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# Prospects for Security on the European Continent

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Lemahieu, Andrea Saviolo and Mark Sheetz



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# Prospects for Security on the European Continent

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## Abstract

This collective *EU Diplomacy Paper* on relations between the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the European Union (EU) consists of essays written by students of the EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies programme at the College of Europe in the class on EU-NATO relations taught by Fulbright Professor Mark Sheetz in the academic year 2014-15. It seeks to provide a blueprint of what the near future of the transatlantic alliance and of the European security framework might look like. Special attention will be given to the possible effects of Finland joining NATO, Swedish-NATO relations, the question whether NATO should continue to exist at all, and finally the use of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in relation with the transatlantic military alliance.

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## **Introduction: Prospects for European security**

*Mark Sheetz*

Which direction is European security taking? Has NATO become less of an alliance and more of a coalition of the willing? The latest NATO out-of-area operations -- Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, and Libya -- suggest that NATO increasingly engages in conflicts of choice rather than conflicts of necessity. European NATO partners are not always willing members of these NATO-led coalitions.

What are the implications for the alliance? Does Europe need NATO at all, or has the time come for a European alternative? European NATO members are accused of free-riding; they seem unwilling to invest in their military capacities – let alone use them – while Washington has to do the ‘dirty work’. At the same time, non-members try to gain NATO’s favour by aligning themselves with NATO activities while avoiding any commitments to membership.

In this publication, the authors seek to address some of the implications for European security caused by these ambiguities. The different works contribute to the understanding of the current and future state of the European security architecture. Special attention is given to two of Europe’s so-called neutral countries, Finland and Sweden. There are two reasons for this focus. Firstly, it highlights the curious trend that it is indeed the non-members who prove to be some of the most engaged in NATO activities. Secondly, the relationship between NATO and these two countries may become increasingly important, as the conflict in Ukraine has led the alliance to slowly shift its focus from out-of-area operations to conflicts closer to home.

The first contribution to this publication explores whether it would be beneficial both for Finland and for NATO if Helsinki decides to join the transatlantic alliance. From NATO’s point of view, it seems clear that letting Finland in would be a positive evolution. Firstly, the Finnish Army possesses interesting military capabilities. Secondly, it would send a strong signal to Russia that NATO is still relevant, and that Russian actions in Eastern Europe do not prevent NATO from enlarging. Thirdly, and most importantly, letting the Land of a Thousand Lakes join would solidify the northeastern part of Europe – it closes the Achilles’ heel of the peripheral Baltic members – and provide NATO with the ideal testing ground to push its Smart Defence Strategy forward.

For Finland itself, the situation is more complicated, since joining NATO could lead to severe economic retribution from Moscow. Nevertheless, becoming a member would provide Helsinki with the opportunity to influence decisions which might have implications for its own future as well. Finland already has tight relations with NATO, but lacks the security umbrella which countries like Estonia have. Looking at the issue solely from a military perspective, Finland would be better off inside NATO.

The second contribution looks to Finland's neighbour, Sweden, a fellow EU member and fellow non-member of NATO. Sweden's non-alignment policy means that Sweden remains outside of NATO, but simultaneously works closely with the alliance. This intriguing double-play entails pros and cons for both NATO and Sweden. From NATO's perspective, allowing countries to opt in and out without committing to membership, risks reinforcing its reputation as an *à la carte* institution. From Stockholm's perspective, Sweden benefits from its current NATO cooperation in terms of enhanced interoperability. However, the most important benefit, namely that of collective defence, is out of the question for Sweden. Therefore, Sweden cannot gain the full range of member benefits with the current non-alignment policy, despite being one of the most active countries in NATO operations. Furthermore, Sweden's double-play makes the country vulnerable to the misperception of potential aggressors who may interpret Sweden's active NATO participation as if Sweden were a NATO member in disguise – which undermines the very purpose of having a non-alignment policy in the first place.

The cases of Finland and Sweden are illustrative of how two non-members actually inhabit the pro-NATO wing of Europe, despite the fact that actual members seem to take a more cautious approach to the transatlantic security architecture. This leads us to question whether Europeans continue to see a need for NATO, or if the time has come for a purely European alternative.

The third contribution argues that NATO is a defunct alliance. The question now facing academics and policy-makers alike is not whether NATO can survive, but whether it should survive. While deterrence through NATO worked in keeping Europe safe during the bipolar era of the Cold War, the formula is no longer valid. NATO as a military alliance is now creating threats in Europe rather than containing them. Indeed, NATO's out of area remit, coupled with its continued expansion eastwards, has played a role in exacerbating the crisis in Ukraine. The essay concludes that, despite its inability to 'speak with one voice', the EU has an obligation to take over in

managing European security from an outdated NATO. Doing otherwise will inevitably lead to a more precarious future for Europe; one where Russia continues to destabilise the East, and where EU member states lapse into paralysis as they free-ride on American power.

The fourth essay complements the findings of the previous contribution by turning the analytical focus to European solutions to European security problems. The author draws a comparison between the 1950s' European Defence Community (EDC) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) of the European Union, the military arm of its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The analysis of the respective strategic contexts reveals the existence of interesting parallels between the years preceding the attempted establishment of the EDC and the CFSP/CSDP period. Although Europeans should begin to take responsibility for their own security, this essay demonstrates that the EU does not need this CFSP and this CSDP. The heavy reliance on NATO and the United States and the lack of a proper security strategy prove that these policies do not serve the real security needs of the Union. Nevertheless, the CSDP represents a useful political tool that has served specific foreign policy objectives, including the need to provide an alternative to the United States' military commitment to Europe and to manage German re-armament and re-unification.



## Finnish NATO membership – What added value?

Tim Gemers

Finland has a long tradition of military non-alignment. Due to its 1,340 km long border with the Soviet Union, it perceived *rapprochement* with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) as a threat rather than as a guarantee for its security. The 'Paasikivi-Kekkonen Line' formed the basis of the Finnish neutrality policy. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Finland joined the European Union (EU) in 1995. However, leaving the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) aside, up until today Finland has stuck to its military non-alignment by not joining NATO, although the military alliance itself seems quite keen on welcoming Finland as a new member.

Although there is no short-term prospect of Finland joining the military alliance, the debate is emerging again due to the situation in Ukraine. Alexander Stubb, until recently Prime Minister of Finland, repeatedly stated his desire for Finland to join the military alliance while in office.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it is useful to see what the implications would be if Helsinki one day decided to join NATO. Which consequences would the accession have for the security situation in the region? Would Finland's security be better safeguarded in NATO? And what is there to gain for NATO by letting Finland join? This paper will try to make clear to what extent this enlargement would be beneficial (or not) both for Finland itself as well as for NATO.

### Added value for Finland?

Although a military conflict with Russia is improbable, the main incentive for Finland to join NATO obviously is to obtain the alliance's security guarantee under the mutual defence clause against a possible Russian aggression.<sup>2</sup> The 2008 Russo-Georgian War and the current situation in eastern Ukraine have fuelled the debate in Finland. Although the majority of the population still opposes accession,<sup>3</sup> the idea of a Russian threat is gaining ground. Finland and NATO work closely together in several missions and domains, but this does not mean that in the case of an aggression against the country, NATO would intervene. NATO also possesses military capabilities

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<sup>1</sup> Cited in J. Dempsey, "Should Finland and Sweden Join NATO?", *Carnegie Europe*, 21 May 2014, retrieved 9 March 2015, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=55657>.

<sup>2</sup> L. Michel, *Finland, Sweden, and NATO: From Virtual to Formal Allies?*, Washington D.C., INSS Center for Strategic Research, 2011, pp. 2-3.

<sup>3</sup> Dempsey, *op. cit.*

which reach far beyond those of the Finnish Army, the use of which could theoretically be in the country's interest, as concluded already by the 2007 report on a possible NATO membership of Finland.<sup>4</sup> NATO membership could also protect Finland have a preventive effect against external threats. As the same report states: "In situations of crisis [...] the other members of the alliance would lend Finland their political support. Awareness of such assistance could have a major preventive effect and ward off threats against Finland."<sup>5</sup>

Alexander Stubb, Prime Minister of Finland until May 2015 and a proponent of NATO accession, argued that "as long as Finland is not a full member, it has no access to the alliance's intelligence, planning, security guarantees, and decision-making".<sup>6</sup> Because of Finland's geographic location, almost every decision made by NATO has direct implications for the country. Therefore, it is important for Finland to weigh on the decisions taken in Brussels. Joining NATO would provide Helsinki with voting power and with real impact on the decision-making process, compared to its current consultative role. It would also put an end to the schizophrenic situation in which Finland in some cases is more active than many NATO member states, especially in peacekeeping, without enjoying the benefits of membership.<sup>7</sup>

On the other hand, becoming a member state of NATO might designate Finland as a potential enemy of Russia, whereas its current non-aligned status gives it a certain degree of flexibility *vis-à-vis* its eastern neighbour.<sup>8</sup> Finland thus might risk ending up in a situation where its security is more endangered by joining NATO than by staying non-aligned. Moreover, there is more than security at risk if Finland joins NATO. Acceding to the military alliance could also potentially lead to retribution from the Kremlin, which would be harmful for Finland, a country that relies on Russia for its energy supplies, large amounts of foreign direct investment and as its third biggest export market.<sup>9</sup> Even though the security situation in the region has changed, it still remains very improbable that Russia (which *de facto* is the only threat to Finland's security) would attack the country. Therefore, it might not be worth joining NATO

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<sup>4</sup> A. Sierla, *Effects of Finland's Possible NATO Membership*, Helsinki, Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>6</sup> Cited in Dempsey, *op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> S. Martti, "Small States and NATO", *Atlantic Council of Finland Occasional Papers*, vol. 5, no. 6, 2014, pp. 12-17.

<sup>8</sup> S. Saari, *Et Tu Brute!: Finland's NATO Option and Russia*, Helsinki, Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 2002, pp. 30-36.

<sup>9</sup> Dempsey, *op. cit.*

while knowing that this would most certainly have a big impact on the country's economic security and financial stability.

Nevertheless, there is a counterargument to this position as well. It is clear that joining NATO would worsen Helsinki's relations with its big eastern neighbour. However, Klus notes that Russia already sees Finland as a surrogate NATO member.<sup>10</sup> By becoming a member of the European Union, Finland *de facto* joined the Western bloc. The country is also a close ally of the United States. Therefore, Finland already bears the political costs of its place on the Western side, while not enjoying the benefits of military protection under Article 5.<sup>11</sup> In other words, military non-alignment puts Finland in a vulnerable position, clearly being part of the Western political bloc, but remaining on its own when it comes to military power.<sup>12</sup>

### **Added value for NATO?**

Although Finland is not a member, the country does have quite extensive relations with NATO. Finland participates in various areas of the Partnership for Peace programme and has sent peacekeepers to Afghanistan and Kosovo in the framework of NATO missions.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, it holds membership in the Enhanced Military Operational Procedures and the Host Nation Support.<sup>14</sup> Because of the extensive cooperation, the Finnish Army is fully compatible with NATO standards. The latest development in NATO-Finland relations came in 2014, when both sides signed a Memorandum of Understanding which confirms Helsinki's willingness to cooperate even further with the transatlantic alliance.

The Finnish Army has considerable assets to offer to NATO. The country's F-18 Hornets would be a real added value in the defence of the airspace on NATO's northern flank. The land forces recently received JASSMs (Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missiles), a long-range strike weapon sold by Lockheed Martin. Even when taking into account the relatively small size of the Finnish armed forces, they still have high-

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<sup>10</sup> A. Klus, "Should Finland Join NATO?", *Atlantic Community*, 7 July 2014, retrieved 9 March 2015, <http://www.atlantic-community.org/-/should-finland-join-nato->.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> K. Giles & S. Eskola, "Waking the Neighbour: Finland, NATO and Russia", *Defence Academy of the United Kingdom Research Paper*, vol. 9, no. 14, p. 24.

<sup>13</sup> Dempsey, *op. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> J. Eliasson, "Traditions, Identity and Security: The Legacy of Neutrality in Finnish and Swedish Security Policies in Light of European Integration", *European Integration online Papers*, vol. 8, no. 6, 2004, p. 10, <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/2004-006a.htm>.

quality capabilities to offer.<sup>15</sup> With the increasing tensions between Russia and the United States, Finland's strategic geographical situation could be a real added value for NATO.<sup>16</sup> Saint Petersburg, Russia's second-largest city, is only 300 km away from Helsinki. Russia has strategically important energy infrastructures in Finland's vicinity, such as the largest Russian oil terminal in Primorsk. In the future race to the Arctic region Finland could also become an important hub. Furthermore, Finland joining the alliance might provoke a similar move by Sweden. If both countries were to join NATO, Russia would face a substantial politico-military challenge in the region.<sup>17</sup>

If Finland and Sweden joined NATO, it would mean that the entire Scandinavian and Baltic region would be covered, which could open perspectives for the Smart Defence Strategy NATO tries to deploy.<sup>18</sup> The armed forces of these countries are relatively small and unable on their own to reach a high quality in all segments of air, land and naval forces. According to NATO, the times of every single nation having its own all-encompassing army are over. Therefore, it tries to stimulate pooling and sharing and specialisation of certain countries in certain facets of the military. Currently, this idea is not met with enthusiasm in most NATO member states. Nevertheless, the Baltic and Scandinavian region, which is historically closely linked, might become a laboratory where NATO could experiment with its Smart Defence Strategy.<sup>19</sup>

Finnish (and Swedish) membership would solidify the northern flank of the alliance, and would provide NATO with a new range of options to defend Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania against possible threats. The three Baltic states are currently seen as the 'Achilles heel' of NATO, forming a periphery surrounded by a grey area of militarily non-allied countries (Finland and Sweden, but also Belarus). A Finnish NATO membership would remove all doubts about the camp to which Helsinki belongs if the security situation in north-eastern Europe were to deteriorate further, and it would solidify the northern flank and enable its proper defence.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> M. Nordenman, "For NATO, Benefits of Adding Finland and Sweden Outweigh Costs", *World Politics Review*, 5 May 2014, retrieved 9 March 2015, <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com>.

<sup>16</sup> Michel, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>17</sup> Klus, *op. cit.*

<sup>18</sup> A. Notovny, "Smart Defence – A New Way Of Looking at The Capabilities of the Alliance", *Centre for European and North Atlantic Affairs*, 2015.

<sup>19</sup> A. Dahl, "NORDEFECO and NATO: Smart Defence in the North?", *NATO Research Paper*, vol. 7, no. 101, p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Nordenman, "For NATO", *op. cit.*

Nordenman also argues that the psychological effect of Finland joining NATO cannot be underestimated.<sup>21</sup> It would show Russia that its behaviour in Georgia in 2008 and in Ukraine more recently has not led to a smaller, but rather to an expanded NATO presence near its borders.<sup>22</sup> On the alliance's side, letting Finland in would show that the process of NATO enlargement has not stopped yet and signal that it still is a relevant player in the European and global security setting.

However, Jakobsen argues that it is better for NATO to have a partial engagement with Finland instead of Helsinki's full membership.<sup>23</sup> According to this reasoning, Finnish accession would have no real added value since it already employs NATO procedures and participates in various exercises and missions undertaken by NATO. Furthermore, non-membership forces the Finnish authorities to spend more on defence than one would expect it to do when falling under the protection of NATO.<sup>24</sup> This is closely linked to the issue of free riding within NATO. Although the Finnish Army clearly has some interesting capabilities to offer, its military expenditure is still far from the 2% of GDP benchmark pledged – but rarely met – by NATO members.<sup>25</sup> Finland's accession might lessen the pressure on current NATO member states to increase their own defence expenditure.<sup>26</sup> According to this argument, it might thus be better for NATO to maintain the current situation: Finland contributes to NATO operations while, due to its non-membership, it is forced to keep on investing in its armed forces.

## Conclusion

Although there are valid arguments on both sides, it is clear that NATO itself would benefit from Finland joining the club. The Finnish Army has great capabilities to offer in a number of areas, and in the past has proven to be an engaged and capable ally in several missions. More important, though, is Finland's strategic position in the north-eastern part of Europe. Letting Finland (and Sweden) in would solidify this flank and enhance NATO's ability to protect its peripheral member states, namely Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Having all Scandinavian and Baltic countries in NATO could

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<sup>21</sup> M. Nordenman, "Amid Ukraine Crisis, Sweden, Finland Face Increasing Pressure to Join NATO", *World Politics Review*, 5 May 2014, retrieved 9 March 2015, <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/13754/amid-ukraine-crisis-sweden-finland-face-increasing-pressure-to-join-nato>.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Cited in Dempsey, *op. cit.*

<sup>24</sup> Dempsey, *op. cit.*

<sup>25</sup> Michel, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>26</sup> Nordenman, "For NATO", *op. cit.*

also create the ideal testing ground for NATO's preferred Smart Defence Strategy. Furthermore, it would send a strong signal to Russia that NATO is still alive and relevant, and that Russia's actions in Georgia and Ukraine did not prevent NATO from enlarging.

For Finland itself, answering the question is more complicated, since joining NATO might have economic implications for the country due to its considerable economic dependence on Russia. However, the main research question of this paper was whether Finland's security would better be safeguarded in NATO. The answer to that question is yes. By joining the EU and by being an ally of the United States, Finland *de facto* joined the Western bloc. But by staying outside NATO, it is highly questionable if the military alliance would be willing to step in to protect a non-member against any kind of threat. Finland bears the political costs of its place on the Western side, while not enjoying the benefits of military protection by Article 5. If it joined NATO, Finland would be able to influence the decision-making of an organisation whose decisions could have major implications for itself. Finland would sit at the table when decisions about European security are being made, instead of walking in the corridors and hoping for some members to take its interests into account.

History has shown that military non-alignment can be a vulnerable position to be in when conflicts arise, such as Belgium prior to the two World Wars. During the Cold War it prevented Finland from developing its foreign policy and resulted in the coining of the term 'Finlandisation', which is tantamount to 'appeasement' in international relations. Finland has gone very far in its cooperation with NATO, and it has done so for a reason. Helsinki understands that on its own, it cannot guarantee its national security. But as long as the title of 'member state' is not given to Finland, it remains questionable if its Western partners will show up when its security is at risk.

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## Sweden and NATO – A relationship *à la carte*?

Rannvá Clementsen

Sweden's former Prime Minister Olof Palme, a fierce defender of Swedish non-alignment, phrased the century-old Swedish security policy in his 1968 Labour Day speech as "non-alignment in peace time aiming at neutrality in war time".<sup>1</sup> As a result of this policy, Sweden remains a NATO non-member, despite having participated in all major NATO-led operations with a UN mandate.<sup>2</sup>

Using Sweden as a case study, this essay examines the extent to which NATO has become an *à la carte* alliance where non-members can opt-in for benefits, but opt-out of commitments. In the process I will question whether Sweden can truly be characterised as neutral. I will base my arguments on the assumption that the core NATO purpose remains its members' collective defence. On this basis, I will argue that without commitment to collective defence, Sweden cannot enjoy the benefit thereof. Thus demonstrating that while Sweden can opt-in to certain NATO benefits, the core benefit of collective defence is 'off the menu' for Sweden, which illustrates that there are limits to NATO being an *à la carte* alliance. Finally, I argue that Sweden may do well to clarify its position to avoid any misunderstanding on the part of potential aggressors.

### A maximalist approach

Several authors claim that the reasoning behind the Swedish policy is more than just a political statement; that it is something more fundamental. They argue that neutrality is more a question of a "deeply rooted" self-perception of the "Swedish national identity".<sup>3</sup> Sticking with the policy then becomes a question of preserving the national identity. Such an ingrained self-perception should probably limit the room of manoeuvre for adventurous policy-makers. However, there is reason to believe that the Swedes are more flexible than that.

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<sup>1</sup> Unofficial translation from Swedish "alliansfrihet i fred syftande till neutralitet i krig". O. Palme, Labour Day Speech, Stockholm and Sundbyberg, 1 May 1968, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> T. Bertelman, "Försvarspolitisk samarbete – effektivitet, solidaritet, suveränitet", Report commissioned by Ministry of Defence of Sweden, Fö 2013:B, 29 October 2014, p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, A. Dahl, "Not if but how: Sweden's future relations with NATO", *Nato Review*, web edition, no. 3, vol. 45, 1997, pp. 19-22; M. Nordenman, "On the Transatlantic Edge", *The RUSI Journal*, vol. 159, no. 3, 2014, p. 50; A. Cottey, "The European Neutrals and NATO: Ambiguous Partnership", *Contemporary Security Policy*, vol. 34, no. 3, 2013, p. 465.



Despite often being lumped into the category of neutral countries, the notion of neutrality has slowly moved out of Swedish policy in favour of 'non-alignment'.<sup>4</sup> This may be a testament to traditional Nordic pragmatism in policy-making. Going with non-alignment is simply more convenient as it allows Sweden to cooperate with NATO when it serves Swedish interests, and to opt-out when it does not.<sup>5</sup>

Non-alignment differs from neutrality as it effectively means that Sweden 'takes sides' with NATO on certain issues. Taking sides is by definition incompatible with neutrality. Shifting to a policy on non-alignment therefore effectively means a farewell to neutrality for Sweden.<sup>6</sup> Non-alignment does not equal full-scale alignment either. Non-alignment is rather a lack of fixed military commitments towards the alliance.<sup>7</sup> Non-alignment simply means that Sweden sides with NATO on certain issues – and on other issues it does not. As such this change does not necessarily entail the introduction of an entirely new security doctrine. Instead, the old policy remains somewhat intact, but is stretched to include a close cooperation with an alliance – without official membership.

With such close cooperation with an alliance, Sweden is arguably not truly non-aligned either. During an interview, a NATO policy expert tends to agree that it is possible to question Sweden's non-alignment in the traditional sense of the word.<sup>8</sup> However, as the interviewee points out "they are not 'in' either". The Swedes seem to have seated themselves between two chairs. Then what happens when the music stops? The label of non-alignment is not only important for its bearer's self-perception. On the contrary, it is probably even more important to convince potential aggressors that the non-alignment is genuine.

Swedish officials are aware that with close NATO ties, Sweden runs the risk of being identified with NATO in the eyes of potential aggressors.<sup>9</sup> Yet since Sweden is actively seeking further cooperation through what Cottey calls a "maximalist" approach

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<sup>4</sup> D.F.C. Austin, "NATO expansion to Northern Europe", *European Security*, vol. 8, no. 1, 1999, p. 80.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*; U. Bjereld, "Svenska folket och NATO", in S. Holmberg & L. Weibull (eds.), *Fåfångans markad*, SOM-rapport no. 33, Gothenburg, Göteborg Universitet, 2003, p. 327.

<sup>6</sup> U. Bjereld, "Svenska folket och NATO", *op. cit.*, p. 327; Dahl, *op. cit.*; R. Hendricksson, "History: Sweden's partnership with NATO", *NATO Review*, 1 July 2007, pp. 327-331; C. Ruffa, "Sweden", in H. Biehls, B. Giegerich & A. Jonas (eds.), *Strategic Cultures in Europe: Security and Defence Policies Across the Continent*, Potsdam, Springer VS, vol. 6, 2013, p. 354.

<sup>7</sup> Dahl, *op. cit.*

<sup>8</sup> Phone interview with a NATO policy expert, 18 March 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Bertelman, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

where it pursues “everything but membership”, one must assume that Swedes are content with staying in the grey area.<sup>10</sup>

When NATO established the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme in 1994, Sweden was one of the first partners. The PfP is seen by Flockhard as a “socialisation process”, which for some countries has eventually led to NATO membership.<sup>11</sup> However, Sweden’s participation in PfP should not necessarily be seen as a route to membership.<sup>12</sup> It can instead be viewed as merely an attempt to institutionalise the pre-existing cooperation. Developments since the Wales Summit in September 2014 support this. Rather than pursuing membership, Sweden opted for the new Enhanced Opportunities Partners programme.

This is not to say that Sweden will not take on membership one day. On the contrary, Stockholm’s increased cooperation with NATO can over time create the public and political will necessary to take the final step to membership.<sup>13</sup> NATO’s popularity in Sweden has increased slightly in recent years. A 2013 survey showed that almost one third (29%) of the population was in favour of membership while one third was against (34%).<sup>14</sup> Curiously, a 2014 survey indicates that the Ukraine crisis has increased the no-side with 50% now being against membership.<sup>15</sup> This indicates that Swedish policy-makers still have some ground to cover if they are to convince their public of the virtues of NATO membership. The Swedish public still seems convinced that it is the (so-called) non-alignment policy that has kept Sweden out of war for more than two centuries.<sup>16</sup>

### **What need for membership then?**

Why would states join NATO in the first place? Kaiser and Van Ham argue that NATO members obtain at least two benefits from their membership.<sup>17</sup> Firstly, members become so interlinked that they are unlikely to wage war on one another. Secondly,

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<sup>10</sup> Cottey, *op. cit.*, p. 447.

<sup>11</sup> T. Flockhard, “NATO and the (Re-) Constitution of Roles: ‘Self’, ‘We’ and ‘Other’?”, *DIIS Working Paper*, no. 4, Copenhagen, Danish Institute for International Studies, 2010, p. 18.

<sup>12</sup> T. Forsberg & T. Vaahtoranta, “Inside the EU, outside NATO: Paradoxes of Finland’s and Sweden’s post-neutrality”, *European Security*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2001, p. 75.

<sup>13</sup> Nordenman, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

<sup>14</sup> U. Bjereld, “Svensk NATO opinion i förändring”, in H. Oscarsson & A. Bergström (eds.), *Mittfåra och marginal*, SOM-rapport, no. 61, Gothenburg, Göteborg Universitet, 2014, p. 488.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 492.

<sup>16</sup> Forsberg & Vaahtoranta, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

<sup>17</sup> K. Kaiser & P. Van Ham, “For Better or Worse: Is NATO still relevant?”, *Internationale Politik*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2008, p. 10.

NATO has contributed to the “growth and democratisation” of its members.<sup>18</sup> Despite its non-membership, Sweden does not seem to be forgoing these two benefits. Due to its close relationship with NATO members, both in NATO activities and otherwise, Sweden is already closely interlinked with other NATO members to the extent that a war with a NATO member seems highly unlikely. Further, Sweden does not seem to lag behind NATO members neither in terms of growth or democratisation.

Two benefits that Sweden as a non-member is unable to entirely enjoy, however, are those of influencing decision-making and having full access to information.<sup>19</sup> However, the operations in Afghanistan and Libya are examples of how a partner can still obtain these benefits. In these operations Sweden had access to intelligence and was actively involved in the decision-making on an operational level.<sup>20</sup>

However, being a partner does not include being automatically involved on every level of decision-making within NATO. Further, partners’ access to influence and intelligence will always solely be provided at NATO’s discretion. The Afghanistan and Libya operations are therefore not examples of Sweden opting in on its own. Rather they are examples of NATO granting Sweden access. This is not always the case. When Poland called for Art. 4 consultations in 2014, the Swedish ambassador was not allowed in the meeting.<sup>21</sup>

Since the introduction of the Enhanced Opportunities Partners programme, the political dialogue between NATO and Sweden has increased, in particular on the ambassadorial level.<sup>22</sup> This could indicate that there will be increased access to information and influence on the decision-making. As a partner, Sweden still cannot opt in on all levels of information and decision-making at its own discretion.

A more freely available benefit from membership could be increased defence capabilities. A close cooperation with NATO is crucial to further develop Swedish operative capabilities, especially inter-operability with NATO allies.<sup>23</sup> However, this benefit is not exclusive to NATO members. On the contrary, Sweden already

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Bertelman, *op. cit.*, p. 73; Forsberg & Vaahtoranta, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

<sup>20</sup> Bertelman, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>21</sup> A. Wieslander, “Sverige i exklusiv krets på Natos toppmöte”, *UI-bloggen*, Swedish Institute of International Affairs, 1 September 2014.

<sup>22</sup> Phone interview with a NATO policy expert, *op. cit.*

<sup>23</sup> Bertelman, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

participates in NATO operations where some NATO members do not. Thus, as an active partner, Sweden has largely the same possibilities, perhaps even more than the non-participating members, to improve its NATO interoperability.

### Collective defence

The number of Swedish opt-ins has led Cottey to claim that Sweden has reached a “vanishing point” where the question of membership is “meaningless”.<sup>24</sup> Some members are uneasy about this vanishing point as they see it as a risk to the “integrity of the alliance”.<sup>25</sup> This argument is not without merit. If non-members can freely opt in and out of benefits, why should states commit to membership?

Contrary to inter-operability, collective defence remains a ‘members only’ benefit. NATO’s shift in focus from out-of-area operations to traditional collective defence in light of the Ukraine crisis has made the difference between members and non-members clearer.<sup>26</sup> Collective defence is therefore one of the benefits where Cottey’s argument, about membership being meaningless, is less convincing.

There are voices in Sweden who believe that Sweden’s geographical location make it within the self-interest of NATO to defend Sweden in the event of an attack.<sup>27</sup> However, NATO has made it clear that as a non-member, a guarantee of collective defence will not be extended to Sweden.<sup>28</sup> The observation that Sweden is within the range of NATO’s long-range defence capability is not in itself an argument in favour of NATO actually deploying these capabilities to protect Sweden.<sup>29</sup>

Is it reasonable that Sweden as an active partner, who opts in on operations where even some members opt out, should be excluded from collective defence? It can seem odd that collective defence is provided for the alliance’s ‘free riders’ and not for its active partners.<sup>30</sup> Arguably, it is the NATO members, and not its partners, who are using the alliance as an “à la carte alliance”.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Cottey, *op. cit.*, p. 465.

<sup>25</sup> Bertelman, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39; Wieslander, *op. cit.*

<sup>27</sup> Bertelman, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

<sup>28</sup> A.F. Rasmussen, “Press conference by NATO Secretary General in Stockholm”, Press Conference, 14 January 2013.

<sup>29</sup> Bertelman, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>30</sup> Kaiser & Van Ham, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>31</sup> Cottey, *op. cit.*, p. 451.

From a NATO point of view, there is arguably cause for concern about free riders. Free riders can undermine the overarching feature of an alliance, namely that of mutual commitment. However, this concern does not seem to be an argument in favour of extending non-members a guarantee of collective security. On the contrary, this would only worsen the situation for NATO, as it would cement Cottey's argument that membership is meaningless. Countries would then have no incentive to be members in the first place.

It seems that NATO would rather accept that its members are opting out of certain NATO activities, as long as they opt in on the collective defence, which they automatically do by virtue of their membership. In other words, NATO accepts some degree of *à la carte* behaviour as long as the commitment to collective defence stays intact.<sup>32</sup>

### Conclusions and future prospects

This contribution has sought to investigate to what extent NATO in the case of Sweden has become an alliance *à la carte*. While the non-alignment policy allows Sweden to opt in on some of NATO's benefits, intelligence and influence on decision-making, it does so only to the extent that NATO allows it. Most importantly, non-alignment makes Sweden unable to opt in on collective defence. While NATO does have some elements of being an alliance *à la carte* for both members and non-members, a line is drawn when it comes to collective defence. As a non-member, collective defence by NATO remains off the menu for Sweden.

Amongst NATO's partners, Sweden is arguably the one closest to membership in terms of *de facto* participation in NATO activities.<sup>33</sup> Former NATO Secretary General Rasmussen indicated in 2013 that a potential Swedish membership application would be a smooth process.<sup>34</sup> Yet, the new Secretary General Stoltenberg should not expect a membership application in the near future. Echoing public opinion, Sweden's new left-green government has in 2014 declared that it will not seek NATO membership.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Arguably the phrasing of Art. 5 gives members considerable leeway to choose their response to a call for collective defence, that is, the response is *à la carte*.

<sup>33</sup> S.R. Sloan, "NATO's 'neutral' European partners: valuable contributors or free riders?", *NATO Review*, 23 April 2013.

<sup>34</sup> Rasmussen, *op. cit.*

<sup>35</sup> S. Löfven, Prime Minister of Sweden, "Regeringsförklaringen", 3 October 2014.

Sweden's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with NATO on Host Nation Support is scheduled to take effect in 2016. One of the implications of the MoU is that Sweden is preparing to potentially receive NATO support in the event of an aggression. This indicates that Sweden is determined to continue its close NATO cooperation, following the maximalist 'everything but membership' approach, while continuing to claim to be non-aligned.

It remains questionable, however, whether the label of non-alignment is convincing to anyone but the Swedes themselves. With its growing NATO ties, Sweden is close to – if not beyond – the limit of what potential aggressors could reasonably be expected to interpret as truly non-aligned. Since one of the main purposes of being non-aligned in the first place is precisely that potential aggressors do not associate one with a particular alliance, Sweden's current security doctrine risks compromising the central purpose of its overarching policy. By purposely muddying the waters of non-alignment, Sweden's current security doctrine leaves much room for (mis)interpretation on the part of potential aggressors, which undermines the 'security' of the doctrine. It may therefore be wise for the Swedish government to clarify its position, if not to its resistant public, then to the outside world.

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## Is the transatlantic alliance still as close as during the Cold War?

Raphaël Lemahieu

Addressing the Chicago Summit In 2012, President Obama pledged that “NATO Allies will stand by one another, now and always”.<sup>1</sup> Twenty years after the end of the Cold War, Obama’s declaration makes clear that NATO remains a fixture of the transatlantic alliance.<sup>2</sup> The realist school of Kenneth Waltz and John Mearsheimer was wrong: NATO survived the end of the Cold War.<sup>3</sup> However, this contribution will argue that realists are now right: NATO must go. Or at least the NATO of today, an expansionist ‘out of area’ institution, needs to go. The question debated in the literature has evolved since the 1990s from whether NATO *can* survive to whether it *should*.<sup>4</sup> The answer proposed in this paper is that it should not. At a time when proponents speak in favour of ‘more NATO’ in Europe, the alternative of ‘less NATO’ must be considered.<sup>5</sup> A more minimalist NATO, or better yet the gradual ‘OSCE-isation’ of the organisation, would benefit the future of European security.<sup>6</sup>

With its ‘out of area’ expansion, NATO has, in many ways, become too successful for the sake of transatlantic security. Rather, a scaled-down NATO would be in America’s interest: with the rise of new powers, the Eurasian landmass – the centre of global power – is not in danger of being monopolised by any one state.<sup>7</sup> Downsizing NATO is in Europe’s interest as well. Europe’s ability to ‘invite’ the US into a permanent military alliance is a feat which secured peace on the continent for six decades.<sup>8</sup> But times have changed, and so too must policy. Europe must pay closer attention to

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<sup>1</sup> B. Obama, “Message from President Obama”, May 2012, retrieved 20 March 2015, <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2012/chicago/president-obama/en/index.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> A. Henrikson, “Creation of the North Atlantic Alliance”, *Naval War College Review*, vol. 32, no. 3, 1980, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> In 1992 John Mearsheimer not only predicted the collapse of NATO, but he expected Germany to go nuclear, see K. Waltz, “NATO Expansion: A Realist’s View”, *Contemporary Security Policy*, vol. 21, no. 2, 2000, p. 28.

<sup>4</sup> As Marc Trachtenberg argues, whether ‘that system’ *can* be preserved, or whether it *should* be preserved, are two different questions, see M. Trachtenberg, “A Military Coalition in Time of Peace: America, Europe, and the NATO Alliance”, in D. Showalter (ed.), *Future Wars: Coalition Operations in Global Strategy*, Chicago, Imprint, 2002, p. 15.

<sup>5</sup> For more on the reported benefits of NATO expansion and of its ‘Open Door Policy’ see “NATO Enlargement”, 12 June 2014, retrieved 20 March 2015, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_49212.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49212.htm).

<sup>6</sup> K. Kaiser & P. Van Ham, “For Better or Worse”, *Internationale Politik*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2008, p. 17.

<sup>7</sup> “Who rules the Heartland”, Sir Halford Mackinder famously declared, “commands the world”. See H.J. Mackinder, *Democratic ideals and reality a study in the politics of reconstruction*, London, Constable Publishers, 1942, p. 106.

<sup>8</sup> G. Lundestad, “Empire by Invitation?”, *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 23, no. 3, 1986, pp. 263.



the threats that currently destabilise European security. Among the threats identified by realist scholars is NATO's continued expansion into Eastern Europe.<sup>9</sup>

### **The rise, or fall, of NATO?**

The 'end of Atlanticism' was much debated in the midst of the fallout over Iraq in 2003; many scholars concluding NATO to be in deep crisis.<sup>10</sup> Robert Kagan famously declared that "Americans are from Mars and Europeans from Venus", refuting the idea that the crisis was merely 'transitory' or based on the unilateralism of the Bush Administration.<sup>11</sup> The discussion turned on the distinction between Europe as a 'trade state' versus America as a 'warrior state'.<sup>12</sup> Scholars spoke of a 'transatlantic divorce', offering marriage counselling in a bid to save the Atlantic alliance. "Every marriage", suggested Ivo Daalder, "requires a continued commitment by both partners to make it work".<sup>13</sup> "The marriage is intact, remains strong, will weather any differences that come along", Colin Powell affirmed.<sup>14</sup> Structural realism fell out of favour, a victim of the end of the Cold War which it had failed to predict. In its place came a plethora of alternative theories, ranging from economic interdependence, to liberal institutionalism, constructivism and democratic peace theory. Optimists like Philip Gordon declared that the "basic American and European values and interests have not diverged" and that NATO would survive.<sup>15</sup> "Mutual shared values" became the buzzword of Atlantic harmony; Thomas Risse arguing that the transatlantic community was linked not only by the institutional solidarity of NATO, but by a collective identity based on common values.<sup>16</sup> Liberal institutionalists like Robert Keohane declared that realism had got it wrong. NATO's longevity was a confirmation of the fundamental necessity of international institutions in the anarchic system.<sup>17</sup> The 'inevitable alliance' would go on.

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<sup>9</sup> S. Cohen, "The New American Cold War", *The Nation*, 10 July 2006, retrieved 5 March 2015, <http://www.thenation.com/article/new-american-cold-war>.

<sup>10</sup> I. Daalder, "The End of Atlanticism", *Survival*, vol. 45, no. 2, 2003, pp. 147-148.

<sup>11</sup> R. Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2003, p. 4.

<sup>12</sup> M. Smith, "Between Two Worlds? The European Union, the United States and World Order", *International Politics*, 2004, pp. 95-117.

<sup>13</sup> Daalder, *op. cit.*, pp. 157.

<sup>14</sup> C. Powell, "Remarks at the World Economic Forum", Davos, 26 January 2003, retrieved 28 March 2015, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/2003/16869.htm>.

<sup>15</sup> P. Gordon, "Bridging the Atlantic Divide", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 82, no. 1, 2003, p. 83.

<sup>16</sup> T. Risse, "Beyond Iraq: The Crisis of the Transatlantic Security Community", in D. Held (ed.), *American Power in the 21st Century*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2004, pp. 214-240.

<sup>17</sup> R. Keohane & L. Martin, "The Promise of Institutional Theory", *International Security*, vol. 20, no. 1, 1995, p. 12.

NATO has indeed proven to be a very resilient institution. From the Suez debacle in the 1950s, to the Gaullist abandonment of the integrated military command in the 1960s, to the Euro-missile crisis in the 1980s, the history of NATO has been a history of 'alliance crises'.<sup>18</sup> It is NATO's resilience which explains how the crises faced by the alliance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, notably the power imbalance caused by America's 'unipolar moment'<sup>19</sup> and the fallout caused by the George W. Bush Administration's doctrine of pre-exemption<sup>20</sup> have coincided with the successful expansion of NATO membership from 16 members to 28 in the post-Cold War era. In between and during 'crises', NATO has not only survived: it has significantly expanded.

Neoliberal and alternative theories which have sought to rationalise and explain the continued viability of NATO, however, miss the point. NATO survived the Cold War not because it *should*, but because it *could*. NATO survives because the US wants it to.<sup>21</sup> NATO in Europe has become a byword for US dominance. Indeed, the idea that Europe 'invited' the US to continue this dominance in order to free-ride on hard power is well accepted by European scholars.<sup>22</sup> In 2014, 61% of Europeans agreed that NATO is essential to their security.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, 73% agreed that it should be "engaged in the territorial defence of Europe".<sup>24</sup> Obama's 2012 pledge that "NATO Allies will stand by one another, now and always" is one that should be taken at face-value.<sup>25</sup> NATO may be riddled with problems, but it will not collapse because America does not want it to. In fact, Washington continues to want the reverse: the expansion of NATO. And that is the problem.

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<sup>18</sup> Robert Gates himself admitted that "over the life of the transatlantic alliance there has been no shortage of squabbles and setbacks". See R. Gates, "Reflections on Future of Transatlantic Alliance", Brussels, 10 June 2011, retrieved 30 September 2014, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009\\_2014/documents/sede/dv/sede190911robertgates\\_/sede190911robertgates\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/sede/dv/sede190911robertgates_/sede190911robertgates_en.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> C. Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 70, no. 1, 1990/1991, p. 23.

<sup>20</sup> J. Haine, "Idealism and Power: The EU Security Strategy", *Current History*, vol. 103, no. 671, 2004, pp. 107-112.

<sup>21</sup> Waltz, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>22</sup> Lundestad, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

<sup>23</sup> "Transatlantic Trends: Key Findings 2014", The German Marshall Fund of the United States, December 2014, retrieved 1 April 2015, [http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/Trends\\_2014\\_complete.pdf](http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2012/09/Trends_2014_complete.pdf), p. 47.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>25</sup> B. Obama, "Message from President Obama", May 2012, retrieved 20 March 2015, <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2012/chicago/president-obama/en/index.htm>.

## Is NATO containing or creating threats?

In the post-Cold War era, NATO has not just survived, but it has 'gone global'. Both neoliberals of the left and conservatives on the right in Washington have pushed for a more global agenda for NATO in the hope that doing so would spread and support democracy. "NATO's credibility", Barack Obama declared, is now dependent on fighting the Taliban in the Hindu Kush.<sup>26</sup> As Kaiser and Van Ham argue, NATO's agenda has become a dumping ground for every security threat: "In its lavish multi-functionality, NATO resembles a Swiss army knife with all its tools exposed."<sup>27</sup> There is a need, however, to consider the full implications of NATO's expansionist remit.

Until the Ukrainian crisis of 2013, few scholars believed that realists were right in arguing that NATO's expansion into Eastern Europe was contributing to the deterioration of US-Russia to the point that "they should now be understood as a new Cold War".<sup>28</sup> This idea, however, must be taken seriously. NATO's expansion, triggered in part by the Clinton Administration's decision to ignore George H.W. Bush's promise not to expand NATO "one inch to the east", has antagonised post-Soviet Russia.<sup>29</sup> In 1994 Yeltsin reminded President Clinton that "NATO was created in Cold War times" and warned that extending the alliance into Central Europe would "sow seeds of distrust".<sup>30</sup> Russia's illegal annexation in 2014 of Crimea needs to be seen within this context of growing distrust. For Moscow, NATO's perceived sabre rattling is made all the more dangerous by the fact that actors within the organisation remain oblivious of its provocations. Officials in NATO adamantly deny that NATO enlargement poses a threat to European or Russian security.<sup>31</sup> "It goes beyond my imagination how the Kremlin thinks", Anders Fogh Rasmussen admitted in June 2014.<sup>32</sup> The combination of denying Russian interests in its neighbourhood, while

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<sup>26</sup> B. Obama, "Address to the Nation on the way forward in Afghanistan", 1 December 2009, retrieved 30 September 2014, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-address-nation-way-forward-afghanistan-and-pakistan>, p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> Kaiser & Van Ham, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> Cohen, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>30</sup> A. Shleifer & D. Treisman, "Why Moscow Says No", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 90, 2011, p. 122.

<sup>31</sup> NATO officials have long dismissed Russian criticism of NATO enlargement as "the myth of the 'broken promise'". See M. Rühle, "NATO enlargement and Russia: myths and realities", 2014, retrieved 20 March 2015, <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2014/russia-ukraine-nato-crisis/nato-enlargement-russia/en/index.htm>.

<sup>32</sup> A.F. Rasmussen, "The Future of Euro-Atlantic Security", London, Chatham House, 19 June 2014, retrieved 30 September 2014, <http://carnegietsinghua.org/2014/09/15/future-of-euro-atlantic-security>.

aggressively propagating expansion, means that NATO has sleepwalked right into a crisis. The existence of NATO as a military alliance is contributing to new threats in Europe rather than containing them.

Where, then, does this leave the European Union? Europe does not speak with 'one voice' over Ukraine. However, many member states agree that an alternative to the US approach is necessary. In regard to EU enlargement, the European Security Strategy (ESS) declared in 2003 that "enlargement should not create new dividing lines in Europe".<sup>33</sup> In light of this, and within the context of the Ukrainian crisis, France and Germany arguably fear American over-reaction more than Russian aggression.<sup>34</sup> Voices in the German press have accused General Breedlove, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe, of "torpedoing Berlin's approach" to the Minsk ceasefire agreement.<sup>35</sup> Similar grievances have been echoed in the upper echelons of European politics. German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier recently appealed in the *New York Times* for "strategic patience" from the US.<sup>36</sup> His call for a "substantially strengthened mission by the OSCE" is an interesting one, highlighting that a shift away from NATO and a greater reliance on alternative institutions could lead to a more cooperative, rather than confrontational approach with Russia.<sup>37</sup>

Europe needs to stop relying on an outdated Cold War instrument to keep itself secured. Firstly, it undermines its security by inadvertently antagonising Russia. The spillover effects of NATO enlargement into Eastern Europe leaves the EU dangerously associated with its repercussions. In the eyes of the Kremlin, Mearsheimer explains, the European Union has become "a stalking horse for NATO expansion".<sup>38</sup> Secondly, NATO dependency has allowed Europe to free-ride on the United States and fall in a slump of alarming lethargy. The territorial defence of EU member states continues to

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<sup>33</sup> Council of the European Union, *A Secure Europe in a Better World: European Security Strategy*, Brussels, 12 December 2003, p. 7.

<sup>34</sup> France and Germany have suggested that "Western sanctions [imposed on] Russia have reached its limits and could only make things worse". See "France, Germany concerned about Russia sanctions policy", 14 January 2015, <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/europes-east/france-germany-concerned-about-russia-sanctions-policy-311046>.

<sup>35</sup> "Breedlove's Bellicosity", *Spiegel Online*, 6 March 2015, retrieved 30 March 2015, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/germany-concerned-about-aggressive-nato-stance-on-ukraine-a-1022193.html>.

<sup>36</sup> F.-W. Steinmeier, "Save Our Trans-Atlantic Order", *The New York Times*, 11 March 2015, retrieved 24 March 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/12/opinion/save-our-trans-atlantic-order.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/12/opinion/save-our-trans-atlantic-order.html?_r=0).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> J. Mearsheimer, "Why Ukraine is the West's Fault", *Foreign Affairs*, 2014, vol. 93, no. 5, p. 10.

be entrusted to NATO, not the CSDP.<sup>39</sup> As a self-defined 'civilian power', the prospect of 'hard power' in Europe has been reduced to that of an April Fool's joke.<sup>40</sup> The Juncker Commission's communiqué in March 2015 which declared that "Europe needs an army" carries little credibility.<sup>41</sup> In order to ease Europe's dependency on NATO, the EU must learn to lead missions rather than to lure the US in joining them.<sup>42</sup> The 2012 conflict in Libya was a missed opportunity to prove that Europe was able to deal with the 'high end' of crisis management.<sup>43</sup> In an era of transnational non-military threats, Europe, the EU concluded in its 2003 Security Strategy, is "particularly well equipped to respond to such multi-faceted situations".<sup>44</sup> The EU must now prove itself a more pragmatic and reliable leader in its neighbourhood, including the post-Soviet space of Eastern Europe.

## Conclusion

This contribution has asked whether the transatlantic alliance is as close as it was during the Cold War. The argument presented is that NATO, buoyed by American political and financial will, has remained a cornerstone in the transatlantic alliance in the post-Cold War era. Indeed, NATO has not just survived the Cold War; it has dramatically expanded its membership. Weighing the costs and benefits of NATO, however, scholars need to question whether it still makes strategic sense to maintain a military alliance designed for a bygone era of geopolitics. The formula of deterrence through NATO worked in keeping Europe safe during the stalemate of the Cold War. In the face of the Soviet threat, the gains of NATO for Europe outweighed the alliance's potential costs. This thinking remained unchallenged and was extended in the post-war era. "You don't cancel your home insurance policy just because there have been fewer burglaries on your street in the last 12 months",

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<sup>39</sup> S. Keukeleire & T. Delreux, *The Foreign Policy of the European Union*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 19.

<sup>40</sup> See the following 'April Fool's' article: "France to sell Mistral warships to EU", *EUObserver*, 1 April 2015, retrieved 2 April 2015, <https://euobserver.com/news/128217>.

<sup>41</sup> "Juncker: NATO is not enough, EU needs an army", *EurActiv*, 9 March 2015, retrieved 20 March 2015, <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/global-europe/juncker-nato-not-enough-eu-needs-army-312724>.

<sup>42</sup> "To brush aside America's responsibility as a leader [...] would have been a betrayal of who we are", Obama, Barack, "Remarks to the Nation on Libya", 28 March 2011, retrieved 30 September 2014, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/03/28/remarks-president-address-nation-libya>.

<sup>43</sup> M. Sheetz, "Has the US Forgotten how to Pass the Buck?", *Foreign Policy*, 23 March 2011.

<sup>44</sup> Council of the European Union, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

Margaret Thatcher declared.<sup>45</sup> As Mandelbaum argues, as long as the US provides security 'scot-free' to the world, no state under its security umbrella will challenge it for fear that doing so would question the lack of shared costs.<sup>46</sup> The EU, however, needs to rethink its relationship with NATO. Just by *existing*, NATO can act as a credible deterrent.<sup>47</sup> However, by actively expanding its military membership eastwards in the post-Soviet space, NATO acts as a potentially dangerous influence in post-Cold War Europe. The latter is now true.

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<sup>45</sup> Cited in E. Hallams, *The United States and NATO since 9/11*, New York, Routledge, 2010, p. 108.

<sup>46</sup> M. Mandelbaum, 'David's Friend Goliath', *Foreign Policy*, no. 152, 2006, p. 52.

<sup>47</sup> As Freedman argues, "the mere existence is NATO's most important quality [...] it does not need to be active or busy". L. Freedman, "European Security 2013", *ISS Report*, no. 17, 2013, p. 20.

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## From EDC to CSDP – Do the Europeans need a common defence policy?

Andrea Saviolo

To integrate or not to integrate, that is the question. The debate on the addition of security and defence components to the European integration process is as old as the very idea of the European Community. It is a common belief that the integration of the Continent started with, and was limited to, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). In reality, “the founders of the Community thought of it merely as one side of a triangle, the other two sides planned being the [European Defence Community] EDC and the [European Political Community] EPC”.<sup>1</sup> However, things evolved differently compared to what was originally envisaged. The Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) of the European Union, the supposed-to-be military arm of its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), can be seen as a phoenix born out of the ashes of the 1950s European Defence Community and the other efforts in this direction, such as the Western European Union.

By running a comparison with that first attempt to integrate European military forces, this essay aims at understanding to what extent Europeans need a Common Security and Defence Policy. The analysis of the respective geo-political and strategic contexts shows that there are interesting parallels between the years preceding and following the attempted establishment of the EDC and the CFSP/CSDP. This contribution rejects a recurrent argument of the literature on CFSP/CSDP claiming that the two policies are the expression of the EU’s determination to become a more credible and more coherent foreign policy actor.<sup>2</sup> It argues that the EU and its member states do not need the CSDP for strategic purposes; it does not serve the real security needs of the Union as the heavy reliance on NATO and the USA and the lack of a proper security strategy show. Nevertheless, the CSDP represents a useful political tool that served specific foreign policy objectives, including the need to address the uncertainties of the US military commitment to Europe and to manage German re-armament and re-unification.

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<sup>1</sup> E.B. Haas, *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social and Economic Forces 1950-7*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1968, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> S. Keukeleire & T. Delreux, *The Foreign Policy of the European Union*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 47-49.



## The rise and the fall of the European Defence Community

The President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, recently argued that the EU needs a European Army to consolidate the credibility of its foreign policy on the international stage.<sup>3</sup> Although this argument resonated strongly across the European media landscape, Juncker is not the first one to talk about a this idea: a European Army was the other name given to the European Defence Community, a French initiative that originated from the Plevin Plan of 1950.<sup>4</sup> At the root of the EDC were main structural determinants: the clear determination of the US government to withdraw American forces from Europe, and, consequently, the need to manage the German re-armament to counter the Soviet threat.<sup>5</sup>

Despite US President Roosevelt's intentions, the post-War period demonstrated that cooperation with the USSR was not an option.<sup>6</sup> The outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 definitively convinced Washington that a coordinated Communist offense represented a credible risk and a real danger for the stability of the European continent. The re-armament of Germany was thus a necessary step in order to credibly contain the Soviet threat. Understandably, Paris did not welcome this idea given the fresh memories of the German invasions of 1914 and 1940.<sup>7</sup> Drawing upon the ECSC model, the EDC aimed at achieving security for France by constraining and controlling German re-armament within the framework of a supranational European Army controlled by common institutions and funded by a common budget.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, this idea served the Americans. Suffice to recall their public statements to demonstrate that a permanent commitment of American forces in Europe was not an option conceived by the main US post-War decision-

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<sup>3</sup> "Jean-Claude Juncker calls for EU army", *The Guardian*, 8 March 2015, retrieved 16 March 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/08/jean-claude-juncker-calls-for-eu-army-european-commission-military>.

<sup>4</sup> T.C. Salmon & A.J.K. Shepherd, *Toward a European Army: A Military Power in the Making?*, London, Lynne Rienner, 2003, pp. 15-54.

<sup>5</sup> J. van der Harst, "The European Defence Community and NATO. A Classic Case of Franco-Dutch Controversy", in M. Drent, A. van den Assem & J. de Wilde (eds.), *NATO's Retirement? Essays in Honour of Peter Volten*, Groningen, Centre of European Security Studies (CESS), 2011, p. 84.

<sup>6</sup> M. Sheetz, "Exit Strategies: American Grand Design for Postwar European Security", *Security Studies*, vol. 8, no. 4, 1999, pp. 13-26.

<sup>7</sup> K. Ruane, *The Rise and Fall of the European Defence Community: Anglo-American Relations and the Crisis of European Defence, 1950-55*, Houndmills, Macmillan, 2000, pp. 3-4.

<sup>8</sup> P. Koutrakos, *The EU Common Security and Defence Policy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 5-9.

makers.<sup>9</sup> The EDC would have led to the creation of a European "third force", strong enough to independently balance the USSR and thereby allow for the withdrawal of US troops from the European continent.<sup>10</sup>

However, despite the presence of strong common interests, and even hegemonic threats and inducements,<sup>11</sup> the *Assemblée Nationale* voted down the Treaty with 319 votes against 264.<sup>12</sup> Why did France, the country that proposed the plan, ultimately decide to abandon it, causing the project to collapse? The reason lies behind the sequence of different governments that tried to deal with this issue.

Different governments proposed, negotiated and attempted to ratify the treaty. Moreover, the coalition supporting each of these cabinets varied and, with every change, the vetoing ability of the political parties opposed to the treaty increased. In short, unconnected coalition shifts deprived EC champions of the leverage to ratify it.<sup>13</sup>

However, this is not an exhaustive explanation; indeed, the real question should be: what was the growing concern behind the opposition of the different French governments? Central to this was the questionable capacity of the EDC to contain Germany: without the support of American or British forces, the institutional framework of the EDC was not sufficiently powerful to alleviate French perceptions of the German threat and the consequent security dilemma. Therefore, the only feasible solution for stability in Europe was an enduring commitment of American forces on the continent.<sup>14</sup> Has this reality changed? What was the geo-strategic context behind the establishment of the CFSP and its military arm, the CSDP?

### **The illusion of a Common Foreign Security and Defence Policy**

"The development of the Union's security and defence policy has followed the movement of a pendulum."<sup>15</sup> With their strong intergovernmental character, the CFSP and its military arm, the CSDP, are at the antipodes of the type of integration envisaged with the EDC. An analysis of the CSDP must necessarily start from an analysis of its overarching framework, the CFSP.

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<sup>9</sup> Sheetz, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 26-36.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>12</sup> C. Closa, *The Politics of Ratification of EU Treaties*, London, Routledge, 2013, pp. 141-150.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>14</sup> Sheetz, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>15</sup> Koutrakos, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

Despite being presented as one of the major achievements of the 1993 Maastricht Treaty, the CFSP was not conceived to be genuinely operational: some practical limits constrained its potential. This is demonstrated by its decision-making system (a purely inter-governmental method), by the fact that it lacked any direct link to the EU's strongest external policies (above all trade) and by the absence of autonomous financial resources. As it was true for the EDC, and despite the completely different structure of the international system, the CFSP served other political purposes, and not strategic ones. It represented a perfect case of a traditional balance of power: firstly, against Germany and, secondly, against the European Commission. The CFSP was part of a bigger diplomatic project that, along with the EU and the Economic Monetary Union, aimed at constraining the re-unification of Germany within the framework of strengthened European institutions. Moreover, especially under Delors' Presidency, the European Commission had demonstrated a confidence in foreign affairs that started to worry some EU member states. The intergovernmental character of the CFSP aimed at containing this assertiveness.<sup>16</sup>

A similar pattern can be identified behind the launch of the CSDP, formerly known as the European Security and Defence Policy. Although according to some, the military dimension of the EU's foreign policy is the "child of the Kosovo crisis",<sup>17</sup> for the Europeans "[t]heir wish to influence America's war strategy was all the more important since they had rightly realised that the subsequent reconstruction and peacekeeping would fall to them in the first instance".<sup>18</sup>

The end of the Cold War led to a re-thinking of the American commitment to Europe, especially considering the growing relevance of other scenarios, including the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>19</sup> European states have thus been confronted again with the issue of regional hegemony on the continent, in other words with the threat of German dominance. Once again, "the CSDP is therefore not about balancing American

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<sup>16</sup> Keukeleire & Delreux, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-49.

<sup>17</sup> P. Latawski & M.A. Smith, "The Kosovo Crisis: The Evolution of Post Cold War European Security", Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2003, p. 120.

<sup>18</sup> N. Gnesotto *et al.*, *European defence - A proposal for a White Paper*, Paris, EU Institute for Security Studies, 2004, p. 44.

<sup>19</sup> A. Hyde-Price, "Realism: a dissident voice", in S. Biscop & R.G. Whitman (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of European Security*, London, Routledge, 2013, pp. 26-27.

power, but containing German power, and the United States, acting as an offshore balancer, can help".<sup>20</sup>

If the EU member states wanted the CSDP to be genuinely operational, they would have based it on a proper security strategy. True, on paper the EU adopted such a document in 2003, yet "to call the document a strategy is nevertheless a misleading characterization".<sup>21</sup> A proper, traditional strategy paper is supposed to define policy objectives, establish priorities among them and set up the available methods and means to achieve them. The European Security Strategy does not do that: it is a mere political exercise that resulted from the efforts of the EU member states to find a common ground across their different foreign policies. The document is influenced by the historical context during which it was elaborated: the rift over the Iraq War in 2003. As Toje points out, the type of language used in the document and the emphasis on multilateralism "seems a recipe for 'masterly inactivity' where the EU seeks the moral high ground".<sup>22</sup>

The CSDP was not conceived to be neither a common nor an operational policy. Considering the nationality of the majority of the troops, it is evident that most of the EU-led military missions, usually with a limited mandate, scope and scale, were national operations "cloaked in a EU flag".<sup>23</sup>

Another critical element regarding the operational capacity and effectiveness of the CSDP is its high reliance on the transatlantic partnership. First, and foremost, "European security is based on U.S. extended deterrence through NATO. In other words, Europeans rely on the U.S. nuclear arsenal for their freedom and peace and for the fact that they can't be blackmailed politically".<sup>24</sup> Moreover, the NATO operation in Libya in 2011 confirmed that the European states simply lack the capabilities and assets to act independently. As US Secretary of Defence Robert

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<sup>20</sup> S. Rynning, "Realism and the Common Security and Defence Policy", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 49, no. 1, 2011, p. 27.

<sup>21</sup> A. Toje, "The 2003 European Union Security Strategy: A Critical Appraisal", *European Foreign Affairs Review*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2005, p. 120.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>23</sup> L. Coffey, "EU Defense Integration: Undermining NATO Transatlantic Relations and Europe's Security", *Backgrounder*, no. 2806, 2013, retrieved 19 March 2015, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2013/06/eu-defense-integration-undermining-nato-transatlantic-relations-and-europes-security>.

<sup>24</sup> J. Techau, "The Illusion of an Independent EU Army", *Carnegie Europe*, Brussels, 10 March 2015, retrieved 16 March 2015, [http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=59296&mkt\\_tok=3RkMMJWWfF9wsRonvKXNZKXonjHpfsX67uguWaOg38431UFwdcjKpmjr1YIGRcR0aPyQAgobGp5I5FEIQ7XYTLB2t60MWA%3D%3D](http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=59296&mkt_tok=3RkMMJWWfF9wsRonvKXNZKXonjHpfsX67uguWaOg38431UFwdcjKpmjr1YIGRcR0aPyQAgobGp5I5FEIQ7XYTLB2t60MWA%3D%3D).

Gates commented: "The mightiest military alliance in history is only 11 weeks into an operation against a poorly armed regime in a sparsely populated country – yet many allies are beginning to run short of munitions, requiring the U.S., once more, to make up the difference."<sup>25</sup>

What does this all tell us about the need of a CSDP for the EU member states? The concluding paragraph will provide the reader with a summary of the findings of this essay.

## Conclusion

This essay aims at understanding to what extent Europeans need a Common Security and Defence Policy. It rejects the argument that the CFSP and its military arm, the CSDP, aimed at strengthening the credibility of the EU as a foreign policy actor. According to this argument, the geo-strategic context that characterised the post-Cold War period required the EU to demonstrate its capacity to address external challenges independently, and the CFSP/CSDP was the answer to those needs.<sup>26</sup> This argument is not convincing because it fails to explain the reason why EU member states did not provide the CFSP and the CSDP with the necessary financial tools, military capabilities and assets to be fully operational.

The comparison with the EDC has demonstrated that, although the power structure of the international system has clearly changed, a traditional balance-of-power logic is the main factor driving the process of European defence integration. In the 1950s the need to contain the Soviet threat and to control German re-armament, combined with the determination of American statesmen to withdraw US troops from the European continent, led to the signature of the Paris Treaty establishing the EDC. Again, a balance-of-threat logic is behind its collapse: without a British and an American guarantee, the rules and institutions of the EDC were not sufficiently powerful to mitigate French fears of a re-armed Germany. At the same time, in the 1990s, it was the need to control German re-unification and to contain the assertiveness of the European Commission in foreign affairs that ultimately convinced the EU member states to launch first the CFSP and, at a later stage, to provide it with a military arm, the CSDP.

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<sup>25</sup> Cited in S. Duke & R. Haar, "A Reassessment of Transatlantic Security: Europe, the United States and NATO", in R. Tiersky & E. Jones (eds.), *Europe Today: A Twenty-first Century Introduction*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 2015, p. 435.

<sup>26</sup> Keukeleire & Delreux, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

This analysis has demonstrated that EU member states do not need the *current* CFSP and the *current* CSDP to address their security and strategic needs, because the two policies are not sufficiently equipped to achieve these objectives, and because there is no proper European security strategy. However, this does not mean that they are of no use: following traditional balance-of-power and balance-of-threat logics, they have successfully served other political objectives. Nevertheless, this does mean that, for the time being, the American military presence remains imperative.

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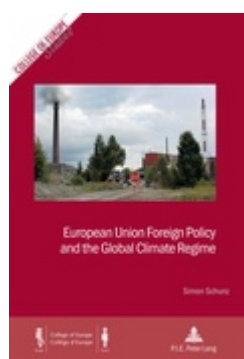
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