

THE EU'S RAPID REACTION CAPABILITY

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WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY

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FOREWORD

FRANÇOIS HEISBOURG*

Fate determined that the fourth meeting of the European Security Forum occurred on the eve of the epoch-changing attack of 11 September. Therefore, this summing-up will be somewhat out of the ordinary to the extent that it will attempt to single out those elements of the discussion that may prove of relevance after the hyper-terrorist outrage, while leaving to the side those that have been overtaken by events.

At the outset, the Chairman requested the three paper-givers to take into account, in their oral presentations, three questions:

- What are the EU's rapid reaction capabilities for?
- What budget efforts are required to give this capability substance, as well to keep under manageable proportions the "gap" with the US?
- How serious is the Turkish issue?

Charles Grant, speaking from a European perspective, gave as a clear answer to the "what for" question: aside from the Balkans, the force also has to be able to operate in Africa and the Middle East.

In budgetary terms, the EU's defence budgets are now mainly flat, rather than dropping overall. One particular item of expenditure, the A-400M military transport aircraft, would be indicative of the seriousness (or lack thereof) of ESDP. He deplored the current relatively low public and political profile of ESDP which is now essentially taken seriously by Defence Ministers – whereas higher-level involvement would make it more likely to resolve contentious issues such as Turkey. On this score, he expected things to get worse before they would get better: Cyprus' prospective entry into the EU in 2004-05 would not be taken gladly by Turkey.

Finally, he noted that the EU's current institutions are less than optimal if one wishes to effectively integrate the impressive array of European soft and hard power instruments.

Dmitry Danilov, from the Russian perspective, made the point that Moscow doesn't work on ESDP or its strategic or military merits, since it is far from clear that ESDP actually exists:

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Russia's attitudes towards ESDP and its RRC are essentially driven by political considerations: the EU (and ESDP with it) is considered as politically positive insofar that it furthers the Russian aim of a "multi-polar world", and because the Russian/EU (and ESDP) interface helps place Russia in Europe, while partnership with the EU (and ESDP) increases Russia's voice in Europe.

Kori Schake, as the American paper-giver, attributed the Bush administration's relaxed attitude towards ESDP in part to Prime Minister Blair's visit to Washington. On this occasion, Tony Blair was understood by his interlocutors as emphasising that ESDP was only about Petersberg tasks, and that the latter were essentially about peacekeeping. This minimalist vision of ESDP was not the one the Clinton administration had been exposed to.

On the autonomous planning issue – which is the bone of contention with Turkey – Kori noted that the US has been doing plenty of autonomous planning on its own in EUCOM, alongside, not inside, NATO. Therefore, there is little reason for the Americans to get excited if the EU wishes to do the same.

In the subsequent debate, a senior ESDP figure confirmed that military budgets were in a steady state. On the planning issue, he noted that Turkey should not be singled out, that some found it convenient to hide behind Ankara. On the substance, he recalled that what was at stake in that discussion were not US assets but collectively owned NATO assets – such as AWACS.¹ Finally, he suggested leaving the scope of Petersberg open to ambiguity, for case-by-case decision-making.

Other participants were highly critical of current European attitudes:

- Why is it so difficult, asked one prominent non-European politician, for the Europeans to put together even the modest capabilities called for in the Balkans (a question that was all the more apposite since on the day of Forum, the Europeans decided not to pick up Colin Powell's suggestion to make the next, very modest, stage of military involvement in Macedonia a European venture)?
- Why rule out Asia from the high-end of European intervention interjected a European analyst?
- Why is it that Blair's support and involvement appear to be fading asked yet another European?

However, an official from an EU and NATO country downplayed the consequences of limited high-level support: after all, the show is on the road, and a compromise would occur with Turkey in time for the NATO Summit in Prague in November 2002. As for planning, many European countries used SHAPE as their multilateral venue of choice: national planning by Britain or France posed a problem to such partners who were by definition left out.

Turkish participants, while not expressing unanimous enthusiasm for Ankara's PR strategy, rejected Charles Grant's characterisation of Turkey as "unreasonable and inflexible". The difference between US and EU perceptions of Turkey was underlined: unlike the Europeans, the Americans look at Turkey in a broad strategic perspective.

An interesting debate took place on the emerging division of labour between the US and Europe. One American participant considered that this trend was driven by military and technical reality rather than by political design: interoperability was becoming more and more problematic, as American military transformation, supported by defence spending increases, overtook European efforts. A European participant however also stressed the fact that the US was actually encouraging the EU to think essentially in peace-keeping terms – as confirmed by the account of the Bush-Blair meeting given earlier by Kori Schake. A European official did not accept that any given geographical location could be ruled out (with East Timor being cited here) and Petersberg operations could be of a much higher-risk intensity and tempo than NATO's UN-style collection of arms in Macedonia.

A former US official indicated that a deliberate geographical and functional division of labour would be deeply destructive.

On the issue of access to NATO assets, another former US official pointed out that NATO assets as such were rather limited – AWACS and a totally useless pipeline, as it were – and that what was ultimately at stake was access to US assets. And Mogadishu had proven that even for low-end peacekeeping one needed high-end assets as back up.

In the concluding round of statements by the paper-givers, the following points were made:

- Kori Schake confirmed that the Bush administration actually believes, since the Blair visit, that the EU will essentially confine itself to peacekeeping and that NATO has secured a right of first refusal. She expressed her scepticism vis-à-vis technical fixes to the

¹ Subsequent to the 11 September attack, 5 NATO AWACS have been put at the disposal of the US for the protection of US airspace, thus releasing national US AWACS for use in US-led operations in the Indian Ocean.

US-EU gap: DCI is not moving in a promising manner on top-end interoperability, and a major asset such as AGS remains stuck in the mud.

- Dmitry Danilov underlined the prospects of EU-Russia crisis management in the Balkans.
- Charles Grant, in closing, saw ground for hope in that EU policy was gradually replacing national policies in the Middle East. This growing-up of CFSP would be mirrored by the evolution of ESDP. The EU is gradually gaining confidence while in the Balkans the US is pulling back.

October 2001
Geneva

A EUROPEAN VIEW OF ESDP

CHARLES GRANT*

A lack of political leadership

It has become something of a commonplace to say that the European Union is suffering from a lack of political leadership. Where are the Delors, Kohls, Mitterrands and Thatchers of today? This dearth is especially evident in the specific area of defence policy. For the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) is a new and still largely embryonic venture. The progress made over the past three years has been striking, but there is a real risk that the ESDP that finally emerges will be much less impressive or noteworthy than had been promised.

The ESDP's biggest problem is that very few senior politicians are giving it much time or energy. Tony Blair, who together with Jacques Chirac set the ball rolling with the December 1998 Saint Malô declaration, has been strangely silent on European defence since the Nice summit (though the major role taken by UK forces in Macedonia suggests that the Blair government remains committed to the project of European defence). Mr Chirac now appears to have other priorities and interests, while neither Lionel Jospin, Gerhard Schröder, Silvio Berlusconi nor Jose Maria Aznar has ever shown much interest in European defence.

Nor have foreign ministers such as Joschka Fischer, Hubert Vedrine and Robin Cook been great advocates of European defence (it is too early to tell whether Mr Cook's replacement, Jack Straw, will be). The defence ministers have generally shown more interest, with Geoff Hoon, Alan Richard and Rudolf Scharping all making valuable contributions. But much of the hard work of building the ESDP has fallen to senior officials, such as political directors and heads of policy in defence ministries.

This may not be enough to ensure that the ESDP fulfils expectations. Some of the problems covered by this paper – such as the difficulties of enhancing capabilities and dealing with Turkey – are probably not resolvable without some leadership from, or at least support from prime ministers, foreign ministers and finance ministers.

This paper will not focus on US attitudes to the ESDP, for I no longer regard them as a serious problem. Most senior figures in the Bush administration are broadly supportive of what the EU is trying to do. Evidently, some influential voices in Washington oppose the idea

of the EU developing military capabilities. But the general line of the Bush administration appears to be this: if the ESDP succeeds in boosting European capabilities, that is good for the US; and if the ESDP fails to achieve that end, no great harm will have been done. In any case, the US defence establishment has more pressing priorities and concerns, such as the Quadrennial Defence Review, missile defence and NATO enlargement.

The problem of Turkey

Turkey has still not accepted the accord on EU-NATO relations that every other member of NATO – including the US – approved last December. Turkey has demanded the right to be included in the ESDP's decision-making. The EU's response is that Turkey should be involved in the shaping of decisions and the management of operations, when Turkish forces participate; but that because Turkey is not a member of the EU, it cannot claim the right to veto autonomous EU actions that do not involve Turkey.

Because of this blockage, the EU does not have guaranteed access to NATO planning facilities at SHAPE. Furthermore, NATO has to approve any formal contact between EU and NATO officials on a case-by-case basis. This is starting to hamper the EU's efforts to build up its military organisation.

Last May the British, with some help from the Americans, seemed to have brokered a deal on Turkish involvement in the ESDP. Foreign minister Ismail Cem accepted a compromise at a Brussels meeting of NATO foreign ministers. But he appears to have been over-ruled by the Turkish general staff when he returned home. Then Greece said that it could not accept the compromise either. Indeed, some of those directly involved in trying to solve this problem complain that Greek positions – such as attempts to restrict the EU's use of NATO assets – are extremely unhelpful.

It is quite possible that Turkish-EU relations will get considerably worse, before they get better. And this has little to do with the ESDP. It now seems likely that Cyprus, without the northern part, will join the EU in 2004 or 2005. This may lead Turkey to annex the north of the island, an act that would be illegal under international law.

The problem of Turkey's role in the ESDP will not be resolved unless those outside Turkey try hard to understand its position. This is rather difficult, because the Turks have – in my opinion – made very little effort to explain their views to policy-makers and opinion-formers.

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Their PR strategy has been little short of disastrous. Whatever the true merits of the Turkish case, they have come across as unwilling to compromise, inflexible and unreasonable. This stance has been losing them friends in Europe.

Their chief concern, as far as I can tell, is that the EU might intervene in an area of strategic interest to Turkey – such as Cyprus, the Aegean or the Balkans. If the EU wanted to borrow NATO assets or command structures for an operation, all NATO members would have to give their approval on a case-by-case basis, which means that Turkey would have the power of veto. But it worries about the prospect of autonomous missions, which it would not be able to veto. And Turkey may be concerned that Greece could use its membership of NATO to block a NATO military mission in these sensitive areas, with the result that the EU – soon to contain two Greek-speaking countries – would have to run the operation.

If Turkey continues to block an accord on EU-NATO relations, the EU will have to think seriously about ways of getting round the problem. Building up an EU equivalent of SHAPE would be very expensive. But the EU should strengthen its links with national planning staffs – such as Britain's Permanent Joint Headquarters, or the American headquarters at Stuttgart. It should be fairly easy for the EU to run an autonomous operation through drawing on the expertise of such national planners, without any help from SHAPE.

If the EU did start to develop ways of bypassing NATO, one might suppose that Turkey would see reasons for lifting its veto, and that the US would increase its pressure on Ankara to accept the compromise of last May. And there is not much doubt that if a serious security crisis blew up, the US would be extremely keen for the EU and NATO to collaborate as closely as possible – without obstacles – in handling the crisis.

Turkey has to make a strategic choice that is about much more than ESDP. Does it want to return to the path of *rapprochement* with the EU; or will it continue to allow its chiefs of staff to set its foreign policy priorities? The answer to that question is unclear.

The problem of military capabilities

The EU has much progress to make on building up its military capabilities. The capabilities conference in October will, like its predecessor, review the imbalance between the forces that are required to fulfil the headline goals, and what the governments have offered.

The biggest shortages are on the logistical side: EU members lack sufficient air-lift and sea-lift; transportable docks, communications equipment and headquarters; and intelligence-

gathering satellites, aircraft and UAVs. But there are also some serious gaps at the sharper end of military operations, such as the suppression of enemy air defences, combat search-and-rescue and precision-guided weapons.

These gaps are not only a problem because they limit the scope of any autonomous mission that the EU may wish to undertake. They are also a huge public relations problem, particularly in the US. It is hard for Europeans to answer the question of American sceptics – “where’s the beef?” – when many of their governments appear to be doing very little about developing the necessary capabilities.

The EU’s success or failure in boosting capabilities can be measured in a number of ways. One criteria is budgets. Both pessimists and optimists can find figures to support their positions. The IISS’s *Strategic Survey 2000-01* measures defence spending by the EU-15 in constant 1999 dollars, reporting a decline from \$178 billion in 1997 to an estimated \$147 billion in 2001. But given the shrinking value of the euro over the past three years, any dollar measurement of European defence budgets is bound to show a decline, regardless of whatever real resources governments devote to their armed forces.

NATO provides figures for the period 1995-2000 (with the 2000 figure estimated), based on constant local currencies. These tell a different story: the defence budgets of the European NATO countries (not counting the three that joined in 1999) went up a little from \$184 billion to \$190 billion.³

George Robertson also says that eight out of the 11 EU members of NATO have raised defence budgets in real terms this year, including Britain, Spain, Italy and the Netherlands (though I note – with regret – that he has not given hard numbers).

More important than the amount of money in defence budgets is how effectively it is spent. And on that criterion, Europe does seem to be making progress. As of next year, France will have an all-professional army. Spain and Italy have begun to abolish conscription. Germany’s recent emphasis on building up crisis-reaction forces is having some effect: it does have 500 soldiers available for Macedonia, in addition to some 8,000 already serving in Bosnia and Kosovo. Sweden has restructured its armed forces, reducing from 29 to eight the number of brigades focused on territorial defence, while increasing the forces available for peacekeeping.

³ My colleague Daniel Keohane has written an article on these budgetary issues, available on the CER website (www.cer.org.uk).

Another way of measuring success is to look at procurement programmes. Britain has taken delivery of its first few C-17 transport aircraft. France recently announced a modest increase in its procurement budget over the next five years. And four EU countries have created OCCAR, an organisation that should improve the efficiency of the management of transnational weapons programmes. In addition, three more EU countries are in the process of joining OCCAR.

The A-400M transport plane – backed by Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Turkey – is a litmus test of whether Europe is serious about the ESDP. If a contract is signed soon, Europe will be showing the world that it is serious about building up its heavy-lift capability. But without a contract, the A-400M project may unravel – and the ESDP would lose credibility.

The arguments over the institutional arrangements for delivering improved capabilities remain unresolved. How should the EU fill the gap between what it needs and what governments offer? How can it ensure that governments meet their pledges? And what are the appropriate mechanisms for generating peer-group pressure? What is at stake is how much the EU's own force planning system should be different and independent from that of NATO. Some of the arguments on this issue have degenerated into the worst sorts of abstract theology.

There is widespread agreement that NATO and the EU should work together closely on capabilities and force planning; and that the EU need not have the same force planning process as NATO, given that the Petersberg missions it envisages are different from much of what NATO plans. What has not been agreed is the composition and the level of the committees that discuss these issues. Another issue is timing: the NATO planning cycle runs over two years, while the EU presidencies rotate every six months.

It might be helpful if the EU agreed to follow the NATO time-cycle, and also if the EU defence ministers met together on a more regular and formal basis, so that they could generate some peer pressure for enhancing capabilities. However, the fundamental problem on capabilities is not constructing the perfect institutional mechanism. It is rather an issue of political will. Either Mr Schröder decides that the ESDP is important, and so he must find enough money to ensure that the A-400M is built – or he does not. And linked to the question of political will is the broader issue of the saliency of European defence.

One socialist member of the Bundestag said to me recently: “Of course I will go on voting for a smaller defence budget. My constituents want more schools and hospitals, not warplanes.

And they are right, there is no military threat out there.” In a sense, he is right. But Germany itself had to take over half a million refugees from Bosnia – which shows the kind of problems the EU will have to face if it lacks the means to manage crises in its near abroad.

The EU and the UN

One issue on which member states do not agree is whether an EU military mission would require a UN mandate. Some say yes, some no and some maybe. Of course this is only relevant for a mission to a country where the local government has not issued an invitation. Both Sierra Leone and Macedonia have invited peacekeepers to their countries.

The EU's various documents on its new defence policy have deliberately left this matter ambiguous. That is probably as it should be. In a crisis, some of the governments that are keenest on a UN mandate will be pragmatic enough to drop their objections. Thus 19 governments supported the NATO military campaign against Serbia, though it went far beyond peacekeeping and had no UN mandate.

A more interesting issue is the extent to which the EU could assist the UN in coping with security crises in places other than Europe. To quote one senior British official, speaking in a personal capacity: “Could the EU give the UN the Rapid Reaction Capability it needs?” The UN can usually raise enough peacekeepers for forces in places such as Eritrea. What it cannot easily do is find the troops for an intervention force, such as that which was required to stop the bloodshed in East Timor.

The US is certainly not going to want to provide such forces to the UN. The EU, however, might be able to provide high-intensity forces, with lift capability and command structures. After the initial intervention, other forces could replace those provided by the EU. All this would be paid for out of the UN budget. Kofi Annan is apparently interested in these ideas – as are, I believe, senior figures in Rome, Paris and London.

Final thoughts

For all the problems, the EU has made much progress over the past three years. Three important new institutions, the Political and Security Committee, the Military Committee and the Military Staff, have been established. And despite the lack of political leadership referred to, the idea that the EU should be able to manage a military operation is not opposed by any mainstream political party in the Union, bar Britain's Conservatives.

Whether or not the EU chooses to declare the ESDP “operational” by the end of the year, it is already capable of carrying out small-scale Petersberg missions involving a few thousand troops. And if it was able to draw on NATO assets, it would be able to undertake more ambitious operations. Some of the longer-term challenges that lie ahead include:

- Making sure that the EU can integrate the economic, diplomatic and military sides of its external policy. The current institutional arrangements, with responsibilities split between the Commission and the Council, Coreper and the PSC, and Patten and Solana, are sub-optimal. A potential strength of the EU, compared with other international organisations, is that it should be able to draw upon a wide range of foreign policy tools – ranging from technical assistance, to humanitarian aid, to trade sanctions, to warplanes. At the moment, the EU makes a poor job of coordinating these various instruments, and is weaker as a result.
- The EU has to find effective ways of slotting into the ESDP not only NATO members outside the EU, such as Turkey, but also countries that are in neither the EU nor NATO. Russia, for example, is interested in working with the ESDP. Given that countries such as Russia and Ukraine are unlikely to join NATO for a very long time, they could be offered a meaningful stake in the European security system through some sort of associate link with the ESDP.
- The EU needs to think more about developing common military capabilities, particularly at the softer end of the military spectrum. The budgetary advantages of governments collaborating on, for example, a common fleet of air transport planes, or air-tankers, or UAVs, are potentially huge: each country could save money on bases, servicing, maintenance and training.
- There is also money to be saved through role specialisation. Even the larger European countries cannot maintain every sort of military capability on limited budgets. For example, it would not make sense for several European air forces to separately develop the capability to destroy hostile radar systems.

Moves towards role specialisation or common capabilities would, inevitably, provoke political opposition in several member states, and not only in Britain. This once again illustrates, however, the importance of political leadership: prime ministers and ministers need to sell the benefits of, and the case for, European defence. They are currently failing to do so.

MANAGING DIVERGENCE

KORI SCHAKE*

Many opponents of emerging EU defence capabilities, both in the US and Europe, are concerned that it will presage the divergence of US and European military forces. This is occurring, and will continue to occur, whether or not the EU focuses its defence policy and money on meeting the Helsinki Headline Goal. The divergence is primarily a function of the technological and, increasingly, organisational change occurring in US forces. EU states are unlikely to spend the requisite money to keep pace with US transformation (except for Britain and possibly France), largely because they are not concerned with the demanding non-European scenarios driving innovation in US forces.

The important improvements in power projection and forces for peacekeeping underway in the EU as a result of the Headline Goal will benefit US interests by providing a force capable of filling the gap between US-led military interventions and the United Nations standard. Turkey's refusal to allow the use of NATO assets is likely to continue, raising the cost to the EU of pursuing ESDP. However, devising alternatives to “assured access” is likely in the interests of both the US and EU, irrespective of Ankara's actions. If the EU were to emphasise *constructive duplication* – innovative ways to replicate by more cost-effective means the high-end capabilities on which US and NATO forces depend – it would make the use of force by the EU genuinely autonomous. It would also make EU states an even more valuable set of allies for the US because, instead of drawing on assets scarce even in US forces, they would be making a critically important contribution to coalition warfare.

The Bush Administration has taken a much more encouraging approach toward ESDP than its predecessor, but that support is contingent on ESDP developing as outlined by Prime Minister Blair: with a NATO right of first refusal, and missions limited to peacekeeping.¹ Secretary of State Powell, widely considered the architect of the more EU-friendly posture in the Administration, believes he has assurances from his EU counterparts that ESDP will develop “in a way that will be fully integrated within the planning activities of NATO.”² This actually secures for the Bush Administration the constrained ESDP that the Clinton Administration's “three d's” policy had been designed to produce.

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¹ Bush, Blair Joint Press Conference at Camp David, 23 February 2001 (www.usinfo.state.gov).

The Bush Administration is also less interested than its predecessor in the use of military force for conflict management – the Petersberg tasks that ESDP is being designed for – either in or outside Europe. An EU reaction force optimised for peacekeeping would facilitate the Administration's “à la carte multilateralism”, reducing the pressure on the US to become involved by filling the gap between NATO operations and the much less capable standard of the United Nations.³

The Turkish veto remains a wild card in the development of ESDP. Many in the EU explain Turkish objections to the use of NATO assets solely as an aspiration to leverage influence for Turkish accession to the EU, without giving sufficient credence to Ankara's concerns about deployment of EU forces negatively affecting Turkish security. Turkey should be suspicious of an EU role in the Aegean, especially if Cyprus becomes an EU member, and likely has supportable concerns about the EU intervening in the Caspian region, Palestine, or even in support of Kurdish communities. Sanctimonious commentary from the EU about only members being able to influence EU decisions hardly facilitates resolution either.

Nevertheless, Ankara seems oddly unwilling to come to terms, which suggests a more punitive strategy. By preventing the use of NATO planning staffs and other assets, Turkey can potentially force three damaging effects on the EU:

- an expensive duplication of NATO headquarters (which currently number 13,000 staff);
- uncertainty on the part of potential adversaries about whether NATO would reinforce an EU operation; and
- estrangement between the US and EU, as the Bush Administration continues to oppose duplication of NATO planning.

Moreover, these could appear to be problems of the EU's own making, since the EU would have to choose to initiate planning outside of NATO.

Whether the US would or could constrain Turkey's options is unclear. The common interests Ankara and Washington have in managing Turkey's neighbours (Iraq, Iran and Syria), and supporting Israel gain Turkey the benefit of the doubt. Americans are more sympathetic than EU states to Turkish concerns about ESDP, more likely to believe the EU should carry over

² Powell, Patten Discuss ESDI and Iraq, 27 February 2001 (www.uspolicy.usembassy.be).

³ Ambassador Richard Haass, “U.S. Foreign Policy: How Much Change is Possible? How Much is Desirable?”, speech given at the Nixon Center, 28 July 2001.

rights that had been provided Turkey in the WEU and very sceptical of the soundness of bringing Cyprus into the EU.

Resolving the Turkish veto would require three unlikely things to happen: 1) the EU to give Turkey full participation in decisions about deployments to regions affecting Turkish security (at a minimum, the eastern Aegean and Cyprus); 2) the US to be willing to provide US assets directly to the EU if Turkey prevents the assignment of assets through NATO; and 3) Turkey to accept that its exclusion from the EU has a legitimate basis in the domestic structures and policies of the Turkish government. None of these three conditions is likely to obtain.

Turkey withholding NATO assets to the EU may, in fact, turn out to be beneficial to the EU, NATO and the US. It will force an end to the politically expedient but potentially catastrophic reliance on “assured access” to NATO – and, implicitly – US assets. The two most important practical problems with the EU relying on NATO assets are:

- To what degree are US assets committed to and planned for NATO, on which NATO operations fundamentally depend, going to be made available for EU operations?

and

- Would the use of NATO military capabilities create an implicit obligation on the part of NATO countries?

The very assets the EU will most likely want to rely on NATO to provide are strategic intelligence collection and assessment, theatre reconnaissance, secure communications, airlift, precision strike forces and logistics to sustain deployed forces. These capabilities are very expensive and scarce even in US forces. The EU is unlikely to be able to rely on guarantees of availability for European crisis management of assets that the US also needs for fighting wars and managing crises globally. A real assurance of availability would mean that the crisis management priorities of the EU would take precedence over the other responsibilities and interests of the US.

The Kosovo campaign, although smaller in scope than anticipated Major Theatre Wars, employed nearly the entire allocation of air assets for an MTW and adversely affected US commitments elsewhere. Had the US been challenged in Korea, the Persian Gulf or Taiwan, the US would have reduced the tempo of operations in Kosovo or, depending on the severity of the contingency, withdrawn altogether as the critical military assets were assigned to those

higher priority missions.⁴ If the retasking of US military forces were considered during a NATO operation, it is even more likely that the US would withhold or withdraw them from an EU operation.

The kinds of information and communications technology the US has bought into its military forces for more than a decade have given our military the ability to see the battlefield more precisely from greater distances, transmit information securely to forces more widely dispersed, and acquire targets more accurately. The change has been occurring for a sufficient amount of time that it is beginning to affect how the US organises for, trains, and even thinks about warfare. Maintaining the ability to fight together in transatlantic coalitions will become more difficult as a result of these changes occurring in US forces.

The shrinking US government budget surplus will likely encourage even greater experimentation and transformation. The Bush Administration, Congressional leaders and the military all agree that we cannot execute the current strategy or afford to sustain the current forces. The service chiefs' request for an additional \$100 billion – an additional 1% of GDP! – made their solution out of the question. Even Americans' amazing tolerance for high defence spending will not likely countenance an additional \$100 billion with so little threat to the country. Hard choices will have to be made about priorities, risk tolerance, and other seminal issues; and the Administration cannot equivocate on the choices in a fiscal environment this tightly constrained.

The EU's focus on improving power projection forces – while greatly to be commended – will also aggravate the problem, as the very low rate of commitment to meeting Defence Capability Initiative Goals demonstrates. In the same time frame that EU defence planners will be concentrating on constructing interoperable forces at the lower-end of the conflict spectrum, the US military will be accelerating in its efforts to capitalise on the information and communications technologies that are transforming US operations at the high end of the spectrum.

We should no longer pretend that either the EU or NATO is going to spend its way out of the problem. Money that could be made available through reprogramming – “spending smarter” – has not materialised. The defence budgets on which EU states are operating will not permit them the luxury of replicating in the EU the same patterns of military organisation and operation that exist in NATO, even before accommodating the transformation underway in

⁴ US Department of Defense, Kosovo Lessons Learned Report to Congress, p. 120.

US forces. While indexing EU defence spending in constant dollars is perhaps unfair, the IISS analysis drives home the point that EU defence spending increases are marginal. The dependence of EU militaries on very expensive and scarce US assets cannot be overcome by modest increases in spending unless the EU finds very creative ways to employ force with greater cost effectiveness (and perhaps tolerating greater risk). The EU will simply not be able to employ force the way the US is going to, or even the way NATO currently does.

Which is not to say that the EU cannot, or should not employ force autonomous of NATO and US support. It can and it should. The EU is just going to have to think differently, and much more cost-effectively, about sufficient and sustainable ways of providing capabilities. This would be a painful transition, as it will likely involve relinquishing comfortable ways of doing business that produce jobs and status symbols. But it will gain for the EU a near-term, substantial increase in their capability to meet the Helsinki Headline Goal and successfully conduct the Petersberg tasks.

As an example of how the EU could improve on strategic lift, instead of pursuing the A-400M, perhaps the EU should look into some combination of leased governmental lift from countries like Ukraine and Russia, creating a civilian reserve air and sea fleet program to enlist the commercial lift of EU states for crisis deployments, and pooling funding to purchase existing aircraft. None are solutions as satisfying as developing and buying the A-400M, all the approaches have associated risks, and the project would require intensive multinational planning and tighter integration of EU forces. However, the EU probably cannot afford to meet all the demands of autonomous operations if it does business as expensively as developing the A-400M. Similar solutions are in range for strategic intelligence, theatre reconnaissance, strike forces, and research/development/procurement.

Such a radically different way of doing business would make interoperability more problematic in the near term. NATO would likely have to accept a division of labour corresponding to geographic areas of operation since the US and EU forces would be less able to connect with each other. But a geographic division of labour is surely preferable to a functional division of labour of the sort in evidence during the Kosovo air campaign. NATO's military structure could even – in the long term – end up as the two pillars connected only at the top wished for by many a French diplomat. But the Atlantic Alliance is strong enough to manage the divergence of US and European militaries as long as NATO continues to have common interests and military forces on both sides of the Atlantic continue to make politically meaningful contributions to coalition warfare.

The status quo of transatlantic military interoperability is not sustainable. Beginning by allocating scarce defence euros to duplicating capabilities that both enhance EU autonomy and reduce the burden on heavily-taxed US military assets creates the prospect of constructive duplication of assets between the EU and NATO. Improving the European Union's ability, and fostering its willingness, to take more responsibility for managing crises with less reliance on the US need not damage NATO. The practical problems are manageable, and trying to sustain the status quo would be equally problematic.

A RUSSIAN PERSPECTIVE

DMITRY DANILOV*

Frankly speaking, it appears that Russia is not ready to face the EU's determination to provide for its own operational capabilities in the framework of ESDP. Whereas these new developments have become a matter of high priority in the West, interest in the subject in Russia is primarily confined to academic circles.

Even when the decision was taken by the EU to proceed with the creation of a European rapid reaction capability (RRC) and the Helsinki EU Summit in December 1999 agreed to set the Headline goal of establishing the RRC by the year 2003, there was no strong interest manifested in Russia. This was partly the consequence of Russia focusing its foreign policy on other aspects of security relations with the West that were considered essential (NATO strategy, use of force, role of the UN and OSCE, Chechnya, etc.). To some extent it can also be explained by Russia's scepticism about the EU's stated intention to become a more independent actor in the European security arena, especially in the area of defence policy. Russia's assessment of the situation was further confirmed by events in Kosovo. In any case, the "RRC in 2003" was perceived in Russia as a somewhat exotic notion rather than as an impending political reality. Such a political assessment (or, more precisely, the lack of it) made the special evaluation of the EU's future capabilities of crisis management meaningless. This component of the Western military structure simply was not taken into account by the Russian military planning bodies.

In principle, the RRC could be a matter of direct significance for Russian military policy for two reasons. Firstly, the RRC could be a factor in terms of the military risks it implies or as a destabilising influence in the European political-military situation. Secondly and on the contrary, if Russia's eventual interaction with the RRC could contribute to resolving some of Russia's defence and security problems. Neither of these, however, seems to be realistic.

Operational assessment of RRC in the context of Russian security interests

Let us consider whether Europe's development of a rapid reaction capability would be considered a military risk by Russia. Notwithstanding the fact that there was obviously no reason for such a consideration in a military sense (it would seem premature at best for Russia to make corresponding adjustments in its assessment of the Western military power), it was

not excluded politically. In fact, in Russia, strongly opposed to NATO's use of force in Yugoslavia and employing anti-western rhetoric, the mood now appears to be concerned with new, additional risks. Conceivably, as a component of the Western military machinery, the EU's future development of a rapid reaction force could pose such a new risk, especially in the context of EU enlargement.

Such an interpretation of the RRC is highly improbable, however, not only from military perspective, but also in light of the content of the present Russian-EU relationship. The prevailing view maintains that the RRC does not present any threat or military danger to Russia. Although Russian attitudes towards the ESDP remained rigid till the autumn of 2000, such an evaluation was voiced informally by some Russian officials including, most surprisingly, high-level generals (for example, General L. Ivashov, then Head of the MoD's General Department of the Military International Cooperation). This position was confirmed definitively by the subsequent official recognition by Russia of the positive nature of the ESDP development.

Another question raised by the RRC is whether it could be useful to Russia in resolving its defence and security tasks. In the medium-term perspective, such an interest would clearly be assessed as rather negligible. Russia does not consider the EU as an operational partner in the CIS space. In other European regions, where Russia might eventually have an interest in being directly involved in crisis management, the RRC doesn't offer any additional advantages. As long as the modalities of Russian participation in European-led operations are not more promising compared to those in NATO-led operations, the latter could even be preferable. Under a scenario in which EU crisis-management capabilities are deployed in a non-European area, where the US does not wish to be involved (Africa, for example), Russia could hypothetically find some interesting opportunities. In situations that did not conflict with its particular political and security ambitions, Russia could act as the EU's partner in military-technical cooperation. This would cost the EU less than if it used American assets and would not be a source of great concern to the US itself, as compared to a cooperative EU-Russian military partnership in Europe. But such illusory and rather modest ad-hoc dividends can't significantly influence Russia's assessment of the RRC's usefulness.

Therefore, Russia cannot consider its defence and security tasks to be directly influenced by or to benefit from the establishment of a RRC. And, ultimately, this is what determines the

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specifics of Russia's attitude, compared to other security actors in Europe. It is unnecessary to argue that for the EU itself, the RRC is an indispensable instrument of efficient foreign and security policy. From a US and NATO perspective, it will also contribute to more effectiveness crisis management as a result of enhanced European capacity and responsibility in the Atlantic community as well as optimising its military structures and resources. Specifically, shaping the EU crisis management capability is an important factor in the implementation and credibility of the NATO's CJTF concept. For European countries striving to integrate into the Euro-Atlantic institutions, the RRC represents a way to resolve security problems in this area. Moreover, the closer these CEE countries are to EU accession, the more they perceive the RRC as their own instrument. Thus, clear practical interests give visible argument for all these actors to support the RRC project, some differences in their political motivation notwithstanding.

By contrast, owing to lack of such practical interest, Russia's attitude towards the RRC is reduced to its political implications: how will obtaining a RRC change the EU political landscape and the European security architecture and to what extent could these changes correspond to Russian security priorities and aspirations?

Russian security priorities in the context of the RRC project

Russia, striving for a significant and active role in international policy and European cooperative security, has to take fully into consideration the dynamics and prospective consequences of the ESDP developments, notably its crisis management capabilities. It is also obvious that the EU-Russia strategic partnership, which became the definitive priority in Russian foreign policy under President Putin, made its opposition towards ESDP absolutely excluded. Moreover, in its relations with the EU, Russia has from the very beginning advocated dialogue on international policy and security as well as practical cooperation in these fields. This strategy was emphasised by the new Russian leadership, which expressed the intention to enhance the EU-Russian security partnership, including its military, political and technical aspects. This intention was evidenced by the Joint Statement of the Russia-EU Summit in May 2000: "President V.V. Putin expressed the positive interest towards forming EU security and defence policy" and noted in this respect the existing possibilities for cooperation. A more important result of the next Summit, in October 2000 in Paris, was Russia's step beyond its rather vague policy of simply declaring its interest and "special

attention” in ESDP towards lending constructive support aimed at development of a practical partnership.

There are three general motives that seem to be crucial in explaining Russia’s attitude. First, Russia is interested in increasing the EU’s political weight, which is consistent with Russia’s concept of a multi-polar world. Second, this would increase the potential for a two-sided strategic partnership, which is considered by Russia as especially important for its integration into Greater Europe. Third, the increasing EU autonomy in foreign and security policy in combination with the development of partnership with Russia would bring new opportunities for the latter to reach its security aims and to strengthen its own voice in Europe. Examination of the ESDP/RRC through the combined lens of these three main motives gives Russia compelling arguments to support these EU activities.

First of all, Russia recognises the significant importance of the EU developing its own crisis management capabilities for its appearance as the political power, namely in the European security arena. This “militarised” EU is not a factor in Russian defence concerns as much in a functional sense (being about the Petersberg tasks and far from collective defence), as it is in an operational sense (limited operational capacity). Moreover, paradoxically and more significantly, an EU with its own RRC would be a factor of demilitarisation of international relations: the EU military dimension will take auxiliary role in the broad security policy – in contrast with NATO, where military activities are the core of security management. This EU’s broad approach to security, which is clearly manifested in the ESDP development, makes it a more attractive partner of Russia, compared with NATO.

Russia also proceeds from the premise that in order for the EU to be a strong political and security player, it has to strengthen the relationship with Russia. On the one hand, this would favour managing Russian security policy in a cooperative way. On the other hand, taking into account that Russia could not only be important in the security field, but also an equal partner (unlike many other cooperation areas where an imbalance is typical), this dimension of cooperation could be essential for promoting the strategic nature of the EU-Russia partnership in general.

Russian aspirations: (In)compatibility with EU interests

At first sight, Russian and EU interests with respect to RRC coincide in the main, considering the EU’s ambition to obtain a greater role as a political and security player as well as to strengthen its partnership with Russia. In expressing its readiness to support the ESDP/RRC,

however, Russia is looking to gain certain objectives that don't necessarily correlate with EU interests.

Russia would like to influence EU crisis-management capabilities in a manner that would correspond with the criteria that are asserted by Russia in its dispute with the West. It also seeks cooperation in this area based on the principles of equality, including common decision-making. Taking into consideration that the ESDP is in the formative stage and, consequently, the EU could be relatively flexible in shaping its crisis-management capabilities, Russia is trying to attain compatibility of its aspirations with the development of ESDP/RRC. It is thought that the EU could and should take into account serious mistakes that, from Russia's point of view, have been committed by the West (NATO) in Yugoslavia with regard to the modes and methods of the use of force as well as to its relations with Russia. It is also believed that the EU is sufficiently interested in securing cooperative relations with Russia and its support of ESDP/RRC to avoid the emergence of serious differences with Russia and respond to its main concerns. Thus, Russia is trying to activate practical cooperation with the EU in the context of the emerging RRC in order to increase Russian ability to influence it.

But that is exactly what apparently is inducing the EU to refrain from instigating greater cooperation with Russia owing to still significant differences in their respective approaches towards ensuring European security, especially in crisis management. Strengthening Russia's voice in the ESDP and RRC would have put the EU in the position of broadcasting these Russian-Western differences into these matters. It is quite obvious that the EU doesn't want to risk making its newborn child – ESDP/RRC – the hostage to these differences. The EU is not only concerned with considerable or excessive Russian influence on a RRC, but would prefer to exclude it altogether, in the near-term at least.

Moreover, the instrumental significance of the ESDP/RRC for the security policy of Russia, which would like to channel the development of the European crisis management potential towards the mainstream of Russian interests, is in contrast to the EU's emphasis on its practical aspects. In an attempt to avoid this inherent conflict, EU doesn't rely on practical cooperation with Russia, even if the latter possesses military capabilities that are attractive for EU-led operations in principle and that are proposed by Russia. The matter of key importance for the EU is cooperation with NATO/US in order to get access to their assets to fill RRC shortages. Establishing practical cooperation with CEE countries that are not members of the EU or NATO is also, unlike Russia, a matter of importance for EU owing to its enlargement policy and their association status in the EU/WEU. As a result, for EU the development of

practical co-operation with Russia, as well as for Russia itself, could be mainly instrumental. But unlike Russia, the EU has no visible political impetus to rely upon this cooperation. Furthermore, it could aggravate the EU's difficulties with regard to obtaining its ESDP priorities and operational goals, as testified by the difficulties experienced in reaching the EU-NATO agreement on access to Alliance assets. One could argue that this has become a "technical" obstacle for the elaboration of the modalities of the third countries' participation in EU-led operation. But in the Russian case the implications seem to be more serious. Due to the key significance of the Atlantic aspect in the EU policy towards its crisis management capabilities, the EU couldn't risk jeopardising the NATO/US supportive attitude towards ESDP by "excessive" *rapprochement* with Moscow.

Policy implications

As a result of these differing motives, Russia and EU have exchanged their roles after the Paris Summit. Before the Summit, the vagueness of the Russian position towards ESDP limited the prospects for political security cooperation with EU. But now, on the contrary, Russia stands up for strengthening cooperation and for its moving into practical interaction on an equal basis, including in future European crisis management operations; and for adequate structuring of the EU - Russia security relationship – that equals at least, the institutional level of the NATO – Russia dialogue.

On the other hand, the EU, having obtained Russia's political support for ESDP/RRC, does its best to limit Russian influence and stresses the autonomy in its decision making when it comes to deploying the RRC. To some extent, Moscow, when negotiating with the EU its participation in the Petersberg operations, strengthens the perception, that it could be some source of trouble for the EU. Russia consistently proposes, firstly, to delineate the geographical boundaries of future operations (read: area of responsibility); secondly, to commit itself to conduct such operations under UN SC mandate. This is a clear reflection of the Russian post-Kosovo position towards crisis management intervention.

How to reconcile this position and deployment of the RRC in a pragmatic way? The EU in any case will neither have capabilities, the political ability, nor the political will to undertake unilaterally any action as in a Kosovo scenario. Also, the EU repeatedly committed itself to act in accordance with the UN Charter and other basic international agreements. But the EU can't restrict its RRC geographically, because the "area of responsibility" of the CFSP is not reduced to the European integration space. As the approach to crisis management of

Europeans, allied in NATO, is different from the Russian one, it is also hard to believe, that they renounce it in the framework of the EU – Russia dialogue. In other words, the Russian preoccupation with the deployment of the RRC is far from just a contingency plan because politically the EU couldn't answer Moscow in a satisfying way. At the same time they push partners apart, limiting their practical co-operation.

This Russian duality is in fact proof of the suspicion of Moscow's counterparts, that there remain motives to counter pose the "good West" (EU) to the "bad West" (NATO/US) in Russian approach. It is true, that in Russian political debates the perception of the European security and defence identity as a counterbalance to NATO, existed. But now Moscow understands more clearly, that the "European project" is definitely developing in the framework of Atlantic solidarity and Alliance, and the access to NATO capabilities is conditional for RRC to be credible. The problem is that this understanding is not put in the right manner into practical policies, especially as a result of remaining differences between Russia and NATO. So, the EU is considered by Moscow as a more appropriate partner than NATO, with RRC establishment opening the possibility to develop the co-operation on crisis management with the West from a clean page. These Russian aspirations strengthened due to the political crises that erupted after-Kosovo between Russia – NATO, having induced Russia to bring new dynamics into the security dialogue with the EU. But having succeeded in this, Russia faces the situation, where the development on this base of co-operation in crisis management is hindered by lack of due progress in its relations with NATO, which are, in turn, determined to a large extent by the content of Russian-American relations. Their aggravation, decrease of the Russian weight in the US foreign policy would make Europeans face a more pressing choice between US and Russia, damaging EU – Russia security relations. So, to be successful, Russian striving for their stepping up has to be combined with a course for consolidation of positive dynamics of the relations with US and NATO. This course would meet strong support among Europeans.

Thus, Russian attempts to establish some kind of "special relationship" with the EU in crisis management and to succeed in this by changing the respective Western approaches, seem unsuccessful. Furthermore, they could result in the opposite effect, increasing Atlantic accents in policy of Europeans. From the practical point of view, these attempts are also far from realistic, if to take into consideration limited EU's operational potential and its integral role in the Euro-Atlantic security structure, and especially its reliance on NATO. So, the qualitative

progress in the NATO – Russia security cooperation is of key importance for the establishment of the workable EU – Russia mechanisms of crisis management.

There is a growing understanding of this dialectic in Russia. It is symptomatically, that the idea of the tri-lateral NATO- EU – Russia co-operation in crisis management has been voiced firstly (but unofficially) by Russian diplomats. However, this demonstrates Russia's in principle readiness to co-operate on an equal footing with all interested partners, as well as the fact that there are no anti-NATO motives in the Russian position towards the EU - Russia crisis management interaction. In practice, Russia is rather unable to explore constructively such a relationship formula owing to remaining differences with NATO and particularly on the eve of the challenge "2002" of NATO enlargement. So does the EU, which, firstly, didn't settle the issues of its own interaction with NATO and which, secondly, doesn't want to actualise the problem of the Russian participation in the Petersberg operations before RRC is in disposal, i.e. at least until 2003-04.

Some prospects

The most likely near-term scenario of EU-Russia co-operation on crisis management issues will be a development of the political dialogue in this field without visible progress in practical co-operation. This trend has been evidenced already by the results of the Russia-EU Moscow Summit in May 2001, where besides the rhetoric about the significance of the mutual partnership one could find the European stand up to keep restraining from meeting Russian aspirations for practical co-operation in the context of the RRC formation. After they succeeded in getting Russia's loyalty, Europeans are focused now on its consolidation. The Summit decision "to intensify the security policy dialogue, including on the work of the EU on military and civilian crisis management" should be sufficient to support the status quo.

But Russia apparently will keep itself to holding its higher-standards position of concretising the crisis management co-operation, including establishment of the appropriate mechanisms of common activities. At the same time, Russia, most likely, will not be too persistent, acknowledging the shortages of the EU potential, as well as existing impediments (first of all, coming from Russia – NATO angle), as well as the importance to progress towards other partnership areas, considered to be essential. However, after stepping over the lines "2002" (i.e. reviewing the enlargement process by NATO) and «2003» (i.e. reaching the headline goal by the EU), Russia, if not satisfied with the level and format of the political and security co-operation with the EU, could become the aggravating factor for practical application of the

new peace-keeping forces of the EU. So, it would be logical to look forward to some EU steps to come closer to the approach of Russia, which could be an important political partner of the EU, but also an attractive military-technical one.

In this respect, the logic of the EU, arguably, when working on RRC, that its application is conditioned by its availability, could be extended to co-operation with Russia. Indeed, EU and Russia have no instruments for eventual common crisis management actions. To take decisions about the possibility and necessity to act in common, preparatory work is needed to shape the adequate mechanisms of consultations and, perhaps, of decision-making, on contingency planning of common operations, on interoperability, including the joint exercises etc. Respective proposals has been tabled by Moscow on the eve of the EU – Russia Summit in May, 2001. Such a practical co-operation could be organised before the deadline of 2003. It would not undermine the EU crisis management autonomy while would allow to rely, if and when it would be the mutual interest and agreement to act, upon created instruments of interaction. Beyond these practical considerations, one could find also political advantages. Firstly, this would ensure more consistent support of the EU component of crisis management by Russia. Secondly, this would become strong instrument for strengthening the EU – Russia partnership as a whole. Thirdly, this would inevitably promote the development of the Russia – NATO relations and interaction.

ABOUT THE EUROPEAN SECURITY FORUM

The Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) and the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) joined forces late in the year 2000, to launch a new forum on European security policy in Brussels. The objective of this *European Security Forum* is to bring together senior officials and experts from EU and Euro-Atlantic Partnership countries, including the United States and Russia, to discuss security issues of strategic importance to Europe. The Forum is jointly directed by CEPS and the IISS and is hosted by CEPS in Brussels.

The Forum brings together a select group of personalities from the Brussels institutions (EU, NATO and diplomatic missions), national governments, parliaments, business, media and independent experts. The informal and confidential character of the Forum enables participants to exchange ideas freely.

The aim of the initiative is to think ahead about the strategic security agenda for Europe, treating both its European and transatlantic implications. The topics to be addressed are selected from an open list that includes crisis management, defence capabilities, security concepts, defence industries and institutional developments (including enlargement) of the EU and NATO.

The Forum has about 60 members, who are invited to all meetings and receive current information on the activities of the Forum. This group meets every other month in a closed session to discuss a pre-arranged topic under Chatham House rules. The Forum meetings are presided over by François Heisbourg, Chairman of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy. As a general rule, three short issue papers are commissioned from independent experts for each session presenting EU, US and Russian viewpoints on the topic.

The Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) is an independent policy research institute founded in Brussels in 1983, with the aim of producing sound policy research leading to constructive solutions to the challenges facing Europe.

The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), founded in London in 1958, is the leading international and independent organisation for the study of military strategy, arms control, regional security and conflict resolution.