appended to The Treaty on European Union of 1991 were 2 Declarations which specified that WEU was to form an integral part of the process of the development of the European Union and to be developed "...in the longer term perspective of a common defence, compatible with that of the Atlantic Alliance." In addition, the first declaration specified that "WEU will be developed as the defence component of the European Union and as a means to strengthen the European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance. To this end, it will

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<sup>7</sup> Alfred Cahen, *The Western European Union and NATO...*;

<sup>8</sup> A Republican Congress wanting to balance the budget and playing to domestic "isolationism" made it easy for a Democratic president to stay out of foreign military entanglements like Bosnia and to permit other states to battle that quagmire.

formulate common European defence policy and carry forward its concrete implementation through the further development of its own operational role.”<sup>9</sup>

In 1992, the Petersberg Declaration, negotiated in an elegant suburb of Bonn, identified the specific measures the WEU would employ to carry out its mission for the EU. The declaration provided for a Planning Cell (to plan contingencies, forces and strategy and to begin to actualize military units called “forces-answerable” (FAWEU). Members agreed the WEU Council would make the decision to use FAWEU in accord with provisions of the UN Charter. But it reaffirmed that participation in specific operations would remain a sovereign decision of member states in accordance with national constitutions. The Petersberg “tasks” or types of involvement in which WEU forces might engage are four: 1) humanitarian and rescue, 2) peacekeeping, 3) use of combat forces in crisis management, and 4) peacemaking.

In the Kirchberg Declaration of 9 May 1994, the Council of Ministers of WEU tasked the Permanent Council to begin work on the formulation of a common European defense policy which was to be spelled out in the Noordwijk meeting held later that November. At Noordwijk, the WEU Council of Ministers identified their role in a Common defense as “having the capacity to defend militarily--either alone or in the framework of a large alliance--the territory of the European Union from attack.”<sup>10</sup> But neither the details nor the hardware accompanied the Noordwijk Declaration.

Accordingly, the European Council meeting in Madrid in December 1995 laid the foundation for the Intergovernmental Conference launched in Turin at the end of March 1996. The IGC, colloquially known as Maastricht II, is supposed to give definition to the aspirations and imprecise outlines laid down at Maastricht

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<sup>9</sup> DECLARATION ON WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION (No. 30) appended to The Treaty on European Union (TEU) 1991. Simon Duke points out a contradiction between the TEU (Art 5) and the 2 declarations which seek to identify WEU’s role. Duke notes the contradiction is the result of “Irish sensitivities, among others.” Ireland, of course was/is a “neutral” state and was unwilling to support a defense arrangement inside the EU.

<sup>10</sup> “Preliminary Conclusions on the Formulation of a Common European Defence Policy, WEU Council of Ministers. Noordwijk Declaration, para 2, 14 Nov. 1994.

in the Treaty on European Union and to find ways to begin to prepare for the common defense or ESDI and its ante-chamber, the WEU.

Despite strong affirmation from the European Parliament, the WEU, however, is not much closer to being the EU's defense arm reinforcing the European Union's external role, notably in safeguarding peace and security, by developing "...a fully operational common foreign and security policy particularly through greater use of qualified majority voting, the establishment of a Common Analysis and Planning Unit under Commission auspices and the gradual integration of the WEU in the EU Treaty;..."<sup>11</sup> In no small measure, integration has foundered on the shoals of membership.

### 3) Membership Among WEU/EU/NATO

Concurrent or coterminous membership of the WEU, the EU, and of NATO is an oft-cited problem. Clearly decision making becomes problematic if there are several layers of members, each layer with a difference competence, and having some members who belong to one organization, but not to another. Indeed, when the issue of integration between WEU and the EU arose at the Intergovernmental Conference, it became clear integration really was not really possible, if so structured. Actually integration between the EU and WEU was never "on the table," at the IGC, for to integrate the WEU with the EU would have meant bringing members into the EU "through the backdoor," the WEU, a condition quite unacceptable to the EU.

It is equally apparent that members of WEU which are not members of NATO raise a similar spectre for NATO. It was argued that the capacity to participate in the CJTF's (combined, joint task forces) presumed NATO membership for reasons of interoperability of weapons' systems as well as, comparability of C<sup>3</sup>I (command, control, communication and intelligence), and rules of engagement.

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<sup>11</sup> Resolution on Parliament's opinion on the convening of the Intergovernmental Conference; and (ii) evaluation of the work of the Reflection Group and definition of the political priorities of the European Parliament with a view to the Intergovernmental Conference. Based on the DURY/MAIJ-WEGGEN report (A4-0068/96). Part IV. 13 March, 1996

There are, in fact, only 10 full Members of the WEU's 28 which belong both to the European Union and to NATO.<sup>12</sup> Full "Members" have "decision making" powers and can restrict Observers' and Associate Members' participation by a majority vote, including the presidency. A second category is called "Associate Members."<sup>13</sup> These three members of the WEU belong to NATO but are not members of the EU. They may participate fully in WEU activities, unless restricted by the Council. A third category is called "Observers." Five members of the WEU, excepting Denmark, do not belong to NATO.<sup>14</sup> These states, all members of the EU, may associate themselves with members' decisions and, in certain cases, may participate in WEU missions. Finally, the fourth category is called "Associate Partners." Ten WEU "Associate Partners" belong neither to the EU, nor to NATO.<sup>15</sup> These are the central and eastern European countries which have association agreements with the EU and Partnership for Peace (PfP) agreements with NATO.

#### 4) National Differences on WEU's Role: Independent vs. Integrated into the EU

Of the European partners in WEU, three states because of size and resources influence decisions more than others: France, Germany and Britain. As is well known, until the Cold-War ended, Germany was the front-line state defending Western Europe against a ground attack from the Warsaw Pact. Accordingly, its conventional forces were the largest in Western Europe and deeply integrated into NATO. Any policy or position which diluted that concerted effort between Germany and the Allies, especially the United States, was vigorously opposed.

But Germany had a second, and oftentimes conflicting, "European" tug, upon its defense commitment. France, having absented itself from NATO's integrated command in 1966/67, pursued a "third force" policy under President Charles de Gaulle and his successors. The French policy was intended to underscore a

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<sup>12</sup> Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Greece.

<sup>13</sup> Iceland, Norway and Turkey

<sup>14</sup> Denmark, Ireland, Austria, Finland and Sweden.

<sup>15</sup> Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

leadership role for France in Europe, both politically and militarily, and they played heavily on that theme with the Germans who had to be both good Europeans (read pro-French) and good Atlanticists (read pro-NATO/U.S). So the tightrope Germany walked was to be both a good European and a good Atlanticist. Afterall, the Schuman Plan, the European Coal and Steel Community of 1952 ,was premised upon France and Germany integrating their coal and steel sectors into a supranational authority so war never again could start between them. And in 1963, President de Gaulle and Chancellor Konrad Adenauer signed the Franco-German Friendship Treaty which was intended to cement Germany to “Europe.” Out of that commitment to France has grown a lengthy list of joint security and defense projects including the Franco-German Brigade and the Eurocorps..and support for WEU, which France has sought to use like stilts to elevate its posture in NATO and in European security. During the long years of the Cold War when the United States did not approve of the WEU, largely because it played the “Eurogroup” role which afforded the 14 European members of NATO a forum to meet and decide issues without the United States, France was only too happy to support the organization. France’s ardour for WEU has dampened only slightly, if at all, as it now sees the opportunity to cooperate more closely with NATO...even suggesting it might rejoin the integrated military command. Just before assuming the presidency of the WEU for the first half of 1997, President Jacques Chirac asserted “France must, with its partners, ‘start thinking at the political level about the vital development of the WEU’s roles and assets.”<sup>16</sup> By that the president meant, said his foreign minister, Hervé de Charette, the WEU should eventually be made a component of the European Union, “its armed branch” and a veritable European pillar of NATO equal with the American pillar.<sup>17</sup> It is not clear what Charette meant by “eventually,” or if he had any timetable in mind.

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<sup>16</sup> *News From France*, French Embassy Press and Information Service,(Wash.D.C.), v97-01, p5.

<sup>17</sup> *News From France*, ..., p5.

Germany has been quite supportive of the French insistence on more European leaders in the major NATO commands, but it is not willing, to see WEU undermine NATO by integrating into the European Union. "...[Chancellor Helmut] Kohl has insisted that the WEU be an arm of NATO and not an independent command with a separate European identity."<sup>18</sup>

Finally, Britain has been as adamantly opposed to integrating WEU into the EU as France has been ardently disposed. The British Government maintains that the "WEU has to remain an independent body, as the EU is 'not equipped' to play a role in defence (it would not be appropriate for the Commission, European Parliament or the Court of Justice to have a role in this field); the British Government is prepared to examine concrete improvements to the Third Pillar [at the IGC], but rejects a transfer of subjects of this pillar to the Community sphere;..."<sup>19</sup>

#### 5) NATO's relation to WEU (& ESDI)

At the conclusion of the Noordwijk Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council (1 Dec, 1994), NATO issued a communiqué of ringing endorsement for WEU. In paragraph 2 of the Noordwijk Declaration, the NAC noted "...[their] full support for the development of the European Defence and Security Identity and for the Western European Union, [and] the development of the Combined Joint Task Forces concept..."<sup>20</sup>

In paragraph 14, the same NAC communiqué continued:

We welcome the endorsement by the WEU Council of Ministers in Noordwijk of preliminary conclusions on the formulation of the Common European Defence Policy taking also into account the results of the NATO Brussels Summit. We welcome the WEU's decision to initiate reflection on the new European security conditions including the proposal put forward by France that this should lead to a white paper on European security. We attach great importance to the process of cooperation that NATO and the WEU are engaged in, aimed at the effective implementation of the Summit results, especially with regard to the Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTF) concept and the possibility of making assets and capabilities of the Alliance available to the WEU. We take note that a report on criteria and procedures for effective use of CJTF has been prepared by the WEU and presented to a

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<sup>18</sup> *Foreign Policy*, Wtr. 94/95, no.97, p. 140.

<sup>19</sup> "Together in Europe" *European Union Newsletter for Central Europe* Number 86 (April 1st, 1996) <http://www.cec.lu/en/comm/dg10/incom/newspage/news-86.html#3>

<sup>20</sup> Communiqué issued by Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council (1 Dec, 1994) pursuant to the meeting of the NAC in Noordwijk. (underlining in text added)

joint Council meeting of NATO and the WEU on 29 June 1994.

In mid-December 1996, the NAC again reaffirmed its commitment to helping WEU adapt its role vis-à-vis NATO. Members noted that the process would be guided by three objectives:

- ensuring the Alliance's military effectiveness;
- preserving the transatlantic link;
- and developing, to the satisfaction of all Allies, the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) within the Alliance.

They continued that there was need to continue to develop the CJTF command structure and practical steps to implement it.<sup>21</sup>

### 3. IS THERE POLITICAL WILL AND DESIRE FOR WEU'S SUCCESS

#### 1) The Big Three: Britain, France and Germany

Full members of the WEU are NOT in agreement on the question whether or not WEU and the EU should be integrated, but they are IN AGREEMENT about the usefulness of WEU both as a European “focus”<sup>22</sup> and as a defense organization which, through the use of CJTFs, can be a significant, regional ancillary to NATO.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Press Communiqué M-NAC(DM)-3(96)172, 18th December 1996 Meeting Of The North Atlantic Council In Defence Ministers Session Held In Brussels On 17th And 18th December, 1996 Final Communiqué [scheurwe@hq.nato.int](mailto:scheurwe@hq.nato.int)

<sup>22</sup> The concept “European Pillar” which had currency for many years seems to have fallen out of favor to be replaced by

<sup>23</sup> Simon Duke in “The Second Death (or Second Coming?) of the WEU,” ( cf. Footnote 1) argues the important question is not whether or not the WEU and EU are integrated in the foreseeable future, but whether the European powers, Britain, France and Germany are willing to define their defense policies in a European light. I agree with Duke that the important question is the political will of the “big three” to continue to build WEU, not whether it is integrated with the EU in the foreseeable future. We disagree on whether or not the political will exists to continue to enhance WEU even as an independent defense actor. The evidence seems to me to be overwhelming that even traditional “Atlanticists” and

French Foreign Minister Hervé de Charette addressing the WEU's Parliamentary Assembly in Paris last December 1996, set forth what he called the main principles for European defense. Among them, de Charette said the WEU must work to impede the potential division of the European continent and to avoid confrontation. In addition he asserted WEU should take the role of conveying and "familiarizing" Europeans (including Russia and eastern Europe) with the new and evolving structure for European structure. He clearly suggested WEU, a European organization, could be uniquely helpful particularly in mollifying Russian sensibilities over NATO expansion eastward, that WEU could do what even NATO, itself, could not do. Importantly, de Charette is underscoring roles WEU can play uniquely well, perhaps better than NATO.

Arguably, however, WEU's most significant role is the development of the ESDI. Said de Charette: "If the renovation of the Atlantic Alliance implies the development of Europe's security and defense identity, it is the WEU that is instrumental in the formation of this identity."<sup>24</sup> Moreover, de Charette's commitment to WEU extended even to its becoming the military component of the European Union, its "armed branch," and a "European pillar" of NATO and an equal partner with the "American pillar."

Germany stands shoulder-to-shoulder with France on WEU and has stated the WEU should be developed into the European pillar of NATO and a component of the EU's defense. From the EU's perspective, Germany believes a common defense policy and common European defense should be an integral part of the CFSP. In decisions that have a military impact, it should not be possible for a minority of states to prevent the majority from engaging in common action; however, no country should be obliged to take part against its will. States that do not take part must contribute to the common financing of the actions concerned. Finally Germany has supported enhancing the operational capability of the WEU and has asked that relations

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Europeans now want WEU to operate successfully and in close tandem with both the EU and NATO. In interviews with Secretary General Jose Cutileiro, I found that to be the position of WEU as well.

<sup>24</sup> *News From France*, French Embassy Press and Information Service, (Wash.D.C.), v97-01 (20 Jan. 1997), p5.

between the EU and the WEU be clarified by 1998 so the confusion can be ended which weakens WEU and progress on integrating European defense.

Britain has quite forcefully maintained that the operational capability of the WEU should be expanded and made consistent with NATO's tasks and that combined joint task forces (CJTfS) should be set up.

Speaking at a press conference on May 15, 1997, right after Parliamentary elections had brought Tony Blair's Labour Party to power, the new foreign secretary, the Rt. Hon. Robin Cook, MP, made clear Labour's direction and priority in European security. He said Britain

“...should play a full part as an active partner within the European family of nations, and that does of course include the WEU...As a government we are fully committed to Britain's security and defence remaining based on the North Atlantic Alliance. But that can include a development of the Western European Union. We are willing to work to build up the Western European Union's role in the Petersberg tasks and the Government is ready to incorporate a reference to the Petersberg tasks in the Treaty of the European Union.”<sup>25</sup>

Cook said security and defense, however, should continue to be dealt with by intergovernmental cooperation. Accordingly, the WEU should not be absorbed by the EU. Thus three core members strongly support the WEU, but only two favor some form of integration between WEU and the EU.

## 2) The Other Full Members

The other EU states which are full members, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Greece, all support WEU and favor some form of integration between WEU and the EU. Belgium favors taking decisions by qualified majority on the CFSP, but argues no state should be obliged to take an active part in a policy that requires military backup. The Danes also want closer cooperation between WEU and EU and provision for opting out of WEU actions, if desired by a member. Spain wants increased convergence between WEU and the EU as a means of strengthening the European pillar. Italy favors a gradual integration between the EU and WEU, and wants WEU placed under the supervision of the European Council. Luxembourg, too, favors gradual integration of WEU and EU, and believes WEU should be brought

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<sup>25</sup> Press Release, Thursday 15 May, 1997, British Information Services (PR67/97) p. 1.

closely into the deliberations regarding CFSP. The Netherlands maintains the IGC should have prepared the ground for full integration and that the EU should have direct control of the WEU planning cell.

One can only conclude support for the European Union among its voting (and vetoing) members is overwhelming. Britain, alone, opposes integrating WEU and the EU

#### 4. RESPONSES TO CHALLENGES: Practical Steps Linking Existing Challenges And Political Will

##### 1) Membership Among WEU/EU/NATO

Looking first at the WEU/EU memberships which are not yet coterminous, it appears that relation is narrowing, rather than widening. For example, two of the three associate members (members of NATO, but not of the EU) have sought EU membership. Norway's government has applied twice and reneged twice after national referenda. But Norway has close economic and political ties with other Nordic states, like Sweden and Finland. However long it is before Norway joins the EU, their current relations are very close, and WEU membership may even help cement those relations, just as Britain was united with the European Community through the WEU after 1958.

Turkey, on the other hand, ardently desires EU membership, has applied and was given the status of a "customs union," rather than membership, with the EU at the beginning of 1996. And while Kurdish human rights issues cloud closer formal relations at present, Turkey's strategic location on the Bosphorus, and its important ties to NATO, make it a state with unique ties to Western Europe. Although not a member of the EU currently, Turkey is orbiting in the EU's sphere of influence until a more auspicious alignment of the EU's stellar constellation..

Four of the five WEU Observers belong to the EU but not to NATO and are "neutral states." Since the end of the Cold War, however, the concept of neutrality itself has become very unclear. Austria, for example, before accession to the EU in 1995, said it would have no difficulty joining WEU, if the WEU were integrated into the EU before Austrian accession. The WEU was not integrated into the EU, and Austria did not become a full member of the organization. Just as clearly, however, Austria does not seem to be opposed

to the principle of collective European defense for which WEU stands, and at the politically appropriate time, may become a full member of WEU. Austria has said preparations should be made for the next stages of framing a common defence policy in accordance with Article J.4 of the TEU, which is intriguing, for that article refers specifically to WEU's role as "...an integral part of the development of the Union,..." And paragraph 1 contains that oft-touted phrasing: "The common foreign and security policy shall include all questions related to the security of the Union, including the eventual framing of a common defence policy, which might in time lead to a common defence."

Ireland, too, is on record as willing to play a constructive part in the negotiations on the common defence policy, and Finland in preparing for the IGC noted the possibility of joint participation by members of the WEU, observers, associate members and associate partners in WEU operations. While Finland has affirmed the intergovernmental principle and unanimity in decision-making on defense, it is also willing to support military cooperation listed in the Petersberg Declaration.

Sweden has noted it will closely follow developments within the WEU (and other common defence systems) while remaining outside (full membership in) the WEU. The EU's future defence policy should involve peace-keeping operations, humanitarian activities and conflict management, not territorial defence. In addition, Sweden says it recognizes that the aim of other Member States is to establish a common defence policy.<sup>26</sup> Thus WEU is playing a midwife's role, helping to sustain and develop the idea of a common defense for Europe while not requiring its less-than-full members to accept defense arrangements for which they are not ready. Clearly this is not a role NATO can play, is uniquely WEU's, and will help bridge the Cold War concept of "neutrality" with the EU's stated desire for defense capability.

## 2) The Big Two: Momentum and Integration between France and Germany

Despite Britain's intergovernmentalist approach to European security and the WEU, France and Germany continue to forge ahead with their concept of "variable geometry" in the CFSP and in particular as it

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<sup>26</sup> Underline added

applies to WEU. In a draft statement by Chancellor Kohl and President Chirac made public on January 27, 1997, the two states unveiled their plan called the Joint Franco-German Security and Defense Concept to collaborate in arms procurement, strategic policy and international peacekeeping. One of the plan's major objectives is "[t]o strengthen in a coordinated way the countries' contribution to the military alliances responsible for collective defense in Europe, namely the Atlantic Alliance and the Western European Union."<sup>27</sup>

Specifically, the document stated the two countries would conduct "a concerted defense policy" with each partner equal to the other.

All conventional forces are primarily at the service of allied defense in the framework of obligations to the Brussels and Washington treaties, the document said, referring to the founding agreements of the Western European Union and NATO. As French and German security interest have become inseparable, they face the same risks and their security should be guaranteed under the same framework: European and Atlantic.

The Franco-German tandem is rightfully considered as the "motor" of the European Union and the two are already working together on several industrial defense projects, including the joint manufacture of surveillance satellites and attack helicopters. Moreover, the Franco-German brigade and the Eurocorps are the nucleus of a future all-European army, are proof that the "old enemies" now share the same strategic vision.<sup>28</sup>

Even on nuclear weapons, the statement noted: "Our two nations are prepared to enter into discussion of the role of the nuclear deterrent in the context of European security policy."<sup>29</sup> And the French Foreign Ministry spokesman said it was the first time that French nuclear forces have been recognized by Germany as having a special role in the context of European defense.

### 3) Developments in the WEU Planning Cell

The WEU Planning Cell was tasked with developing a listing of available defense forces in November 1994 in the *Preliminary Conclusions On The Formulation Of A Common European Defence Policy* That listing of "forces-answerable" to WEU (FAWEU), updated in 1995 and continuing since, has grown steadily

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<sup>27</sup> *News From France*, ...v97-03 (17 Feb. 1997) , p3.

<sup>28</sup> *News From France*, ...v97-02 (03 Feb. 1997), p2.

<sup>29</sup> *The Week in Germany*, German Information Center (New York), Jan 31, 1997, p 2.

upwards in quantity and quality. Those forces may come from any of the 28 member states, although as a practical matter the core comes from the ten full members. National forces available as “forces-answerable” are identified or “counted” in “units.” A unit could be, for example, a ship, or a battalion, or a squadron. In July 1996, the Planning Cell contained over 2000 units of forces-answerable. It should be noted, however, that forces-answerable came not only from full members of WEU. Associate members also may make units available, and, in fact, the first armed helicopters have come from associate members.<sup>30</sup>

And the Planning Cell does “exercise” the forces-answerable. Phase I of Crisex 95/96 began in December 1995. Not only troops were involved, but also the WEU Council as well as the political and military officials and the Planning Cell. Phase I is considered a political planning phase. In Phase II of the exercise held in June 1996, the commander and a multinational staff were selected, and an operations plan adopted. In Phase III, held in December 1996, a CJTF plus the commander and key staff were deployed. After each phase an assessment, a kind of post-audit, is carried out.

Using strategy or strategic planning provided by the WEU Council, the Planning Cell then develops “contingency plans” to use the FAWEU. Those plans, however are not designed for a specific country, an Iraq, or a Bosnia. Instead the planning is called “generic,” and the parameters are: 1) size of threat, 2) distance from deployable force, 3) intensity of the conflict, 4) the projected time, and, finally 5) the cost of the operation. Accordingly a force-package would be designed for and based upon those five variables. Generic plans for humanitarian and rescue-type operations, the lower end of the Petersberg tasks, have been written, are available, and can be used in exercises. Generic plans are now being written for traditional peacekeeping operations and the use of force in crisis management situations.

#### 4) CJTFs: Modular Mobility

CJTFs are military task forces structured for a particular operational purpose which might include humanitarian relief, peacekeeping or peace enforcement. “Combined” signifies two or more states (e.g. France

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<sup>30</sup> Personal interviews conducted with officials of the WEU Planning Cell, 5 July 1996.

and Germany) are participating in a task force, and “joint” means two or more services (e.g. army and navy) are involved. So, a CJTF is “a deployable, multinational, multiservice formation generated and tailored for specific, contingency operations.”

The CJTF concept was first articulated at a meeting of NATO defense ministers held at Travemunde, Germany in 1993, and was launched at the NATO summit in Brussels in January 1994. It grew out of the need for smaller, and more cost-effective military forces to respond to new crisis management missions in the post cold war world. Presumably CJTFs could be initiated by any Alliance member and used in any crisis under NATO, WEU, UN or OSCE auspices, from traditional “Article V” (collective defense) missions to new missions: “unpredictable and multidirectional,” as NATO’s new Strategic Concept says.

CJTF has become one of the principal deployment-of-force concepts underpinning the Western European Union (WEU), for it permits the WEU, being developed as the defense component of the European Union, to access NATO assets which are “separable but not separate,” and thus to undertake missions of concern to some, but perhaps not all NATO members. Also, under Partnership for Peace (PfP) arrangements, some members of a CJTF using NATO assets conceivably might not be members of NATO, although the command of such a CJTF would be under a NATO member.

A NATO CJTF will be built around a permanent headquarter’s “nucleus” established in selected Alliance headquarters. A nucleus is the minimum necessary framework around which a complete headquarters could quickly be constructed once a decision had been made to employ a CJTF. The nucleus would be augmented with staff “modules” to complement the specific forms of expertise and specialized supported needed for an operation. The completed CJTF headquarters could then take control of force units provided by participating nations.

##### 5) Eastern Europe and Multi-layered Integration: the sub regional dimension

Finally, for those who think of WEU as the step-child of NATO, perhaps trying to wriggle into wealth and respectability via a marriage to the European Union, perhaps a forced marriage at that, Alyson J. K Bailes

offers a look at yet another subset of defense integration, what she calls "multi-layered integration."<sup>31</sup> There are six principal groupings within the area of Central and Eastern Europe - the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC), the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Visegrad group, the Central European Free Trade Area (CEFTA), the Central European Initiative (CEI) and Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). An impressive array of organizations which Bailes identifies as the "Cinderellas of European security" with activities which rarely win front page attention in the West. Still they provide "low-key, flexible channels to fill a political vacuum and to restart elements of central and east European cooperation abandoned after the demise of CMEA/Comecon. These sub-regional organizations which help integrate defenses, Bailes refers to as "soft security," like telephone numbers to dial in a crisis and colleagues to talk to in meeting hallways. More importantly for an analysis of WEU, however, is to note Bailes' finding that there is a strong correlation between sub-regional groupings and integration, that a good performance record at the sub-regional level should help states in their application for membership in NATO and in the EU, for states are learning the prerequisites of cooperation in democratic defense. In short, there are many types of groupings, many which are less persuasive and less impressive than WEU which are helping build a security penumbra around NATO and the EU. The WEU, rather than "smoke and mirrors," is, itself, built upon many layers of support.

##### 5. AND IN CONCLUSION...

It is not difficult to see how much WEU has NOT accomplished, how far it has fallen short of its stated goals, or, at least, those of its most ardent supporters. On the other hand, it is not difficult to identify scattered achievements of WEU, and to acknowledge fragments of success. It has been the contention throughout this paper, however, that there is a difference between seeing achievements in isolation, and seeing the outline of institutional growth and pattern in those fragments, an outline which could bring a sizable new dimension to European defense.

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<sup>31</sup> Alyson J.K. Bailes, "Sub-regional organizations: The Cinderellas of European Security -." NATO Review, no. 2 (3/97) p. 27

It is perhaps not an unfair assessment to note that the WEU appears focused more on outcomes than on policies or practical means to achieve them.<sup>32</sup> It is, of course, a truism to note WEU is an intergovernmental organization and must remain faithful to its members. To this observer, however, it appears that even though there is considerable disagreement about the path and process of the WEU's development (and even fundamental disagreement between Britain and her fellow European members), it appears, nonetheless, that a congeries of necessary (though not yet sufficient) elements is building around the WEU, largely driven by Germany and France, the core members of the EU who continue to strive for a more integrated and practical European defense. Although the sufficient conditions are not yet evident, the achievements WEU has made in its Planning Cell are remarkable, in developing the forces-answerable concept and in carrying out force exercises from planning to deployment to reassessment. These are not "troops by smoke and mirrors," and they are not just "outcomes," or plans without actions.

So it is with WEU's problem of overlapping memberships. Four disparate categories of membership appear to doom WEU to immobility, but closer examination of the members in the respective categories shows closer agreement on the usefulness and applications for WEU. While there is not congruence among membership categories, the divergence, again, is much less than meets the eye. And it appears the differences are converging. The absence of a crystal ball does not allow us to say if Britain will ever agree with Germany and France on how deeply WEU should be integrated, but, more importantly, that disagreement is not immobilizing WEU. A new world order in European security which includes the WEU is now perceptibly shaped, and it is a shape not even conceived of seven years ago when the Soviet flag was lowered from the Kremlin. To say WEU will continue to shape, and be shaped is only to acknowledge the inevitable process of change. But with some surety one can say: WEU is an idea whose time has come.

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<sup>32</sup> Joseph I Coffey, Coffey makes a thoughtful analysis of the likelihood of the EU's facing the holes in its CFSP and resolving to find new modes of cooperation or integration with WEU. He concludes that a third IGC is more likely to produce results than IGC-2, however.