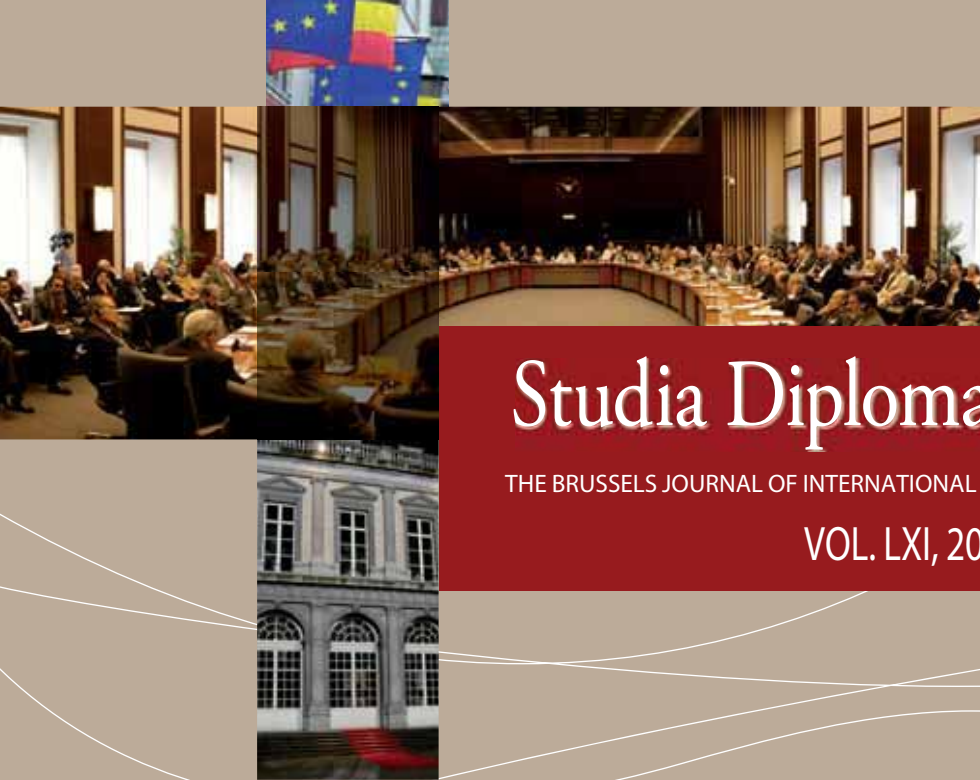




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The European Security Strategy 2003-2008: Review and Implementation


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EDITORIAL

According to the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS), “the European Union is inevitably a global player”. The ESS itself is the clearest expression of the ambitions and role which the EU sees for itself as a global actor. It sets forth a holistic approach: recognizing the interdependence between all aspects of foreign policy, it aims to put to use all instruments at the disposal of the EU in an integrated way in order to achieve the objectives of a secure neighbourhood and “effective multilateralism”. A permanent strategy of partnership and prevention, this holistic approach is to address the underlying causes of the key threats to security and stability.

Four years after the adoption of the ESS, in the fall of 2007, Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt and French President Nicolas Sarkozy put forward the proposal that the EU should revisit the document. The European Council of December 2007 subsequently mandated the High Representative, Javier Solana, “to examine the implementation of the Strategy with a view to proposing elements on how to improve the implementation and, as appropriate, elements to complement it”.

Like in 2003, when the original ESS was drafted, the EU Institute for Security Studies (Paris) organized three seminars in order to collect the views of the broad community of practitioners and academics working on the various issues covered by the ESS: in Rome (5-6 June 2008), Natolin (27-28 June 2008) and Helsinki (18-19 September 2008). The Swedish Institute of International Affairs (Stockholm) and Egmont — Royal Institute for International Relations (Brussels), having both been very much involved in the debate on the ESS, decided to also offer a national contribution. On 6-7 December they co-organized one of the first seminars on the topic, under the title *Global Europe: Strategy and Identity* (Val Duchesse, Brussels). The aim of this expert seminar was to assess the implementation of the ESS and its contribution to the development of a strategic culture at the EU level, i.e. the habit of automatically referring to the strategic framework of the ESS when taking decisions and the willingness to undertake the actions and commit the means required to achieve those strategic objectives.

This issue of *Studia Diplomatica* brings together contributions from a number of participants in the seminar, complemented by articles by other leading experts, both academics and practitioners. Giovanni Grevi, Antonio Missiroli and Alexander Mattelaer address the general context of the issue and the nature of the strategic debate. Others cover specific topics which the EU should include in this debate: ESDP operations and capabilities (Daniel Keohane), the Neighbourhood Policy (Roland Dannreuther), the evolving context of global and regional actors (Alyson

Bailes), the role of China, notably in Africa (Uwe Wissenbach), and relations with the US (Youri Devuyst). Michel Liégeois adds a Belgian perspective, focussing on the contribution a small country can make to European and global security.

Studia Diplomatica is very grateful for their outstanding work, which offers a valuable contribution to the ongoing debate on the ESS.

Sven BISCOP
Editor-in-Chief

FRAMING THE EUROPEAN STRATEGIC DEBATE

Giovanni GREVI*

In his speech at the Conference of the Ambassadors of France in September 2007, French President Nicolas Sarkozy called for the development of a common European vision of the challenges and threats confronting the EU and international security. This proposal triggered rounds of intergovernmental consultations involving a number of capitals. This process reflected mixed views on the need for a revision of the European Security Strategy (ESS) approved in December 2003. After weeks of exchanges, a compromise position was agreed in time for the European Council on 14 December 2007.

The conclusions of the European Council included an important reference to the implementation of the ESS, and to its future development. The European Council acknowledged that the Strategy proved very useful in providing the Union “*with the relevant framework for its external policy*”. At the same time, “*in the light of all evolutions which have taken place since [its adoption], in particular the experiences drawn from ESDP missions*”, the European Council mandated the High Representative Javier Solana, in full association with the Commission and in close cooperation with the Member States, to “*examine the implementation of the Strategy with a view to proposing elements on how to improve the implementation and, as appropriate, elements to complement it, for adoption by the European Council in December 2008*”.^[1]

This initiative sets the stage for a new phase of strategic reflection at EU level. Such debate is to be welcomed, but also needs to be managed with care. The Union’s claim to be a credible international actor crucially depends on its ability to define its own strategic interests, and the options to pursue them. Strategy-making should encompass policy-making, to make the latter more coherent and effective. On the other hand, tackling the strategic debate requires a selective approach to policy priorities, and realistic expectations on the output. The EU is a collective international actor and progress can only be incremental. From this standpoint, the connection between the internal dimension — what the EU is, and how it functions — and the external dimension — the projection and role of the EU in the world — is central to strategic thinking.

* Dr. Giovanni Grevi is a Senior Research Fellow at the EU Institute for Security Studies in Paris. He is writing in a personal capacity. This article is based on a speech given in December 2007 and was revised and completed in the spring of 2008.

[1] Brussels European Council, 14 December 2007, Presidency Conclusions, 16616/07.

This contribution does not address the question of whether the time has come for a more or less extensive revision of the ESS. The actual scope, the extent and the timing of this particular exercise will be a matter for political decision-makers. Instead, this article seeks to define the broad framework and the main elements of the new strategic debate at EU level, and to outline some of the issues that could be tackled in this context. Thinking in strategic terms has a value of its own, not least to progressively develop a common strategic culture by enhancing the convergence of national ones.^[1] A phase of reflection should in any case precede and inform the decision on how to update or complement the ESS. With this in mind, some basic questions should be addressed upfront so as to shed light on the process ahead.

First, the key features of a truly strategic debate are pointed out, so as to highlight its added value with respect to day-to-day policymaking. Second, the evolution of the global geopolitical landscape is addressed, since that contributes to defining the EU's room for manoeuvre, and its priorities. Third, the "domestic" political and institutional environment of the strategic debate is briefly recapitulated, so as to situate strategy-making in the distinctive context of the EU. Fourth, the scope of the strategic debate is outlined, selecting four potential levels ranging from a grand strategy to a focus on thematic and regional strategies. Fifth, depending on the level, or levels, at which the debate is conducted, some issues for strategy-making are identified as pointers for further reflection.

1. THE FEATURES OF THE STRATEGIC DEBATE

Essentially a strategic debate is about how the EU sees the world and the challenges out there, how it should define and pursue its strategic interests in that context, and how it should guarantee its security. As such, a strategic debate at the EU level is defined by seven main features, namely:

- a focus on the external challenges and threats, with a view to developing a common assessment: in the absence of a shared analysis of challenges and threats, the definition of common interests and options proves all the harder;
- a focus on the root causes of those challenges and threats, and not on their symptoms, no matter how visible these may be: the debate should look at

[1] On the evolution of the European security culture, see P. CORNISH and G. EDWARDS, *Beyond the EU/NATO dichotomy: the beginnings of a European strategic culture*, *International Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 3, 2001 and, by the same authors, *The strategic culture of the European Union: a progress report*, *International Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 4, 2005. Other recent contributions include C.O. MEYER, *The Quest for a European Strategic Culture* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); J. HOWORTH, *Security and Defence Policy in the European Union* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 178-207; and S. BISCOPE, *The ABC of the European Union Strategy: Ambition, Benchmark, Culture*, Egmont Paper No. 16, Brussels, Egmont, October 2007.

the factors and actors affecting the security agenda upstream, before danger is manifest or conflicts break out;

- a focus on the medium to long term and not on the most pressing requirements: the debate should have a proactive and not simply a reactive character, should escape the constraints of the daily political agenda, and should provide sustainable policy solutions;
- a focus on the definition of common European interests in confronting challenges and threats: the purpose of the debate should be to achieve a sense of collective ownership of the output and of related policy initiatives;
- a focus on ranking common challenges, interests and goals: the debate should lead to a better sense of priority and direct the allocation of resources accordingly;
- a focus on the synergy between different aspects of EU external action and, where relevant, on the linkages between external and internal EU policies: the debate should overcome institutional divides and cut across policy domains that are connected in practice;
- and, finally, a focus on the worldviews, interests and threat perceptions of other global and regional players whose behaviour increasingly affects the interests of the Union.

Drawing from a debate conducted along these lines, key policies can be devised or reviewed and issue-linkages can be identified, as a basis to develop relevant capabilities. Importantly, however, the political environment of the strategic debate should be fleshed out, addressing both the fast-changing international system and the very context of European integration, in which strategy-making takes place.

2. THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT OF THE STRATEGIC DEBATE

Taking a medium-term look at the international system, two basic coordinates should be factored into the European strategic debate: the diversity of actors, and the complexity of the challenges.^[1]

2.1. The diversity of actors

Alluding to the emergence of global actors such as China and India, and the renewed strength of Russia, has become commonplace. However, the effects of the ongoing

[1] For a comprehensive overview, from a European perspective, of the main trends defining the international system, see N. GNESOTTO and G. GREVI (eds.), *The New Global Puzzle: What World for the EU in 2025?* (Paris, EUISS, October 2006). An updated version of this report is also available in French: *Le monde en 2025* (Paris, Robert Laffont, 2007).

shift of power are profound and will only intensify across a number of policy areas, from trade matters to environmental regulation, and from development policies to crisis management. Other large countries, such as Brazil, will exert noticeable influence on global economic and political affairs.

Relatively less explored is the relevance acquired by some medium-sized powers because of their “swing” potential, meaning their ability to affect stability in crucial regions, for better or for worse. These include, among others, Iran, Pakistan, Nigeria, South Africa and Venezuela. The impact of their evolution over the next ten years or so will be a key variable. In affecting these developments, the interests and priorities of the EU will be one factor among many, given the penetration of other powers in all the main regions, from the Persian Gulf to Central Asia, from the Guinea Gulf to Latin America.

The basic point, however, is not the proliferation of regional or global powers *per se*, but their diversity. The international system is growing more heterogeneous. Some big powers in the emerging world order will be democracies and others authoritarian states. Some of the economic superpowers will be relatively poor countries, which carries implications in terms of domestic and international priorities. For some, power is a given; for others, it is an ambition. Under these conditions, just defending primacy is a recipe for inviting competition. Also, the threat perceptions of global and regional powers are quite diverse.

The shifting balance of power entails a shifting balance of perceptions, which will be channelled and reflected through both old and new media. In particular, new technologies empower individuals and small groups and multiply their outreach. The definition of strategic narratives, from the grand strategy level down to specific crises, will become a more competitive undertaking and, therefore, all the more important.^[1]

Of course, state actors are not the only ones affecting international affairs and European security. The importance of both legitimate non-state actors, like transnational business and financial bodies, and illegitimate ones, like terrorist groups and organised crime, is well-documented and is likely to grow. That poses challenges and threats, but also opens up opportunities. An interdependent world is exposed to disruptions, including by non-state spoilers. However, it can only thrive

[1] L. FREEDMAN, *The Transformation of Strategic Affairs*, Adelphi Paper No. 379 (London, International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2006).

if trans-national and trans-governmental networks grow stronger and expand to include protagonists from emerging powers.^[1]

2.2. The complexity of the challenges

A distinction should be drawn between the direct threats and the complex, systemic challenges confronting the EU. This distinction matters not because threats and challenges are disconnected, quite the contrary, but for four main reasons. First, countering threats and addressing challenges require a different policy mix. Second, more political focus and resources have gone to tackling threats than to managing challenges. Third, drawing from a variety of disciplines, knowledge needs to be pooled together to better understand the challenges facing Europe. Fourth, branding too large a range of issues as threats may well induce a sense of urgency, but also convey a sense of fear and introspection.

The 2003 European Security Strategy provided a set of five key threats — terrorism, WMD proliferation, regional conflicts, state failure and organised crime — which by and large remains valid. However, the Strategy rightly acknowledged that these threats arise out of complex causes. It follows, and it needs to be stressed, that direct threats and systemic challenges cannot be effectively confronted in isolation from each other. In other words, the threats are often the tip of the iceberg; more focus should be put on what lies below the waterline.

Islamist-fundamentalist terrorism provides a good example. No doubt, it poses a direct threat to Europe and possibly the most serious one in terms of physical security, notably if associated with the proliferation of WMD. Good intelligence, appropriate force and the rule of law are required to counter this threat. Aside from preventing an imminent attack and dismantling existing cells and networks, however, the complex challenge is to prevent radicalisation and recruitment in the first place, countering the factors that enable them. In this connection, the recent CSIS report on smart power makes an important point: “*Today’s central question is not simply whether we are capturing or killing more terrorists than are being recruited or trained, but whether we are providing more opportunities than our enemies can destroy and whether we are addressing more grievances than they can record*”.^[2] Authoritarian rule in the Muslim-Arab world, low levels of human and economic development, struggling integration and potential alienation among the immigrant communities

[1] On the important role of trans-governmental networks in managing global governance, see A. M. SLAUGHTER, *A New World Order* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2004).

[2] CSIS Commission on Smart Power, R.L. ARMITAGE, J.S. NYE (co-chairs), *A smarter, more secure America*, (Washington, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2007).

in Europe, the ongoing Israeli-Arab conflict (among others), and the perception of US and European policies in the Middle East all play a role. Terrorism is the symptom and not the disease.

In addition to tackling the roots of trans-national terrorism, three complex challenges stand out when looking at the next decade or so: conflict prevention (notably in the regions surrounding Europe); state building (an undertaking whose complexity is only beginning to be appreciated); and dealing with the implications of climate change and resource scarcity for stability, development and security.^[1] Of course, none of these challenges is entirely new, but addressing them will require a far-reaching and comprehensive approach because of their interlinked character and because of the interplay between EU priorities and the interests of other global actors.

3. THE “DOMESTIC” CONTEXT OF THE STRATEGIC DEBATE

Strategy-making cannot be extrapolated from the political and institutional context in which it is situated: a strategic debate reflects the political entity that expresses it.^[2] One should therefore start by looking at the nature of the beast — in this case, the EU. This clarification is relevant so as not to raise expectations which would be unlikely to be fulfilled, and could therefore backfire.

First, the EU is a unique mix of political integration and inter-governmental cooperation on a continental scale, achieved by peaceful means and based on distinctive values and also distinctive methods. It has not been created against anybody, it does not aim to attack anybody, it does not aim at primacy or supremacy, and it is not in the business of great power competition or zero-sum games. The EU is the most advanced embodiment of multilateral governance.^[3] These unique features define the strategic horizon of the EU for the foreseeable future. They disclose opportunities for the EU's action and influence in the world, but define the limitations of its external policies as well. Either way, they cannot but be reflected in EU strategy-making.

[1] According to Biscop, providing global public goods to counter poverty and exclusion is a central component of the EU international action and security strategy in particular. See S. BISOP, *The European Security Strategy* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005).

[2] On the implications of the internal features of the EU for its external role and performance see, among others, M. TELO, *Europe: a Civilian Power?* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); H. MAULL, Europe and the new balance of global order, *International Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 4, 2005.

[3] Robert Cooper describes the EU as “the most developed example of a post-modern system” See R. COOPER, *The Breaking of Nations* (London, Atlantic Books, 2004), pp. 36-37.

Second, the EU is and will remain a collective international actor without the ultimate authority to decide on the use of force, a prerogative that lies firmly with Member States. Third, following enlargement, the EU is a larger collective actor than in 2003, and the breadth of national interests, threat perceptions and strategic cultures has also widened. Clearly, convergence will take time. In practice, a potential solution to strike the balance between the size of EU membership, the need for an inclusive policy-making process, and the requirement for EU engagement, may be to allow for more flexibility. Different groups of Member States could take the lead on different issues with the constructive abstention, or permissive consensus, of others. Flexibility can take different shapes but it should be stressed that any form of flexibility would draw more support if enabled by a strategic consensus on the principles and goals of EU foreign and security policy, by extensive upstream consultation among all Member States on specific initiatives, and by a strong common institutional framework.

The strategic debate should be regarded in the context of the ongoing institutional reform. The new Treaty of Lisbon envisages the creation of the new position of the double-hatted High Representative of the Union for foreign affairs and security policy, who would also serve as Vice-President of the Commission, and the establishment of the European External Action Service, which would support the High Representative in fulfilling his mandate. The new permanent President of the European Council and the President of the Commission will also play important roles with regard to CFSP and other aspects of external relations.^[1]

In the case of the EU, strategy-making and institution-building are two sides of the same coin. The bottom line is that both exercises are about enhancing convergence, forging consensus and fostering coherence in the shaping of a common foreign and security policy. Within the EU, like it or not, process is substance, and there is little process without viable institutions. Consensus-building is not an alternative to making clear-cut choices, but a precondition.

[1] On the drafting of the relevant provisions of the Constitutional Treaty, and on their institutional implications, see G. GREVI, *The Institutional Framework of External Action, and Common Foreign, Security and Defence Policy*, both articles in G. AMATO, H. BRIBOSIA and B. DE WITTE (eds.), *Genèse et destinée de la Constitution européenne — Genesis and destiny of the European Constitution* (Bruxelles, Bruylant, 2007). For an analysis of the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty and of their implementation, see G. QUILLÉ, *The Lisbon Treaty and its implications for CFSP/ESDP*, Briefing Paper, Policy Department External Policies, European Parliament, February 2008, and A. MISSIROLI, *The impact of the Lisbon Treaty on ESDP*, Briefing Paper, Policy Department External Policies, European Parliament, January 2008.

4. THE SCOPE OF THE STRATEGIC DEBATE

A strategic debate can be undertaken at different levels. Four levels are pointed out in what follows:

- **Grand strategy:** this expresses a political vision of what the EU is and stands for in international relations; it is comprehensive and takes a broad look at the state of the world; it involves a range of policy areas, both internal and external; it is an instrument of public diplomacy and provides a narrative for partners and public opinion both within and outside the EU.^[1]
- **Security strategy:** it can be more or less comprehensive, ranging from a grand strategy to a military strategy, depending on the interpretations of “security”. In essence, however, it is about vulnerabilities and threats, and how to preserve a given entity from them.
- **Military strategy:** this is about the use of military force in order to pursue political objectives. As such, a military strategy is a component of a security strategy, although one of distinctive importance. This is because of the resources that a military engagement entails, its often dramatic political implications, and the particular symbolic value attached to it.
- **Thematic or regional strategies:** these are about applying a strategic, meaning coherent and long-term, approach to more distinct policy domains such as the non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction,^[2] or to given regions, such as Africa or Central Asia.^[3]

These four levels of debate need not be mutually exclusive. Moreover, not all the tracks of the strategic debate need to translate into policy-making at the same time. For example, a common understanding of global transformations and of their implications for the EU could be sought while focussing for practical purposes on more specific strategic action plans to enhance policy coherence and effectiveness. The 2003 ESS can be situated between the level of a grand strategy and that of a security strategy. However, it only provides broad guidelines for its operationalisation.

[1] For a comprehensive definition of grand strategy along these lines, see B. POSEN, *The European Security Strategy: Practical Implications*, *Oxford Journal on Good Governance*, Vol. 1, No. 1, July 2004. The same author offers a shorter definition of a state's grand strategy as “its foreign policy elite's theory about how to produce national security” in *The case for restraint*, *The American Interest*, Vol. 3, No. 2, November/December 2007. This is an interesting definition as it points to the importance of strategic debate in shaping a common security culture among the EU's foreign policy elites.

[2] Council of the European Union, *EU strategy against the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, 15708/3, Brussels, 10 December 2003.

[3] Council of the European Union, *The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership — A Joint Africa-EU Strategy*, 16344/07, 9 December 2007, and Council of the European Union, *The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership*, 10113/07, 31 May 2007.

5. THE STRANDS OF THE STRATEGIC DEBATE

The different strands of the strategic debate need to be identified at an early stage in the process. If need be, different stages of the debate could be planned over time so as to cover the “strategic ground” without overloading the debate. In this perspective, some of the themes that could be addressed are outlined in what follows.

5.1. Grand strategy

At the grand strategy level, the debate needs to tackle the momentous transformations affecting the international system, and the position of the EU therein. The basic objective of the Union to support a multilateral, rule-based international order holds valid today as in 2003, but the international system has changed. Therefore, new ways need to be devised to fill the gap between structural developments and governance frameworks. It is a question of putting effective multilateralism to the test, and of defining the role that the EU wants to play in a fast-moving international environment.

As noted above, the influence of major powers such as Russia, China and India on all dimensions of global governance and security has become central to the strategic debate. In this context, taking a medium-term perspective, the international system is often described as multipolar,^[1] while it is understood that the distribution of power among key global actors and across different policy fields is very uneven and that the US will remain by far the most powerful among the other power centres for the foreseeable future.

The implications of emerging multipolarity for EU policies such as crisis management, humanitarian intervention, peace-building, development assistance, democracy promotion and conditionality, should be fully addressed. For the Union, however, multipolarity is a point of departure, and not of arrival, in defining its grand strategy. Multipolarity is a descriptive, and not a prescriptive notion. In other words, it is a factor that needs to be integrated into EU strategic thinking, and not a strategic vision *per se*. In this perspective, the fledgling discourse of European decline needs to be countered, with arguments and action, while not endorsing a narrative of confrontation with other powers. The grand strategy of the EU should be about defusing the tensions inherent in multipolarity, and building the case for multilateral cooperation.

[1] See N. GNESOTTO, G. GREVI, 2006, *op. cit.*, and C. Grant, *Preparing for the multipolar world: European foreign and security policy in 2020*, Essay, Centre for European Reform, 2007.

From this standpoint, the concept of “interpolarity” — that is, multipolarity in the age of interdependence — may prove useful. In a multipolar system, different poles balance each other and compete for scarce resources. In an inter-polar system, poles cooperate to share the advantages of globalisation, set fair ground rules for competition, and confront common challenges. The more influential a pole is, the more it takes a stake in establishing a multilateral system that delivers results. An inter-polar system and a multilateral order are compatible and mutually reinforcing.

5.2. Strategic partnerships

The paradigm of inter-polarity could also be instrumental in reviewing and enhancing the strategic partnerships that the EU seeks to develop with other major global players, in addition to the long-lasting and pivotal one with the US. By pursuing these partnerships, the EU acknowledges the importance of large and emerging state actors in the international system, but aims to set bilateral relations with them in the broader context of inter-dependence and in institutionalised frameworks.^[1]

A strategic debate on these partnerships entails not only reviewing and enhancing the *acquis* across the different policy areas that they encompass, but also defining what are the key interests of the EU in relation to its partners and how to achieve them. This is not to dismiss the structural and normative approach of the EU to shape the rules and the frameworks for cooperation, but to complement it with a clearer sense of priority, including in the political and security field. This strand of the strategic debate requires first and foremost dialogue and convergence among EU Member States. Their consensus is a crucial pre-condition for the credibility of the EU as a strategic partner in the eyes of other global players.

5.3. ESDP missions

The experience drawn from ESDP missions is explicitly mentioned in the conclusions of the European Council as the starting point for the review of the implementation of the ESS. ESDP has achieved a lot, but yet more is expected from it: the demand for crisis management is growing. However, the limits of the EU engagement may be in sight, whether in terms of political will or capabilities. Progress needs to be achieved at both the conceptual and at the operational level.

[1] See G. GREVI and A. DE VASCONCELOS (eds.), *Partnerships for effective multilateralism. EU relations with Brazil, China, India and Russia*, Chaillot Paper No. 109, Paris, EUISS, May 2008.

In this perspective, the strategic debate should address the actual level of ambition of EU crisis management across the large spectrum of the so-called Petersberg tasks, its geographical focus, and the progressive approximation of national doctrines towards a common EU crisis management doctrine.^[1] Also, for the purposes of the strategic debate, crisis management under ESDP should be set in the wider context of conflict prevention and peace-building, with a view to enhancing a comprehensive approach to complex crises.

Under such an approach, there should be a focus on achieving a common assessment of threats and needs, including when addressing capability requirements, and on enhancing coordination. These objectives should be pursued at three levels: among EU institutions, between the EU and its Member States, and between the EU and other international organisations. The importance of the latter level of coordination will grow in future because of the widening range of agencies and instruments that need to be pooled together, and because of the limited resources of the Union. Relations with the UN, NATO, and regional organisations such as the African Union will therefore feature at the core of this debate.

5.4. Specific policy domains and regions

The strategic debate could also address other policy domains, or specific regions. In this context, it could take the form of an in-depth review of the EU *acquis*, aimed at sharpening priorities, identifying issue-linkages and, where appropriate, delivering strategic action plans, which would also include a review and implementation process. In this perspective, four sets of issues stand out.

First, there is a need to devise a strategic and coherent approach to the security/development nexus, particularly in the context of conflict prevention and of post-conflict stabilisation and peace-building.^[2] The ESS rightly stated that “*security is a precondition of development*”. Likewise, human, social and economic development is itself a pre-condition for viable political and security arrangements within and between countries. In fact, the strategic debate should bring added value by addressing the link between development, good governance, and security. There is a

[1] See D. KEOHANE and T. VALASEK, *Willing and able? EU Defence 2020* (London, Centre for European Reform, June 2008).

[2] See the Joint Statement by the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission, The European Consensus on Development, *OJ*, 2006/C 46/01, 24 February 2006. On the challenges of defining a workable joint approach to security and development, see R. YOUNGS, *Fusing Security and Development: Just Another Euro-platitude?*, Working Document No. 277, Brussels, Centre for European Policy Studies, October 2007. See also 2831st Council Meeting, External Relations, 15240/07, Brussels, 19-20 November 2007, with conclusions addressing, respectively, Security and Development, the EU response to situations of fragility and policy coherence for development.

need to sharpen the policy tools of the EU, in conjunction with other international actors, and define the best practices and methods for pursuing development and security together, in real synergy.

Second, the massive scientific evidence on the impact of climate change on the environment calls for urgent analysis of its present and potential security implications, and of measures to address them.^[1] The ESS already noted that “*Competition for natural resources — notably water — which will be aggravated by global warming over the next decades, is likely to create further turbulence and migratory movements in various regions*”. The scope of the challenge calls, however, for much further reflection and early planning. The consequences of climate change may include conflicts over scarce resources, food shortages, the collapse of already fragile states unable to provide essential services to growing populations, energy security-related tensions, and serious damage to infrastructures and therefore disturbance of trade flows. The strategic debate should focus on critical regions, notably those surrounding the Union, and address the policy mix required to mitigate the impact of climate change, as well as the capabilities needed for disaster response within and outside the Union. Ways to establish a more structured cooperation with international bodies and individual countries should also be explored.

Third, a strategic review of the EU approach to its neighbourhood should be conducted, cutting across all the policies devised at the European level. Building security in the neighbourhood of the Union was one of the strategic objectives outlined by the ESS. In this context, the coherence and effectiveness of EU instruments and the degree of convergence of EU Member States’ policies should be addressed. All EU countries should be involved in defining the EU interests in both the Eastern and the Southern neighbourhood. However, the debate could also explore the scope for flexibility in devising and implementing sectoral programmes in different regions.

Fourth, a comprehensive review of the interplay between internal and external policies in countering trans-national terrorism and organised crime and addressing political and religious radicalisation should be undertaken. The ESS stated that “*the internal and external aspects of security and indissolubly linked*”. It also specified that “*Better coordination between external action and Justice and Home Affairs policies is*

[1] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Fourth Assessment Report*, Synthesis Report, released 17 November 2007. On the security implications of climate change, see K. M. CAMPBELL et al., *The Age of Consequences: The Foreign Policy and National Security Implications of Global Climate Change* (Washington, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Centre for a New American Security, November 2007). See also D. SMITH and J. VIVEKANANDA, *A climate of conflict, International Alert*, November 2007. For a recent EU policy perspective, see the Paper from the High Representative and the European Commission to the European Council, *Climate Change and International Security*, S133/08, 14 March 2008.

crucial in the fight both against terrorism and organised crime". Since 2003, progress has been achieved in separate policy areas but much remains to be done to enhance the synergy of different tools. The strategic debate should aim to bridge the divide between the different "pillars" of EU action with a particular attention to key regions such as the Western Balkans, the Mediterranean Basin, South Caucasus and Central Asia, including Afghanistan.

6. CONCLUSION

Over the last five years, the EU has covered a lot of ground in developing a common assessment of security challenges and threats, and in devising viable instruments to confront them. ESDP has made remarkable progress, with almost twenty military and civilian operations launched since 2003. Efforts have been made at both the conceptual and operational levels to bring different EU institutions and tools together under a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention, crisis management, and state-building. Much remains to be done, but the grounds for further policy developments have been laid down.

The ENP has marked a new approach to the EU's near abroad, based on deepening partnership, a degree of differentiation and positive conditionality. The EU has sought, with varying degrees of success, to establish or deepen strategic partnerships with major global players such as China, Russia, India, and Brazil, and has devised innovative approaches to key global regions with the EU Strategy for Central Asia of June 2007 and the Africa-EU Joint Strategy of December 2007. The question of energy security has become prominent on the EU agenda, and has triggered reflection on the EU approach to the inter-related issues of security of supply, energy policy and climate change.

Arguably, however, change outside the EU has occurred faster than policy innovation within the EU. Hence the need for a renewed strategic approach to the challenges facing the Union. The goal to support the development of an effective multilateral system remains topical. However, the strategic debate within the Union needs to factor in the growing diversity of major state and non-state actors in the international system, and the increasing complexity of interconnected challenges.

In addressing the issues outlined above, the strategic debate should pursue the three "Cs" of EU foreign and security policy : convergence, coherence and capabilities. First, the progressive convergence of Member States' strategic outlooks and interests, with a view to generating a truly European perspective. Second, the coherence of

the policies and initiatives undertaken at the European and at the national level, to enhance the clout of joint action. Third, the civilian resources and the military capabilities needed to make a difference on the ground. Holding a strategic debate at the EU level is a pre-condition to fostering a common strategic culture that fits both the changing global landscape and the distinctive features of the EU as an international actor.

REVISITING THE ESS — BEYOND 2008, AND BEYOND ESDP

Antonio MISSIROLI*

Perhaps a bit surprisingly, the December 2007 European Council “invited the Secretary General/High Representative [for CFSP], in full association with the Commission and in close cooperation with the Member States, to examine the implementation” of the European Security Strategy (ESS) adopted in 2003, “with a view to proposing elements on how to improve the implementation and, as appropriate, elements to complement it, for adoption by the European Council in December 2008” (§ 90 of the Presidency Conclusions).

Four years since December 2003, in other words, Javier Solana is now asked to revisit the ESS and come up with an overall assessment thereof. The Presidency Conclusions do not mention the need for an updating, let alone a rewriting of the Strategy: the emphasis is entirely on its implementation “in the light of all the evolutions which have taken place since, in particular the experiences drawn from ESDP operations”. And the whole exercise is aimed at putting forward “elements to improve” and possibly “complement” the Strategy’s implementation.

1. A JOB WELL DONE

Still, it will be difficult to avoid reassessing its analytical grid and tentative prescriptions entirely. Nor would it be right to do so, even though the ESS is a policy document that has unusually withstood the test of time. Launched in early May 2003, in the final days of the Iraq war, as a fence-mending effort both inside the EU and across the Atlantic after the harsh divisions of the previous months, the Strategy turned quickly into a consensus-building exercise for the enlarged EU.

The drafting was carried out in two phases: a first version was presented by Solana to the June 2003 European Council, which “took note” of it and asked the SG/HR first to broaden the discussion *i.a.* through a series of workshops organized by the EU Institute for Security Studies (an autonomous agency of the Council based in Paris), then to come up with a final text. This, which included a number

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of adjustments and amendments to the initial version, was eventually approved in December 2003 with the general title *A secure Europe in a better world*.

Arguably, the ESS is one of the best written EU policy texts ever (possibly alongside the Laeken Declaration of December 2001): short but dense, concise but not superficial, neither too self-celebrating nor necessarily based on the lowest common denominator. It was prepared by a close group of aides to Solana, taking into account the observations of both the various foreign ministries of the then 15 Member States and the experts involved in the discussion, but without ever submitting a draft text to the COREPER or the Political and Security Committee (PSC): in other words, the ESS was never “negotiated” through the usual inter-governmental channels.

Moreover, after its approval, Solana sternly resisted calls to translate the Strategy into a series of specific “action plans” for future implementation: in his view, the ESS had to remain a set of guidelines for possible action, not a prescriptive operational document. For some time, especially until the signature of the Constitutional Treaty in October 2004, the Strategy was even occasionally quoted in CFSP Joint Actions as a sort of “soft law” basis for launching ESDP operations whose scope went beyond the original “Petersberg tasks” enshrined in art.17 of the Treaty.

Yet the ESS is not only about ESDP. In a way, it is not even a “strategy” — a term that is often abused in current EU practice and parlance — as it has become the closest thing to a European foreign and security policy “doctrine”, shaping the Union’s approach to a number of diverse developments and contingencies and also proving an effective tool of EU public diplomacy. As a doctrine, also, it has hardly lost its relevance.

2. FIVE YEARS LATER

In fact, while the original Introduction to the ESS may sound slightly outdated now, the “key threats” and the “global challenges” identified in 2003 have not changed significantly, undergoing instead only marginal shifts in emphasis.

Regarding global terrorism, the ESS was quite farsighted already in pointing out that the threat was already well present on European soil (“Europe is both a target and a base”, as it stated). Ever since, especially after the Madrid and London bombings, we are all much better aware that home-grown terrorism is a specific European phenomenon that requires specific responses — including finding an acceptable and sustainable balance between security and liberties, both personal and collective.

The struggle against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) is now less focused on North Korea (let alone Iraq) and much more on Iran's nuclear programme and the regional domino effect it could trigger. And while the risk of "loose nukes" seems less present, the possibility of a "dirty" bomb loaded with lighter, "portable" WMD has anything but disappeared.

Regional conflicts (old and new) are still well visible on our radar screens, from the Balkans to the Middle East, and so are the "frozen" ones in and around Europe. Even previously internal conflicts now risk spreading to neighbouring areas — from Afghanistan itself to Darfur and the Horn of Africa.

We tend to speak less of State "failure" as such now and more of State "fragility", a condition that is quite common and recurrent on the international scene and that permits and even requires — contrary to "failure", which is rare and often irreversible — timely and proactive "preventive engagement", as also advocated in the ESS. Indeed, we can easily identify "fragile" States both on our continent and in sensitive areas where European and global interests are at stake.

Organised crime is now indicated by one third of EU citizens (according to Eurobarometer) as the main security and policy priority altogether, and its presence is felt in a growing set of activities related to the normal functioning of our societies, from banking and finance to services of public utility.

Furthermore, Europe's overall energy dependency has increased in terms of both perception and reality, underlined as it has been by a series of regional crises on the continent itself and by the dramatic rise of the price of oil worldwide. Energy security, in other words, has turned into a major problem that is bound to affect significantly our external relations in the years to come.

In an increasingly globalised world, Europe's demographic challenge is becoming ever more serious and also more widely perceived, raising the demand for a shared management of migration flows and better integration of immigrants.

Climate-related stresses have also materialised more frequently, translating into such diverse phenomena as floods, droughts, and forest fires. In perspective, climate change and global warming may come to aggravate the struggle for natural and energy resources (including the few remaining untapped reservoirs), deplete food and fish stocks, and above all further destabilise vulnerable regions and ill-governed countries — thus generating new conflicts and disputes, reinforcing migratory pressures, and affecting international relations at large.

Other “wild cards” have become apparent lately, including the SARS and “bird flu” scares, the Asian *tsunami* of December 2004, intrusive cyberattacks by foreign hackers, and financial disruptions triggered by traders. In other words, more natural and man-made emergencies — often transcending national (and EU) boundaries — may be in the offing.

3. THE HARDER THEY COME

Also the “strategic objectives” set in 2003 still hold — but we are now much more aware of the difficulty of achieving them.

Much as it is not formally or primarily a challenge for the EU proper, Afghanistan is proving hard enough to tackle, and not only in military terms. Defining “success” in Kabul is a demanding task, with knock-on effects elsewhere. The “quick in, quick out” approach that has initially characterised such operations, in fact, is no longer valid: we all have to brace ourselves for the long haul (“quick in, long in”) which is not exactly popular with the public or sustainable with limited capabilities. Exit strategies are harder to envisage as the “end state” to aim at is more elusive.

“Building security in the neighbourhood” is a moving target. In the Balkans, for instance, the Union’s “soft” (or “transformative”) power is no longer as effective as it used to be elsewhere. This in part is due to the doubts that have arisen within the EU itself over the enlargement process, which have in turn weakened its hand in dealing with the countries of the region: “conditionality” does not work if it is not associated with a credible commitment to integrating them in the Union sooner rather than later. At the same time, “conditionality” as we know it may have to be revisited as the expansion of the Union is clearly evolving into a “*Member State-building*” exercise.

Moreover, Russia’s increased assertiveness (coupled with Europe’s occasional disunity in dealing with it) has made addressing “frozen” conflicts ever more problematic, while the Union’s Mediterranean policies — in the framework of either the Barcelona Process or the European Neighbourhood Policy proper — seem to have come to a critical point or to be making little headway.

“Fragility” in the wider EU periphery, power politics in the East, instability in the South, and growing competition for resources worldwide: this is the broad-brush picture of European security in early 2008 — to which we may add the growing interconnectedness between the international and the domestic/societal dimensions of security, making this policy area quintessentially “inter-mestic”.

Last but certainly not least, “effective multilateralism” advocated in the ESS is proving a serious challenge, in part also because it is seen at the same time as a principle, a means, and an end in itself. The Union put up a good showing on the occasion of the crisis in South Lebanon in the summer of 2006, but Kosovo is now looking almost intractable in this context, as effectiveness and multilateralism seem hardly compatible with one another (albeit for reasons that do not necessarily depend on the EU). Acting on Darfur, too, presents comparable dilemmas. And, in a different policy domain, the Doha negotiations are stuck and the multilateral trade framework appears increasingly challenged.

This is not to say that “effective multilateralism” is unattainable or, worse, that it is wrong. On the contrary: for the EU, it may well prove as much a necessity as it is a choice. Yet the international environment has become more complex since 2003, with a rising number of major players (old and new) to be taken into account. They all appear strongly sovereignty-minded and focused on short-term gains. The resulting “competitive interdependence” leaves the EU in a quite vulnerable position. Delivering results is thus harder and harder, even when the goals are fairly reasonable and realistic, and even when the EU and the US broadly agree on them — which was not a foregone conclusion in 2003.

This is also why the linkage between the quest for “effective multilateralism” and cooperation with possible “strategic partners” needs to be better articulated. In what was arguably its weakest section, in fact, the ESS mentioned among these (in questionable order and company) Japan, China, Canada and India — a list that, if at all necessary, requires some adjustments.

In truth, the Union and/or its main Member States keenly participate in “mini-lateral” fora related to specific crisis situations: from the G-8 itself to the Contact Group on the Balkans, from the Middle East “Quartet” to the “5 + 1” format on Iran. Some of those “strategic partners” matter more in some critical configurations than others, and additional actors may play a role too depending on the area and the issue in question. Maybe, therefore, “working with partners” as defined in the ESS needs to be turned more explicitly and consistently into a vehicle for achieving effective multilateral solutions and also for giving the EU as such the necessary visibility and clout.

4. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The “policy implications” drawn by the ESS remain valid too, especially since they were framed in broad qualitative terms, with no deadlines or benchmarks.

The EU has definitely become “more active” on the international scene in general and in crisis management proper: what was still a promising start in late 2003 has since blossomed into a wide array of diplomatic initiatives and, above all, ever more numerous and demanding overseas missions. If some of these were largely symbolic and (understandably) meant to wave the EU flag and build a tentative *acquis opérationnel*, the latest ones — the civilian mission in Kosovo and, to a lesser extent, the military one in Chad — seem to belong in a different league altogether.

A few years ago Lawrence Freedman famously made a distinction between the “wars of necessity” typical of the “short” 20th century for the West, and the “wars of choice” that seemed to characterise the post-Cold War era and the fledgling “revolution in strategic affairs”. The Union’s ESDP and European forces at large, instead, appear to be moving away from their initial “operations of choice” and towards a growing number of “operations of necessity” in different theatres and with various “formats”. This, however, raises serious questions in terms of medium- and long-term sustainability.

The EU is also becoming “more coherent” in the conduct of its external policies. A few minor hiccups apart (in the preparatory phase of the 2005 mission in Aceh/Indonesia or in the legal dispute over small arms), the Council and the Commission seem to have found a workable *modus vivendi* and *operandi* especially within the PSC. The basic intuition behind the ESS — that crisis management must be integrated and comprehensive and not exclusively or primarily based on the military dimension and the use of force — has been vindicated by the experience of the past years.

For its part, the Lisbon Treaty creates a new “architecture” for foreign policy-making that is expected to increase coherence and effectiveness both in Brussels and outside the Union — mainly by building an “arch” between the existing EU “pillars” and permitting a much more comprehensive approach to “security”. The treaty’s implementation, however, may take some time and require a high degree of inter-institutional cooperation to deliver the desired effects.

Coherence, however, does not and will not depend only on the two sides of Rue de la Loi. The behaviour of the Member States, too, must be looked at (for instance, when it comes to selling military equipment to certain countries). And so must other international players — “partners” as well as organisations — involved in crisis management alongside the EU.

5. TAKING STOCK OF ESDP PROPER

Whether the EU is also becoming “more capable” remains, however, an open question. Institutional capabilities have improved if compared to 2003, and so have operational ones: lessons have been learned and applied to new contingencies, and more Member States seem now willing and able to put up forces for common operations than previously. Still, the overall “pool” of EU capabilities has grown only marginally, and some countries are now reaching a critical point in terms of overseas commitment and military overstretch.

The readiness to resort to force in peace support operations remains uneven across EU countries. This may ultimately create a two-tier system that, in turn, could raise sensitive questions in terms of internal solidarity and burden-sharing. Per se, this might not undermine common policies (NATO has lived fairly well with such a problem for decades), provided appropriate arrangements are made in terms of common decision-making and funding. More EU solidarity is needed, in other words, and not only because it is required by a new clause in the Lisbon Treaty.

On the whole, however, one could say that since 2003 ESDP has in fact *widened*, and it has done so in terms of membership (every enlargement brings in new interests and attitudes) as well as functionally (beyond the old “Petersberg tasks”) and geographically (beyond the wider European area). It has also *deepened*, so to speak, and it has done so in both doctrinal (the ESS) and institutional (the Lisbon Treaty) terms. And it has *hardened*, too, starting to deal seriously with non-proliferation and terrorism-related issues.

Evaluating European capabilities, therefore, is also about assessing how many are needed for what purposes — and here is where opinions vary most. Expectations and ambitions tend to be either too high or simply too diverse, which makes meeting all of them impossible and which makes force planning more arduous.

On top of that, ESDP is and will probably remain only one possibility for EU countries to be involved in international crisis management. For certain operations, NATO is likely to play a central role still; for others, the UN framework may be preferable (as in Lebanon); temporary “mixes” are also thinkable, as it has been the case with Bosnia, Kosovo and the RDC; and “coalitions of the willing” will continue to represent a further option on the menu. And ESDP “alone”, so to speak, is arguably insufficient to tackle such “key threats” as home-grown terrorism and organised crime. To this end, resorting to the new instruments available in the domain of Justice and Home Affairs may prove a crucial asset — and one requiring, in turn, an additional degree of “coherence” across EU pillars and policies.

On the strictly military side, the new treaty provisions on “structured permanent cooperation” will offer a golden opportunity to overcome differences and set shared and attainable goals. What is still to be determined is the extent to which participation in it will be determined by political will and/or functional ability. The criteria listed in the relevant Protocol attached to the Lisbon Treaty include: (1) the achievement of high military operational readiness through national or multinational force packages, and through pooling and/or specialisation of defence means and capabilities; (2) participation in “major joint or European equipment programmes” and in those managed by the European Defence Agency (EDA); and (3) increased cooperation with a view to meeting agreed objectives concerning “the level of investment expenditure on defence equipment”.

As such, therefore, the criteria leave much room for interpretation: there are no figures, no deadlines, and no hierarchy between them. Much will depend on the way in which they will be eventually set and implemented. Their degree of inclusiveness — based on a combination of explicit (but not quantified) functional benchmarks and implicit political incentives (being “in”) — will determine also the ultimate shape and scope of the whole scheme.

Things are less clear, however, on the civilian and diplomatic side, although jointly devoting more resources to relations with the outside world should be an imperative for the entire EU, considering how much less relevant our continent is expected to be in 20 years time. By then, in fact, the EU will simply not be in a condition to afford being inward-looking and spending more than two thirds of its common budget on internal policies, as its share of world population, trade and GDP will be a fraction of today. Europe will increasingly appear like a dwarf whose only chance of preservation lies in a much more widespread and effective presence at the global level. The possible “elements to complement” ESDP should probably take this trend into account, too, as regards the capabilities to develop in common.

6. TOWARDS DECEMBER 2008 — AND BEYOND

In light of all these considerations, therefore, what is the December 2008 ESS assessment likely (or hopefully) to be for?

If one looks at the timing of Solana’s planned report, it will basically coincide with the 10th anniversary of the St. Malo Declaration (3-4 December 1998), with which France and Britain launched what we have come to know since as ESDP. At that point in time, perhaps, both Nicolas Sarkozy and Gordon Brown may feel ready to fill in the footsteps of their predecessors and inject new momentum into European crisis management ambitions.

France may use the opportunity to announce its full reintegration into the military structures of the Atlantic Alliance, thus dispelling once and for all long-held fears and suspicions about ESDP as potentially undermining NATO. For its part, Britain may try and recover some initiative at the EU level — provided the Lisbon Treaty is smoothly ratified — in the one policy domain in which it is undoubtedly a central player.

Moreover, St.-Malo's 10th anniversary and Solana's report will fall right in-between the US presidential elections and the inauguration of the new administration. There may not be a better moment to send a few messages across the Atlantic, thus reconfiguring EU-US relations on a new basis after the stormy years past. Doing so at the end of the French EU presidency would only add to its credibility and overall impact. For their part, the Americans now know that they can still "go it alone" but also that they cannot "*do* it alone".

On top of that, the new ESS exercise may end up being run in parallel with the possible redrafting of NATO's Strategic Concept. The current one dates back to March 1999, i.e. before Iraq, before 9/11, even before the Kosovo war. If the Alliance decides to proceed with a comprehensive strategic reassessment on its part, it would be important to use it also as a bridge-building exercise, namely with the EU — provided neither side claims primacy.

Last but not least, Solana's report will precede by a few days the likely entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. It could therefore come to represent the beginning rather than the end of a broader reassessment of the goals and means of European foreign policy at large, extending into 2009 and the implementation of the Treaty provisions.

If so, it could well turn into a team-building exercise for the new EU leadership to be appointed by October 2009. Such possible second stage in the reassessment of the ESS could involve also the relevant services of the Commission, crucial for both a more comprehensive **foreign** policy — including the various external ramifications of other common policies — and a more integrated **security** policy proper, including its internal ("homeland") dimension. The final report, possibly due by October 2009, could thus become a regular end-of-term exercise for the future High Representative and Vice-President of the Commission.

In conclusion, revisting the ESS may entail some recalibration and minor adjustments, plus a few new "elements to complement" the future implementation of ESDP (which the Lisbon Treaty now rebrands as CSDP, stressing its "common" dimension). The title could usefully be amended as "*A stronger Europe in a better world*", thus underlining the need for a less defensive, self-centred and inward-looking approach. As even the Union's most assertive Member States (starting

with France and Britain) have come to realise over the past years, they are each much weaker when acting alone, and weaker still when sharply divided. Indeed, *l'Union fait la force*.

This said, the nexus between common *values* and common *interests* may require fresh attention: all too often are these disjointed, and not only between the national and the EU level. Our shared values need to be woven into our shared interests: values should guide in the pursuit of interests, not substitute for them — while interests should contribute to affirming values.

By the same token, *processes* need to be better geared towards producing *outcomes* rather than being seen as an end in their own right: be they intra-EU, transatlantic, multilateral or “mini-lateral”, they have to bring tangible results within reasonable time frames.

Finally, the increased *presence* of the EU in the world should better translate into comparable *influence*, which has not always been the case lately. Tomorrow’s world will require this, and so does today’s Europe.

LISTEN TO THE GENERALS? MILITARY STRATEGY IN EUROPEAN CRISIS RESPONSE OPERATIONS

Alexander MATTELAER*

The meaning of the word “strategy” is disputed. In the view of Hew Strachan, the term underwent a profound semantic shift from its military sense *à la* Clausewitz — strategy as “the use of the engagement for the purpose of the war” — to being a fashionable synonym for “policy”.^[1] Sven Biscop, on the other hand, points out that a broader conception of strategy in public management terms can still serve useful purposes. It would then function as a reference framework enumerating long-term objectives and the instruments needed to achieve them.^[2] Regardless of the definition of strategy one uses, however, it seems we are never shy of using the word but not nearly as often successful in generating strategic effect. The criticism is particularly scathing when European states attempt to realise common projects. The grand projects in the European arena — the ill-fated EU Constitution and the Lisbon Agenda to name but the most obvious — were received with ample scepticism. Interestingly enough, the question of where Europeans stand on strategy in its original context of military operations, so far received scant attention. This essay therefore outlines a number of questions that can be raised regarding the military-strategic characteristics of the operations European armed forces undertook in recent years.

1. THE CHANGING DYNAMICS OF DEFENCE POLICY IN EUROPE

While European states have not engaged in major warfare over the past decades, they have all to a greater or lesser extent maintained defence policies. In the shadow of the Cold War, this should have come as no surprise. In the more recent security context, the activities of armed forces in Europe expanded beyond territorial defence and found their place in broader security policies. In a simplified picture, these activities boil down to *assessing* security threats, *planning* how to deal with these threats in the present and the future and *conducting operations* to mitigate the security environment. In this sense, it can be said that armed force always has a broader role as an instrument

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[1] Hew STRACHAN, *The Lost Meaning of Strategy*, *Survival*, Vol. 47, No. 3, 2005, pp. 33-54.

[2] Sven BISOP, *The ABC of European Union Strategy: Ambition, Benchmark, Culture*, Egmont Paper No. 16 (Brussels, Egmont, 2007).

of policy. More often than not, however, the use of force is seen as an all or nothing tool, the intricate nature and workings of which are little understood.

States have a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. Nevertheless, the process of European integration has not left the domain of defence policy unaffected. While this traditional area of high politics has been shielded from any formal transfer of sovereignty, European states are forced, as a result of scale, to work together and with external allies — the United States in particular. States can deploy their armed forces in a variety of frameworks. They can do so (i) on a national basis, (ii) as part of an ad hoc coalition or (iii) through a formal alliance or international organisation. However, most of the European states, with the exception of the former colonial powers France and Britain, no longer have the ability to conduct meaningful operations on a national basis, especially should these be of an expeditionary nature. European states have three institutional frameworks at their disposal for deploying their forces on operations: the UN, the EU and NATO. This results in a situation where there is no standard causal chain linking military means to policy ends. Rather, there exists a complex puzzle of overlapping authorities and competences: a lot of the work (assessing, planning and conducting operations) takes place in a variety of institutional contexts, yet the final decision-making lies in the national capitals. Unsurprisingly, this only adds to the confusion about the workings of defence policy and its components.

Arguably, the core of defence policy lies in the operations conducted. Where are European armed forces active and what do they do? In the recent past and the foreseeable future, these operations have been about crisis management (rather than territorial defence) and hence expeditionary in character. One can observe that European forces have mounted a cooperative effort in three main operational theatres. First, European troops constitute about half of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan — making this the largest currently ongoing deployment of European forces. Second, European troops constitute the bulk of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) which was substantially reinforced in the aftermath of the conflict between Israel and Hizbullah in the summer of 2006. Third, Africa provides the main theatre for EU-UN cooperation in military crisis management. Under the banner of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), European soldiers have conducted two military operations (Operation Artemis & EUFOR RD Congo) in support of the UN peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). A new ESDP mission in Chad and the Central African Republic was deploying at the time of writing. Coincidentally, these three theatres illustrate the different institutional options available to European states for deploying soldiers on operations.

These crisis response operations display very different characteristics. A small-scale operation to secure elections in the Congo with a duration of six months is something quite different from providing stability and reconstruction throughout Afghanistan. The political discussion about such operations tends to focus on simple technical characteristics (mandate, troop numbers, casualties...) and above all, the national decision about whether or not to participate. However, the discussion about how these operations instrumentalise the use of force for political purposes, i.e. about strategy in its military-technical sense, is conspicuously absent.

2. LEVELS OF ANALYSIS IN THE STUDY OF DEFENCE POLICY

The study of defence policy in Europe is split up along different, seldom overlapping compartments. National defence policies unsurprisingly receive substantial attention in the individual states, NATO's activities are endlessly scrutinized and the ESDP may be studied by considerably more people than those who "make" it in the Brussels institutions. UN operations continue to warrant a steady level of critical attention, and institutional comparisons abound. In all these compartments, however, research tends to focus on the level of *policy* — where goals and objectives are set — or on the level of *grand strategy* — which outlines how different policy instruments interact and play a distinct role in the realization of these policy objectives. The level of *military strategy* — which studies how the military tool is required to realize the effects needed for achieving a political outcome — is by and large absent from both political and academic discourse about security policy in Europe. It is likely to receive a lengthier treatment in history books than in contemporary political science: as a concept, "Blitzkrieg" is more widely known than "deterrence".

There are good reasons to regret this situation. In all European states the armed forces are to a greater or lesser extent under civilian control. This is obviously fully in line with the Clausewitzian view of the use of military force as an instrument of policy. This does presuppose, however, the existence of a well-functioning civilian-military interface. The armed forces execute plans that are politico-military in nature and designed to achieve political effects. The other side of the bargain is that the political sphere does not ask its soldiers to do the impossible. Granted the inherent complexity of strategy, as argued by Richard Betts, this does require civilian expertise in understanding the intricate dynamics of the policy instrument that the military represents.^[1]

[1] Richard BETTS, *Is Strategy an Illusion?*, *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 2000, pp. 5-50.

When discussing military strategy in the context of the crisis response operations undertaken by European armed forces, Clausewitz' definition of strategy may be overly battlefield-oriented. For the purposes at hand, the definition that Colin Gray offers seems more appropriate: "By strategy I mean *the use that is made of force and the threat of force for the ends of policy*".^[1] It retains the essential idea of linking military force to political effect, but it recognizes that modern militaries can do more than wage war. The strategic axis linking policy to tactics hence constitutes the central element in the politico-military interface. It embodies the balance between ends and means, all the while recognizing that political circumstances define what constitutes such a balance.

Strategy functions simultaneously in the context of the local theatre and that of the general political context. On the one hand there is the question how the strategy of an operation can affect the security reality on the ground. For example, how will it keep the peace, crush an insurgency or provide stability? On the other hand there is the question of the broader political significance of an operation: how does an operation itself generate strategic effect in the setting of international politics? For example, an ESDP operation can serve as a tool to put the EU on the map as a military actor. This dichotomy between the local theatre and the political context acquires even more salience from the perspective of the smaller European states. As their military contribution to an operation will seldom determine the fundamental balance of power on the ground, its strategic effect mainly lies in symbolizing their political support for the mission or their adherence to the institutional framework that provides the banner for the operation.

It is in the planning phase that the strategic axis intersects with the axis linking security assessments to military action. It is in the work of military planners that the strategy of an operation — at least as far as the local theatre is concerned — finds its clearest expression. In the planning phase of an operation (or alternatively, when reviewing an ongoing operation) the balance between ends and means is debated most directly. In the development of the operation plan, the end-state, military objectives as well as force requirements would need to be outlined. At the level of the general political context it is the decision to launch or participate in an operation and the choice between the different strategic options that carries the brunt of general strategic significance.

[1] Colin GRAY, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999).

3. ELEMENTS OF MILITARY STRATEGY IN CRISIS RESPONSE OPERATIONS

Since the end of the Cold War, the armed forces of European states have, as discussed above, by and large concentrated on crisis response operations.^[1] The “Petersberg Tasks” these missions represent, involving peacekeeping, stabilisation and reconstruction, are arguably of greater strategic complexity than the all-out war-fighting that Clausewitz had in mind. As Theo Farrell points out, such operations tend to disregard the four main principles of war: (i) defining clear and attainable objectives, (ii) achieving unity of effort and command, (iii) massing force in space, time and effect and (iv) surprising the adversary.^[2] How to apply military force in a useful way when the objective is not to destroy an opponent but to foster a peace process or rebuild a nation remains a delicate question to which no answer is beyond debate. However, we can identify some recurring elements that have served in the making of strategy in the crisis response operations undertaken by European armed forces.

First and foremost of these is *deterrence*. It embodies the idea that the presence of a military threat discourages potential adversaries from undertaking any undesirable action out of fear for retaliation. Deterrence with nuclear weapons was the centrepiece of Cold War strategy, but it still serves in its more limited, conventional sense. The mere presence of intervening armed forces in a crisis zone would then already serve as a factor of stability. In the case of operation EUFOR RD Congo, for example, the objective of the EU force was to secure elections. This was to be achieved by deterring any of the electoral contenders to resort to force to manipulate or challenge election results. While the limited duration of the mission effectively undermined this plan — the very scenario of the militias of the political adversaries fighting it out on the streets of Kinshasa materialised with a couple of months delay — the idea that intervention forces are a stabilising factor by their mere presence remains powerful in European thinking about crisis response operations.

A related second element is *interposition*. In traditional peacekeeping doctrine, a neutral force can function as a buffer in order to foster confidence and a secure climate in which conflict parties can implement a peace agreement and demobilise their forces. Although the experience with UN peacekeeping in more complex conflict situations during the 1990s resulted in some well-publicised failures — Bosnia and Rwanda to name but the most obvious — the use of armed forces as

[1] Cf. Timothy EDMUNDS, *What are armed forces for? The changing nature of military roles in Europe*, *International Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 6, 2006, pp. 1059-1075.

[2] Theo FARRELL, *Humanitarian Intervention and Peace Operations*, in John BAYLIS *et al.*, eds. *Strategy in the Contemporary World* 2nd ed. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 313-334.

a buffer continues to serve in those situations where clearly identifiable actors end their hostilities without having resolved the underlying conflict. The European-led expansion of UNIFIL in 2006 serves as a good illustration: the UNIFIL area of operation would serve to prevent Hizbullah from redeploying south of the Litani river on the one hand and prevent the Israel Defense Forces from moving back into Lebanese territory on the other.

A third element is *local capacity-building*. This generally serves as the exit strategy for a crisis response operation: enabling local governance through the training of local security forces. In Afghanistan, for example, the military strategy of ISAF relies heavily on the training of the Afghan National Army through embedded support (the so-called Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams). As Western armed forces cannot remain present in distant theatres indefinitely, the need for security providers after the departure of intervention forces becomes a primary concern from day one.

While it is possible to discern elements of military strategy for crisis response operations, this should not obscure the fact that generating the intended political effect through the use of armed forces is inherently difficult. This is a classic maxim in the strategic studies literature — Clausewitz aphoristically coined it as: “Everything in war is very simple, but even the simplest thing is difficult” (p. 71)^[1] — but even more so in crisis response operations. It can be remarked that the elements outlined above are essentially passive or reactive (rather than pro-active) postures. It could be argued, for example, that the interposition strategy of UNIFIL, which was not made conditional upon political progress, effectively turned the force into a vulnerable bystander at the mercy of the conflict parties’ goodwill.

Apart from conceptual problems, military strategy can be bedevilled by problems of implementation. Force sizing criteria are often overruled by political or budgetary concerns, resulting in thinly stretched forces bogged down by persistent capability shortfalls. James Quinlivan already put forward the argument that stability operations could demand very large numbers of peacekeeping forces, as the required troop numbers are primarily determined by the size of local populations.^[2] As different troop contributors put a variety of restrictions on the conditions under which their troops can be used (so-called “caveats”), the unity of command is effectively broken and mass effects are diluted. When European states have to work together,

[1] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1976).

[2] James T. Quinlivan, *Force Requirements in Stability Operations*, *Parameters*, Winter 1995, pp. 59-69.

the political process of intergovernmental decision-making often results in unclear or unrealistic mission objectives.

While a number of elements of military strategy can be identified, the field of strategic thought in Europe remains rather barren. From an analytical perspective, moreover, several questions remain. First, is the relationship between the context of the local theatre and the general political context: does one level take clear precedence over the other? Do the different operations undertaken by European armed forces differ in this respect? Second, is there an emerging consensus on how to link military force to political purpose in Europe? Do we have proven strategic recipes for crisis scenarios? Or, as a controversial think-tank pamphlet put it, is there a European way of war?^[1] Third, if we can speak of a general body of thought on military strategy in Europe, how does this fit into a European grand strategy, if any? Once the debate on military strategy is opened, new sets of questions materialise.

4. CONCLUSION: THERE'S WORK TO BE DONE

It is often stated that the contemporary security environment can best be characterized by great uncertainty. The requirements that crisis situations pose in terms of military responses are, correspondingly, complex and diffuse. As crisis response operations remain mostly missions of choice rather than necessity, interest in understanding their intricate dynamics has been scarce. Problems pertaining to military strategy have over the past years received increasing attention on the other side of the Atlantic, as can be witnessed in the extensive public interest in the new *US Army / Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual*. However, European armed forces are treading on similarly unexplored strategic territory — witness Afghanistan and other recent engagements — but largely without the corresponding intellectual interest by academics and policymakers. This is as unfortunate for civil-military relations as it is for the quality of defence policy-making in Europe. The design of military strategy for the crisis response operations undertaken by the European armed forces constitutes quite a challenging programme for academic research as well as for public debate.

[1] Steven EVERTS et al., *A European way of war* (London, Centre for European Reform, 2004).

THE FUTURE OF EU MILITARY OPERATIONS AND CAPABILITIES

*Daniel KEOHANE**

Since its first peacekeeping operation in 2003, the EU has undertaken roughly 20 missions through its European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Although these operations have been relatively small in size — the largest was a 7,000-strong peacekeeping operation in Bosnia (which now numbers 2,500) for the most part they have achieved their goals. Most ESDP missions have not been primarily military operations. More interesting has been their complexity and range, such as preventing civil unrest in Macedonia; reforming the Congolese army and the Georgian judicial system; training Afghan and Iraqi police forces; monitoring the Rafah crossing point in Gaza; and overseeing the implementation of a peace agreement in Aceh.

And demand for EU action is growing. In February 2008, EU governments started sending 1,800 police, judges and customs officials to Kosovo, who are operating alongside 16,000 NATO peacekeepers, to help prevent a return to violence in that region; and they started deploying a peacekeeping force to Eastern Chad to protect refugees, which will comprise of 3,700 soldiers.

1. THE STRATEGIC RISE OF ESDP

For all its notable achievements, the EU has not yet carried out a military operation anything like the scale of the NATO operation in Afghanistan or the UN mission in Congo. For instance, NATO is leading 43,000 soldiers in Afghanistan, some of whom are fighting in extremely dangerous conditions, while the UN has 16,600 peacekeepers in Congo. It may be that the EU doesn't need to carry out military operations of a similar size and nature to the UN or NATO. Perhaps it will continue concentrating mainly on smaller humanitarian and State-building operations for many years to come, for which there is already considerable demand. But looking to the future, this assumption seems risky for at least two reasons.

First, the world in and around Europe will probably become more dangerous. The threats identified in the European Security Strategy, a document agreed by EU

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governments in 2003, remain unresolved. The risk of spread of weapons of mass destruction has probably increased, as has the demand for interventions on behalf of human rights (think Darfur). The possibility of ethnically-motivated violence remains high (think Kosovo). An unstable mix of demographic, economic and political pressures in Europe's neighbourhood means that the EU's already-challenging security agenda could be more difficult in the future. Plus other challenges will surely evolve, such as climate change or energy security.

Second, the EU will increasingly have to assume roles previously played in and around Europe by the United States. The US Ambassador to NATO, Victoria Nuland, made it clear that the US welcomes the strategic rise of EU defence policy in a speech on February 22, 2008: "I am here today in Paris to say that we agree with France — Europe needs, the United States needs, NATO needs, the democratic world needs — a stronger, more capable European defence capacity. An ESDP with only soft power is not enough." Strategically, this makes sense. The US is stretched thin by the demands of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. For the medium-term future it may not be as willing as in the past to take on new military responsibilities. When and if it does, these are unlikely to focus on Europe and parts of its neighbourhood. US military priorities these days are not in the Balkans or North Africa, they lie in Asia and the Middle East.

The EU, however, will need to develop a more effective set of policies for stabilising the Balkans, North Africa, and the countries that lie between it and Russia. Many of these policies will involve trade, aid and political dialogue. But EU strategy towards its near-abroad will also have to include a military component. While no future security challenge can be resolved with force alone, on occasion EU governments may need to deploy robust armed forces. For instance, the experience of multinational peacekeeping in places such as Lebanon, Somalia and Afghanistan has shown that well-intentioned missions can quickly turn into situations that resemble war-fighting. Or the EU may need to intervene in a nearby country with a large-scale force to separate sides in a civil war, or to prevent a humanitarian crisis.

2. WILL THE EU FIGHT WARS?

The EU has showed that it can act outside of Europe. As outlined above, it will probably have to deploy military forces abroad frequently in the future. Plus, the EU is working hard to improve its mix of military and non-military resources — such as police, judges, aid workers — for coping with crises. This makes sense since all international security problems require a strong blend of policy responses. The reforms contained in the Lisbon treaty would help the EU to further develop its

holistic approach to international security, since it would join up the diplomatic and military power of the Member-States with the vast development assistance, State-building and reconstruction resources of the European Commission.

But will the EU ever do more than peacekeeping? To date, Member-States have been very reluctant to send the EU into a shooting war. It has become a cliché to observe that Europe lacks the military capabilities and the will to conduct large-scale combat operations. Critics of EU defence policy point to the “cosmetic” nature of some current EU missions, such as the 2006 deployment to Congo. They argue that the German-led force, while intervening at one point to protect a presidential candidate (and a few European diplomats) from crowd violence, in general stayed far from harm’s way. The mission was more about “European form than African substance, comforting rhetoric than relevant action”, concluded one article.^[1] Likewise, US scholar and senior State Department official, Kori Schake, has described the small-scale missions undertaken by the EU so far as “luxury indulgences” because they are not central to Europe’s security, nor are they sufficient to solve the problems in those crisis areas. Therefore the EU has “actually increased scepticism about its seriousness of purpose rather than built a foundation for more complex and more demanding undertakings”.^[2]

The critics are right to say that the use of force has been largely absent from EU thinking on foreign and security policy to date. But the EU will never have an effective defence policy if European governments cannot agree on the use of force. It is true that deciding when the EU should (or should not) use force is extremely difficult; different histories and national sensitivities are involved. For precisely those reasons the authors of the European security strategy found it hard in 2003 to say anything clear to say on the subject. They concluded somewhat vaguely that “with the new threats the first line of defence will often be abroad”, and the EU should “develop a strategic culture that fosters early, rapid, and when necessary, robust intervention”.

On the one hand, it is currently difficult to imagine robust EU interventions outside Europe. But future events may force EU governments to use force. If the need arises, for example, to counter WMD proliferation in the Middle East, the likelihood is that the US would lead such missions. If the Americans chose to be

[1] Jean-Yves HAINE and Bastian GIEGERICH, In Congo, a cosmetic EU operation, *International Herald Tribune*, June 12th 2006.

[2] Kori SCHAKE, An American eulogy for European defence, in Anne DEIGHTON, Victor MAUER, *Securing Europe? Implementing the European security strategy*, Zürcher Beiträge zur Sicherheitspolitik und Konfliktforschung No. 77 (Zurich, ETH Zurich, Center for Security Studies, 2006).

supported by an international military coalition, NATO would probably be the lead institution. On the other, if the US were preoccupied with other security concerns elsewhere in the globe (like North Korea), and if they were faced with a compelling terrorist or WMD threat in an area such as North Africa, the Europeans might have no other option but to act alone. Plus, EU governments have committed themselves to use force to stop WMD proliferation. The EU's WMD strategy, agreed by EU governments at the Thessaloniki summit in June 2003 says that that coercive measures can be used — as a last resort — for preserving international non-proliferation regimes.^[1]

The difficulty is that EU governments have very different military strengths, and diverse attitudes towards the use of military force. Lawrence Freedman from King's College London has argued that those differences mean that the EU would produce a dysfunctional military doctrine — a necessary requirement before using force — if it tried to create one.^[2] Since the EU is now conducting peacekeeping operations, elements of an EU military doctrine for future missions are bound to emerge from these experiences. But peacekeeping is not the same as war fighting, and the risk of a dysfunctional EU doctrine is high, mainly because it would require 27 governments, and their respective defence establishments, to compromise. The danger is that if EU governments did agree on a common military doctrine, it would be due to a determination to demonstrate political unity rather than the imperatives of creating a good doctrine that would provide effective guidance in an actual conflict.

Also, even if the EU had a military doctrine, Member-States would not necessarily share the same commitment to participate in EU operations. The former German defence minister, Volker Rühe, (in)famously remarked in the mid-1990s that the EU should not try to “re-invent the *Afrika Korps*”, meaning that the EU should not get involved in operations in Africa. His remark seems outdated, even ironic, now that Germany has led an EU operation in Congo in 2006. But his general point holds true. The public will not always be aware why EU missions in faraway places are important. If disaster struck during an EU operation, and there were a number of casualties, the commitment of those governments involved would be severely tested.^[3]

[1] The Presidency Conclusions from the Thessaloniki European Council, 19 and 20 June 2003, say: “The European Council endorses the ... declaration ... on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction adopted by General Affairs Council on 16 June 2003”. This “Declaration on Non Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction” mentions “as a last resort, coercive measures in accordance with the UN Charter”.

[2] Lawrence FREEDMAN, Can the EU develop an effective military doctrine?, in Steven EVERTS, *e.al.*, *A European way of war* (London, CER, May 2004).

[3] Richard GOWAN, Is the EU ready to take casualties?, *The Globalist*, 15th September 2006, <http://www.theglobalist.com/StoryId.aspx?StoryId=5080>.

However, the responsibility for fighting — if the EU resorts to force — would at any rate be spread unevenly. Some countries like France and the UK are simply more willing to fight and more capable of doing so. They would probably lead any high-intensity operations, since they account for half of EU defence spending, have the most advanced military capabilities, and have the most experience of leading high-octane missions. For example, aside from contributing to various military coalitions, Britain sent troops to Sierra Leone in 2000, while France deployed soldiers on its own to the Ivory Coast in 2002.

It seems worthless to talk about EU “war fighting” if the Union is unable to fulfil its current rather limited ambitions. However, a debate on whether or not the EU should be prepared to fight wars in the future is worthwhile. That is not to suggest that the EU will fight old-fashioned imperialist-style wars, like Britain and France in the 19th century. There is no public support for that kind of EU defence policy.^[1] Rather the “war fighting” debate should be about if and when the EU would ever have to use high-level large-scale military forces when intervening in another country — for example to separate warring factions in a civil war.

Thinking about robust EU operations is important for at least three reasons. First, Europe’s neighbourhood might become much more unstable in the coming years, and the EU may be condemned to act. If EU governments wish to be prepared for future shocks, they should be prepared to discuss the full range of potential military responses. Second, it makes sound military sense to be prepared for the worst-case scenario. Even on relatively benign peacekeeping missions, there is always a chance that things might get nasty, and soldiers need to be equipped and trained for such eventualities. Third, what is the point of EU defence policy? To paraphrase Haïne and Giegerich, it should not be about doing what is convenient in the name of Europe, or generating a feel-good factor among European bureaucrats.^[2] If EU governments really do plan to contribute more to international security, then they cannot avoid discussing the use of force — or using force when the circumstances absolutely require the EU to do so.

[1] Eurobarometer polls usually show high support for EU defence policy per se, but it is questionable how many Europeans actually know what the EU is contributing to global security

[2] Jean-Yves HAÏNE and Bastian GIEGERICH, In Congo, a cosmetic EU operation, *International Herald Tribune*, June 12th 2006.

3. A LACK OF MILITARY RESOURCES

To meet their growing demands, EU governments will need access to adequate military resources. The 27 EU governments collectively spend €200 billion on defence.^[1] This means that, collectively, EU governments are the world's second biggest defence spenders after the US. That amount of money should be enough to cover Europe's defence needs. But despite these hefty financial resources, Europeans do not have nearly enough soldiers they can use. The EU-27 governments have close to 2 million personnel in their armed forces, but they can barely deploy and sustain 100,000 soldiers around the globe.^[2] This amounts to a measly five per cent of EU armed forces. Plus some Member-State armed forces are already over-stretched because of non-EU commitments in places such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

Part of the reason for a lack of deployable soldiers is that there are roughly 220,000 conscript troops in the EU.^[3] Conscripts — a legacy of Cold War military planning — are useless for foreign deployments. Another reason for Europe's lack of military muscle is a shortage of useful equipment, such as transport planes and communications technology. Inefficiency abounds in European spending on defence equipment, with too many small procurement programmes for essentially the same capability. To illustrate: the EU-27 currently spends roughly €30 billion a year on some 89 equipment programmes; the US spends much more (roughly €83 billion annually) on only 27 projects.^[4]

European governments have been slowly reforming their armies since the end of the Cold War — some with more success than others — shifting from a focus on territorial defence to an emphasis on international deployments. The good news is that military reform is now widely recognised at the EU level as absolutely necessary if the EU is to fulfil its security aims. Member-States have agreed on a “headline goal” — a list of military capabilities EU governments have agreed to acquire — commitments they are supposed to meet by 2010. Although the EU, like NATO, has not yet managed to convince European governments to rapidly improve their military capabilities, the process of military reform in Europe will continue. Plus a number of major equipment investments started by EU defence ministries should enter into service in the coming years. These capabilities include A400M transport

[1] European Defence Agency, *European Defence Expenditure in 2006*, Brussels, 19 November 2007.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Based on estimates from the *Military Balance 2008* from the International Institute for Strategic Studies (London/New York, Routledge, 2008).

[4] European Commission, UNISYS, Final report of the study: *Evaluation of the Common Initiative in the context of the Intra-EU Transfers of Defence Goods*, Brussels, February 2005.

planes; A330 air tankers; Eurofighter, Rafale and Joint-Strike-Fighter jets; and three new Franco-British aircraft carriers.

4. THE LISBON TREATY

Europe's lack of military muscle formed a major part of the discussion of the defence parts of the Lisbon treaty. If the treaty is ratified by all 27 members during 2008, it should help to improve the way EU defence policy works and is resourced. During 2008, EU defence ministries will start fleshing out what the Lisbon treaty means for EU defence policy in practice. The most important change is that the treaty would make it easier for a subset of EU countries to work together more closely on military matters, using a procedure known as "permanent structured co-operation". Those Member-States which meet a set of capability-based entry criteria can choose to co-operate more closely after securing a majority vote. This clause makes a lot of sense. Military capabilities and ambitions vary widely among the Member-States. So the EU could rely on a smaller group of the most willing and best-prepared countries to run its more demanding military missions.

At first glance, the defence group would seem, in some respects, to resemble the eurozone: some countries may stay outside because they choose to and some because they do not fulfil the entry criteria. During 2008, EU defence ministries will discuss what precisely the entry criteria should be, and some governments worry that they might be left out depending on the stringency of the criteria. That said, the wording of the treaty suggests an easy-to-meet set of capabilities thresholds for participation in the defence vanguard. For example, the draft says that one of the criteria that EU Member-States should meet is to supply a combat unit — a national unit or as part of a multinational formation — that can be deployed between five and thirty days. In fact, 25 out of 27 EU Member-States already supply these combat units as part of a "battle groups" plan that EU defence ministers approved in April 2004. Fifteen battle groups have or are being set up, mostly multinational units of 1,500 troops, and the first of these became operational at the start of 2007. Each battle group should be able to draw on extensive air and naval assets, including transport and logistical support, for early and rapid responses to crises.

Another innovation for defence policy in the Lisbon treaty is that Member-States can sign up to a "mutual assistance" clause: if a Member-State is attacked it can ask for help — military or otherwise — from other EU Member-States in accordance with the UN charter. But the six neutral countries for example would not be willing to give such an outright commitment, as it would imply the EU is a military alliance. Thus, another clause explains that this article "shall not prejudice

the specific character and defence policy of certain Member States” — meaning the neutrals. In addition, to allay fears of Atlanticist governments such as the UK, Poland, and the Netherlands, that EU defence could undermine NATO, the treaty says that this EU commitment should be “consistent with commitments under the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, which, for those States which are members of it, remains the foundation of their collective defence and the forum for its implementation”.

The so-called “Petersberg tasks” set the parameters for EU military missions, which range from humanitarian relief to ending regional conflicts — essentially peace-support missions. The treaty adds some new types of military missions to this list, but they are things the EU has already been doing, like disarmament operations (such as de-mining), security-sector-reform (reforming armies and police) and military advice. Each EU government currently has a veto over every single EU military operation, and that veto power is enshrined in the Lisbon treaty. Although unlikely, if a Member-State government vehemently opposed a particular EU military operation it could prevent it from happening. The treaty also says that governments are requested to provide the EU with military and civilian capabilities that would help the Union to deal with international crises — but purely on a voluntary basis. In other words, there is no obligation on a Member-State to participate in any EU mission if it does not want to. In addition, the treaty does not establish a standing EU force, never mind a “European army”.

5. THE NEW EUROPEAN SOLDIER

The Lisbon treaty, if adopted, should help develop much greater integration and cooperation between European armies. In effect, Europe could have a collection of interlocking “European armies” rather than a single force. Even if defence budgets increase, the cost of ongoing operations and the costs of military reforms themselves will force most EU governments to pool their military resources in the future.

The €200 billion EU governments spend each year on defence clearly should buy a lot more equipment than it currently does. Every EU Member-State — bar Britain and France — plans to carry out military operations only in coalition with other EU or NATO countries. Thus, joint military units make sound military as well as budgetary sense. They ensure that soldiers from different countries work well together on the ground, since they would train together and use the same equipment.

Tentative efforts to encourage greater military co-operation have already started, such as the battle groups initiative, in which EU Member-States pool their troops

to form a 1,500 strong, rapid-reaction forces capable of long-distance deployment. If successful these might convince EU defence ministries to develop more ambitious joint units. For example, France, Italy and Spain could combine to form a Mediterranean fleet of frigates. France and Germany already train their Tiger helicopter pilots together, and could use the same combat helicopter units. Another possibility would be for countries that are part of battle groups to think about forming multinational divisions (10,000 troops) together.

All EU countries will need to continue reforming their armed forces. This is due to the pressing need to spend money on new equipment, the increasing difficulty of attracting young people to join armed forces (changing demographics mean that most EU Member-States will have less eligible young people in the future), and the rising cost of hiring IT-savvy soldiers. EU defence ministries need to reduce the numbers serving in their armed forces. They could start by scrapping their remaining conscript troops, some 220,000, as they are much less useful than volunteers for foreign missions.

Some smaller countries, already part of multinational units, should specialise in certain key military tasks because they cannot afford to acquire the full range of new military equipment. These niche capabilities include anti-submarine warfare, field hospitals, jamming enemy radar and protection against chemical and biological weapons. This is already happening on a small scale: the Czechs have taken the lead in providing chem-bio-nuclear weapons detection capabilities, and Estonia is focussing on cyberwarfare. In the future, some smaller countries may find that the budgetary pressure is such that they can no longer afford to keep certain armed services. Denmark has already had an internal discussion about scrapping its air force, leaving airpower to others so that it can invest more in land and sea forces. These are not easy decisions for any government to take, given that defence policy goes to the heart of national sovereignty. But more pooling of defence capabilities is inevitable, even if it will be politically very difficult.

The profile of European soldiers in the future will undoubtedly change. European armies will employ many more women, ethnic minorities, scientists, information technology experts and linguists. In addition, the EU has a pool of *gendarmarie* paramilitary policemen. The EU *gendarmarie* force was created by France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain in 2005. It can put 800 military policemen in an area of crisis on a short notice, and up to 2,300 if given more time. The experience of State-building operations in Africa and elsewhere over the last decade has taught EU governments that they needed not only peacekeepers but also more military police, which can mix both military and policing tasks. The governments also learned that

they needed police, judges, engineers, central bankers and development advisers to successfully carry out these missions. EU governments should aim to be able to deploy 10,000 policemen plus a “civil reaction force” of 50,000 aid workers, doctors and administrators at a few weeks’ notice by 2020.

6. CONCLUSION

Europeans will increasingly have to take more responsibility for their own security, as they are doing in Bosnia. They will also increasingly be asked to intervene to protect refugees, as they are doing in Chad. They will probably frequently be asked to keep fragile peaces in difficult places, like the European-led UN operation on the Israeli-Lebanon border. Each of these examples fit in with a strategic trend — European governments will probably have to carry out many more autonomous military operations in the future, especially in their turbulent neighbourhood.

EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY — SELLING THE BRAND STRATEGICALLY

Roland DANNREUTHER*

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), which has now had three year's experience, excites mixed and contradictory emotions from EU analysts, depending in large part on the particular perspective they adopt. For those whose principal concern is the EU as an international actor, the ENP represents an exciting and critical challenge. As highlighted in the European Security Strategy, one of the key strategic goals of the EU is to "promote a ring of well governed countries to the East of the European Union and on the borders of the Mediterranean with whom we can enjoy close and cooperative relations".^[1] From this grand strategic perspective, the neighbourhood presents itself as the natural arena where the EU's ambitions for power projection are most likely to be realised to their full extent, involving the comprehensive set of policy instruments — economic, political and military. The implicit expectation is that the EU's incipient emergence as a global strategic actor, characterised by its distinctive post-imperial normative agenda, will first be confirmed in the neighbourhood of the Union, where Europe's direct interests are most significantly engaged.^[2]

A shift of policy perspective presents a very different vision. For those whose interests are more focused on the regional level, at Middle Eastern and post-Soviet political developments, the perception of the EU, and its strategic ambitions for the ENP, is considerably less rosy. The tendency here is to see the ENP as representing a severe weakening of EU interests and engagement in its neighbourhood. The ENP is viewed as a rather cynical device to dampen expectations of EU membership and a policy reflecting the EU's internal institutional paralysis and "enlargement fatigue". Recent developments in the Middle East and Eastern Europe add to this sense of low expectations and pessimism. The EU's record in the Middle East remains tarnished by its impotence during the Iraq war and the perceived failure of the Barcelona Process. In the East, the initial enthusiasm with the "Orange" and "Rose" revolutions in the Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, where the EU briefly became

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[1] Council of the European Union, *A Secure Europe in a Better World: European Security Strategy*, Brussels, 12 December 2003, p. 8.

[2] See, for example, see Jan ZIELONKA, *Europe as Empire: the Nature of the Enlarged European Union* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006).

a symbol for democratic freedom, has been supplanted by a disillusionment with perceived EU failure to respond favourably to these shifts and its seeming paralysis in the face of Russia's increasing geopolitical activism.

The ENP is, therefore, a difficult and contested policy to assess and judge in an objective manner. This article argues that neither of the above approaches to the ENP are satisfactory and that a more realistic assessment is required to judge both the challenges and opportunities of the EU's engagement with its neighbouring countries. It is only once such a realistic assessment is made that a proper focus can be made on the most appropriate and effective policies and strategies. The first part of this article provides just such an assessment through a comparison between the considerably more difficult and complex task of integrating the EU's neighbourhood as against the enlargement process of East Central Europe. It is by articulating and understanding the critical differences between these two processes that exaggerated expectations, often based on using the enlargement as test-case for judging the success or failure of the ENP, can be minimised. The second part highlights a number of key challenges and issues which, once a more realistic picture is established of the possibilities for the ENP, can genuinely help to advance the ENP's policy ambitions and goals.

The image or metaphor used in the title is taken from business and marketing — the challenge of the EU promoting its distinctive “brand” in a competitive environment. The good news is that the brand itself is basically good and attractive, despite the internal anxieties of many of the peoples within the Union. In comparison with its neighbours, the EU represents a sea of stability, peace and prosperity, which contrasts with the instability, relative poverty and multiple conflicts of most of the neighbouring regions. The EU's main international competitors in its neighbourhood — the US and Russia — have significant difficulties with their respective brands. The US is suffering from the aftermath of the invasion and occupation of Iraq; Russia suffers from an image of a bullying and increasingly neo-imperialist power. The EU also has the strategic advantage that, given the proximity of its large market, neighbouring states ultimately have no option but to integrate with the EU if they are going to respond effectively to the demands of globalisation and economic integration.

But the bad news is that many of the states in the neighbourhood are far from convinced of the need to integrate with the EU. Elite interests are frequently directed towards the preserving the status quo and in blocking the reforms which would permit the transformative (and inevitably also painful) processes of integration and political and economic change promoted by the EU. The key challenge for the EU is, therefore, to sell the EU brand so as to overcome or undermine these elite

interests, which requires attention to be given to persuading the peoples (as much as the elites) of the region that the EU is a positive and dynamic force which is open rather than closed, inclusive rather than exclusive, and which seeks integration rather than separation. It is this focus on “brand selling”, and the ways in which practically the EU can be sold to the ordinary men and women of the neighbouring countries, which can provide the best and most realistic appreciation of the potential strengths of the ENP.

1. THE ENP AND THE LIMITS OF THE ENLARGEMENT TEMPLATE

It is natural that the EU should celebrate the success of the enlargement of the EU and the overcoming of the injustices of the Cold War divide in Europe. Although the negotiations were both hard and basically asymmetric in nature, with the ECE countries having to submit to the conditions set by the EU, such an ultimately favourable outcome was by no means guaranteed. Enlargement from 15 to 27 member states represents, in the final analysis, the historic fulfilment of a political vision and ideal, whatever the grubby compromises and demands made in the process.^[1] It is also natural that, in the aftermath of the eastward enlargement, there is a strong temptation to use the same basic “enlargement” template as the basis for devising a strategy for the “new” neighbours for the EU whose prospects for eventual membership have a considerably more limited and in many cases indefinite perspective.^[2]

There are, though, dangers to using the post-Cold War eastward enlargement process as a model for the new neighbourhood. The danger, in particular, is to raise expectations for a similarly successful set of outcomes when the underlying conditions in relation to the ENP are vastly different. Articulating and defining what these differences are also helps to establish a more realistic and substantive assessment of the nature of the challenges facing the EU in the neighbourhood, the prospects for the EU promoting its influence and its preferred policy outcomes, and the concrete policies which might contribute to a realistic agenda for regional economic and political change.

[1] See Pal DUNAY, *Strategy with moving targets: East-Central Europe*, in Roland DANNREUTHER (ed.) *European Union Foreign and Security Policy: Towards a Neighbourhood Strategy* (London, Routledge, 2004).

[2] For how the enlargement process influenced the design of the ENP, see Judith KELLEY, *New Wind in Old Wineskins: Promoting Political Reforms Through the New European Neighbourhood Policy*, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 1, 2005, pp. 29-55.

The first major difference between the ENP and the enlargement process is one which most analysts have immediately seized upon — the absence of a clear perspective for EU membership for the ENP states. In practice, the initial exclusionary discourse has been somewhat softened with the European ENP states still having this perspective left open, if rather distant and indeterminate, though such exclusion remains in place for the Mediterranean partners. But, irrespective of this, the EU's neighbourhood engagement has a significantly different incentive structure to that offered to the Eastern and Central European (ECE) accession countries. EU policies based on "conditionality" have inevitably less power of persuasion and transformation when the clear and concrete incentive of EU membership is simply not on offer. Recent scholarship also confirms that it was this material incentive of EU membership, rather than processes of social learning and socialisation of the EU's "normative" agenda, which was most critical to the transformation in ECE.^[1] Without such a clear material incentive, the powers of influence of the EU on its neighbourhood is inevitably going to be significantly reduced.

But there is a second and less noted implication of this changed incentive structure. It is that the tensions between the EU's strategic-security interests and its "normative ambitions" — its ambitions for regional socioeconomic and political transformation — become more pronounced. It is generally the case that ambitious regional powers continually struggle to reconcile their more narrow strategic interests, most particularly the security of their own citizens, with their broader political and normative ambitions to transform their neighbourhood into their own image. In the case of ECE, there were real concerns and anxieties that the political goal of integration would have a deleterious impact on the internal security of Europe and the prosperity of its citizens. Ultimately, though, the higher-order normative agenda assumed primacy over, and in a sense, sublimated the more strictly security-driven concerns. But, in the case of the ENP countries, where the internal political will for further outward integration is considerably weaker, such a reconciliation of the EU's mix of strategic and normative interests is markedly more difficult. In theory, there is no necessary contradiction between these two sets of interests since, as the ESS notes it is only with "well governed" market-oriented democracies in the neighbourhood that the EU's security interests can ultimately be protected. In practice, though, the EU's strategic and security interests often demand engagement and agreements with existing governments and elites, which can materially undermine the dynamics of economic and political change and reform. And, unlike with the

[1] See Frank SCHIMMELFENNIG and Ulrich SEDELMEIER (eds), *The Europeanization of Central and East Europe* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2005).

ECE, there is no grand narrative — such as the reunification of Europe — to help to reconcile such tensions and contradictions.

A third significant difference is that the collection of states covered by the ENP are considerably more heterogeneous than the new accession states of the EU. They differ in particular in their attitude to the EU itself. Some are clearly reluctant partners, if not directly hostile, like Russia, Belarus and Algeria; there are some who are excluded from consideration by the ENP, such as Libya, Syria and the various secessionist entities, like Abkhazia or Nagorno-Karabakh. There are others who are much more enthusiastic about the ENP such as Morocco, Ukraine, Moldova, Tunisia and Israel. Another category is those who might be seen to be ambivalent or passive such as Egypt or Azerbaijan.^[1] However, whichever state is being considered, even the most enthusiastic, there remains a significant degree of suspicion and scepticism about the intentions of the EU and a need to be convinced that the EU is not seeking to “impose” its preferences on its weaker neighbours. Many of these states, particularly in the Middle East, have a long history of resisting external pressures and intervention. And, in those cases where state elites simply do not want to take up on the EU’s offers of engagement, there are limits to what the EU, or any external actor, can do. The EU, in particular, prides itself on not seeking to “impose” democracy or to enforce its preferences through coercive means. This generally admirable ambition also means that progress cannot be made where willing partners are absent.

The fourth difference between the ENP and the enlargement process is the presence and activities of other external powers. In the case of eastward enlargement, the EU was essentially the sole relevant external actor. The United States willingly devolved responsibility to the EU for the substantive process of economic and political integration, while leading the way on security integration through NATO enlargement. During the 1990s, Russia was both too weak and too geographically distant to have any significant influence, whether positive or negative, on EU enlargement. But in relation to the ENP region, such a strategic vacuum is far less evident. In the Mediterranean, the US is much less willing to devolve responsibility to the EU and actively seeks to preserve its hegemony over the Arab-Israeli peace process and Gulf security in ways which many EU states feel undermine European interests. In the post-Soviet borderlands of the EU, US and European interests are more closely correlated but here there is the growing threat of a more emboldened and authoritarian Russia, which increasingly views the EU’s encroachments as

[1] This categorisation of ENP states is drawn from Michael EMERSON, Gerghana NOUTCHEVA and Nicu POPESCU, *European Neighbourhood Policy Two Years On: Time indeed for an “ENP Plus”*, CEPS Policy Brief, No. 126, March 2007.

undermining and challenging its geopolitical interests. Thus, in both the southern and eastern parts of the ENP region, the EU faces distinct challenges from other significant regional powers which makes the EU's preference for "positive-sum" solutions much less easy to achieve.

The final but arguably most critical difference is that the international security situation has deteriorated significantly from the period of enlargement in the 1990s to the current focus on the neighbourhood in the mid-2000s. The development of the ENP coincided with the terrorist attacks on the US on 9/11, the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the subsequent deep tension and turmoil in the Middle East. During the same period, Russia has made a significant come-back onto the international stage, buoyed by high oil prices, and has increasingly staked its claims to political hegemony over its neighbourhood. In these conditions, the EU faces a more urgent and critical situation and no longer enjoys the relatively benign international conditions for enlargement. As the adoption of the ESS demonstrated, there is no option but that the EU begins to act more strategically.

2. SELLING THE EU BRAND TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

All of the above indicates that the circumstances surrounding the ENP are markedly more difficult and challenging than was the case during the 1990s and the period of negotiations for eastward enlargement. There are now serious competitors to the EU, most notably the US in the Middle East and Russia in the East (and one should also mention increasingly China), who represent differing and often attractive brands in their own right. There is also a broader context where the ENP partners of the EU are considerable less enthused about integration and, in many cases, actively resist any significant EU influence on their domestic economic and political systems. As a consequence, the EU finds itself increasingly forced to act in a more realist manner than the liberal internationalist approach to which it is accustomed. And, all of this is occurring at a time when there is a significant degree of institutional inertia within the EU and a marked reduction in the internal political will for further expansion and engagement beyond the existing borders of the EU.

But while cataloguing this more challenging and difficult environment, it is important to remember the more positive and dynamic areas where the EU brand still remains attractive and maintains a competitive advantage. The EU remains a powerful model for conflict resolution, for the construction of a community based on prosperity, peace and the overcoming and pooling of sovereignty. It is a model which has arguably become even more attractive in the aftermath of the US shift

to a more markedly hard Wilsonian and unilateralist stance based on a strong defence of (US) sovereign autonomy.^[1] In comparison with Russia and China, which also remain committed to a strong doctrine of sovereignty, the EU presents a counter-narrative of the pursuit of prosperity being married with respect for human rights and democracy. Furthermore, in the context of Europe's immediate neighbourhood, the EU has all the advantages of being the economically hegemonic neighbour with an immense internal market which neighbouring countries simply have to penetrate if they are to develop economically. In the global framework set by globalisation, the neighbours of the EU have no real alternative but to seek integration into the EU's larger economy.

The challenge for the EU is, therefore, to accentuate the positive aspects of its "brand" and seek to minimise and ideally overcome the most pervasive and damaging of the negative perceptions of the EU's engagement. Also, it is through focusing practically on the current key "negative" perceptions of the EU that more concrete practical measures, which can hope to overcome such perceptions, can be identified. The following list is a broad-brush attempt to set out what might be considered key "negative" perceptions of the EU and ways in which the EU can respond to this. In part, this analysis follows the excellent analyses already undertaken by the Commission whose assessments of the ENP published in December 2006 and December 2007 make a set of bold recommendations for how the ENP needs to develop and be advanced.^[2] The following recommendations follow very much the spirit of these documents, though also setting out the challenges in perhaps rather bolder and more politically sensitive terms:

- **Trade.** Clearly, one of the most pervasive "negative" perceptions of the EU is that it is open to trade in all areas except those where the partner countries have the greatest competitive advantage, such as agriculture for the Mediterranean and steel for Ukraine. There are clearly limits to what can be done here since these issues encroach upon some of the most sensitive internal domestic political constituencies within the EU. However, it is important for the Commission continually to chip away at these protectionist measures so as to make its economic engagement with neighbouring countries more attractive. Recent positive moves in this regard include expanding free trade

[1] For an interesting comparison between US and European conceptions of sovereignty and their emulative attraction, see Robert KEOHANE, *Ironies of Sovereignty: the European Union and the United States*, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 4, 2002, pp. 743-65.

[2] European Commission, Communication on Strengthening the European neighbourhood Policy, COM(2006)726 Final, 4 December 2006; European Commission, Communication on a Strong Neighbourhood Policy, COM(2007) 774 Final, 5 December 2007.

with the Mediterranean countries to agriculture and services. In addition, the concept of “deep and comprehensive free trade” is a welcome development, highlighting ways in which the EU is seeking to develop more intensive trade relations which go beyond “classical” free trade agreements and seek to overcome multiple “non-tariff” barriers to trade. In particular, setting out what regulatory reforms and degrees of convergence with EU norms and standards are required to facilitate economic engagement with the EU needs to be better articulated. It clearly does not make sense to demand conformity with the full *acquis* for partners without a membership perspective, but it remains unclear what parts of the *acquis* would maximise economic integration without imposing excessive regulatory burdens. The negotiations for an “enhanced agreement” with Ukraine should be utilised as a template for what a more intensive and “deep” economic relationship involves in practice. Similar work on a common template should also be involved in agreeing on an “advanced” agreement with Morocco.

- **Mobility.** There is probably nothing which alienates the general population of the neighbourhood countries more than excessive bureaucratic delay and unnecessary denial of legal short-term movement into EU countries. Visa facilitation is a policy which has an enormous resonance, as recognised in the Commission reports on the ENP. Particularly in the southern Mediterranean countries, where there remains fast demographic growth, it is important that the prospect of legal migration into the EU should also be included so as to avoid the alienation and radicalisation of unemployed youth cohorts within these countries and excessive pressure on illegal immigration which this inevitably causes. The EU, if not all the member states, has made significant intellectual progress here and there is now far greater recognition that these issues need to be treated in a holistic manner, which incorporates the full range of development, human rights, economic and security perspectives.^[1] This is a distinct improvement on the EU-focused security agenda which dominated discussion about migration in the immediate post-9/11 period. The current idea promoted by the EU of developing pilot mobility partnerships which would address the co-management of migration flows in all their various forms is a good indication of this more advanced way of thinking about migration.^[2]

[1] For a fuller discussion of the need for such a holistic approach, see Roland DANNREUTHER, *International Security: The Contemporary Agenda* (Cambridge, Polity, 2007), ch. 6.

[2] European Commission, Communication on Circular Migration and Mobility Partnerships, COM(2007)248 Final, 16 May 2007.

- **Socialisation.** All clubs suffer from the potential sense of exclusion of those denied hope of membership. But, it makes a difference if the perception is that the benefits of the club are only to be enjoyed by the members of that club and that, like with Gentleman's Clubs in London, non-members are both rigorously excluded and somehow inferior. It is clearly vital for the EU to demonstrate as far as possible that the club is an open and inclusive one even for those without a perspective of membership. The EU has again made the right moves in this direction, opening up the prospect of membership of various agencies and programmes for ENP partners, and also permitting a greater number of scholarships to be offered to students in ENP countries. The number of scholarships still remains fairly small (1,000 for all the ENP countries) and consideration should be given to expanding this. If there is one way to change negative perceptions of Europe, and to socialise a new generation in European norms and values, experience as a student in European countries is probably the most cost-effective long-term strategy. It is, indeed, a classic strategy of ambitious powers who wish to exert influence beyond their immediate borders. Also, generosity in this area helps to shift attention away from the tendency of the EU to spend money on technical assistance programmes which enrich EU-based consultants rather than individuals in the partner countries themselves.
- **Holistic foreign policy engagement.** Another common negative perception and criticism of the EU is that it adopts a "hub-and-spoke" approach to its neighbouring countries, which perpetuates asymmetries of power and undermines sub-regional integration. To a certain extent, the ENP celebrates such a "hub-and-spoke" approach, forcefully defending the virtues of the principle of differentiation within the ENP, where those countries which most strongly want to integrate with the EU are permitted to do so without being pulled back by their more laggard colleagues. The EU is, as a consequence, concentrating its current ENP efforts on the willing and enthusiastic, like Ukraine, Morocco and Israel. However, the EU is also aware of the limits of such bilateralism and of the need to ensure that developments in the broader regional and international context are not ignored. One dimension of this more regionalist agenda involves encouraging cross-cutting sub-regional developments, such as the Black Sea Synergy. Another is in identifying common sectoral areas, such as transport, energy and climate change, where transnational interdependence exists and where the EU is uniquely placed to facilitate mutually advantageous cooperation and institutionalisation. However, a further aspect of this is the EU itself being able to move beyond a compartmentalised foreign policy and project its interests more holistically.

The concept of the “neighbours of neighbours” — the interconnections between the ENP with the Gulf region and Central Asia and Africa — highlights the need to locate the ENP in a broader strategic context. In some ways, the ESS does do this but could benefit now from a more precise set of regional specifications.

- **Strategic foreign policy.** A connected negative image about the EU as a foreign policy actor is its reputation as a “paper tiger” which is constitutionally unable, for example, to challenge US policies in the Middle East or to stand up effectively to Russian threats. Admittedly, it is not likely that the EU, given that it is constituted from 27 sovereign independent states with multiple foreign policy agendas, is going to be transformed overnight into a coherent and unified international actor. But particularly in the neighbourhood region, there are increasingly foreign policy areas where policy subordination to other major external powers is not necessarily in the EU’s best interest. Two in particular are likely to continue to rear their head. The first is the question of whether any progress can be made in promoting economic and political change in the Middle East without direct engagement with Islamist opposition movements, even if their democratic credentials are questionable. The EU has not yet grasped this nettle, with its meek submission to follow the US in refusing to recognise the Hamas government in Palestine being widely criticised in European foreign policy circles. At the other end of the neighbourhood, the increasing recognition that the EU will need to become more involved in resolving some of the “frozen conflicts” — such as Transnistria, South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Nagorno-Karabakh — will potentially lead to a more abrasive and difficult relationship with Russia. At some point, the EU might need to make a decision to side more openly with the opposition groups to neo-imperial Russian expansion, which will require a shift in strategic orientation. Both these areas of Islamist oppositions and Russian neo-imperialism might enforce the EU to adopt a more strategic and interest-defined foreign policy.

3. CONCLUSION

“Empire by integration” is one rather apt description of the ways in which the United States engaged with and influenced the political and economic developments in post-World War II Europe.^[1] Such a description is also appropriate for

[1] Geir LUNDESTAD, *“Empire” by Integration: the United States and European Integration, 1945-1997* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998).

the challenges facing the European Union as it seeks to protect its interests and extend its influence into the regions neighbouring its immediate borders. The EU is not, as the US in Europe, engaged in traditional empire-building, and rightly prides itself on its commitment to the principles of non-coercion and consent. But, this does not mean that the EU should be indifferent to the socio-economic and political conditions on its borders nor that it should not seek the best and most appropriate ways to promote change in a positive direction which conforms not only with European interests but also with European norms and values. It is this ambition to expand Europe's influence and power through integration rather than imposition which is at the heart of the ENP. It is a policy which seeks to transform "hearts and minds", to use a phrase more normally associated with counter-terrorism strategy.

The internal EU and the broader international circumstances in which the ENP has been forged have certainly not been propitious. The EU is suffering from institutional malaise and the broader security situation has significantly deteriorated since the events of 9/11. In this context, the ENP can look a rather limp and ineffective tool for the regional tasks set for it. This article argues that it is certainly a mistake to exaggerate the potential for the ENP and, in particular, to judge it by the standards of eastward enlargement into ECE. But, it is also a mistake to assume too negative and pessimistic a view, which fails to recognise the strengths of the EU as a "brand" and as an actor promoting influence beyond its borders. It can also lead to a certain apathy and failure to undertake those seemingly small but practical reforms which can help to promote and strengthen the ENP. Clearly, the goal of the transformation of Europe's neighbourhood is a difficult and long-term ambition but the ENP has already proved to be a significant tool in promoting stability and prosperity in the EU's neighbourhood. Taking seriously the next steps to improve and enhance the ENP will ensure that its effectiveness will continue into the future.

REGIONAL LEADERS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: A WALK THROUGH THE ISSUES

*Alyson JK Bailes**

The topic of regional leadership would have been much easier to discuss in the nineteenth or even the early twentieth century. It would have been natural at that time to assume immediately that a “leader” could only be a nation-State, and specifically the largest State in any given region; and that a region with more than one strong State was like to witness a contest, perhaps a violent one, for leadership between them. That was of course the pattern of Europe’s own history for many centuries, while Europe’s rival leaders — Spain, Britain, France, Germany — increasingly went outside their own continent to seek competitive advantages, by commandeering resources from other continents, collecting allies or actually seizing territory there.

One thing that was true then is still true now, namely that what is happening about leadership in anyone region matters very much for other regions. Even if the imperial phenomenon of one continent owning bits of others has passed away, the phenomenon of countries reaching out for other kinds of advantages or taking actions in remote locations to demonstrate their power is still very much with us, and can draw upon more varied means than before. This provides the simplest answer to why there is still need for study and discussion about regional leadership. It is far from just a theoretical topic, because the way any given region is led affects other regions in very concrete ways in real life, and vice versa, while globalization is making these influences and interdependencies ever more important for the security and prosperity of mankind.

Most of this text provides the equivalent of a discursive stroll through the issues that arise from these propositions, based on a personal and empirical perspective rather than any established theoretical approach. First, however, it is worth pausing a moment on the question of whether the leading States of each region should still be defined as the largest States and/or the States that have greatest influence on how the region is organized. There are, arguably, some ways of thinking and talking about world affairs that would give the option of judging and ranking countries on quite a different basis. In everyday parlance, it is not unusual to find a certain

* University of Iceland. This text is based on a lecture originally delivered on 7 July 2008 to the summer school of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für auswärtige Politik (DGAP) in Berlin.

State being mentioned (regardless of size) as a “leader” in democracy for its region; or in conflict resolution, sustainable development, economic and technological innovation, or “cutting-edge” approaches to some emerging issue like climate change. Cannot a country be a leader simply by reaching out from its continent to engage cooperatively in world affairs, while its neighbours stay more backward or closed or hostile? If any of these alternative usages has merit, it is clear that countries exercising these kinds of leadership are usually not the biggest powers of their regions but on the contrary, may be more flexible, cooperative and open to change precisely because they are smaller and less rigidly bound to the status quo.^[1] A fair example in many of the fields so far mentioned would be the role of Dubai in the Gulf region, or of Singapore or Costa Rica in their respective areas. Africa offers the case of a whole continent where size and strategic position alone have rarely determined which States the world will identify as leaders and key partners, but where such choices seem strongly influenced by levels of development, governance, and something that can only be called ethical authority as well.

This important complication will be revisited at the end of this article. Most of the discussion will be based on the more traditional or natural way of looking at leadership, and will attempt to develop a broad comparative framework for thinking about two sets of issues: the role and impact of leaders within their regions, and relations among regional leaders on the global stage. The linkage and complementarity between these two aspects should be clear.

1. LEADERSHIP WITHIN REGIONS

Looking first at conditions within regions, two sets of variables need to be distinguished: what may be called the power pattern (i.e. the inter-State and trans-State dynamics) that determines leadership, and the question of how far the region is institutionalized — in the sense of some or all of its States being linked through formal organizational structures that either belong to the region or are a sub-set of some larger group. Theories of regionalization in the political and security sphere have realized for a long time that there is no simple match between high institutionalization and a happy and united region: for instance, in the extreme case a region can consist of two highly organized blocs of enemies, like Europe in the

[1] This argument has been fully developed already by advocates of the power and usefulness of “small States” in the international system. The approach in this passage overlaps with theirs, but differs in that the kind of “leadership” discussed here could also be wielded by medium-sized States or quite large ones which at the same time try to avoid hegemonic approaches (South Africa?).

Cold War.^[1] Conversely, the Nordic group of States have maintained a mainly “de-securitized” form of cooperation in modern times partly because they do not experience enough problems with each other to create a need for stronger institutional disciplines. What should be interesting from a 21st century perspective is to look at a *range* of ways in which inter-State power patterns and institutions can be co-related in practice, and try to see which combinations tend towards minimizing security problems — both for the region itself and the world — and which combinations merely reflect the problems, or make them worse.

The intersection of these issues creates a Rubik’s cube that could be taken apart in several ways. Here, four main scenarios will be offered that move (roughly speaking) from the least degree of regional unity towards greatest regional unity.

The first or weakest scenario is where a region has no clear leader, or leaders shift too fast because of their different, and probably limited, strengths in different dimensions. An additional assumption is that no outside power or institution has felt a need to impose greater order on the region for its own purposes; possibly outsiders are tempted to divide and rule or back different sets of proxies against each other, which obviously makes local institutionalization harder. In such a region there will either be no formal institutions; or local States with their outside backers will proclaim competing local structural initiatives for purposes of self-interest and self-advertisement, most of them never getting beyond the drawing board or surviving only in a shadowy fashion on paper. In real life there is hardly any part of the world where conditions are quite so clear-cut, but much of the description applies to the Middle East or the Arab world more largely — where, perhaps, part of the problem is that the building blocks of States themselves have in some cases never been fully formed or demarcated or modernized due to the colonial legacy, Islamic tradition, border disputes and so forth. The scenario is also not a bad fit for Central Asia considered in its own right, but there important changes have been brought by outsiders drawing the region within organizational systems that have their main power base elsewhere, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization or NATO’s Partnership for Peace.

Of course, the Middle East also suffers from having some more or less permanent candidates for leadership who detest each other, and this provides a bridge to the next scenario where there are two or more clear potential leaders but none of them

[1] This point and much of the earlier work underlying this essay will be found in BAILES, A.J.K. and COTTEY, A., *Regional security cooperation in the twenty-first century*, chapter 4 in *SIPRI Yearbook 2006: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (OUP, London, 2006). However, the methodology for regional comparisons proposed in that text is only partly drawn on in the present study, which is less specifically focused on security issues.

enjoys clear dominance. In terms of organization and security this multi-leader situation can develop in two quite different directions. In Western Europe since World War Two it has led to the world's tightest model of regional integration, operating through different institutions both in the military and civilian spheres of policy. It is of course notorious that the region's 3-5 largest States still wrestle for group leadership and "ownership" *within* the EU and the European part of NATO; also that the system leaves many loopholes for these larger Europeans to follow their own national paths on strategic issues involving the outside world. Even so, Europe's integrative solution is strong enough to make it worth reflecting on the unique conditions that brought it about: the fact that the alternative leaders longed for a solution to avoid fighting each other ever again, that a strong ally was ready to back them (the USA), and that they were driven together by a strong common enemy to the East. Now that NATO and the EU have lasted long enough to deeply transform habits of leadership, however, they have shown themselves able even without the original threats and encouragement to go on developing new forms of collective power — and to transform Central Europe's traditional leadership patterns as well in the process. This story fits South East Asia and ASEAN, *mutatis mutandis*, almost as well as it does Europe, while Latin America has come at least some of the way along this road.

The other and more traditional result of a multi-leader model, however, is that organization-building is blocked altogether or takes the form of two opposing camps, in which both local and external States may be implicated. External influence may be critical for stability if it blocks the strongest of the rivals from simply dominating or resolving the question by war. The South Asian situation may be analysed in those terms, while noting that the obstacles to that sub-continent gaining a strong local organization include not only the India-Pakistan confrontation but the distrust most of the small neighbours feel for India. An even larger case fitting this scenario better than any other is the story of East Asia - or the Asia-Pacific zone more widely — up to the present, where a kind of mutually blocking leadership contest has been waged both between China and the USA for the wider region, and China, Japan and in some senses Australia for the Western side of the Pacific. All these powers do work through the organization APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) for some shared goals e.g. on trade and transnational threats, and most of them also have the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) as an arena to talk directly about security. Both these larger frameworks, however, might better be classified as analogues to the Euro-Atlantic area's Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe — which originally, and even today, has functioned as a framework for managing difference — rather than organizations on their way to becoming like-minded strategic communities. The closest approach so far to the latter model has

been the six-party talks framework set up by China to find a peaceful solution for North Korea's nuclear challenge, and many people have speculated whether this might be the seed of a more regionalized North-East Asia. However desirable that might be, on sober reflection North Korea is probably too limited a threat to have a wider and permanent regionalizing effect on its neighbours in the way that the Soviet bloc did for Western Europe after 1945; and while the six-party device has resolved China-US differences rather well in its own field of action, it has done little if anything to reduce Chinese-Japanese tensions.

The third model is one where a region has one State more powerful than the others and a regional grouping is built up by its neighbours without it, to balance its power — very often with the encouragement and support of a rival large power from outside. This kind of structure was more common in the past than today and there are few convincing examples in the modern world. ASEAN certainly has the peaceful balancing of China as one aim but it seeks balance in its own members' relations with China, rather than for the whole East Asian region, and it has enjoyed some success partly because it has avoided becoming the tool of any wider American or Japanese game. The four post-Soviet States in the GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova) group seek to balance Russia and especially to limit its strategic interference in their affairs, with clear US encouragement, but their common front has in practice broken down every time one of their members had a real showdown with Russia — partly because each State has different strategic and economic factors at stake. Arguably, GUAM also shows that groups of States who have immature democracies and are still led in a very top-down way find it hard to grow deep roots and achieve real integration because they remain too “Westphalian”, with little wider social or even business involvement.^[1] Despite these problems, it has been a recurring pattern in US policy for Washington to try to create such “leader-balancing” regional groups against the countries it sees as its own main rivals, while the instinct of Europeans and the stated policy of the European Union is more to aim for inclusive regional solutions where the largest power and others can coexist within a single conflict-reducing or conflict-sublimating framework. To consider which approach is better-based it is necessary to consider what actually happens in the last of the four categories, which may be defined as a “leader-led” region.

In this kind of region, the largest power neither has any State rivals nor any meaningful grouping of the other States lined up against it. In the basic Westphalian version

[1] For more on GUAM and neighbouring groups see BAILES, A.J.K., BARANOVSKY, V., and DUNAY, P., *Regional security cooperation in the former Soviet area*, chapter 4 in *SIPRI Yearbook 2007: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (OUP, London 2007).

of this scenario the leader leads without an explicit organizational framework — or with a supposed framework as a flimsy cover for power relations — because this allows it to handle each neighbour separately with full benefit of its asymmetrical advantages, and even to play different neighbours off against each other. This may look like a good situation strategically for the top dog, but it often means that potential economic benefits are reduced and tensions are multiplied because all smaller States are likely to be resentful and natural networking among them leading to the exploitation of comparative economic advantages is blocked. The Communist economic organization CMEA or COMECON was a prime example of this,^[1] and relations within South Asia still have some of the same characteristics today including abnormally low levels of bilateral trade between various sets of neighbours. In modern conditions, however, it is usual for the leading power to create some more substantial and more genuinely transformative region-wide structure, not least because regionalization has become such a widely recognized norm and it sees the need for “its” region to exploit the same device *i.a.* to help it hold its own in global processes like trade talks. This would explain how the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) arose, and also why Russia has persisted — despite frequent breakdowns and limited successes — in trying to give a precise multilateral form to its relations with at least the more friendly of its post-Soviet neighbours.

What is interesting about the scenario of a region that is both leader-led and institutionalized, is that it can produce a wide variety of results in terms of efficiency, legitimacy and real stability. All these good things are likely to be more present when the degree of institutionalization goes far enough to place some restraint on the leading State’s exercise of power, making its own behaviour more rule-based and giving the other States a better chance to have their views heard individually and collectively than under the old “law of the jungle”. If these features seem to involve some sacrifice by the leading power, they may also serve its interests by reducing the risks of revolt and betrayal by neighbours, mobilizing the more limited but unique strengths of the small States and giving the region a stronger united face to the outside world. An excellent example of such success would be the NATO of Cold War times, where the USA was clearly the strongest and “indispensable” power but where Alliance policies were often actually tilted towards the interests of some of the smaller members, notably Germany.^[2] This model worked not least because the USA was truly dependent on the European members to protect its own

[1] For instance, all its smaller members’ currencies had exchange rates with the ruble that did not make them similarly convertible with each other, or allow them to be traded normally on international exchanges.

[2] This point was true both of NATO’s “forward defence” and its “flexible response” policies, both of which strove to avoid having to base warfighting concepts on some surrender of German territory.

front-line interests against the Soviet bloc, and it is easy to hypothesize that NATO has got into greater difficulties since 1990 partly because Washington no longer sees such vital interests for itself in Europe, and partly because the European bloc of members has solidified as a kind of rival leader within the structure.

If other examples are required in the modern world, it is interesting to note that most of the sub-regional groups of Africa (ECOWAS, SAADC, IGAD) are built around one strong State such as Nigeria in the West and South Africa in the South, but that they have matured quite well into more balanced, rule-based communities which enjoy considerable outside legitimacy especially as local security providers. The really intriguing case is that of Russia with its present-day Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which is clearly Russia-dominated but whose smaller members so far seem quite satisfied because they have a genuine interest in Russia's strategic protection. Interestingly, when Russia wants to betray their interests it does so not by changing the group rules but by acting bilaterally outside the framework, including when it wants to do special deals with China or with the West. The general conclusion that emerges is simple and perhaps obvious: that organized groups produce more security and satisfaction when the organization itself has a real transformative and constraining influence, above all on its largest member or members.

2. RELATIONS AMONG REGIONS AND THEIR LEADERS

For lack of space, a briefer treatment must be given to the different ways these different kinds of groupings can interact. In pure theoretical terms four models may be distinguished also here, proceeding from maximum security and legitimacy towards the minimum.

First is the ideal model of global governance where groups cooperate according to their various strengths and responsibilities to achieve equitable global regulation and rational distribution of resources. In institutional terms this would mean that different regions should have equally effective and representative organizations able to work together under common rules at the United Nations, but also in the world financial and trade institutions. This could also be described as a group leadership of global affairs and group ownership of the global commons.

The second model would still involve non-zero-sum cooperation among regions but, perhaps more realistically, would rest on relationships between a mixed bag of single large powers and regions that have become regionalized enough to speak with a collective voice. The results of agreements among these diverse leaders would

be carried through in the global institutions but the real deals might be made in frameworks with more limited participation determined by more old-fashioned strategic clout, like today's G8 or some more inclusive development of it.

In the third model, perhaps the closest to today's reality, this group of national and organizational leaders would communicate and cooperate for some purposes, but work separately, competitively and perhaps even in a hostile zero-sum way for other purposes, such as regional armament or the protection of special economic interests. Such a system may manage to avoid large conflicts but has obvious drawbacks such as waste of money on mutual defence, inefficient distribution of resources generally and a tendency to drive the weakest players towards the wall. It is also more likely under such a model that leading States or regions with a zero-sum world view will try to intervene in other regions, perhaps even distant ones, to knock out dangers that they see emerging there or to subordinate that whole region in some way to their own interests — a kind of behaviour that carries an echo of pre-modern competing empires but now exploits all kinds of new tricks and technologies. At present the USA is the most obvious example of such behaviour and it may be that its recent inter-regional adventures have reflected not just its relative strength, but also the fact that it has such a strong strategic grip on its own regional backyard. Washington need hardly fear its rivals stirring up either Canada or Mexico against it, while President Putin's occasional hints about using Cuba again as a thorn in the American side have not (yet) needed to be taken seriously.

The fourth model is the kind of multipolarity that gives multipolarity a bad name especially among US thinkers: namely a war of "all against all" where the regions that are most hegemonic internally and most old-fashioned in their strategic outlook are free to play their cards in the most ruthless way, undermining the strengths of more advanced and legitimate players and, of course, ensuring a very bad outlook again for smaller States and weaker regions everywhere. This vision might be crystallized by imagining how things would look if China at its present state of political and strategic development was to following the same model of cross-regional intervention that the US has recently used.

This categorization is, of course, still too simple because the way the system works can resemble one model on certain issues — for instance genuine global cooperation against health hazards or to outlaw chemical weapons — and one of the more competitive models for certain other purposes where national and regional interests are more divergent, such as control of nuclear technology or agricultural trade. In a rough way the UN's successes and failures respectively would reflect areas of global governance where a (so to speak) "higher" model is emerging, on the one

hand, and areas where the model is tilted more towards adversarial multipolarity, on the other.

3. WHAT CONCLUSIONS?

It is clear, at least theoretically speaking, that — just as more genuine multilateralism within regions moderates the power of old-style leaders — the conversion of a greater number of regions to such organizational approaches would tilt the global odds towards the more cooperative models of inter-regional relations. Tough negotiations would still be needed, especially on economic issues where every region would be able to define and defend its collective interests more strongly than at present, but it would be far less likely that any player would try to resolve the differences by unilateral force and dirty tricks, if only because multilateral organizations find it very hard to agree on using such methods. To those who say that a world of such restrained organizations would be too soft and muddled to deal with the real bad guys such as rogue States and terrorists, it may be retorted that on the contrary, it would deprive such people of their present national supporters and leave them nowhere to hide from global norms enforced with the strength of 99% of the world's nations behind them.

If that vision appeals, as it probably does to most Europeans, how could Europeans themselves tilt the odds in favour of its development? First, by not giving up on those regional institutional experiments that already exist, by improving the sharing of lessons and mutual support among all legitimate groups, by encouraging non-legitimate ones to move in more legitimate directions and by looking for chances to start new group experiments. Second and last, coming back to a point made at the start: the chances for group cooperation and legitimate, restrained leadership ought to be greater if it is recognized that leadership does not exist only in one dimension or depend upon any one kind of strength, and least of all exclusively upon military power. The countries with the brilliant ideas, the clean hands or the miracles of self-transformation are also truly world leaders whatever their size; and the regions that can best harness such nations' strengths within pluralistic frameworks will surely improve their chances of winning the longer race for building both a safer region and a better world.

THE EU, CHINA AND AFRICA: GLOBAL GOVERNANCE THROUGH FUNCTIONAL MULTILATERALISM

Uwe WISSENBACH*

1. INTRODUCTION

Since 2006, China's Africa policy has become a critical issue in the China-EU dialogue.^[1] A central objective of the EU development agenda is to achieve good governance in African States in order to eradicate poverty, reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and promote sustainable development. China has come under pressure to rally to this agenda as well, which would require a profound adaptation of China's economic assistance policy. Indeed, critics focus on China's "unethical" support for "rogue" or "pariah" States such as Sudan or Zimbabwe culminating in the "genocide Olympics" campaign. China's unconditional aid is said to counter international efforts to persuade African governments to increase transparency, public accountability and financial management and good governance in general. China has been accused of being a "free rider", of threatening Western debt relief efforts and debt sustainability. China stands accused of starting a "new scramble for Africa's resources". Finally, Chinese migration into Africa threatening local employment and even social cohesion in the long run has raised concerns.^[2]

While this seems a problematic starting point for cooperation, common objectives exist such as reducing poverty, promoting economic growth and achieving the MDGs. The Chinese President, building on his concept of a harmonious world subscribed to this international agenda in a speech at the 2005 World Summit.

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[1] The issue was first raised by the European Commission in its 2006 policy paper on China (European Commission, *EU-China: Closer Partners, growing responsibilities*, COM (2006) 632 final) after initial talks in 2005 and at the 9th EU-China Summit. On 15 June 2007 the first meeting between the EU and China's Africa Directors took place in Beijing to follow up on the summit statement.

[2] While this study is not about reviewing these points of criticism in detail, we conclude from analysis of the literature and primary sources of information, that to quite an extent this criticism is overstated and needs to be much more nuanced. For many claims there is often a lack of more than anecdotal evidence or a selection of comments or facts which fit into the desired picture. In other cases political statements are confounded with analysis. This is particularly problematic when China's "success" in Africa is extrapolated to predict the inevitable erosion of European influence or the failure of a Western development approach or the other way around, when China's problems are extrapolated to predict its imminent failure.

There is a deeper layer of issues which affect the debate about the objectives of development policy in Europe's foreign relations overall — a debate which pits the pro-poor policy faction against the advocates of development as one of the tools to achieve Europe's strategic interests abroad.^[1] The European Security Strategy of 2003 and the European Consensus on Development of 2005 stress that security and development are complementary agendas and that neither is subordinate to the other. China's policy in Africa has helped to bring these issues to the fore as it promotes development without making the nexus between security, good governance, human rights and development. Thus, European conditionality, whether based on intrusion or incentives faces a dilemma. The EU needs to persuade its strategic partners that its holistic approach pays dividends and needs to be pursued as a key element of an effective multilateral world order. The African Union for its part needs to make sure that its Member States adhere and implement its own good governance and human rights agenda, as enshrined in the AU Constitutional Act.

The debate in Africa has focused on whether Africa can gain from the Chinese engagement, whatever China's intentions might be, whether African societies at large can benefit from China's engagement in terms of development given that some groups lose out (textile industry, workers, small traders) and whether the overwhelmingly positive view of China by African leaders is in line with African societies' wider interests or a manifestation of "elite" politics and corruption. More broadly in the development community as well as in China itself there is the question whether China's development model can be applied in Africa. Africans need to formulate a strategic consensus in the AU framework and of course nationally in order to be in the driving seat of the debate. A potential African consensus needs to be built on solid foundations, not on a temporary commodity boom. The AUC has laid the groundwork by creating a task force on this topic.^[2] This task force recommends a systematic assessment, effective and efficient use of Africa's natural resources with a view to pursuing the continent's industrialization process and proposes initiatives in the context of the emerging partnership framework to: enhance economic cooperation, trade and improved market access for Africa's products; boost agricultural productivity; strengthen Africa's services and private sectors; develop Africa's human resources, knowledge generation, sharing and application and accelerate the development of infrastructure.

[1] 2007 OECD DAC, *European Community. Peer review* (Paris, OEDC, 2007) <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/57/6/38965119.pdf> and MAYALL, James, *The Shadow of Empire: The EU and the Former Colonial World*, in HILL, Christopher and SMITH, Michael (ed.), *International Relations and the European Union* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 292-316.

[2] AUC (2006) African Union Commission, *Meeting of the task force on Africa's partnership with emerging powers: China, India and Brazil. Report* (Addis Ababa, AUC, September 2006).

The challenge ahead is to build on the positive effects of the EU's and China's engagement and use their willingness to cooperate on the basis of similar objectives for growth and development in Africa in order to ultimately construct a common set of concepts and "rules of engagement" in Africa. These rules need to promote sustainable peace based on an emerging African security community (in Karl Deutsch's sense) and the AU/NEPAD principles for governance and development in Africa. However, changes in attitudes, path-dependent policies or conditionality will not happen overnight.

The EU has concluded that effective cooperation between the EU and China in taking up common responsibilities is central to the shaping of international affairs and global governance in the future. The European Commission in 2006 for the first time focused on jointly addressing global challenges including climate change, development policy and Africa.^[1] At the 9th EU-China summit, China somewhat hesitatingly agreed to a dialogue with the EU on Africa's peace, stability and sustainable development.^[2] Hence, the EU's and China's dialogue and cooperation on African development can be regarded as a test-case for the EU-China strategic partnership, for the EU's strategy to promote global security and governance through effective multilateralism, for China's ambition to be a responsible (great) power, but also for Africa's development and position in the world. Thus, clearly, Africa's development has become an issue not merely for aid specialists or economists, but also for International Relations scholars.

2. EU-CHINA-AFRICA RELATIONS SEEN THROUGH AN IR LENS: THE NEED FOR A NEW PARADIGM

This essay conceptualises this emerging triangular relationship from an International Relations point of view and beyond the prevailing empirical — if not anecdotal — approach to the question of China's engagement in Africa. It complements the analysis focused on the economics of the China-Africa relationship which (cautiously) concludes that through China's trade and investment, African countries have started to seize opportunities for integration into the global economy and value-chains, albeit at the vulnerable level of suppliers of raw materials. These studies also claim a substantial contribution to growth rates in Africa by the Asian

[1] *EU-China: Closer Partners, Growing Responsibilities*, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, COM (2006) 632 final, 24.10.2006.

[2] Council of the European Union, *Joint Statement of the 9th EU-China Summit*, Brussels 11 December 2006, 12642/06

partners.^[1] Others have focused on China's own motives and interests and how they differ from those of "the West".^[2]

To what extent does the prevalent mode of "neo-realism" in IR — notably the balance of power approach — suffice to analyse China's "interest driven", "mercantilist", "neo-colonial" approach to Africa? To what extent are we witnessing a more global social construction of reality? For example why are Western perceptions of China in Africa so different from those of China's engagement in Asia a decade ago? Finally, referring to the European Security Strategy (ESS) I examine how the EU, China and Africa could construct a new and effective approach to multilateralism, conceptualising a new approach to functionalism (functional multilateralism) as a device to take account of the different theoretical perspectives of this phenomenon which has the potential to profoundly modify the future world order.^[3]

Neither the EU's nor Africa's nor China's international relations have been looked at from this triangular perspective, while there is literature on the EU's regional diplomacy^[4] or bilateral relations and some literature on China's nascent multilateral diplomacy in the context of research on its changing diplomacy under the "peaceful rise paradigm".^[5] What kind of actor is China in Africa and how has its Africa policy affected its foreign policy doctrine? Descriptions oscillate between a hard-nosed, neo-colonial giant pursuing its national interests and that of China as

[1] KAPLINSKY, R., MCCORMICK, D. and MORRIS, M., *The impact of China on Sub-Saharan Africa*, April 2006. (http://www.ids.ac.uk/UserFiles/File/globalisation_team/asian_driver_docs/DFIDAgendaPaper06.pdf); BROADMAN, Harry, *Africa's Silk Road China's and India's new economic frontier* (Washington, World Bank, 2006); GOLDSTEIN, A. et al., *The rise of China and India: What's in it for Africa?* (Paris, OECD, 2006).

[2] KURLANTZIK, Joshua, *Beijing's Safari — China's move into Africa and its implications for aid, development and governance*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Policy Outlook No. 29, November 2006; BATES, Gill, HUANG, Chin-hao, MORRISON, Stephen J., *China's expanding role in Africa. Implications for the United States*, CSIS Report, January 2007; NAIM, Moisés, *Rogue Aid*, *Foreign Policy*, No. 159, March/April 2007.

[3] Telò referring to the European Commission's 2001 White Paper on governance argues for a new concept of global governance in which the EU itself as a system of multilevel governance has to integrate. He proposes three approaches: 1) accept the crisis of classical multilateralism and a hierarchy of US-led alliance politics; 2) stick to the classical multilateralism through its own force of inertia; 3) in cooperation with the US, but especially other actors such as Japan, China, India and others, initiate a profound reform of multilateral organisations. For Telò new forms of multilateralism have to overcome State-centred approaches and include the transnational economic, commercial and cultural dynamics of globalisation. The concept of functional multilateralism advocated in this study proposes a concept taking up Telò's third option (TELÒ, Mario, *L'interdépendance entre la gouvernance européenne et la gouvernance globale*, *The European Union Review*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 2002, pp. 7-26).

[4] ALECU DE FLERS, Nicole and REGELSBERGER, Elfriede, *The EU and Inter-regional Cooperation*, in HILL, Christopher and SMITH, Michael (ed.), *International Relations and the European Union* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 317-342.

[5] BERSICK, Sebastian, STOKHOF, Wim; VAN DER VELDE, Paul (eds), *Multiregionalism and multilateralism. Asian-European relations in a global context* (Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2006); GODEMENT, Francois, *Neither Hegemon nor soft power: China's rise at the gates of the West*, in ZABOROWSKI, M. (ed.), *Facing China's Rise: Guidelines for an EU Strategy*, Chaillot Paper No. 94, 2006; PANG, Zhongying, *Ping Zhong Ou "zhanlue huoban guanxi"*, *Guoji wenti luntan*, No. 46, 2007, pp. 10-26; SHAMBAUGH, David, *The New Strategic Triangle: U.S. and European Reactions to China's Rise*, *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 3, Summer 2005, pp. 7-25; YUAN, Peng, *A Harmonious World and China's New Diplomacy*, *Contemporary International Relations*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 2007, p. 12.

an attractive soft power actor. Which are its attractions, which are its weaknesses? Is China in Africa because it is strong or because it is weak? What are the EU's strengths and weaknesses in its response to the changes in the global environment that unfold in the continent to its South? What does the South-South relationship mean for the emerging "post-post Cold War" world order? This essay cannot answer all these questions, but it provides a framework of analysis and concepts to discuss the evolution of policy. A key point made in this study is the importance of perceptions and social learning for explaining the criticism of China's engagement in Africa and China's response to it.

2.1. Assumptions

2.1.1. The EU

The EU's role in the world is now no longer a matter of "if" it plays a role and "if" it is a subject of international relations, but rather how it interacts with the world and with which objectives.^[1] The institutional aspects of EU external relations are well researched. EU positions, decisions and actions in the world are produced as the result of often complex interactions in a multi-level system and produces dynamic, not always predictable results. Member States have their own diplomacy but carry it out more and more in an EU framework.^[2] For instance, the "federating" role of the European Commission in development policy was recently emphasised by the OECD DAC.^[3] However, the EU is not yet a unitary and effective global *power*. It can fairly be assumed that other countries often do not sufficiently understand the EU and sometimes mistake Member States' policy for that of the EU. The EU has emerged as a security actor in Africa through its support to the African Peace Facility, military and civilian ESDP missions and support to security sector reform or demobilisation efforts in several countries. The EU (and the UNSC) served as a blueprint for the institutional set-up of the AU. The EU collectively provides more than 55% of ODA to Africa.

I believe that no one IR theory is in itself sufficient to explain the EU's role in the world and that for the particular case under study this is all the more true. I propose to add a new approach to describe the evolution of the EU's effective

[1] HILL, Christopher and SMITH, Michael (ed.), *International Relations and the European Union* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005), chapter 18.

[2] HILL and SMITH, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

[3] OECD DAC, *European Community. Peer review* (Paris, OEDC, 2007) <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/57/6/38965119.pdf>.

multilateralism, which I call functional multilateralism.^[1] It builds on (classical) functionalism, but integrates key elements of constructivism and liberalism (notably the importance of “low” politics, networks, non-state actors and cooperation). The more familiar concept of neo-functionalism has focused on the territorial and integrationist aspect of the EC’s development (convergence towards a centre and integration), which is not sufficient to explain attempts at managing globalisation in times of erosion of the post-war world order.

Functional multilateralism is meant to enrich the concepts of the EU’s external relations on the one hand and to provide ideas to operationalise the ESS on the other. In the security field the EU has engaged in functional multilateralism through its relevant partnerships with the UN and the AU promoting both the global or African security interests and its own while strengthening the multilateral frameworks — in line with the ESS’s commitment expressed in its title, a secure Europe in a better world. Gowan underlines the advantages of such a “pluralistic approach” or “bluriness” as this allows for strategic innovation and pragmatic solutions to strategic challenges.^[2] One of the examples Gowan cites is the 2006 ESDP mission in support of the UN’s MONUC. Similarly the 2007 ESDP mission in Chad is meant to support the hybrid UN/AU force in Darfur. None of these initiatives actually involves alliance building, but they strengthen multilateral institutions such as the UN and the AU to make them effective. In return, these experiences enhance the EU’s “actorness” and provide opportunities for social learning regarding an evolving strategic culture and operational capacity building.

2.1.2. China

China is not a revisionist power, but it tries to blend into an international order with a modest agenda of change for the next decade or so.^[3] Indeed, since the 1990s China has made efforts to subscribe to international conventions, to enter international regimes and organisations (most prominently the WTO) and to stabilise

[1] WISSENBACH, Uwe, *The EU’s effective multilateralism—but with whom? Functional multilateralism and the rise of China*, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, International Politikanalyse, 2007; PANG, Zhongying, Ping Zhong Ou “zhanlue huoban guanxi”, *Guoji wenti luntan*, No. 46, 2007, pp. 10-26.

[2] GOWAN, Richard, *The EU’s multiple strategic identities: European Security after Lebanon and the Congo*, *Studia Diplomatica*, Vol. LX, No. 1, 2007, pp. 59-80.

[3] For the stated strategic foreign policy objectives, their time horizon and underlying assumptions cf. MEN, Honghua (2007) Strategic Roadmap of China’s Idea Evolution, *World Economics and Politics* (Chinese), No. 7, 2007, pp. 13-20. Of course sceptics may question these official lines [SANDSCHNEIDER, Eberhard, *Globale Rivalen. Chinas unheimlicher Aufstieg und die Ohnmacht des Westens* (München, Hanser, 2007)], but no one seriously expects a sudden change of strategy in the next ten years or so given China’s limited capacities and enormous domestic challenges. Indeed looking back at the reform policy, broadly speaking China’s policy-makers seem to have followed and implemented the masterplan by Deng Xiao Ping. One could therefore assume that abrupt departures from it are unlikely in the absence of a major crisis.

its neighbourhood through the settlement of historic border disputes, bilateral and multilateral dialogues and regional agreements. This strategy has brought enormous economic and development benefits to China. Another dividend of this effort is that China is increasingly perceived as *the* power of the future, increasing Beijing's influence.

China's primary goal is domestic development for which international relations provide the necessary conditions in terms of security, stability, predictability and economic and commercial benefits. There is a multitude of actors and constituencies that determine the international relations of China, much like those in Western countries, minus the humanitarian pressure groups and media transparency. China's emphasis on sovereignty and non-interference is rooted in its historical experience of foreign domination and its current ambition to consolidate its territorial sovereignty.

Finally, China's foreign policy agenda pursues a limited national project (revival, recognition and re-unification) rather than a global vision, it is implemented with a high degree of pragmatism embellished by rhetoric which partly caters for domestic constituencies, but mainly aims at foreign opinion. China aims at a maximum of stability and predictability abroad which allows its leaders to concentrate on the domestic agenda. China can't avoid being drawn into local conflicts or reacting to pressure regarding global challenges, but it does so reluctantly as it is aware of associated risks and its limited capacity to deal with them. China, while often perceived as strong and strategic thus acts from a position of weakness rather than strength (low per capita GDP and social indicators, catching up, limiting risks and costs, maximising benefit, avoiding conflict, navigating between conflicting interests and challenges, lack of hard power to project abroad, limited soft power).^[1] China's fundamental problem is thus conceived of as a balancing act between pursuing national interest (based on interdependent key domestic and subordinate foreign policy goals) and integrating into what the English School has called the international society, a term which bears close resemblance to the term Zoellick used in

[1] On the hard and soft power discussion regarding China [cf. GODEMENT, Francois, Neither Hegemon nor soft power: China's rise at the gates of the West, in ZABOROWSKI, M. (ed.), *Facing China's Rise: Guidelines for an EU Strategy*, Chaillot Paper No. 94, 2006, p. 51] and an interesting dynamic approach from Zheng and Zhang [ZHENG, Yongnian and ZHANG, Chi, Soft Power in International Politics and the Implications for China, *World Economics and Politics* (Chinese), No. 7, 2007, pp. 6-12] adding the dimension of bargaining power and relativity of both hard and soft power, criticising and completing Nye's original thesis [NYE, Joseph S., Jr., *Bound to lead: the changing nature of American Power* (New York, Basic Books, 1990) and NYE, Joseph S., Jr., *Soft Power. The means to succeed in world politics* (New York, PublicAffairs, 2004)].

2005 to call on China to behave as a stakeholder of the international community.^[1] Thus explicitly an approach has been used in politics and taken up in the EU's recent strategy paper on China, which is rooted not in realism, but in the normative, constructivist approach to the world, which characterises European external relations and China's efforts to become a "responsible power". Pang^[2] goes so far as to describe the role of the EU in China's international socialisation process as that of a teacher. At the other end of the spectrum China refers to different international norms than Zoellick when basing its policy in Africa on the principles of the non-aligned movement during the Cold War and most famously stressing sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs. This apparent paradox — not so much of interests, as of norms and values — can be addressed through a process of social learning and constructing new norms for the future world order that will inevitably follow the awkwardly named (post Cold War) transition period from the neo-Westphalian, bipolar balance of power agreed at Yalta. This order is progressively being eroded, while the contours of a future order have not yet emerged, but are likely to comprehend a stronger role for developing countries, economic actors and a diversity of multilateral structures and systems of governance to respond to the increasing diversity and complexity with a degree of flexibility that the current institutions don't have.^[3] Progressive erosion differentiates this change in the international order from those past attempts by individual countries to deliberately and abruptly change the balance of power (Imperial Germany and Japan for instance). China is not an aggressive challenger to the existing order, but it is a force for progressive change that takes place through shifting economic, demographic and cultural patterns and a more general emancipation of the developing countries from Western domination, of which the failed Cancún meeting of the WTO was a powerful announcement.

I argue that functional multilateralism can promote the process of addressing global challenges in the short-term and the process of changing norms and values in the long term complementing and improving the inadequate multilateral structures inherited

[1] The term "international community" has not been defined and while intuitively it should comprise all countries, it seems to refer to the US and its allies the way Zoellick uses it [ZOELICK, Robert B., *Whither China? From Membership to Responsibility?*, Remarks to National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, New York City September 21, 2005. <http://www.state.gov/s/d/former/zoellick/rem/53682.htm>]. Cf the similar use in the Princeton Project [G. John IKENBERRY and Anne-Marie SLAUGHTER (dir.), *Forging A World Of Liberty Under Law. U.S. National Security In The 21st Century*, final report of the Princeton Project on National Security. 27 September 2006].

[2] PANG, Zhongying, *Some Approaches to boosting China's pivotal role in tackling global challenges*, New Powers for Global Change?, FES Briefing Paper 6, May 2007, p. 14.

[3] Cf. Princeton Project, IKENBERRY and SLAUGHTER (dir.), *op. cit.*, p. 7: "The system of international institutions that the United States and its allies built after World War II and steadily expanded over the course of the Cold War is broken."

from the 20th century. It builds a bridge between the principled multilateral approach of the EU and the more pragmatic approaches of China (and the US).^[1]

2.1.3. Africa

The AU is certainly not yet an international actor on a par with the EU, never mind a nation State. Thus Africa's diversity needs to be borne in mind, even though we need to simplify for the sake of argument. In general African countries are weak players in the world economy and world politics, although as an "object" of international relations they have become more prominent in recent years.^[2] The public image is associated with hunger, poverty, disease, crime and conflict, but this does not capture Africa's diverse reality. Africa's new found appeal stems from its strong market performance in recent years, driven by better regulatory regimes, structural reforms, higher growth rates, rising foreign direct investment and foreign exchange reserves, robust export performance, and lower debt levels. The origin of this new international strength is linked to the commodity boom and global value chains. Significantly, many African countries are politically stable today compared with a decade ago. There is a need for Africa to develop a strategy which allows it to convert the gains of the current commodity boom into durable economic and political currency, something it failed to achieve in earlier decades. Progress on the MDGs is uneven, but generally not on track. The AU is a credible attempt at unity and integration, albeit without the pooling of sovereignty characteristic of the EU model. Some of the regional economic communities have become functional, while others are "paper elephants". Currently many resource rich African countries are in a position of strength, but this strength is at the mercy of the ups and downs of commodity prices (such situations have existed in the past and have not led to durable development in Africa). A key issue for those countries would be to emulate the diversification strategies and growth trajectory of other resource rich countries such as Malaysia, Norway or Australia. This requires not only a real strategy for a country's response to globalisation, but also strong economic and political governance. Finally, the resource poor countries in Africa have little to attract international political attention if it is not their misery itself. They need to find ways out of poverty and aid dependency.

[1] Kupchan and Trubowitz conclude their advocacy for a bipartisan American strategy by favouring "pragmatic partnerships over the formalized international institutions of the Cold War era" (KUPCHAN, Charles A., TRUBOWITZ, Peter L., *Grand Strategy for a Divided America*, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 4, 2007, p. 82).

[2] WISSENBACH, Uwe, China, Africa and Europe. Africa's Attractions, *The World Today*, Vol. 63, No. 4, 2007.

2.2 Challenges for cooperation

The key challenges for EU-China-Africa relations are thus threefold: 1) Can the EU and China manage to use their partnership as a model to address the global challenge of sustainable development and progress towards the MDGs that Africa represents despite value differences? 2) Can China handle economic and trade relations with developing countries (as it can't risk isolation from them or losing the goodwill of its resource suppliers)^[1] and avoid confrontation with the US and Europe over critical differences in its approach to Africa? Can China overcome the conflicts of interest as a major exporter of manufactures and partner of developing countries which are afraid of deindustrialisation due to Chinese competition? 3) Can Africa manage its multiple partnerships in such a way that it becomes a (unified) actor in international relations that can realise its objectives, rather than remaining an object of great power agendas? These challenges will ultimately define whether a multilateral world order in which the North-South dividing line can be overcome could function.

3. WHAT REALITY? PERCEPTIONS AND INTERESTS

Interestingly the debate on China in Africa has been very emotional and has brought up stereotypes and perceptions of the “other” in a way which has been completely absent in a similar process which happened only a decade ago: China's engagement with South-East Asia. Tay and Jansson^[2] point to the similarities of Africa and Asia as regions which had been strategically important for the West in the colonial and Cold-War periods, resource rich, containing “rogue” States or countries involved in conflicts and which were faced with an overwhelming economic power. Yet, the discourse was different then: focusing on competition and economic complementarity rather than on neo-colonialism and exploitation. As a first answer, they point to ASEAN being in a position to negotiate on a more equal footing with China than Africa is. One would assume — and some comparative research may be useful in this context — that this explanation is not sufficient to explain the different reactions in the US and Europe. Also in Asia itself, the shift from the perception of China as a threat (after all ASEAN was born as an anti-Communist alliance)

[1] YUAN, Peng, A Harmonious World and China's New Diplomacy, *Contemporary International Relations*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 2007, p. 12; HE, Wenping, The balancing act of China's Africa Policy, *China Security*, Vol. 3, No. 3, Summer 2007, pp 23-40. Similarly, but more critically: ALVES, Philip and DRAPER, Peter, China's growing role in Africa, in LE PERE, Garth, *China in Africa — Mercantilist predator, or partner in development?* (Braamfontein, Institute for Global Dialogue & South African Institute for International Affairs, 2007), p. 24.

[2] TAY, Nastasya and JANSSON, Johanna, Regional development with Chinese characteristics?, *China Monitor*, No. 20, July 2007, p. 10

to one of enhanced trust and cooperation came about through some landmark events and policy decisions: the Chinese reaction to the 1997 Asian financial crisis and thereafter deliberate Chinese engagement with ASEAN (Chiang Mai initiative, signing the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, China-to-group diplomacy and Free Trade negotiations). But these do not explain Western silence then and alarmist reactions now regarding Africa, although China is very much repeating its own successful strategy towards ASEAN in the last decade: a group diplomacy through the FOCAC,^[1] support for Africa's integration efforts, trade concessions and debt relief, development aid in exchange for commercial cooperation. All this is producing a change in global value-chains and economic complementarity not dissimilar to that which has operated in Asia.^[2]

Such developments are in fact in line with the EU's repeated encouragements of China's integration into the world economy. At the same time, the EU's and China's economic interest in Africa is limited compared to their overall trade volumes (Africa accounts for only 2-3% of overall trade in both cases) with the exception of the supply of oil and strategic minerals. Thus, the size of the "cake" does not explain the vocal competition to "eat it".

It seems rather that a mixture of geopolitical interests, perceptions and the social reality construct provide answers to this question. For some Europeans Africa has been more important strategically and as a zone of influence (notably for France which for decades until the mid-1990s had built its great power ambitions on its influence in francophone Africa) than Southeast Asia. However, this tendency has been declining since the end of the Cold War: Africa's importance in terms of EU shares of trade and FDI has declined continuously, political attention has receded since the end of the Cold War and increased aid has flown to Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean neighbourhood, not to Africa.^[3]

For the US, arguably, Africa has never been a priority comparable to South-East Asia, and yet the stir about China's engagement in Africa is most vocal and extreme

[1] The difference between ASEAN and FOCAC being that the latter is purpose-made for China-Africa relations and is not building on the African integration structures such as NEPAD or the AU, because of membership problems relating to the Taiwan and the Western Sahara issues.

[2] For Africa, see BROADMAN, Harry, *Africa's Silk Road China's and India's new economic frontier* (Washington, World Bank, 2006) and for Asia, EICHENGREEN, Barry, RHEE, Yeongseop and TONG, Hui, *China and the Exports of Other Asian Countries*, *Review of World Economics*, Vol. 143, No. 2, 2007, pp. 201-226.

[3] 2007 OECD DAC, *European Community. Peer review* (Paris, OEDC, 2007) <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/57/6/38965119.pdf> and MAYALL, James, *The Shadow of Empire: The EU and the Former Colonial World*, in HILL, Christopher and SMITH, Michael (ed.), *International Relations and the European Union* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 292-316 show how the 'pyramid of privileges' with the ACP formerly at the top has been reversed since the end of the Cold War.

in the US.^[1] This seems due to the widespread view of China as an emerging strategic rival of the US and an ideological foe.

Thus, it seems that perceptions of China and constructions of Africa as a vulnerable partner in need of Western assistance, more than “hard” economic or security interests play an important role. Far-away Asia seems to have been considered a “natural sphere of influence” for China and thus neither affected European interests nor perceptions of China nor the EU’s self-perception as an emerging power, for which its status as a “development superpower” in Africa has become relevant in recent years. This status is threatened by the appeal of Chinese investment with favourable conditions, high relevance, rapidity and generally good quality and which comes as business not aid with its implications of dependency, inequality and patronising prescriptions (whatever donors’ good intentions are).

From a Chinese point of view, Africa is a “natural” partner given historic and political ties, the common experience of foreign domination and the economic complementarity (including economic opportunities for many Chinese citizens). China has given up its earlier ideological foreign policy which was characterised by its active promotion of socialism and strong interference into political processes in Africa.^[2] It now pragmatically pursues policies which it believes are in line with long standing Western demands on it: capitalism, development aid pledged at the UN summit and multilateral diplomacy. China was therefore surprised at the West’s strong reaction, as it had observed the progressive marginalisation of Africa in the years since the Cold War ended. Rather than challenging the West, it was filling a void.

In terms of values and norms Pang^[3] bemoans the EU’s tendency to expect China to take on board its norms and policies instead of treating China as an equal. He points to the positive, rather than the negative, side of this clash of values arguing that it may lead to the evolution of globally owned norms rather than imposed Western ones. Other Chinese commentators are much harsher in their rejection of Western criticism.^[4]

[1] NAIM, Moisés, *Rogue Aid, Foreign Policy*, No. 159, March/April 2007; EISENMAN, Joshua, *China’s Post-Cold War Strategy in Africa. Examining Beijing’s Methods and Objectives*, J. EISENMANN, Eric HEGINBOTHAM and Derek MITCHELL (eds), *China and the Developing World: Beijings Strategy for the 21st Century* (Armonk NY, M.E. Sharpe, 2007).

[2] For details Li, Anshan, *China’s engagement in Africa: Singular Interest or Mutual benefit*, Conference Paper, Heinrich Böll Stiftung, *Resource Governance in Africa in the 21st century*, 2007 and He, Wenping, *The balancing act of China’s Africa Policy*, *China Security*, Vol. 3, No. 3, Summer 2007, pp 23-40.

[3] PANG, Zhongying, Ping Zhong Ou “zhanlue huoban guanxi”, *Guoji wenti luntan*, No. 46, 2007, pp. 24-25

[4] Li, Ruogu, *Zhengqu renshi fazhanzhong guojia de zhaiwu kezhiyu wenti* (Correct understanding of debt sustainability of developing countries), *World Economics and Politics* (Chinese), No. 4, 2007, pp. 63-72; WANG, Hongyi, Shilun “Zhong Guo weixie lun” (discussing the China threat), In: *West Asia and Africa*, No. 163, 8/2006, pp. 28-32.

When one looks at interests, there is probably a much larger commonality than one would expect behind the clamour of critical rhetoric. This points to the usefulness of a constructivist paradigm which takes not only account of the material reality and facts that exist aside from an actor's agreement, but also a social reality which is constructed with shared and individual intentionality, such as projected images of "humanity" or "humanitarianism",^[1] "partnership", "developing country solidarity" etc. These constructs are often built in response to constructs of the other side and they are sometimes confusing like a cabinet of mirrors when one tries to identify what is image and what is reality.

3.1 Europe's relations with Africa: the conditionality trap

Both Europe and China have in common the problem of combining their commercial and political interests with the short- and long-term developmental needs on the African continent.^[2] At the same time some European States carry post-colonial baggage^[3] as well as certain misconceptions in external development (ranging from the lack of local ownership-support to uncoordinated aid and the ideas of the international liberal mainstream about political transformation)^[4]. On the conceptual level the EU, driven by the European Commission to "europeanise" development and Africa policies, has refocused on locally-owned solutions at continental, regional and national levels in Africa and has launched an ambitious package to rationalise the EU aid effort commended by the international donor community.^[5] It has recently backtracked from "conditionality"^[6] to political and financial incentives for good governance and ownership.^[7] This marks a change from both the unconditional support by neo-colonial powers in return for strategic

[1] For a critical view on these notions, see BOURNE, Richard, At last — Europe takes an interest in Africa, in *Charting new paths for Europe at home and abroad*, Challenge Europe No. 10, 2003, on EPC website: www.epc.eu and BELLONI, Roberto, The trouble with humanitarianism, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3, 2007, pp 451-474, for a more balanced view of the European civilising process including a thought-provoking preliminary moral audit of the EU, cf. LINKLATER, Andrew, A European Civilising Process?, in HILL, Christopher and SMITH, Michael (ed.), *International Relations and the European Union* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 367-387.

[2] BERGER, Bernt, WISSENBACH, Uwe, *EU-China-Africa Trilateral Development Cooperation. Common Challenges and New Directions*, DIE Discussion Paper, No. 21, 2007.

[3] YATES, Douglas, The Scramble for African Oil, *South African Journal for International Affairs*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2006, pp. 11-31.

[4] KIELY, Ray, Poverty reduction through liberalisation? Neoliberalism and the myth of global convergence, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 33, 2007, No. 3, pp. 415-434.

[5] OECD DAC, *European Community. Peer review* (Paris, OEDC, 2007) <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/57/6/38965119.pdf>

[6] MAYALL, James, The Shadow of Empire: The EU and the Former Colonial World, in HILL, Christopher and SMITH, Michael (ed.), *International Relations and the European Union* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 292-316; LINKLATER (*op. cit.*) rated conditionality as a distinguishing feature of post-Cold War development policy.

[7] *The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership. A Joint Africa-EU Strategy*, Lisbon, December 2007.

benefits during the Cold War and the overly prescriptive approach known as the Washington Consensus.

China may have become a factor in accelerating a process of re-orientation of the EU-Africa partnership as its no-strings attached approach provides African countries with alternatives to the post-Cold War development model. Since China has increased its engagement on the African continent,^[1] dealing with development on the continent has become a more complex, multi-dimensional undertaking for the EU. The EU has realised that the partnership with Africa requires new foundations and more trust. Now, China's focus on a mutual interest-based, commercially driven and politically high-level partnership with Africa has concentrated minds in Europe and in Africa on how the old donor-recipient partnership could be transformed into a modern or even post-modern partnership (given the key focus on the AU-driven integration processes which characterises the EU's approach^[2]). This new kind of partnership is designed to respond to common global challenges and is not only focused on a one-sided, often charity-based approach to development. To be sure, this re-orientation has not been prompted by China, it has been prompted by the demands of a new generation of African leaders flanked by outspoken African critics of aid dependency^[3] and more importantly by the realisation that globalisation, the commodity boom and the tectonic shifts in global politics in the nearly two decades since the end of the Cold War have profoundly changed the way Africa, China and Europe look at each other. At the same time the strategic review of the EU's role in the world, the European Security Strategy of 2003 and the decisions on ESDP, led to the mutation of the old "civilian power" into a globally active security actor willing and able to project security beyond its immediate neighbourhood and in places as far as Aceh and central Africa.^[4]

3.2 China's changing approach to Africa:

The clash of values and reality?

China's 30 years of opening-up policy, while based on core national interests of re-gaining sovereignty and re-building a powerful nation under the lead of the

[1] Ironically the first FOCAC in 2000 passed almost unnoticed — it was in the same year that the EU and ACP countries signed the Cotonou agreement and the AU was born.

[2] ALECU DE FLERS, Nicole and REGELSBERGER, Elfriede, *The EU and Inter-regional Cooperation*, in HILL, Christopher and SMITH, Michael (ed.), *International Relations and the European Union* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 317-342.

[3] SHIKWATI, James, *Streicht diese Hilfe*, Interview in Der Spiegel, No. 27, 04. Juli 2005 <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/0,1518,363375,00.html>; IWEALA, Uzodinma, *Cessez de vouloir "sauver" l'Afrique !*, *Le Monde*, 29/30 juillet 2007, p. 13.

[4] HOWORTH, Jolyon, *Security and Defence Policy in the European Union* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

CCP, can be described as a process of social learning and gradual adaptation to the expectations and rules of the international community, which China initially rejected during the early Cold War period. In terms of international relations there has been a shift from a suspicious and bilateral approach to a more open and multilateral mode as embodied by China's joining the WTO or the collective, consensus-based Asian structures. In Africa, China has since the Cold War moved away from ideology-based support^[1] to commercial approaches.

The diplomatic spat with Taiwan overshadows relations with African countries and causes some prejudice to African integration efforts, as the AU cannot replace the FOCAC as long as some of its members recognise Taiwan.^[2] Interestingly, Africans have shown more readiness to compromise on their unity in relations with China than in relations with the EU regarding representation of all African countries at summits. But is China's approach to Africa based on strength or does it reveal China's weaknesses as a global player?

In view of China's increasing engagement on the African continent, its image as a determined and strategic actor in all sectors preaching the gospel of non-interference, sovereignty and no-strings-attached cooperation has taken shape within the media as well as in academic and political circles, especially in the US. However, thus far China's engagement in Africa while strategically conceived in its broad thrust has been less effective in practice than one might assume.^[3]

[1] Although there are still anti-hegemonic and traditional Third World overtones.

[2] The issue of Morocco and Western Sahara is another sore spot, on the African side this time. The only existing multilateral regional structure which does not have problems with the Taiwan issue is the Arab League which has consequently become China's key interlocutor for the Arab World.

[3] BERGER, Bernt, WISSENBACH, Uwe, *EU-China-Africa Trilateral Development Cooperation. Common Challenges and New Directions*, DIE Discussion Paper, No. 21, 2007.

China adapts its strategies to each local situation with a mix of instruments. A number of studies describe those in detail.^[1] Generally speaking, China has been mobilising economic resources for both economic and non-economic purposes. China assumes that business combined with solidarity rhetoric, modest development assistance and putatively win-win based cooperation will be sufficient to gain access to the neglected continent. It therefore neglected to analyse local political considerations or long-term political implications for State-society relations and social conditions inside countries in its strategies. Instead, China contents itself with keeping good relations with whatever government is in place (provided they keep faithful to the one-China policy), not realising that such a neutral position may draw criticism which can be damaging to China's long-term interests. This approach has been successful in the short term, but there are signs that China has to prepare for more difficult times ahead. International and local criticism came unexpectedly and does not fit into China's image as a soft power, nor into the approach to Africa based on equality, friendship and solidarity outlined in China's White Paper and in the FOCAC process, which still has to stand the test of results, the strengthening bargaining power of (some) African countries^[2] or reversals of fortune. Moreover, many government-backed deals may in fact present a moral hazard for the Chinese companies and banks involved.

China's external development policy is closely linked with its own development path. In view of international differences and mounting discontent in Africa itself about a relationship based on export of raw materials with little added value in Africa, strained labour relations and frequent violations of environmental, labour

[1] ALDEN, Chris, ROTHMAN, Andy, *China and Africa*, Special Report, CLSA, September 2006; ALTENBURG, Tilman, WEIKERT, Jochen, *Moeglichkeiten und Grenzen entwicklungspolitischer Dreieckskooperationen mit Ankerlaendern*, DIE Discussion Paper, No. 15, 2006 and LE PERE, Garth, *China in Africa — Mercantilist predator, or partner in development?* (Braamfontein, Institute for Global Dialogue & South African Institute for International Affairs, 2007) and others. Fandrych describes how cooperation with Angola is based on a package of preferential credits, investment, trade, technical support and development of infrastructure (FANDRYCH, Sabine, *China in Angola — nachhaltiger Wiederaufbau, kalkulierte Wahlkampfhilfe oder globale Interessenpolitik?*, *Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft*, No. 2, 2007, pp. 63-74). Grión gives a detailed account of the China-Angola relationship including its risks, and also points out that political relations have been complex in the past, as China had initially backed the opposition to the current regime during the civil war [MORESO GRION, Emilio, *The political economy of commercial relations: China's engagement in Angola*, LE PERE, Garth, *China in Africa — Mercantilist predator, or partner in development?* (Braamfontein, Institute for Global Dialogue & South African Institute for International Affairs, 2007), pp.141-159]. Ali [ALI, Abdalla Ali, *The political economy of relations between Sudan and China*, in LE PERE, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-185] gives a detailed overview of the political economy underpinning Sudan-China relations, which by many critics are reduced to the Darfur issue. For a detailed analysis of Chinese activity in the infra-structure sector see *China's interest and activities in Africa's construction and infrastructure sectors*, Working Paper, Centre for Chinese Studies, Stellenbosch University, 2006.

[2] The case of Angola is telling in this regard, disproving by the way earlier Western speculation of a take-over by the Chinese: Angola has used oil diplomacy to extract concessions from China while rejecting an IMF loan, then it gave China's efforts a blow by cancelling the contract for the building of the Lobito refinery and joining OPEC, while not cutting its ties with the US, IMF, World Bank despite their outrage over the earlier failure of the structural adjustment programme negotiations. Another failure of Sinopec in Angola is described in: "La Chine a manqué de stratégie pour s'implanter dans le secteur pétrolier angolais", *Afrique-Asie*, janvier 2008, pp. 20-21.

or immigration laws by Chinese companies, China has started to quietly review its strategies. This points to a conflict of interest between the government's aim of projecting a responsible image internationally and an image of sincere friendship to Africans more particularly, and the aim of many Chinese companies of making a profit regardless of ethical or image considerations (a few big players with global ambitions are more conscious of branding, image and CSR). Competition takes place in a harsh environment and with companies from other emerging economies with similar focus.

To some extent, the non-interference doctrine may simply provide a convenient cover for the lack of ability to influence other countries. Resource rich countries can take advantage of China's needs and lack of alternatives (the evolution in Angola and even China's difficulties in convincing Sudan's government to accept the UN/AU hybrid force point to this limited influence). China's only real trump card (notably compared with other emerging powers) is its seat in the UNSC, but given China's interest in not antagonising the other UNSC members, even that is of limited value.

The underlying weakness of China's generally successful approach to Africa has several reasons. China has not conceived a proper development policy. Rather it is first and foremost informed by a mechanical transposition of its own development approaches and dated Third World principles, which prioritise the needs and sovereignty of States and economic growth. However, Beijing has ignored the "collateral damage" of unintended interference in social affairs through commercial interaction and lacked contemporary concepts about aid-coordination, ownership-support and concepts of political development including practical concepts of supporting good governance. It also seems that Beijing has not sufficiently understood the contemporary African agenda and the domestic policies of many countries. Instead — and quite ironically — a politically neutral, capitalist "one-size-fits-all economic model"^[1] dominates cooperation. In terms of poverty alleviation efforts China's aid is ad hoc, in kind and lacks project management and evaluation frameworks geared to comprehensive, participatory and sustainable development (not unlike its own domestic Western Development Strategy). Sometimes, projects can easily be perceived as sweeteners for commercial contracts or as serving elite interests only with implications of corruption, alienating important segments of African society, thus de-facto belying the non-interference mantra (and creating

[1] For a summary of the conceptual development see: LEFTWICH, Adrian, Politics in command: Development Studies and the rediscovery of social science, *New Political Economy*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 2005, p. 597; for a critical approach, including on China's development model, see KIELY, Ray, Poverty reduction through liberalisation? Neoliberalism and the myth of global convergence, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 33, 2007, No. 3, pp. 415-434.

open flanks for Taiwan's diplomacy as the Zambian elections have shown). This may overshadow the fact that many Chinese projects in health or rural development for instance have been relevant for recipient populations.

Finally, as in many Chinese domestic policies, the ineffectiveness of a top down political structure based on vertical reporting lines, in tackling complex situations which require horizontal coordination and bottom-up participation, has become apparent. The multitude of agencies and actors involved, each with different objectives, has created a messy principal-agent challenge for China's leaders.^[1]

3.3 The EU's and China's dilemmas and Africa's choices

The complex picture of the EU's and China's relations with Africa reveals dilemmas on both sides, linked to non-avowed failures in their respective Africa policies. They carry substantial baggage from colonial and Cold War history and still need adjustments to the realities of globalisation and Africa itself. To some extent Chinese Africa policy has taken an almost exclusively economic twist, despite its political rhetoric and with unexpected negative impacts on some social groups in Africa. This raises questions about the durability of China's engagement beyond the current economic opportunities. The EU has struggled more to adapt its policy. It has found it difficult to re-define its interests in a credible way and to move away from a charity approach to Africa, long a key feature of public pressure.^[2] Chinese "competition" provides Europe's policy-makers with an opportunity also to address interests which were more difficult to articulate as long as poverty was the sole reference in the discourse about Africa.

In order to overcome these dilemmas it is important to pursue EU-China cooperation on the basis of an African agenda. In a sense this should be facilitated by the ongoing process of putting responsibility for Africa's development where it belongs: into African hands. This is what Africans have long claimed, but such an approach is also associated with risk for Africa's leaders: they have to be able to exercise these responsibilities and obtain the outcomes, in terms of development, which the people of Africa and the international community expect. Otherwise

[1] BATES, Gill, REILLY, James, The Tenuous Hold of China Inc. in Africa, *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 3, Summer 2007, pp. 37-52; ALTENBURG, Tilman, WEIKERT, Jochen, *Moeglichkeiten und Grenzen entwicklungspolitischer Dreieckskooperationen mit Ankerlaendern*, DIE Discussion Paper, No. 15, 2006, pp. 27-30, and the author's own findings. The structure of the Africa Fund of the CDB seems tailored to remedy such problems at least partly as it has been given a political steering committee composed of MOFCOM, MFA and NDRC officials alongside the Supervisory and Executive Boards cf. ZHANG, Ning Zhe, Guo Kai Hang linglei PE lu (The CDB's special type of private equity approach), *Caijing Magazine*, No. 15, 2007, 23 July 2007, pp. 88-91.

[2] Such as the Make Poverty History campaign and the moralistic overtones of the British G8 Presidency, when it termed Africa a scar on the world's conscience.

African responsibility may just become a convenient excuse for disengagement and further marginalisation of Africa. Africa needs to decide whether it wants its partners to cooperate on this agenda or to compete for influence, thus continuing the post-colonial pattern of African policy-making being driven by outside actors and consequent divisions among and within African countries.^[1] Africa may enhance its global role by actively making South-South partnerships compatible with North-South relations. This would, however, require choices between the values of the Western donors and the Asian partners.

4. MAKING MULTILATERALISM EFFECTIVE THROUGH A FUNCTIONAL APPROACH

The EU's strategy was originally based on the belief that as the Cold War ended, the United Nations and its Security Council should be the central actor in the new world order, after it was prevented from taking up its original role by the mutual blockades by the US and USSR during the Cold War decades. This expectation was also based on the experience of the EU itself that through normative and regulatory cooperation and integration peace and prosperity could be achieved among countries which were previously divided by bloody conflicts. The EU has also through enlargement and cooperation with the wider neighbourhood extended regulatory convergence and established itself as a normative power.^[2] However, the multilateral order the EU aspires to has been severely damaged by the unexpected renaissance of imperial policy on the one hand and the fragility of statehood in many parts of the world on the other. From the realist point of view the UN as a central actor could not function in the developing world periphery of the economically and politically powerful States in the transatlantic and East Asian regions. In the periphery (developing countries), a world order built on the sovereignty of functioning States (in the Weberian sense) proved illusory. Indeed, many States only exist in name and crises of different kinds and State failure as well as international terrorism (privatisation of war and conflict) have prompted imperial interventions to combat terrorism, protect communication lines and resources crucial for the economic centres of power.^[3] But dysfunctions have also become apparent in the Bretton Woods

[1] MORESO GRION, Emilio, The political economy of commercial relations: China's engagement in Angola, LE PERE, Garth, *China in Africa — Mercantilist predator, or partner in development?* (Braamfontein, Institute for Global Dialogue & South African Institute for International Affairs, 2007), p. 141: "Is it acceptable that China's involvement in Africa could lead to a degree of conflict of interest with the former colonial rulers, and to a situation in which the Western commitment to fostering good governance and democracy is jeopardised by China's involvement?"

[2] COOPER, Robert, *The Breaking of Nations. Order and Chaos in the Twenty-First Century* (London, Atlantic Books, 2003); BISROP, Sven, *The ABC of European Union Strategy: Ambition, Benchmark, Culture*, Egmont Paper, No. 16, 2007.

[3] cf. MÜNKLER, Herfried, *Über den Krieg — Stationen der Kriegsgeschichte im Spiegel ihrer theoretischen Reflexion* (Weilerwist, Velbrück, 2002), pp. 226-7.

Institutions and even the WTO.^[1] Effective multilateralism, which is the concept of the European Security Strategy, is ill adapted to a world where seemingly most key actors are pursuing unilateral diplomacy in the national interest.

Global multilateralism based on the consensus of large numbers of countries almost inevitably leads to the smallest common denominator and involves non-crucial actors whose interests may block solutions which could be found among key players. At the same time territorial multilateralism, i.e. regional integration, can only partly address the challenges of globalisation and in itself requires long and fragile processes as the experiences of ASEAN, Mercosur and African unity^[2] show. Given the nature of the global challenges and the structural deficits of the multilateral regime where the UN has not been able to lead effectively and “Western” multilateral institutions such as the OECD, the IEA^[3] or the G8^[4] lack the legitimacy of comprehensive membership, it is more effective to address issues on a functional multilateral basis. Institutions which were a product of the Cold War divisions have already expanded membership and reached across the divide: WTO, the G7 by including Russia and now the G5 through the Heiligendamm Process.

There are some examples of functional multilateralism, sometimes with a global aspiration if not reach, sometimes reflecting a “coalition of the willing”.^[5] New initiatives were set up to tackle new challenges and complement existing, but inadequate UN organisations: the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) or the Kyoto Protocol to combat global warming. These are reflecting the role of non-state actors in their governance structures (the GFATM is a good example here). Some new initiatives have even been set up through NGO efforts such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), the Kimberley process or Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT). They all strive to find tailored-to-measure multilateral solutions to a specific global problem and overcome traditional politico-institutional divisions or limitations.

A functional multilateral approach can be conceived of as a strategy to manage the transition to an emerging new global order. The crucial areas of action are

[1] DEFRAIGNE, Pierre, The Doha Round between a narrow escape and freezing, *Studia Diplomatica*, Vol. LX, N° 1, 2007, pp. 119-134.

[2] MURITHI, Timothy, *The African Union. Pan-Africanism, Peacebuilding and Development* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005).

[3] The IEA, counting 26 members and linked to OECD membership, has been unable or unwilling to enlarge its membership. The US enjoys veto power in this organisation.

[4] DEFRAIGNE, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

[5] KUPCHAN, Charles A., TRUBOWITZ, Peter L., Grand strategy for a Divided America, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 4, 2007, pp. 71-83.

Africa's development (and the MDGs more globally), energy security and climate change^[1]. For all these efforts — where the EU has tended to assume a leading role — to re-construct a multilateral system adapted to the current realities China is a key partner. So far, both the US and the EU have contented themselves in a piecemeal fashion with inviting China to join existing initiatives or to subscribe to rules which have not been co-authored by China. This approach is based on the idea of China as a “responsible stakeholder”. Yet, so far there is no political will to give China or indeed other emerging countries *membership*. “Exclusive clubs” such as the G8 keep them at arm's length and voting rights in “census-based” organisations (Bretton Woods, IEA) remain dominated by Western members. It is not surprising that such moves have been perceived as attempts to preserve existing power structures, undermine China's economic cooperation with third countries or to deny China access to energy and other resources. This makes it easy for China to rally the support of nearly all developing countries for alternative approaches, thus potentially precipitating a crisis of the Western global governance strategy in the future. Functional multilateralism is geared to overcome these institutional obstacles. The EU could invite China and others to reform global governance in a comprehensive way based on functional multilateralism and a membership based on today's realities and not yesterday's power structures. The underlying assumption is that the best way to accommodate China's rise is to include it functionally in reforms of global governance progressively and in selected key areas of mutual interest, such as development, climate change and energy security, rather than bet on a domestic transformation in China.

[1] WISSENBACH, Uwe, Energy security — A Bermuda Triangle for EU-US-China Relations?, *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* (CICIR), No. 10, 2007, pp. 44-51.

IS WASHINGTON READY FOR THE “EQUAL PARTNERSHIP”? KENNEDY’S LEGACY FOR TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS

Youri DEVUYST*

1. INTRODUCTION

More than 45 years after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, his policy statements remain a point of reference in transatlantic relations. European politicians delivering speeches and statements on the relationship between the United States and the European Union (EU) keep on praising Kennedy’s idea for a “Declaration of Interdependence”, as formulated on 4 July 1962 at Independence Hall, Philadelphia.^[1] On some solemn occasions, American Presidents and Secretaries of State have also deemed it useful to present their policy towards Europe as a continuation of Kennedy’s “Grand Design”.^[2]

In view of the remaining popularity of Kennedy’s promise for “an equal partnership” in transatlantic relations, it is interesting to assess his legacy in greater detail. This assessment is particularly worthwhile at a time when the EU is taking a new step in its integration process with the Treaty of Lisbon and the United States is preparing to elect a new President. Section 2 of this article recalls the foundations of Kennedy’s policy towards European political integration and his ideas for an “equal partnership” from a historical perspective. Section 3 appraises whether there is a readiness on the American side to continue pursuing the “equal partnership” ideal and its indispensable corollary: acceptance of the autonomy of the EU’s decision-making process and acceptance of the EU’s growing importance as a foreign policy actor

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[1] See, for instance, José Manuel BARROSO, *Hands across the Ocean*, *International Herald Tribune*, 25 April 2007; José Manuel BARROSO, *The EU and the US: a Declaration of Interdependence*, Speech at the School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, D.C., 18 October 2005; Gordon BROWN, then UK Chancellor of the Exchequer, *Remarks to the Government Leaders Forum Europe*, Scottish Parliament, 31 January 2007; Gordon BROWN, *Rediscovering Public Purpose in the Global Economy*, Lecture at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 15 December 1998; Javier SOLANA, *Mars and Venus Reconciled: A New Era for Transatlantic Relations*, Albert H. Gordon Lecture at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 7 April 2003; Anders FOGH RASMUSSEN, *Partnership in a Globalized World: a Declaration of Interdependence*, Speech at the University of California at Berkeley, 12 June 2006; Catherine COLONNA, speech on the occasion of the Third Conference of the Aspen Institute-France, Paris, 9 May 2006.

[2] Ronald REAGAN, address to a Special Session of the European Parliament, Strasbourg, 8 May 1985, 3; Warren CHRISTOPHER, *A New Atlantic Community*, speech in commemoration of Secretary of State James Byrnes’ 1947 Speech of Hope, 6 September 1996, p. 5.

in its own right. Section 4 leads to the conclusions. It highlights a number of key arguments sustaining that the next American President would do well to support European unification and embrace the “equal partnership” ideal.

2. KENNEDY’S ATTITUDE TOWARDS EUROPEAN POLITICAL INTEGRATION

2.1. European unification as a prerequisite for effective burden-sharing

As mentioned above, Kennedy’s most frequently cited statement on transatlantic relations is his Atlantic Partnership address made on Independence Day 1962. In view of its importance, the speech deserves to be cited at some length:

“We do not regard a strong and united Europe as a rival but as a partner... We believe that a united Europe will be capable of playing a greater role in the common defense, of responding more generously to the needs of poorer nations, of joining with the United States and others in lowering trade barriers, resolving problems of currency and commodities, and developing coordinated policies in all other economic, diplomatic, and political areas. We see in such a Europe a partner with whom we could deal on a basis of full equality in all the great and burdensome tasks of building and defending a community of free nations ... The first order of business is for our European friends to go forward in forming the more perfect union which will some day make this partnership possible ... I will say here and now on this day of independence that the United States will be ready for a “Declaration of Interdependence”, that we will be prepared to discuss with a United Europe the ways and means of forming a concrete Atlantic partnership ...”.^[1]

The thinking behind the Independence Hall speech can be summarized in five points. First, Kennedy’s support for European unification was essentially the continuation of the policy initiated by Presidents Truman and Eisenhower. European political integration was seen as an important contribution to build Western Europe into an effective entity that works “with us” to hold the line against Soviet expansion,

[1] John F. KENNEDY, *The Goal of an Atlantic Partnership*, address made at Independence Hall, Philadelphia, 4 July 1962, *Department of State Bulletin*, 23 July 1962, p. 132.

tie West Germany to the Atlantic community and insure the continued freedom and viability of West Berlin.^[1]

Second, the Kennedy Administration was particularly concerned about the increasing weight of the “burdens and responsibilities of leadership”, which reflected itself in America’s balance-of-payments problems.^[2] Kennedy considered that “the United States was left not only with an excessively heavy burden of military commitments in Europe, but also the burden of aid to under-developed countries all over the globe”.^[3] In the global Cold War context, development aid was for Kennedy as important as military expenditure. Without such aid, developing countries would be victim of enduring poverty which could only foster communism.^[4] Third, for Kennedy, the Europeans did not seem to carry their fair share of the burden in the military and development fields. In his eyes, the uneven burden-sharing situation among Western allies was due to the fact that France and the United Kingdom had been “withdrawing from the world” since 1945, “both countries concentrating more and more on Europe”.^[5]

Fourth, to relieve the United States of some of its burdens the Europeans needed encouragement to take a greater share of the responsibility. According to Under Secretary of State George W. Ball, who was Kennedy’s main source of inspiration on European unification, burden-sharing would imply asking the Europeans “to take real responsibility by turning over to them certain countries or allies”.^[6] At the same time, the Kennedy Administration proposed that the Europeans would, to some degree, be participating in military planning and control of a nuclear force.^[7] In Ball’s view, the feasibility of such a burden-sharing arrangement depended on

[1] “Scope Paper Prepared in the Department of State, 11 June 1962”, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, hereinafter *FRUS* (Washington, D.C., Department of State, Office of the Historian, 1961-1963) Vol. XIII, doc. 44; “Editorial Comment”, *FRUS* 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, doc. 72 (Report by Ambassador David Bruce, 9 February 1963).

[2] On the U.S. balance of payments problems during the 1960s, see Fred L. BLOCK, *The Origins of International Monetary Disorder. A Study of United States International Monetary Policy from World War II to the Present* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1977), pp. 140-163; David P. CALLEO, *The Imperious Economy* (Cambridge, Mass, Harvard University Press, 1984), pp. 79-102.

[3] “Memorandum of Conversation, 8 January 1962”, *FRUS* 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, doc. 26.

[4] Diane B. KUNZ, *Butter and Guns. America’s Cold War Economic Diplomacy* (New York, Free Press, 1997), pp. 120-148; Erin MAHAN, *Kennedy, de Gaulle and Western Europe* (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2002), p. 17.

[5] “Memorandum of Conversation, 8 January 1962”, *FRUS* 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, doc. 26.

[6] “Summary Record of NSC Executive Committee Meeting No. 39, 31 January 1963”, *FRUS* 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, doc. 64. On the importance of George W. Ball for Kennedy’s European policy, see David L. DiLEO, George Ball and the Europeanists in the State Department, 1961-1963, in Douglas BRINKLEY and Richard T. GRIFFITHS, eds., *John F. Kennedy and Europe* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1999), pp. 263-280; Pascaline WINAND, *Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the United States of Europe* (New York, St. Martin’s Press, 1993), p. 147.

[7] Lawrence S. KAPLAN, The MLF Debate in BRINKLEY and GRIFFITHS, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-65; P. WINAND, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-243.

the emergence of a unified and reliable European ally.^[1] The fifth and most crucial point in the Kennedy-Ball reasoning was, therefore, that the Europeans needed “to move toward substantial internal cohesion in order to provide the solid foundations upon which the structure of an Atlantic partnership can be erected”.^[2] In other words, European unity was “an essential prerequisite” to the development of strong Atlantic ties.^[3] Ball was convinced that “a strong partnership must almost by definition mean a collaboration of equals”.^[4] As long as Europe remained in its fragmented state, Ball expected that the Europeans would naturally shy away from a real Atlantic partnership. Without internal strength and unity, Europe would refrain from getting institutionally close to the United States as they would fear becoming simple “ancillaries” of American policy.^[5]

2.2. European integration and the danger of creating a “third force”

While pushing for European integration, the Kennedy Administration rejected ideas that a united Europe would turn into a “third force” that might go a separate way from the United States. Kennedy and his advisors knew that a united Europe would not always be following America’s lead on every possible subject. But they nevertheless assumed that the vitality and solidity of the common Atlantic heritage would ensure agreement on the fundamentals of foreign policy.^[6] The Europeanists at the State Department maintained their optimistic viewpoint throughout the Johnson Administration. In reply to a skeptical remark by Senator Frank Church in 1966, Ball answered that even if Charles de Gaulle were President of the “United States of Western Europe”, the United States would still be better off than with a divided Western Europe:

“Given the common traditions and common civilization which exists on the two sides of the Atlantic, I think that we would tend to follow courses which were quite in harmony with one another ... I do feel, quite confidently, that given the character and the background and the general cultural inclinations

[1] Along the same lines, see Robert R. BOWIE and Theodore GEIGER, *The European Economic Community and the United States* (Washington, D.C., U.S. Congress, Joint Economic Committee, Subcommittee on Foreign Economic Policy, 1961), p. 12.

[2] George W. BALL, *Toward an Atlantic Partnership*. Address made before the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia, 6 February 1962, *Department of State Bulletin*, 5 March 1962, p. 366.

[3] George W. BALL, *The Discipline of Power. Essentials of a Modern World Structure* (Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1968), p. 61.

[4] G. W. BALL, *Toward an Atlantic Partnership*, *op. cit.*, p. 366.

[5] G. W. BALL, *The Discipline of Power*, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67.

[6] G. W. BALL, *Toward an Atlantic Partnership*, *op. cit.*, p. 366.

and attitudes of the European peoples, we would come out in broad lines of a policy not too far different from one another. There would be possible a very high degree of cooperation between us in the performance of common tasks”.^[1]

European unification could, according to Ball, only bring the Atlantic partners closer together and more able to work together: “Europe united will almost certainly display a deeper and stronger feeling of responsibility for the defense of Western values than will the individual nation states in a Europe weak and fragmented”.^[2]

2.3. Controlling the course of European integration

While enthusiastic about the potential political benefits of European unification, Kennedy also felt that active American involvement in European affairs was necessary to ensure Europe’s Atlantic orientation. Three lines of action were tried.

2.3.1. Encouraging the Community’s enlargement with Atlantic-minded countries

A first important line of action to ensure the Atlantic orientation of the European Community was the Administration’s insistence on British accession.^[3] In April 1961, Kennedy for the first time stated in affirmative manner to British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan that he would receive the strong support of the United States “if the U.K. were to join the Six and wholeheartedly accept the political and institutional obligations of the EEC”.^[4] Kennedy’s support for British accession to the Community aimed at strengthening Europe’s Atlantic course and free trade orientation.^[5] Because Kennedy saw British accession as a contribution to the strengthening of the Atlantic Community in a Cold War context, he simultaneously rejected the association of neutral countries. In their contacts with Austrian Foreign Minister Bruno Kreisky, the Administration left no uncertainty about the

[1] “Supplemental Statement of Hon. George W. Ball”, U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Hearing on United States Policy toward Europe*, 89th Congress, 2nd Session, June-July 1966, p. 331.

[2] BALL, *Toward an Atlantic Partnership*, *op. cit.*, p. 366.

[3] Jeffrey Glen GIAUQUE, *Grand Designs and Visions of Unity. The Atlantic Powers and the Reorganization of Western Europe, 1955-1963* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 165-166; P. WINAND, *op. cit.*, pp. 184-185 and 260-325.

[4] “Circular Telegram from the Department of State to Certain Missions in Europe, 12 April 1961”, *FRUS* 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, doc. 5.

[5] Max BELOFF, *The United States and the Unity of Europe* (Washington, D.C., The Brookings Institution, 1963), p. 16. Kennedy’s plans for an immediate Community enlargement were frustrated when French President Charles de Gaulle announced his veto to British membership in 1963.

American position: an "association of neutrals with the Community could create a situation where every new step forward towards closer political union among the members of the Communities would be delayed or frustrated by the question whether this created new problems for the neutral associates".^[1] This was all the more problematic as the State Department "could not see the Community playing the kind of role [the United States] expected of it without somehow becoming involved in Western defense".^[2]

2.3.2. Maintaining bilateral contacts with key allies within the European Community

In the face of Gaullist attempts to create a "European Europe", the Kennedy Administration was adamant to demonstrate that it would, in spite of French maneuvers, remain a European power. At a National Security Council meeting immediately after de Gaulle's veto to British membership, Secretary of State Dean Rusk emphasized that "we are in Europe not because the Europeans want us there but because we believe our presence there is essential to the defense of the U.S. ... we cannot permit de Gaulle to force us out of Europe".^[3] Kennedy did not hesitate to advise the Five [i.e. the then Member States of the European Community, except France] about matters of importance to Washington.^[4] Bilateral contacts with Germany, in particular, were deemed essential for bringing the Community back on the right track.^[5]

2.3.3. A first attempt at obtaining a seat at the Community table

Bilateral contacts were, however, not always seen as sufficient. In an attempt at preventing the development of an inward-looking Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) during the Dillon Round of tariff negotiations, the Kennedy Administration requested a "semi-seat" at the Community table. In December 1961, the White

[1] "Circular Telegram from the Department of State to Certain Missions in Europe, 4 May 1962", *FRUS* 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, doc. 37. See also "Letter from Secretary of State Rusk to Foreign Minister Kreisky, 1 July 1961", *FRUS* 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, doc. 13.

[2] "Circular Telegram from the Department of State to Certain Missions in Europe, 4 May 1962", *FRUS* 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, doc. 37.

[3] "Summary Record of NSC Executive Meeting No. 39, 31 January 1963", *FRUS* 1961-1963, Vol. XIII, doc. 64.

[4] "Memorandum from the Under Secretary of State (Ball) to President Kennedy, 8 March 1963", *FRUS* 1961-1963, Vol. IX, doc. 271; "Memorandum from the Special Representative for Trade Negotiations (Herter) to President Kennedy, 1 May 1963", *FRUS* 1961-1963, Vol. IX, doc. 275

[5] "Memorandum of Conversation, 28 December 1963", *FRUS* 1961-1963, Vol. IX, doc. 294; "Memorandum from the Special Representative for Trade Negotiations (Herter) to President Johnson", *FRUS* 1961-1963, Vol. IX, doc. 291.

House sent its Special Assistant for International Trade Policy, Howard C. Petersen, to Brussels to discuss the trade-related aspects of the CAP. Although it is hard to reconcile with the theory of an equal partnership that is based on mutual respect for each other's decision-making autonomy, Petersen proposed a Joint Declaration in which the European Commission and the Member States would grant the United States the right to be consulted concerning the CAP's conception, before its implementation.^[1] Like all later American attempts at obtaining a seat at the Community table, the Petersen draft was rejected by the Europeans.

3. THE UNITED STATES AND THE "EQUAL PARTNERSHIP" TODAY

Aside from such unhandy attempts at influencing the course of European integration as the Petersen proposal, Kennedy's most important legacy for transatlantic relations is that of having left a relatively coherent and promising conceptual framework. Far from being out of date, Kennedy's Grand Design, as formulated in the Independence Hall speech, puts the emphasis on a number of crucial links that continue to be most relevant in today's world. First, he accurately singled out the concept of interdependence as the key characteristic of the emerging world structure. Secondly, he underlined that active partnership and burden-sharing across the Atlantic are essential to adequately tackle the many challenges posed by the interdependent world. Thirdly, he stressed that a successful transatlantic alliance requires the equality of the European and the American partners. Finally, he encouraged the Europeans to solidify their integration efforts so as to make the equal partnership possible. For the Europeans, Kennedy's Grand Design was — and still is — attractive because it contains the promise of a more equal partnership. On the American side, the appealing element of Kennedy's concept is that of leading the way to an enhanced degree of burden-sharing from the European partners and an increased effectiveness of common efforts on the world stage. A key question, however, is whether Washington is still ready to embrace the "equal partnership" ideal. Such readiness would imply — as indispensable pre-conditions — acceptance of the EU's decision-making autonomy as well as acceptance of the EU's attempt to become a foreign policy actor in its own right.

[1] *Note sur les négociations tarifaires avec les États-Unis* (Brussels, EEC Commission, Direction Générale des Relations Extérieures, 20 January 1962), p. 2.

3.1. Accepting the EU’s decision-making autonomy

To build an equal partnership, a first requirement is the active readiness on the American side to accept the existence of an autonomous European decision-making process in the framework of the EU. Washington’s most visible difficulties in accepting the EU’s decision-making autonomy emerged during Henry Kissinger’s years at the helm of American diplomacy.^[1] Still as Harvard Professor, Kissinger had argued that the growth of European integration was unlikely to help American foreign policy:

“The assumption that a united Europe and the United States would inevitably conduct parallel policies and have similar views about appropriate tactics runs counter to historical experience. A separate unity has usually been established by opposition to a dominant power. The European sense of identity is unlikely to be an exception to this general rule — its motives could well be to insist on a specifically European view of the world ... which is another way of saying that it will challenge American hegemony in Atlantic policy”.^[2]

In light of these earlier views, it was no surprise that, as National Security Advisor in the Nixon Administration, Kissinger looked with particular concern at the start of European Political Cooperation in 1970.^[3] Fearing a reduction of American influence on the old continent, Nixon and Kissinger warned that “our closest friends are now developing a collective identity and collective policies separate from us”.^[4] Entirely in the same spirit, President Nixon did not hesitate to describe attempts by the Community to speak with one voice in world affairs as a practice of “ganging up” against the United States.^[5] In an attempt to avoid the creation of an autonomous European centre of decision-making, President Nixon asked the support of British Prime Minister Edward Heath to ensure that the European Community would refrain from making decisions before the United States were given an opportunity to register its views in the formative period of policy-making. Heath’s

[1] See Youri DEVUYST, *American Attitudes on European Political Integration — The Nixon-Kissinger Legacy, IES Working Paper Series* (Brussels, Institute for European Studies, Vrije Universiteit Brussel), 2/2007.

[2] Henry A. KISSINGER, *The Troubled Partnership. A Reappraisal of the Atlantic Alliance* (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1965), p. 39.

[3] Argyris G. ANDRIANOPOULOS, *Western Europe in Kissinger’s Global Strategy* (Houndmills, MacMillan, 1988), pp. 66-73 and 90-110.

[4] Richard NIXON, *United States Foreign Policy for the 1970s. Building for Peace. A Report to Congress* (Washington, D.C., The White House, 25 February 1971), pp. 16-17.

[5] J. Robert SCHAEZEL, *The Unhinged Alliance. America and the European Community* (New York, Harper & Row, 1975), p. 78.

response was negative.^[1] Kissinger felt strongly about the matter and returned to it in the context of his “Year of Europe” initiative.^[2] While proposing “a new Atlantic Charter setting the goals for the future”, Kissinger emphasized the need for “an understanding of what should be done jointly and of the limits we should impose on the scope of our autonomy”.^[3] Kissinger explicitly urged the Community to open its decision-making for American involvement: “To present the decisions of a unifying Europe to us as *faits accomplis* not subject to effective discussion is alien to the tradition of US-European relations”, Kissinger stated while claiming that “as an old ally, the United States should be given an opportunity to express its concerns before final decisions affecting its interests are taken”.^[4] For Martin J. Hillenbrand, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (1969-1972) and Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany (1972-1976), the Europeans could only regard Kissinger’s initiative as an American attempt to obtain “quasi membership on the cheap”.^[5] In what turned out to be a shocking experience for Nixon and Kissinger, the Europeans decided to prepare — among themselves — the common reply that would be given to Washington. Instead of opening the way for more American influence on the continent, “the European nations had decided that they would work on a paper (on Atlantic relations, no less) without any consultation with us. We would be shown no drafts; we would have no opportunity to express our views”.^[6] Kissinger’s project failed and, instead, the Community’s heads of State and government adopted a Declaration on European Identity in which they confirmed their “determination ... to establish themselves as a distinct and original identity” in world affairs.^[7]

In 1990, during the Community’s preparation for the Internal Market, U.S. Commerce Secretary Robert Mosbacher made a new attempt at curtailing Europe’s decision-making autonomy. He “advocated a seat at the [European Community] table at least as an observer” because he wanted “to engage the EC in a broadened

[1] William BURR and Robert A. WAMPLER, ‘With Friends Like These’ ... Kissinger, the Atlantic Alliance and the Abortive Year of Europe, 1973-1974, paper presented at the International Conference: NATO, the Warsaw Pact and the Rise of Détente, 1965-1972, Machiavelli Center for Cold War Studies, Dobbiacho, 26-28 September 2002, p. 11.

[2] Henry A. KISSINGER, “The Year of Europe”, address to the Associated Press, New York, 23 April 1973, reprinted in Gerard MALLY, ed., *The New Europe and the United States. Partners or Rivals* (Lexington, Lexington Books, 1974), p. 29.

[3] W. BURR and R. A. WAMPLER, *With Friends Like These*, op. cit., p. 11.

[4] Henry A. KISSINGER, “US-European Relations”, address to the Pilgrims of Great Britain, London, 12 December 1973, reprinted in G. MALLY, *The New Europe and the United States*, op. cit., p. 42.

[5] Martin J. HILLENBRAND, *Fragments of Our Time. Memoirs of a Diplomat* (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 1998), p. 331.

[6] Henry A. KISSINGER, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1982), p. 188.

[7] “Statement on European Identity, Copenhagen, 14-15 December 1973”, 7th General Report on the Activities of the European Communities 1973, pp. 492-496.

productive dialogue at all levels”.^[1] Without surprise, Commission President Jacques Delors dismissed Mosbacher’s request because it could be interpreted “as a deliberate attempt to interfere in our affairs, something which would be unacceptable between two equal partners”.^[2] Still — to this day — Kissinger and many of his colleagues as former Secretaries of State and Defense have never stopped pleading openly for a direct American involvement in the EU’s decision-making bodies.^[3] The advocates of a U.S. seat at the Community table continue to argue that “members of the U.S. executive branch could be associated with the work of separate [EU] Councils”. The key issue, they say, is “not one of U.S. membership in the European Union, but one of association, dialogue, and cooperation before decisions are reached”.^[4] As could be expected, the European reaction to such requests has been persistently negative.^[5] The “seat at the table” proposal is, indeed, incompatible with an equal partnership where both partners respect each other’s decision-making autonomy. As European Commissioner Karel Van Miert correctly stated in reply to Secretary Mosbacher’s request of 1990, “the seat at the table formula is not a good idea [as] this could imply co-decision and veto rights and risk[s] to lead to obsessive patronizing ... What we need is a pragmatic partnership, open to all levels and providing for trip wires as soon as there are signs of conflict and difficulties”.^[6] The next Administration would do well to learn from the “seat at the table” failures of the past. Without a straightforward acceptance by Washington of the EU’s decision-making autonomy, there can be no future for an equal partnership.

3.2. Accepting the EU as a foreign policy actor in its own right

Bringing the equal partnership into practice does not only mean respecting the European decision-making autonomy. It also includes accepting the EU as an actor

[1] Robert MOSBACHER, “Address to the Columbia Institute Conference on the U.S. Role in a United Europe”, Washington, D.C., 24 February 1990, p. 5.

[2] Jacques DELORS, Presentation of the Annual Programme of the Commission for 1990, *Verbatim Report of Proceedings in the European Parliament*, 17 February 1990, p. 150.

[3] Henry A. KISSINGER, The Atlantic Alliance Needs Renewal in a Changed World, *International Herald Tribune*, 2 March, 1992. See also Henry A. KISSINGER, “Speech at the 37th Munich Conference on Security Policy”, Munich, 2 March 2001, pp. 3-4.

[4] “Joint Declaration: Renewing the Transatlantic Partnership” (Washington, D.C., Center for Strategic and International Studies, 14 May 2003). This Declaration was endorsed by prominent members of Washington’s foreign policy establishment such as former Secretaries of State Madeleine K. Albright, Warren Christopher, Lawrence S. Eagleburger and Alexander M. Haig and former Secretaries of Defense Harold Brown, Frank C. Carlucci, William S. Cohen and James R. Schlesinger.

[5] See, for instance, Jacques DELORS and Notre Europe, *Defining Together a New World Order*, *Le Monde*, 28 May 2003.

[6] Karel VAN MIERT, *The Relationship between Europe and the US in the 1990s: An Economic and Political Analysis*, lecture delivered at the Elsevier Seminars, Brussels, 4 April 1990, p. 10.

who is trying to speak with a single voice in external relations, including security and defense matters. On this point, most Administrations have given mixed signals. The team of President George W. Bush forms no exception. Before coming to power, some of its prominent members had taken an openly hostile approach towards the EU's attempts to build a common foreign and security policy.^[1] Furthermore, influential voices in the Administration seemed to advocate a so-called policy of "disaggregation" vis-à-vis the EU. Richard Haass, Director of the Policy Planning Staff at the State Department, argued that "we must disaggregate the European unity by opting for bilateralism: it is much better to talk to different capitals than to Brussels".^[2] Later, Haass somewhat reformulated his remark: "Where there is no consensus within Europe — something increasingly likely to be the case now that the EU has expanded to twenty-five countries and over time will take in more — the United States should feel free to invite individual countries to work with it if they so choose".^[3] Against the backdrop of Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's divisive distinction between "old" and "new" Europe, the Bush Administration did little to counteract the impression that promoting European unity was far from a priority for Washington.^[4] Instead, the Bush team sent strong signals to the 2004 accession countries that direct, bilateral relations with Washington needed to continue as before.^[5] In the words of Elisabeth Jones, Bush's Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, the Administration had been "especially aggressive ... to reassure [the accession countries] that just because they are joining the European Union does not mean they have less of us ... because we continue to work directly with each of the Member States on any number of bilateral issues that are of importance to all of us".^[6]

The Bush Administration's public rhetoric on European integration changed considerably in the second term. Following the deep transatlantic crisis over the military

[1] John BOLTON, The Next President and NATO, *Washington Times*, 21 July 1999; John BOLTON, The European Threat to NATO's Future, *Financial Times*, 11 February 2000. By naming the author of these articles as Under Secretary of State for International Security, President George W. Bush signaled that he did not seem to be fundamentally opposed to the views expressed.

[2] Quoted by Pierre HASSNER, Europe in US Policy (panel discussion) in *New Geopolitics of Central and Eastern Europe. Between European Union and United States* (Warsaw, Stefan Batory Foundation, 2005), p. 75.

[3] Richard N. HAASS, *The Opportunity. America's Moment to Alter History's Course* (New York, PublicAffairs, 2005), p. 165-166.

[4] Donald H. RUMSFELD, "Briefing at the Foreign Press Center", Washington, D.C., 22 January 2003, pp. 2-3.

[5] Whether Bush Jr. was actually pursuing a policy of "disaggregation" is discussed in two insightful articles by John PETERSON, Europe, America, Iraq: Worst Ever, Ever Worsening, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 42 (Annual Review 2004), p. 17; and America as a European Power: the End of Empire by Integration?, *International Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 4, July 2004, pp. 620-623.

[6] "Statement of A. Elisabeth Jones", U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on Europe, *Hearing on United States Priorities in Europe*, 108th Congress, 2nd Session, 3 March 2004, pp. 29-30. See also George W. BUSH, "Address to the Faculty and Students of Warsaw University", Warsaw, 15 June 2001.

invasion of Iraq in 2002-2003, the doubtful results of the “coalition of the willing” and the tragic failure of the neoconservative attempt to transform the world, there was “a conscious decision” at the beginning of Bush’s second term “to reach out to Europe”.^[1] President Bush’s first trip in his second term and Condoleezza Rice’s first trip as Secretary of State were to Europe and aimed at rebuilding transatlantic relations.^[2] While refraining from using a Kennedy-style “equal partnership” terminology, the Administration started underlining the importance of joint transatlantic action. On the 50th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome in 2007, Bush stressed that “the world requires the cooperation of the United States and Europe to confront and overcome the challenges we face”.^[3] The Bush team claimed that it was therefore working “very methodically, issue-by-issue, to build an actual strategic consensus between the United States and Europe on what it is we are trying to do in the world together”.^[4] In the increasingly multipolar world, the EU is — in the words of Secretary Rice — “an important drawing card ... an important force for stability and ... a force for good and for the promotion of democratic principles abroad”.^[5] The learning process of the Bush team with respect to European integration might form a good starting point for the next Administration. The new President should recognize unequivocally that in today’s multipolar world the United States has a strong interest in accepting the EU as a full partner.

4. EUROPE AS AN EQUAL PARTNER: WHAT DOES A UNITED EUROPE HAVE TO OFFER?

Seen from America’s own perspective, there are three solid arguments why the United States should feel more confident in welcoming the EU as a united actor in world affairs.

4.1. The United States is in need of solid international partners

During Bush term, the world’s geo-political and geo-economic reality has visibly changed. The unipolar moment seems to have passed. The rise of China and India

[1] Kurt VOLKER, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, *Transatlantic Relations in the Fall Semester: Priorities and Opportunities*, Chatham House, London, 4 October 2007, p. 2. On the failure of the neoconservative strategy to transform the world, see Francis FUKUYAMA, *After the Neocons. America at the Crossroads* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2006).

[2] K. VOLKER, *Transatlantic Relations in the Fall Semester*, op. cit., p. 2.

[3] “50th Anniversary of the Signing of the Treaties of Rome: Personal message from the President”, Washington, D.C., 26 March 2007, 2.

[4] K. VOLKER, *Transatlantic Relations in the Fall Semester*, op. cit., p. 2.

[5] Condoleezza RICE, *Press Availability at the NATO Ministerial*, Vilnius, Lithuania, 21 April 2005, p. 4.

and the resurgence of Russia as an international power are subject of multiple publications.^[1] Goldman Sachs has famously argued that the economic potential of Brazil, Russia, India, and China (the so-called BRICs) is such that they may be among the four most dominant economies by the year 2050.^[2] New foreign policy forums such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (an intergovernmental mutual security organization including China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) and the IBSA Dialogue Forum (gathering India, Brazil and South Africa) are playing an increasingly important role on the world stage.^[3] At the same time, the persistent double deficits, a weakening dollar, turmoil on the U.S. financial markets, increasing oil dependency and the visible limits of military might have raised growing doubts on the sustainability of America's primacy.^[4]

In the stage "beyond American hegemony", it is fair to believe that the United States will increasingly have to rely on strong partners to get things done. Washington will need allies if it intends to give priority to affirming a system of peace based on democratic values.^[5] "And that's why", in Secretary Rice's words, "at core, at base, the relationship with Europe and with the transatlantic powers ... is so core to American interest".^[6] However, contrary to what would be needed to make such partnership possible, the degree of convergence in foreign policy views between the United States and its European partners has been steadily declining in the past decade. A historical comparison of voting coincidence in the United Nations General Assembly reveals that — over the last 12 years — the degree of Europe's convergence with the United States on the major foreign policy questions has markedly decreased.^[7] In 1995, there was an 85% coincidence between the United

[1] Mark LEONARD, *Divided World: the Struggle for Primacy in 2020* (London, Centre for European Reform, 2007); Karl KAISER, Les grandes puissances au XXI^e siècle, *Politique étrangère*, Vol. 72, No. 3, 2007, p. 619; Andrew HURRELL, Hegemony, liberalism and global order: what space for would-be great powers?, *International Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 1, January 2006, p. 1 and the articles on Brazil, Russia, India and China in the same issue.

[2] Dominic WILSON and Roopa PURUSHOTHAMAN, Dreaming with BRICs: The Path to 2050, *Global Economics Paper*, No. 99 (Goldman Sachs, October 2003).

[3] Alyson J. K. BAILES *et al*, The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, *SIPRI Policy Paper*, No. 17 (May 2007); Alyson J. K. BAILES, The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Europe, *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 3, August 2007, p. 13; Chris ALDEN and Marco Antonio VIEIRA, The New Diplomacy of the South: South Africa, Brazil, India and Trilateralism, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 7, 2005, p. 1077; Daniel FLEMES, Emerging Middle Powers' Soft Balancing Strategy: State and Perspectives of the IBSA Dialogue Forum, *GIGA Working Paper*, No. 57, 2007.

[4] This is a point made since many decades by David P. CALLEO. See, for instance, his *Beyond American Hegemony* (New York, Basic Books, 1987); A New Era of Overstretch? American Policy in Europe and Asia, *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Spring 1998, p. 11; Unipolar Illusions, *Survival*, Vol. 49, No. 3, Autumn 2007, p. 73.

[5] For an interesting exchange on this issue, see Condoleezza RICE, "Interview with Josef Joffe of *Die Zeit* Newspaper", U.S. Department of State Press Release, 20 December 2007, pp. 5-6.

[6] C. RICE, "Interview with Josef Joffe", *op. cit.*, p. 6.

[7] See the annual reports *Voting Practices in the United Nations* (Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of State, available at <http://www.state.gov/p/io/conrpt/vtgprac/>).

Kingdom and the Clinton Administration in General Assembly voting. In 2001, the George W. Bush Administration’s first year in office, this percentage decreased to 63%. By 2006, the voting coincidence between London and Washington had further sunk to 53%. The figures indicate a similar evolution with respect to all other EU Member States, irrespective of whether they were, or were not, part of the “coalition of the willing” in Iraq. The voting coincidence between Warsaw and Washington, for example, decreased from 77% in 1995, to 54% in 2001 and 43% in 2006. The conclusion should not be that transatlantic partnership with Europe has become impossible. What the figures are showing is that the United States has — over the last decade — gradually been setting itself apart from the rest of the democratic world. In an international system “after American hegemony”, such a course of action seems unsustainable. The lesson for the incoming Administration is that, to reconnect with its democratic partners, a change in Washington’s policy looks indispensable.

4.2. A united Europe is a more stable partner than bilateral alliances and “coalitions of the willing”

When looking for partners for the military expedition in Iraq, President George W. Bush resorted to a “coalition of the willing”. While it allowed Washington to claim that it was not acting in a unilateral manner, the “coalition” proved unstable, with little value for the long term. Following a series of electoral defeats of the governments that supported the Bush coalition, many of the initial partners — such as Spain, Italy, Poland and Australia — have already withdrawn or are concretely planning to withdraw their military presence from Iraq.

Some old hands of the first Bush Administration continue pleading for the bilateral course of action *vis-à-vis* Europe.^[1] Such a bilateral option is not, however, Washington’s most rational choice. In weighting the arguments for an equal partnership with a united Europe, the next Administration would do well to take inspiration from its experience in the World Trade Organization (WTO), a framework where the United States has been dealing with a single European voice for decades. Already in the old GATT, the United States had come to the conclusion that the stability and solidity of deals made with a united Europe far outweighed the possible short-term advantages of bilateralism. When, during an episode in 1988, France broke ranks with the European Community and wanted to have its individual voice heard in GATT decision-making, the United States was one of the most fervent defenders

[1] John BOLTON, Britain can’t have two best friends, *Financial Times*, 31 July 2007.

of the Community's unity. Considering that the Community — speaking through the European Commission's single voice — had been a stable partner in the GATT, the representative of the United States wondered whether that was going to change and whether third parties would in the future have to deal with the Commission as well as with each Member State separately. That would mean "that at any time, on any issue, when one had an agreement of any sort with the representative of the European Communities, it would be possible that subsequently one of the Member States might void that agreement". The United States delegate hoped that this was not the case and that the Community would continue to speak through the Commission as its sole spokesman "whose words bind the Community" in the GATT.^[1] By helping to protect the Community's status in the GATT, the United States was trying to protect the solidity of the Community's trade commitments.

American trade negotiators have not only applauded the Community as a guarantor of international commitments, but also as a facilitator for reaching agreements. According to Stuart E. Eizenstat, at that time Clinton's Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade, it was "a good bet that the Uruguay Round would not have succeeded in covering agriculture, intellectual property, or services if the United States had been required to negotiate independently with each Member State".^[2] Eizenstat appreciated that the EU's complex political system was conducive to international agreement. Firstly, the Union's inclusive internal decision-making process — aiming at consensus — allows reluctant Member States to voice their objections during international negotiations in the framework of the EU's Council of Ministers. But instead of provoking an immediate breakdown of the negotiations, such objection by individual Member States can be translated by the Union's single negotiator into language that does not cause the international talks to go down with a bump. Secondly, the Union regularly serves as an internal solidarity framework for the Member States facing particular difficulties as a result of the outcome of international negotiations. This sometimes gives rise to what can be called "internal compensatory adjustment" that keeps reluctant Member States on board.^[3] The next Administration would do well to remember these facts and realize the potential of dealing on an equal basis with such an effective facilitator of international commitments.

[1] GATT Council, Minutes of Meeting held on 16 June 1988, C/M/222, pp. 13-15.

[2] Stuart E. EIZENSTAT, *A Strong Europe is in the U.S. Interest*, USA Text (U.S. Mission to the EU), 24 May 1996, p. 2.

[3] This paragraph is based on Youri DEVUYST, *The European Community and the Conclusion of the Uruguay Round*, in Carolyn RHODES and Sonia MAZEY, eds., *The State of the European Union. Vol. 3: Building a European Polity?* (Boulder CO, Lynne Rienner, 1995), pp. 449-467.

4.3. A united Europe delivers the burden-sharing promise

Washington has recognized that the EU, to the degree it has managed to act in unity, "has been an important force for stability and for progress".^[1] At the end of the Cold War, the European Community's leading role in anchoring the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the Western camp constituted one of the main reasons for President George H. W. Bush Sr. to provide support to European integration.^[2] Bush Sr.'s National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft has recalled that the Community's involvement was "badly needed in order to augment our own slight assistance to Eastern Europe".^[3] At the 1989 G-7 Summit in Paris, the European Commission was given the responsibility of managing the technical and financial assistance to the Central and Eastern European countries. Bush Sr. considered this burden-sharing arrangement as a major victory for American foreign policy and "was exceptionally pleased" with this role for the Community.^[4] The EU is currently fulfilling a similar task with respect to the South Eastern European (SEE) countries. The former Yugoslav republics and Albania have all been offered the perspective of eventual EU membership.^[5] In the meantime, the EU is providing them large amounts of technical and financial assistance. Looking at the situation in 2000, the EU was responsible for 66% of the donor contributions to the SEE Stability Pact. The United States contribution amounted to 3%.^[6]

In the broader field of assistance to developing countries, the EU accounted in 2005 for 55% of world-wide official development, representing 0.33% of its GDP. The United States was spending 19% of world-wide official development aid, representing 0.11% of its GDP.^[7] In addition to being the biggest donor of development aid, the EU also became the largest trading partner for the poorest countries. The EU has notably turned into the main importer of agricultural products from developing countries, more than the United States, Canada and Japan together.^[8] At the start of the 21st century, 50% of the contributions to United Nations develop-

[1] Condoleezza RICE, *Press Availability at the NATO Ministerial*, Vilnius, Lithuania, 21 April 2005, p. 4.

[2] George H.W. BUSH and Brent SCOWCROFT, *A World Transformed* (New York, Vintage Books, 1998), p. 42.

[3] G. H.W. BUSH and B. SCOWCROFT, *A World Transformed*, op. cit., p. 128.

[4] George H.W. BUSH, *Outline of Remarks at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Headquarters in Brussels*, 4 December 1989, p. 4.

[5] European Council at Santa Maria da Feira, *Presidency Conclusions*, 19-20 June 2000, para. 67.

[6] "The European Union and South Eastern Europe", in *EU Facts & Arguments: Annexes - Factsheet 3* (Washington, D.C., EU Presidency with the European Commission Delegation, December 2000), p. 1.

[7] *The European Union and the United States. Global Partners, Global Responsibilities* (Brussels, European Commission, 2005), p. 29.

[8] *The European Union and the United States*, op. cit., p. 31.

ment, food, population and related funds came from the EU (17% for the United States).^[1] In the joint enterprise of spreading development — one of President Kennedy's main strategic priorities — it seems indisputable that the EU has taken up a major burden-sharing role in world affairs. In this regard, the Kennedy team seems to have made a rather accurate policy prediction with respect to the benefits of European unity.

This does not imply that the United States is no longer complaining about the lack of burden-sharing on the part of Europe. For the Pentagon, the Europeans are still lagging far behind in terms of military spending and efficiency.^[2] In 2003, the United States was spending 3.7% of its Gross Domestic Product on defence. The EU average was 1.7%. At \$ 453.6 billion, the United States national defence outlay for fiscal year 2004 was more than twice the combined EU-25 defence budgets for 2004.^[3] But Kennedy's original list of burden-sharing subjects went well beyond collective defence and offensive military capabilities. It is mainly in the civilian and peacekeeping areas that the EU has been delivering its "Kennedy-promise". In the framework of the United Nations, the EU share in the budget for peacekeeping operations for 2001-2003 was 40% (28% for the United States). At the same time, the EU is further developing its own intervention capacity.^[4] Under the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), no less than ten military and civilian operations are currently ongoing, while eight operations have been completed. Ongoing operations include the EU police mission in Afghanistan, the EU integrated rule of law mission for Iraq and military operations in such countries as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Eastern Chad and the North Eastern Central African Republic.^[5] The EU's Treaty of Lisbon of 2007 further expands the range of military and civilian missions that the EU will be able to undertake outside the Union. The list includes "joint disarmament operations, humanitarian and rescue tasks, military advice and assistance tasks, conflict prevention and peace-keeping tasks, tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peace-making and post-conflict stabilization".^[6] The Treaty of Lisbon also stipulates that those Member States whose military capabilities fulfill higher criteria and which have made more

[1] "European Union-United Nations Statistics", in *EU-UN Info Pack* (Brussels, European Commission, April 2001), p. 1.

[2] This is a complaint that pre-dates the military expeditions of the Bush Jr. See President Bill Clinton's Secretary of Defense William S. COHEN, Preserving History's Greatest Alliance, *The Washington Post*, 8 January 2001.

[3] Gustav LINDSTROM, *EU-US Burdensharing: Who does What?*, Chaillot Paper No. 82 (Paris, EU Institute for Security Studies, 2005), pp. 29 and 80.

[4] "European Union-United Nations Statistics", *op. cit.*, p. 1.

[5] http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_fo/showPage.asp?id=268&lang=en&mode=g.

[6] *Treaty of Lisbon*, art. 1(49), inserting a new art. 28 B TEU.

binding commitments with a view to undertaking the most demanding missions shall establish a new form of “permanent structured cooperation” within the EU.^[1] These developments in European integration are likely to turn the Union into an even more capable international actor, and therefore, an even more interesting burden-sharing partner than today.

5. CONCLUSION

In his 1962 speech at Independence Hall, President Kennedy formulated a coherent concept for transatlantic cooperation in an interdependent world. Since 1962, both the degree of interdependence and the objective need for close collaboration in international relations have only grown. American foreign policy as formulated during the first term of the Bush Jr. Administration could be considered as the unsuccessful anti-thesis of Kennedy’s ideal.^[2] However, since the tumultuous years 2002 and 2003, Washington’s foreign policy establishment seems to have concluded that unilateralism and “coalitions of the willing” cannot be the future of a sustainable American foreign policy. In 2007, in a revealing statement that seemed directed both to Europe and to the next Administration, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns — the highest career diplomat at the State Department — argued as follows:

“I’m not a Republican, I’m not a Democrat, I’m not a political person. So I just say this objectively. In my country there is a consensus that America cannot live in the world alone, that America should not try to face the world alone, that we need allies, we need friends. We need to tend to those alliances and nurture them and rebuild them when they are frayed and when we have great disagreements ... So I think the fundamental understanding in our society, in our government, in our political class in the United States, is that we need to work with others around the world ... So we understand that in 2007 and for all the future to come, we cannot act alone ... We can’t be unilateralist, not when most of these problems can’t be resolved by us alone ... America does want the closest possible relationship with the European Union”.^[3]

[1] *Treaty of Lisbon*, art. 1(49), inserting a new art. 28 A(6) TEU.

[2] Stanley CROSSICK, *Time for one voice across the Atlantic*, *European Voice*, 1 February 2007.

[3] R. Nicholas BURNS, *Challenges and Opportunities Facing the Transatlantic Community*, Remarks at the Center for European Policy Studies, Brussels, 26 March 2007, pp. 6-8.

If Burns' statement reflects the current thinking of Washington's foreign policy circles, it might be a good starting point for the future development — under the next Administration — of a mutually beneficial transatlantic partnership. In light of the many global environmental, developmental and security problems, such a partnership will be a necessity, not a luxury. However, as the analysis above has shown, the American willingness to tap the EU's resources is not enough. An equal partnership also requires a readiness to accept the EU as an autonomous foreign policy player. In words that are similar to those of Kennedy and Ball, David Calleo has convincingly argued that an effective transatlantic partnership is unlikely to take root "except as a friendship among equals, a friendship based on balance":

"Europe, with its vast postwar experience in anticipating and conciliating conflicts among states, ought to have a great role to play in shaping the world's future structure ... And America, having done so much to bring this Europe into being, must now have the wisdom to stick fast to its own generous vision, to embrace the partnership of equals that has consistently been that vision's logical conclusion".^[1]

[1] David P. CALLEO, Transatlantic Folly: NATO vs. the EU, *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 3, Fall 2003, p. 23.

A SMALL POWER UNDER THE BLUE HELMET THE EVOLUTION OF BELGIAN PEACEKEEPING POLICY

Michel LIÉGEAIS and Galia GLUME***

1. BELGIUM: SMALL COUNTRY, NOT SUCH A SMALL POWER

Belgium is a small country by its size (30,528 sq km) and its population (about 11 millions). It is nevertheless a country of significant economic importance as its GDP comes to about US \$370 billion. In addition, its population enjoys one of the world highest standards of living, as Belgium appears in 13th place in the 2006 Human Development Indicator (HDI) ranking established by UNDP. As far as foreign policy is concerned, though not being a major player on the international stage, Belgium may in some circumstances weight more than expected by the common sense. Actually, Belgium is a founding and dynamic member of every Western and European organization^[1]. In addition, it hosts several of these international bodies in Brussels which is therefore an important diplomatic hub. With regard to the United Nations, whose Belgium is also one of the founding countries, the country contributes as high as US \$20,5 millions to the regular budget^[2], ranking 17th, and is expected to bear a share of about US \$58 millions of the 2007 peacekeeping budget^[3]. Last but not least, for the years 2007 and 2008, Belgium is sitting for the fifth time^[4] as non-permanent member of the Security Council, thus ranking rather surprisingly as the eighth country having been the most frequently elected therein.

Neither is Belgian a military power. Since the end of the Cold War, Belgium has severely reduced the size of its armed forces. Its defence budget currently amounts to about four billions US \$ which represents 1.2 percent of the Belgian GDP. The military manpower recently slipped under 40,000 and investments suffered from

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[1] Council of Europe, European Communities and European Union, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

[2] Source: UN Budget 2006.

[3] UN General Assembly, Sixty-first Session, Fifth Committee, Agenda item 132, Administrative and Budgetary Aspects of the Financing of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, 15 January 2007, 1/C.5/61/18.

[4] 1947-1948, 1955-1956, 1971-1972, 1991-1992 and 2007-2008.

recurrent cuts for the two last decades. Altogether, taking into account manpower, equipment and financial constraints, Belgium is currently able to sustain a permanent deployment of maximum 2,000 soldiers on foreign theatres.

This information depicts a small country with limited resources which, at the same time, owns valuable assets that in some circumstances allow Belgium to be influential on a particular issue or even to demonstrate authority in many multilateral bodies. Influence and authority are nothing else than particular ways of — smoothly though — exercising power. In such a landscape, what is the importance of United Nations peacekeeping? How is it regarded from Brussels? Considering the strong involvement of the country towards multilateralism in general — and within the UN in particular — how does Belgium practice peacekeeping, and why?

Trevor Findlay^[1] drew up an inventory reflecting the diversity of the Member States' motivations to take part in UN peace operations. Of course, most of the time, the States pursue several of the following objectives simultaneously:

- (1) altruism, international citizenship: Canada, Sweden, Norway;
- (2) assertion of an ambition to become permanent member of the Security Council (on the assumption of its widening): Brazil, Germany, Japan, India, Pakistan, Nigeria;
- (3) support for a candidature as non-permanent member of the Security Council;
- (4) international assertion of a recently acquired independence: countries of Eastern and Central Europe;
- (5) military demonstration of capacity as precondition for joining NATO: Baltic states;
- (6) payment of a symbolic debt to UN by States having profited from a previous UN operation: El Salvador, Namibia, Jordan, Egypt;
- (7) consolidation of a democratic culture within the armed forces: Argentina;
- (8) financing of the budget of defence through UN refund: Fiji Islands, Ghana, Bangladesh;
- (9) training of the deployed units.

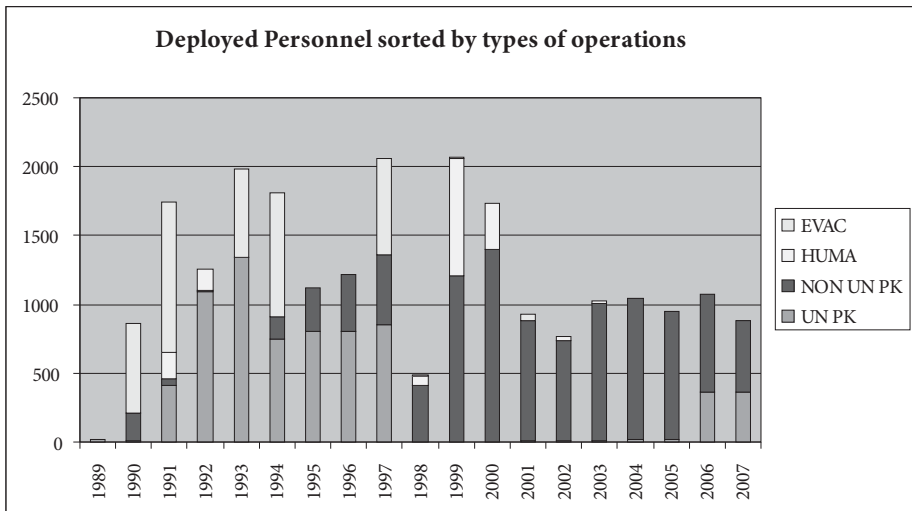
At first glance, as far as Belgium is concerned and apart from other national interests, only motivations (1), (3) and (9) could possibly apply. Though, findings exposed

[1] Trevor FINDLAY (ed.), *Challenges for the New Peacekeepers*, SIPRI Research Report No. 12 (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 7-10.

here below suggest that the underlying rationale that brings Belgium to take part in UN peacekeeping operations is of more complex nature.

2. MILITARY OPERATIONS ABROAD: A QUANTITATIVE APPROACH

Since the end of the cold war, Belgium carried out more than 100 military operations^[1] abroad, sending overseas a cumulate total of 23,000 soldiers. On the given period, the yearly average deployed personnel amounts 1,200. Given Belgian Armed Forces manpower and capabilities, these figures are surprisingly high. They suggest that, for the last two decades, Belgium has almost constantly reached its maximum deployment capability. A majority of these operations were peacekeeping and *stricto sensu* “humanitarian” operations^[2] that, most of the time, consisted in air shipments performed by the Belgian Air Force^[3]. This typically Belgian readiness to use so-called “C-130 diplomacy” will be discussed further.



[1] The accounting of military external operations faces the problem of defining what an operation is. From the Armed Forces HQ point of view, sending only one officer as military observer constitutes an operation since it requires a minimal planning as well as a formal governmental clearance. Another problem is raised when Belgium takes part to long duration missions needing the deployment of relieving troops, as the rotation that usually occurs every three or four months also requires a Governmental clearance. Therefore, with the exception of these first overall operations figures, the charts will focus on deployed personnel figures, which are a more reliable indicator.

[2] Operations of humanitarian help in the wake of natural disaster or in conflict situations, performed outside any formal UN or non UN multinational operation.

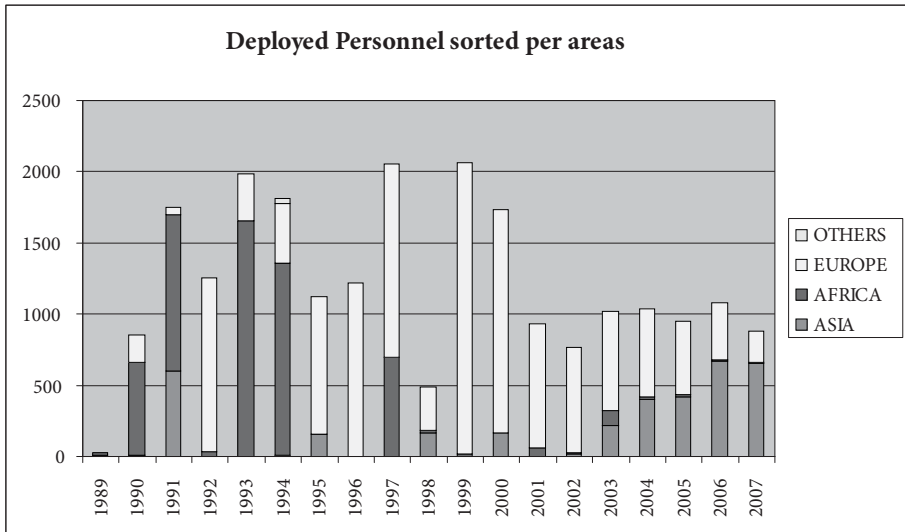
[3] The 15th Wing Air Transport of the Belgian Air Force is equipped with 10 C-130 and 2 Airbus A310-200.

The first chart sorts the deployed personnel on the given timeframe by type of operations. It clearly shows how Belgium increased its commitment to UN peacekeeping in the beginning of the 90s with significant contributions to UN operations in former Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR and UNTAES), Somalia (UNOSOM) and Rwanda (UNAMIR). Caution is required in assuming that this activity revival directly results from the Belgian presence in the Security Council in 1991-1992. The overall post-cold war context played the most substantive role in the “blowing up” of UN peacekeeping activities. But lately, one could hardly consider a coincidence that the Belgian return in UN peacekeeping occurs simultaneously with its 2007-2008 Security Council membership. In-between, the chart shows a 1998-2005 period during which Belgium did not take part in any UN peacekeeping operation^[1].

If the UN framework prevailed during the 1990s, after 1995, NATO and the European Union replaced the United Nations for the management of the military aspects of Balkans stabilization and consequently, most of the Belgian troops abroad were then engaged under the NATO banner —and later under European flag. Moreover, the killing of 10 Belgian peacekeepers in Rwanda in April 1994 in the very days preceding a genocide that was about to kill one million, caused a fundamental breakdown in the Belgian practice of peacekeeping.

This breakdown is illustrated by Chart 2 which sorts deployed personnel by areas of operation.

[1] During these years, only a tenth Belgian soldiers remained involved in UN peacekeeping operations, mainly as military observers.



Until 1994, Africa hosted a large portion of Belgian overseas operations, either for peacekeeping, humanitarian aid or nationals' evacuation purposes. But from 1995 to the early 2000s, Europe became the main destination of external operations, notably with significant contributions to NATO-led operations in Bosnia (IFOR, SFOR) and Kosovo (KFOR). From 2003 on, the gradual reduction of the international military presence in the Balkans enabled Belgium to follow the trend and to re-assign the spared capacities to ISAF and more recently UNIFIL, making Central Asia and the Middle East the new core theatres of Belgian foreign operations.

Thus, crossing type of engagement and area distribution, three main periods arise. The first one runs from 1989 to 1994. During that time-frame, a significant majority of Belgian operations were deployed in Africa under UN mandate. On the opposite, the 1995-2003 time-frame saw most operations occurring in the Balkans under NATO command. Finally, from 2003 onwards, along with the EU takeover in FYROM and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the trend shows a gradual slipping from Europe to Eurasia with almost equal share between UN and non-UN operations.

Three questions emerge from the above quantitative outline: what are the particular goals pursued by Belgium in engaging troops in those UN operations? How are these objectives articulated with the overall Belgian foreign policy? What are the explanatory factors of the identified evolutions?

Historical evolution

2.1. The end of the cold war and the seat of non-permanent member to the Security Council

When Belgium entered the Security Council on 1 January 1991, its representatives shared a crucial moment for the world and a crucial time for the institution. On one hand, the end of the cold war dismantled the hurdle which, up to that point, had reduced the Council to quasi-impotence by the inopportune use of veto. Moreover, with the Iraqi war going on, the time was decisive to the SC, whose Member States were likely to re-shape the Council's contribution to a collective security system entering a new era. On the other hand, the end of the bipolar confrontation contributed to the bursting of new conflicts generated by ethnic and nationalist forces hitherto inhibited by the domination of the great powers. The ambitions of Belgium were up to the challenge:

“Belgium entered to the Security Council with the ambition to fully assume its responsibilities in international peace and security and to reinforce the effectiveness and the cohesion of the Council. It should be stressed that it took its seat without personal agenda, and in all independence of mind insofar as it was not directly affected by any of the questions on the agenda of the Security Council. Faithful to a political line that it constantly illustrated during the process of European unification, Belgium wanted to defend in priority the common interest, namely, in this case, that of the United Nations”^[1].

The whole rationale of Belgian diplomacy is therein summarized. The Belgian policy towards the United Nations is designed as a natural prolongation of Belgian foreign policy's traditional features, mainly articulated around the process of European integration. In practice, Belgium puts forward its own interests through the promotion of the common interest. The underlying idea is that the Belgian interests will be best pursued as the Rule of Law applies to international politics through strong multilateral institutions. If anarchy and power politics prevail, there are few chances for a small player as Belgium of being heard in any way.

Unless being sullied with inconsistency, the Belgians could hardly remain uninvolved in peacekeeping operations. In 1990, only five Belgian officers were on duty as military observers within UN operations. From 1991 on, the situation changed

[1] *La Belgique au Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies 1991-1992*, Rapport du Gouvernement, Chambre des Représentants et Sénat de Belgique, 887/1-92/93, p. 1.

drastically with more than 650 Belgian Blue Helmets deployed in Croatia, a hundred others in Bosnia-Herzegovina and 587 in Somalia. In addition, 13 Military Observers were serving in Kampuchea, Pakistan and the Middle East. In 1992, the country's financial contribution to the UN peacekeeping budget rose with more than 18 million dollars.

Meanwhile, in about one year of time, UN peacekeeping shifted from a situation of "excess of credibility" to a major crisis encompassing mission creep on the ground and conceptual questioning about the very nature of peacekeeping. Thereafter, the Security Council itself saw its position weakened since the diplomatic centre of gravity escaped the UN for the benefit of *ad hoc* diplomatic forums such as the "Contact Group" or the G8.

Belgium went through these evolutions with a particular intensity. Initially in its quality of member of the Security Council, then as a troop contributor in three UN operations which encountered the worst problems: UNPROFOR, UNOSOM and UNAMIR.

2.2. The Rwandan trauma and its consequences

Even if Belgian soldiers took part in the operations in ex-Yugoslavia and Somalia, they were not directly caught in the most dramatic episodes of these two conflicts, as were the Italians (Mogadiscio), the French (Sarajevo) or the Dutch (Srebrenica). The limited Belgian casualties resulted from mines and road accidents. Moreover, the good records of Belgian troops operating under UN flag contributed to the credibility of the country's diplomacy within the Organization. So that in Fall 1993, as the planning process of UNAMIR was on its way, Belgium was asked by DPKO to provide the core contingent. Together with the previous performances of the Belgian Blue Helmets, the enduring Belgian experience in the Great Lakes area obviously induced the UN Secretary General to address such a request to Brussels. In doing so, however, the Organization contravened one of the usual principles ruling the composition of a peacekeeping force, namely: no soldiers coming from bordering countries or having particular interests in the area of deployment. And, incontestably, Belgium had some. However, in the absence of any other country ready to assume the leading role of UNAMIR, appointing the former colonial power was the only option.

Perfectly aware of that serious issue, Belgium endeavoured to balance its uneasy position at the price of some military inconsistencies. Although providing the main and by far best-equipped contingent, the Belgian Government — contrary to recent UN practice and against the opinion of its own military hierarchy — formally decided not to ask the UNAMIR command. The latter was consequently entrusted to the Canadian General Romeo Dallaire, even though his country did not provide the mission with any soldier. The same logic — i.e. avoiding a too visible Belgian presence and preventing the risk of confusion between UNAMIR and Belgium — partly explains^[1] the decision of the Belgian Government to authorize the deployment of only 370 men, whereas UN asked for 800 and while the Belgian Headquarters estimated the minimal manpower required at 600 to carry out the mandate under good conditions.

However, these precautions of a cosmetic nature did not address the core issue. What was on its way was a coming clash between the African policy of Belgium, on the one hand, and its activist diplomacy within the UN, on the other hand. The hesitations and excuses of the Belgian Government during the months preceding the deployment illustrate the ambivalence generated by these interfering agendas. The Belgian decision-makers perceived the uncertainties and risks related to an involvement in UNAMIR, but at the same time, they seized what appeared as a unique opportunity of strategic repositioning in the middle of the Great Lakes region. In this respect, the testimonies collected by the Parliamentary Inquiry Committee^[2] later indicated another convincing argument propelling the governmental decision, that is: the Belgian deployment in Rwanda could provide Belgium with a potential tool of protection — or even extraction — of its nationals in case of failure of the Arusha process.

In April 1994, the assassination of ten Belgian soldiers caused the precipitated withdrawal of the whole Belgian contingent of UNAMIR, while at the same time, the genocide was starting. These dramatic events created a trauma which, more than ten years later, continues to impact on the African policy of Belgium, as well as on the way the country designs participation in peacekeeping operations.

To understand the political bases of this shift, it is necessary to go back to Parliamentary Inquiry Committee established in 1997 in order to get to the bottom of the fateful events of April 1994. After one-year hearings with intensive media coverage,

[1] The other one was budgetary, as it was established later by the Parliamentary Inquiry Committee regarding the events of Rwanda.

[2] Sénat de Belgique, Session de 1997-1998, Commission d'enquête parlementaire concernant les événements du Rwanda, *Rapport fait au nom de la commission d'enquête par MM. Mahoux et Verhofstadt*, 6 décembre 1997, (1-611-7).

the Committee delivered a report whose fifth and final chapters addressed precise recommendations regarding the conditions to be fulfilled if Belgium wanted to take part in any peacekeeping operation in the future. Less than one month later, on 28 January 1998, the Government issued a Note of General Policy regarding the Belgian Participation in Peacekeeping Operations^[1]. The document reiterates the substance of the Inquiry Committee recommendations while adding some military provisions.

When this 21-page document was released, only one sentence grabbed the observers' attention: "*Belgium should not send armed troops in countries with which we had colonial bonds anymore*"^[2]. This radical decision appeared as a fundamental breakthrough in Belgium's African policy and inadvertently occulted the rest of the document. The latter however deserved an attentive reading. It consists in a series of principles that have shaped a new Belgian policy towards peacekeeping:

- "*All other means to solve the crisis have to be worked out*";
- "*Whether the operation begins under Chapter VI or VII should not make any difference as for the armament or the rules of engagement*";
- "*Maximum guarantees for troops safety on the ground*";
- "*Mandate must include an exit strategy*";
- "*The use the force must be authorized explicitly, enabling deterrence and capability to repress disorders (...)*".

Through such principles, the Government implicitly ruled out to take part in UN peacekeeping operations in the future. Belgium was not alone on that track: a similar drive was initiated by most Western countries. As a matter of fact, the lessons learned were entailing the same conclusions: no more soldiers in Blue Helmets, lightly armed, protected by their sole impartiality and deployed as "voluntary hostages" at the mercy of the warring factions' goodwill.

In the aftermath of the 2000 Brahimi report on UN peace operations^[3], the Westerners obtained the demanded reforms within the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). Yet revised peacekeeping practice did not usher them back in UN operations in the early 2000s. As the DPKO Under Secretary General noted with certain bitterness, "*the main part of the UN peacekeeping forces is provided today by developing countries, and the industrialized countries, but some notable exceptions,*

[1] *Note de politique générale du Gouvernement sur la participation belge aux opérations de maintien de la paix*, Sénat et Chambre des Représentants de Belgique, Session de 1997-1998, 1394/1-97/98.

[2] *Idem*, pp. 6-7.

[3] *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, A/55/305 — S/2000/809, New York, 25 August 2000.

rather act within ad hoc coalitions, if need be authorized yet not mandated by the Security Council (...)^[1].

The difference of interpretation is obvious between the European Union and the UN Secretary General. When the Belgian representative spoke on behalf of the EU at the 56th UN General Assembly, he stressed the fact that the Union was contributing for nearly 40 percent to the UN peacekeeping budget and that 5,115 of its nationals operated under UN flag, adding: *“In operations mandated by the United Nations like the SFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina and KFOR in Kosovo, the European Union provides the major part of the troops. Indeed, some 40,000 nationals of EU countries are deployed within these missions”*^[2]. Jean-Marie Guéhenno’s analysis is quite different, when he reflects that *“among the 34,000 soldiers deployed by the UNO, less than 4,000 come from the European Union”*^[3].

3. HUMANITARIANISM AND THE “ETHICAL DIPLOMACY”

In theory, structural and doctrinal reforms operated by the UN should have entailed a renewed Belgian involvement in UN peacekeeping missions in the early 2000s. Indeed, these evolutions met most of the requirements of the assessment frame used by Belgian military HQ and by the Government prior to any external operation. The Government moreover implicitly acknowledged that logic in a statement issued in August 2003: *“the Belgian armed Forces will be firstly available for international peace operations within the framework of the United Nations, the European Union and NATO; the share of the budget envisaged for such operations will be doubled”*^[4].

In practice, however, other parameters led to a different outcome. The first is the Belgian Army manpower issue. Along with most European countries, Belgium cancelled conscription soon after the Cold War ended. As military personnel were turning professional, wages consumed a greater proportion of the Defence budget leaving almost no investment capacity. Several plans were then implemented in order to reduce the overall size of the Defence manpower^[5]. However, severe cuts in personnel indirectly resulted in other pitfalls. The age pyramid deteriorated as the average aging of the soldiers curbed, thus affecting the ability for overseas opera-

[1] Jean-Marie GUÉHENNO, Opérations de maintien de la paix : la nouvelle donne, *Le Monde*, 18 December 2002.

[2] Item 89 of the Agenda of the 56th UN General Assembly.

[3] J.-M. GUÉHENNO, *op. cit.*

[4] Belgian Government Agreement, August 2003.

[5] See for instance *Strategic Plan for the Modernization of Armed forces 2000-2015*, Ministry of Defence, February 2003.

tions. At the same time, the reduced armed forces turned out to be overcrowded with high and mid-ranking officers. Hence, with nearly 800 soldiers permanently located in the Balkans since 1999 and 160 to 600 others engaged in Afghanistan since 2002, Belgium had already consumed most of its deployment capacity.

The political parameter, too, carries out very much weight in explaining why Belgium remained outside UN peace operations in the early 2000s. After the 2003 national election, Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt, together with Minister for Foreign Affairs Louis Michel and Minister of Defence André Flahaut, were reconducted in their mandate for another four-year term, inducing a rather rare continuity in the conduct of Belgian foreign and security policy. The so-called “ethical diplomacy” professed by Minister Michel that marked this period found a logical prolongation through the humanitarian activism of the Belgian Army triggered by Minister Flahaut. The most remarkable achievement of this duo remains undoubtedly in the establishment of B-FAST: Belgium First aid and Support Team^[1].

The decision made on a participation to ISAF in 2002 tells a lot about the political rationale that has been prevailing in Brussels when discussing troop deployment abroad. Remarkable enough, Belgium chose to secure Kabul airport. Actually, this choice involved a few valuable benefits. It avoided the dispersion of the Belgian personnel, limited the risks of casualties and eased the evacuation contingency planning. It gave a sufficient visibility and finally, it is rather complementary to the airlift capacities regularly performed for ISAF by Belgian C-130 aircrafts. Frequently put under pressure by NATO Secretary General to lift the caveats that shut Belgian soldiers in Kabul airport and its immediate neighbourhood, Brussels only conceded to a small participation in the Kunduz Provincial Reconstruction Team.

4. THE UNIFIL BREAKTHROUGH

On 12 July 2006, Hezbollah launched diversionary attacks toward various Israeli military positions. At the same time, a ground contingent crossed the border, i.e. the technical barrier set up on the armistice line into Israel territory and attacked an Israeli Defence Forces patrol, killing or injuring five and abducting two Israeli soldiers. In reaction, the Israeli government ordered large scale military attacks in order to destroy the Hezbollah positions in South Lebanon and Beirut’s Southern

[1] Through series of arrangements and procedures, B-Fast enables contingency planning and deployment of various civilian and military means in a wide range of humanitarian emergencies. Since 2001, the Belgian armed forces performed many operations in the B-FAST framework.

suburbs, but also to disrupt communication networks, infrastructures and facilities on the entire Lebanese territory.

On 11 August 2006, after one month of another war between Israel and Lebanon, the UN Security council unanimously adopted Resolution 1701 that called for a full cessation of hostilities and decided to supplement UNIFIL in size, equipment, mandate and scope of operations. Belgium got involved by pledging a 400-troop contribution. But the early beginnings of Belgian commitment to UNIFIL actually started earlier.

4.1. From French involvement to European commitment

The dynamics of the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) towards a particular issue is most of the time initiated by one or a few Member States which have a specific interest in it, either for historical, cultural or geopolitical reasons. In this particular case, France had undoubtedly the lead.

France has been present in the Middle East — that French used to call *Levant* — since the Crusades and, in 1920, after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, France received a mandate on the area from the League of Nations. Due to that longstanding French presence, Lebanon remains well marked by the French culture. The French language is used in administrations and spoken by a significant part of the population (mostly the Christian one) either living in the country or belonging to its wide diasporas. Lebanon is also member of the Organisation internationale de la francophonie.

France commitment did not weaken after the Cedar country accessed independence. When UNIFIL deployed in South Lebanon in 1978, the French soldiers took their part of the burden. Ever since, France participated to all international operations in Lebanon, losing 133 soldiers, notably 58 on the fateful 23 October 1983, when a suicide bomb truck hit the “Drakkar” building in West Beirut.

Nevertheless, beyond historical and cultural background, the individual variable also played a crucial role in this conjuncture. Indeed, Prime Minister Rafic Hariri and President Jacques Chirac had been very close friends for years. They never missed an opportunity to support each other and Hariri’s funding of Chirac’s electoral campaigns is not a secret anymore.

On 14 February 2005, when a huge explosive charge detonated as Hariri’s car drove past the Saint George Hotel in Beirut, the former Lebanese Prime Minister had no chance to survive the blast. Considering the friendship between the two Statesmen, President Chirac had good reasons to get personally involved. The French President could simply not stand Damas going on using such dubious methods to oppose the

Lebanese renewed aspiration to recover independence towards Syria. France then evinced, *inter alia* within the Security Council, abiding support to the Lebanese People's movement that ushered Syrian armed forces outside the country a few weeks after Hariri's assassination; and freed its diplomatic relations with Syria.

Hence, as soon as the war started in July 2006, the French diplomacy deployed intense activity to attempt reaching a cease-fire. In his *Palais de l'Élysée* or in the summer residence of the French Presidency, the Fort of Brégançon, Jacques Chirac followed every detail and gave instructions to his Minister of Foreign Affairs Philippe Douste-Blazy. During the first weeks of the conflict, the European Union was unable to formulate a common position on the issue at stake. France and Italy, while sharing the same goal, were trying to set the pace but London, in accordance with Washington, wanted to spare time, hoping that Tsaahal would be able to get rid of Hezbollah in South Lebanon. Italy scored one — though symbolic — point by hosting a peace conference in Rome on 26 July. France scored more substantive ones through its activism into the UN Security Council. The efforts of the Finnish EU presidency devoted at building common action eventually reached some results, so that Paris and London could speak one voice, on behalf of the EU, drafting Resolution 1701 in the Security Council.

From historical background to most recent developments, everything converged to put France in first line when UNIFIL reinforcement began to be discussed.

4.2. Window of opportunity and early planning

Though staying outside of the main diplomatic stage, Belgium was keeping a close eye on ongoing events. As Belgian diplomats were preparing to enter the Security Council four months later, when a reinforced international presence in Lebanon was called forth, the Government considered taking part. The Government anticipated the possible opening of a unique window of opportunity for Belgium to again take part in a UN peacekeeping operation^[1].

Since early August, the planning cell of the Belgian Army had proceeded to a preliminary review of available options. Provided that other operations in Kosovo and Afghanistan were already mobilizing about 500 soldiers and that the maximum sustainable deployment abroad peaks between 1,000 and 1,500 men, the target size of the force would consequently stand between 300 and 500 men, in order to

[1] Even if early talks considered sending a NATO or a EU-led force, these options were quickly ruled out. NATO was certainly not a good choice because of the unwillingness of various actors — Hezbollah in first instance — and the accusations of collusion due to American support to Israel. Regarding the EU, the political will of the most concerned Member States was lacking and the strategic planning shortfalls too important to consider this option further.

spare some capacity as reserve for any contingency operation. Informal contacts between Brussels, Rome and Paris made planning staffs fully aware that something was going on in each capital, but there was no real coordination at this stage. Neither was the EU Military Staff involved in the process. Yet Belgium knew from the very beginning that its lifelong EU partners were planning significant contributions. Without this provision, Belgium would certainly not have considered taking part in UNIFIL II. In such a volatile context as the Lebanese political one, a “Belgium-sized” force would not have been able to secure itself by its own means. Therefore, it had to rely on the other units of the Force; in this respect, Europeans were regarded as providing better guarantees. Troop safety was the first Belgian concern and it would remain a priority throughout the planning and deployment process.

As weeks wore on, the planning cell at the Belgian armed forces Headquarters was getting closer to a full concept of operation. Nevertheless, re-hating Belgian soldiers with blue helmets — 12 years after Kigali — was a highly sensitive political issue. Of course, the traditional armoured infantry battalion, that usually constitutes the main body of a peacekeeping force, was one of the options on the table. A second one consisted in taking part in the significant naval force that was expected to be deployed off Lebanon coasts in order to enforce arms embargo. The sea option was a quite attractive one because it raised less safety concerns and therefore reduced the political sensitivity of the operation. This attractive option was also contemplated by others^[1]. Among those, Germany prevailed. For obvious historical reasons, the idea of German soldiers deployed along the Israeli border was hardly thinkable. Patrolling at sea would entail fewer problems. As a consequence, by late August, Belgian planners were focused on ground options only.

The armoured infantry battalion was soon dropped for a new configuration: an improvised task force made up with engineers, medicals and mine clearance specialists. Minister Flahaut’s influence is probably the most discernible in that very choice. One can tell that the first option was too “military” from André Flahaut’s perspective. What can an armoured infantry battalion do? Patrolling, and that’s it. It is the basic task of peacekeeping missions but it offers few opportunities to “win hearts and minds”. On the opposite, engineers, medicals and mine clearance units can make two birds with one stone: although working at first stance for UNIFIL forces, they can easily spare time and allocate resources to meet the needs of local communities and win gratitude from the population. This would contribute shaping a safe environment for the Belgian troops and highlighting some “niche” expertises

[1] Later, with a tone of irony, DPKO expressed its surprise: offers from contributing countries to the naval component of UNIFIL by far exceeded the needs, which of course was not the case for the ground component (Interview in *Le Monde*, 28 August 2007).

of the country's armed forces. Last but not least, that option totally fit the line of the humanitarian-oriented policy woven by Minister Flahaut since his arrival at the Department of Defence.

Once set the concept of operation, lots of important issues remained to be tackled. The criteria settled in the aftermath of the UNAMIR failure had to be met; moreover because Prime Minister Verhofstadt, as former chairman of the Inquiry Committee on Rwanda, was closely tied by them. Following these guidelines, further steps prior to deployment would have to ensure high level of safety of the troops, appropriate rules of engagement and the presence of high ranking officers at all levels of the chain of command.

4.3. Multinational force generation

The early discussions between DPKO and the main contributing countries began on weak foundations since the latter started from the premise that UNIFIL I was a failure^[1]. Therefore the new contributing countries demanded a completely different pattern of mission. Needless to say some in New York were irritated by those Europeans who wanted to reshape UN peacekeeping in their own way. In a statement issued prior to the vote on Resolution 1701, Kofi Annan opportunely recalled that, in order to fully implement its mandate, UNIFIL I should have enjoyed the full cooperation of the parties and the constant support of the Security Council. Clearly enough, these conditions were never fulfilled for the last 30 years. Eighty Blue Helmets lost their life as a consequence.

But the toughest difficulties were still ahead. Those European countries that were expected to form the core of new UNIFIL stated their own conditions. As far as UN peacekeeping is concerned, French, Italians, Belgians and Germans endured similar hard times in the early 90s; the lessons learned were identical, too. None among them wanted to replay the tragic scenarios they experienced within UNPROFOR, UNOSOM or UNAMIR, resulting in a shift in peacekeeping policies, as their precise demands for UNIFIL II testify: a clear mandate, robust weaponry, permissive ROE and a single, direct, chain of command. They had a very clear idea about what they did *not* want, too: extensive mandate with low-profile military provisions,

[1] As a long-lasting mission, UNIFIL's mandate was modified several times. The last major change occurred in 2000, after the Israeli occupation forces withdrawal. UNIFIL was supposed to support fostering of the Lebanese authority and sovereignty in South Lebanon, and keep the Blue line peaceful; but as the Lebanese government refused to re-enter the South if no agreement with Israel was found, the Lebanese armed forces remained absent and the Blue Helmets in a deadlock. They could only report violations of the Blue Line — violations which eventually led to the 2006 war.

national units under control of UN appointed foreign Force Commander, “double key” procedure^[1] for the use of force.

Although quite understandable in respect of their past experiences, the European requirements were blackmailing DPKO, further deteriorating talks’ atmosphere. But there was no alternative. UN officials knew that UNIFIL II would be a European-framed operation, or would not be. Despite DPKO reluctances, Europeans obtained everything they had asked for, whatsoever.

Yet UNIFIL’s new mandate is not quite different from the former one. It is however more precise regarding the support to the Lebanese Government and the implementation of the demilitarized zone. The main contributing countries have successively resisted those who wanted to make UNIFIL responsible for the disarmament of non-governmental armed forces in Lebanon — a burden that would have been a perfect recipe to re-launch civil war in Lebanon. The wording of Resolution 1701 is rather elusive on this topic:

The Security Council *authorizes UNIFIL to take all necessary action in areas of deployment of its forces and **as it deems within its capabilities**, to ensure that its area of operations is not utilized for hostile activities of any kind (...)*^[2]

Once granted that their soldiers would not have to actively search arms or to dismantle Hezbollah militias, Europeans concerns focused on more technical, though important, issues. The easiest one related to the weaponry of the new UNIFIL. Since attack helicopters had been routinely used by MONUC^[3] in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, no DPKO guideline opposed a UN force to be equipped with up-to-date robust armaments anymore. With heavy battle tanks, radar guided artillery, anti-aircraft missiles, unmanned air vehicles and multipurpose vessels, UNIFIL II has become by far the most robust UN force ever deployed. But such an arsenal means nothing if it cannot be used in an appropriate way. This had to be determined by the rules of engagement (ROE).

There are two very different records of the ROE talks. The first one comes from medias and various public statements made by national officials. It depicts a tough negotiation that turned into a clash between two opposite conceptions. On one side, the European governments requested appropriate ROE allowing UNIFIL

[1] See below.

[2] See UN Security Council Resolution 1701 (para. 12), adopted on 11 August 2006, S/RES/1701(2006) [emphasis added].

[3] French acronym for the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

to perform its mandate and to ensure the safety of its troops. On the other side, UNDPKO stuck to ancient principles restricting the use of force to self-defence. While ROE used to be a rather technical issue that only a couple of legal experts were interested in, the Europeans made it a top priority. The leading French newspaper *Le Monde* even published — though classified — part of the drafted ROE under discussion^[1].

Another version of these talks is told of the negotiators themselves. Despite they cannot give detailed information over the substance, they explain that UNIFIL's ROE do differentiate from usual UN peacekeeping ROE on maximum 5 per cent^[2]. If discussions on ROE unfolded indeed in two rounds because of additional requirements of the main contributing countries, they didn't last longer than usual however^[3].

Why are these stories so different? The answer may lie in a political rationale. Negotiations *had* to be tough. This dramatization would later serve as political insurance for European decision makers. Even if the real talks were not so difficult, European leaders had to pretend they had to struggle to maximize the safety of their troops, so that they could not be blamed with any neglect if casualties occurred.

But Europeans had not to do that much window-dressing because, even if talks were advancing correctly on the substantive issues, the overall atmosphere was remaining rather tense. The main reason of that tension was not the ROE discussion itself, but the European requirements regarding the chain of command. As stated by a high-ranking officer, "*French soldiers don't want to see the drama between Akashi and Janvier — that led to the Srebrenica disaster — happening again. We want a clear and precise chain of command*"^[4]. "Clear and precise" is not so meaningful as far as chain of command is concerned. What the French requests actually meant was that they wanted the Force Commander (FC) to report directly to DPKO without the double key system that gives a veto power to the Secretary General Representative (SGR) regarding the use of force. Being a political issue, the item was on the agenda when the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan met European Ministries of Foreign Affairs in Brussels, on 25 August. The outcome was unambiguous: no SGR above the UNIFIL FC. The latter would also serve as Head of Mission.

[1] *Le Monde*, 23 August 2006.

[2] Interview in Belgian Armed Forces Headquarters.

[3] Interview in DPKO.

[4] *Le Monde*, 24 August 2006.

Having fixed the double key problem, talks focused on the upper part of the chain of command. From the European point of view, there was a missing link due to the absence of a strategic military staff inside DPKO. Therefore, Europeans set forth the idea of a new military structure — created within the DPKO but as part of UNIFIL — aiming at providing strategic guidance to the UNIFIL Headquarters in Naqura. No doubt Europeans intended to fill the new structure with their own officers. The implicit message, though inadvertent, was clear: we don't trust you! To say that DPKO was not pleased with that idea is an understatement. Having dictated *ad hoc* rules on armaments, ROE and Force Commander authority, Europeans now wanted to reshape the DPKO structure itself, by inserting an alien body within the Department. DPKO was not the only one to be infuriated. Major contributing countries to UN peacekeeping operations, such as India or Pakistan, watched the European requirements as an offence to them, who conducted robust operations and suffered significant casualties in Eastern Congo without asking for any specific arrangements. To overcome these resistances, the Europeans relied on a last but persuasive argument: the new UNIFIL would encompass a strong naval component and DPKO had no experience in planning sea operations. So was created the Strategic Military Cell (SMC).

The lower part of the chain of command also raised some concerns. As a Belgian planning officer pointed out: “*When we looked at UNIFIL Headquarters in Naqura, we realized that it was not a military HQ as we usually conceive it. No Operational Section, no Intelligence... There were more civilians than militaries over there*”^[1]. As a result, Naqura was largely reinforced. In addition, to fulfil the post-Rwanda guidelines, Belgium had to request a position for one of its upper officers in Naqura. Nevertheless, with less than 400 soldiers on the authorized total of 15,000, this proved to be an unrealistic requirement. Thus, Belgium had to content itself with an observer.

At the outset, everything indicated that France would take the lead and exercise the command of the Force. In addition, the French General Alain Pellegrini was the current UNIFIL FC to remain on duty until February 2007. But the assumption of French leadership was based on figures issued by French military sources^[2] suggesting that 6,000 soldiers could be sent to Lebanon. Such a figure should have made France the *de facto* leading nation above Italy that was considering sending a maximum of 3,000. However, these figures were only working hypothesis for planning purposes. *Inter alia*, Paris was aware that giving a distinctive French touch

[1] Interview at Belgian Armed Forces Headquarters.

[2] *Le Monde*, 24 August 2006.

to the new UNIFIL might have been hazardous. French militaries and decision makers kept in memory the 53 soldiers trapped dead in the collapsing of Drakkar, in 1983. France finally sent about 1,500 soldiers, well below the 2,500 that Rome eventually deployed. Consequently, Pellegrini would stay in charge until February 2007 and be replaced then by an Italian, General Graziano. As a consequence, the first SMC Director would be an Italian, to be replaced by a Frenchman (General Neveu) by February 2007.

In New York, implementing the SMC concept notwithstanding DPKO reluctances was a real challenge. The first problem was a real estate one. The Strategic Military Cell was supposed to be inserted into the DPKO, but offices were lacking. The SMC manpower was consequently split in two different buildings: the main UN building and the Uganda House, on the other side of UN Plaza. The second problem was a need for clarifying the respective role of the three military bodies that had henceforth to cohabit inside the UN structure: UNIFIL HQ, Office of the SG Military Adviser and the brand new SMC. The way it was solved is rather subtle. SMC would not be headed by a “Commander” but by a “Director”. That semantic distinction shows that SMC has no hierarchical authority on the Force Commander who reports directly to the Under-Secretary General (USG) for Peace-keeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guéhenno. The Military Adviser, as for him, is out of the chain of command. As a result, even if USG DPKO receives military advice issued by the three bodies, the real military authority is in the hands of the sole Force Commander. In spite of all these difficulties, one should acknowledge that SMC managed to plan UNIFIL enhancement within three months where ordinary DPKO procedures would probably have required six.

Regarding its presence within the Strategic Military Cell, Belgium faced the same problem than for Naqura HQ. In order to respect the guideline requesting a high ranking officer at each level of the chain of command, Brussels was supposed to get a seat for one of its Generals inside the new SMC. But, again, this was unrealistic. Should SMC have accepted the Belgian request, identical demands would immediately have arisen from other contributing countries, inducing inflation of SMC with about 50 Generals. Regardless of these practical impediments, the Belgian Government still deemed necessary to implement that particular provision of the Guidelines and therefore unilaterally appointed a three-star General who, prevented to attend the SMC meetings, was hosted by the Belgian Mission to the United Nations.

A last requirement of the Belgian 1998 Guidelines still had to be fulfilled: the safety of the soldiers. At the operational level, as previously mentioned, the protection of the Belgian soldiers would be part of the mission of the French units deployed in the same area of interest. But at the tactical level, given Belgium chose not to deploy combat units, the security of the medics, engineers and mine clearance teams had to be handled. The planning cell thus incorporated “Force Protection” assets to BELUFIL^[1] in order to enforce close protection of its convoys as well as compound and Battle area clearance (BAC) sites. In case of emergency, these platoons are able to react on short notice and to manage crisis situations. They are trained to face any hostile intent and to foil terrorist attempts.

That innovative design was perfect to meet the Guidelines requirements but did not fit with DPKO practice that could not accept the “Force Protection” concept. There are at least two reasons for this. The first is that the term “Force Protection” implies a defensive posture that DPKO sees as incompatible with the role of a peacekeeping force. The second reason is that a generalization of the concept would lead to a scattered UN force, each country providing protection to its own troops regardless the overall mission. Consequently, given DPKO reservations, the “Force Protection” component, though amounting to one third of the Belgian contribution, does not appear in the official organization chart of UNIFIL. On paper, Belgium contribution consists only in medics, engineers and mine clearance units.

4.4. BELUFIL Deployment and challenges

Located next to the village of Tebnin, 12 km north of the Blue Line, BELUFIL (see UNIFIL map below) was operational in mid-October 2006. At that point, “Camp Scorpio” was occupied by a small Polish contingent, and the whole compound had to be fully reorganized by its new occupants. In accordance with the concept of operation, the multifunctional battalion relies on three pillars that provide UNIFIL with EOD and demining support, mobility and reconstruction support, and medical support; in addition, BELUBATT^[2] assists the Lebanese Armed forces (LAF) with means and capabilities, in compliance with UNSCR 1701. The fourth component of Belufil, the “Force Protection”, is pretty visible on the field; it focuses on one motto: escort, protect and be ready to react.

[1] BELUFIL is the official acronym for Belgian-Luxembourg component of UNIFIL. Since the Armed Forces of Luxembourg are too small to take part on its own to UN operations, a bilateral agreement enables the incorporation of soldiers from Luxembourg into Belgian units deployed under UN flag.

[2] Belgian-Luxembourg Battalion.

As mentioned, to some extent, this independent battalion also endorsed humanitarian assistance tasks, would its capabilities be needed to enforce reconstruction and return to normal living conditions. This is particularly the case of the field hospital, which relies on extended capacities: surgery, radiography, biological analysis, ... First of all, it provides UNIFIL and LAF with first and second line health care, transport of patient to third line health care centres, and assures a medical quick reaction force — notably to assist the demining teams. But it also offers large-scale health care to the surrounding civil communities, whose medical facilities are either lacking or highly expensive. Between October 2006 and April 2008, consultations and hospital care amounted to 16,846 units, including 9,208 dedicated to civilians. In hardly two months, between February and April 2008, Belufil V medics performed 1,785 consultations, whose large majority (1,236) for civilians^[1]. The specialist doctors are highly appreciated by the population, especially in the Burn Unit Care of the hospital^[2].

Belufil's second pillar — the “geniacs” — is about mobility support, construction and of course EOD and demining. They first started performing engineering tasks to enable UNIFIL and LAF freedom of movement, together with the mine clearing units: after having cleaned priority areas like helicopter landing sites and main roads in the sector, they both began to work on a larger scale to conduct Battle area clearance (BAC) in accordance with UNMACC^[3] directives, notably in order to enable locals to access olive plantations and tobacco fields. As a matter of fact, the Belgian Battalion is leader in this respect: among 6 other demining forces^[4] within UNIFIL, it has reached the best results, with about 14,000^[5] items found on a total of 30,501 — and 1,635,256 square meters cleaned on 4,199,032. Still, the demining task in South Lebanon remains huge.

As mentioned, medical capacities are made accessible to the civil population as well as some engineering works are performed following requests by local communities. Talks with the locals are conducted by the Local Communication Team (LCT) and by the Civil-Military cooperation (CIMIC) section. The mission of the first consists in establishing a good communication with the local population through a constant dialogue and the releasing of information about BELUFIL missions and

[1] Source : *Belubatt Briefing*, Camp Scorpio, 4 April 2008.

[2] Children are the first victims of such incidents, more related to domestic than to EOD accidents. Interview with medical staff, Camp Scorpio hospital, 4 April 2008.

[3] United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre South Lebanon.

[4] Chinbatt, Frenchbatt, Italbatt, Finirebatt, Turkbatt and Spanbatt.

[5] 13,734 exactly as of 19 March 2008 (deminig operations level 1 and 2). Source: *Belubatt public briefing* on “Deminig Day”, Camp Scorpio, 4 April 2008.

activities. LCT regularly distributes leaflets in Arabic with messages like: “*We try our best to become integrated and to respect your culture. We are working for UNIFIL but we are also at your service*”^[1]. After each rotation, the new Belubatt Commander is introduced to the population *via* printed pictures, and meets all leading citizens and “Mukhtars” in Tebnin. Indeed, to reinforce “large-scale” communication, two methods have been preferred: written text messages in Arabic supported by explicit pictures, and constant dialogue with the local authorities — either political, moral or religious leaders. The messages displayed by the Local communication Team also include prevention initiatives related to cluster bombs and unexploded devices. Lebanese appreciate such work but constant communication efforts are necessary: on 4 April 2008, Belubatt even organized the “Mine Awareness International Day”. Gathering press, locals and Belufil officers, the “Demining day” was dedicated to prevention and explanation of Belubatt mine clearance work, bringing people around one of the BAC sites where demining was going on. The local authorities were indeed pressuring Belubatt to withdraw from the site, to enable the owners of the fields to exploit them in spite of the remaining danger^[2].

The LCT officers work in close cooperation with the “Team CIMIC”. They share the same goal, with different but complementary methods. The “team CIMIC” focuses its efforts on the elaboration of projects likely to facilitate the integration of the force in its civil environment. The projects are initiated by the Team itself, or proposed by locals. Granted with a monthly amount of about 6,000 Euros, the Team can implement a project with its own means (distribution of notebooks to the children), ask the other components of Belubatt to do so (clearing beforehand the building of a school), finance a project (theatre spectacle for children of Tebnin neighbouring schools), or co-finance it with UNIFIL and delegate its implementation (building of a school monitored by local and international NGOs).

First of all, these projects allow multiplication of the contacts with local leaders in a cooperative context to foster common understanding. Secondly, they usually try to address most civilians as possible; therefore, they are often related to child care: by helping one child, you touch the whole family and friends’ family^[3]. The other usual objectives of the CIMIC function, i.e. facilitating return to normal conditions of security, are less relevant in the Lebanese context (especially two years after the war) which cannot be compared to situations where the needs for infrastructures and humanitarian aid are awesome, such as RDCongo for instance.

[1] Cédric GERBEHAYE, *Le Vif-L'Express*, 7 November 2006.

[2] Visit of Belufil contingent, Tebnin, 4-5 April 2008.

[3] Interview with Belufil V Team CIMIC, Tebnin, 5 April 2008.

With more than 45 projects amounting US \$ 75,810 in one year^[1], the Belgians are known within UNIFIL as champions of the cheapest Quick impact projects (QIP). But the most substantive asset of the Belgians is no doubt their hospital. Despite it cannot be categorized *stricto sensu* as a CIMIC project, nor corresponds to the CIMIC doctrine implemented in South Lebanon, the huge work of the medics can be included in a civil-military cooperation approach serving Belufil and UNIFIL's interests. Together with the demining teams, since 2006, they have been fostering a highly positive Belgian reputation in the whole area.

Obviously dedicated at "winning heart and minds", these actions help to shape a secure environment for the Belgian soldiers. In addition, since the Belgians do not have to perform military patrols, they are not using the most heavy armoured vehicles that cause noise and road degradation and, therefore, are less appreciated by the locals^[2]. In addition, the force protection units are performing "social" or "contact patrols" in five distinctive areas around Tebnin, to elude a "gap effect" with the population due to their military posture: twice a month, Blue Beret on the head, they meet inhabitants for a talk or a coffee. The French Battalion has recently opted for similar "contact" patrols.

Since their arrival in South Lebanon, the Belgian soldiers have not experimented any hostile action against them, suggesting Minister's Flahaut option was successful. As stated by Colonel Dany De Wolf, Commander of Belufil VI, "the Belgians have never felt threatened"^[3]. Still, the safety of the Belgian soldiers remains a top priority concern. Every road convoy is thoroughly planned with the Force protection platoon. Itineraries are randomized and severe security and anti-terrorist measures are applied to every movement in or out Camp Scorpio. Indeed, transportation of troops and patrols do constitute the main hazardous operations, apart from mine clearance operations which injured several and killed one Adjutant officer in Ajt Arun. Three others died while serving in a road crash due to their Pandur break failure. But terrorist attacks have been continually highlighted by UNIFIL successive FC as the main threat jeopardizing troops security: in March 2007, former FC Alain Pellegrini publicly denounced terrorism targeting UNIFIL, coming from Sunni hard-liners and Al Qaida-related groups — adding that several attacks under planning had been stopped in the past^[4].

[1] From June 2007 to June 2008. Interview with Spanish Colonel MOLA, J9 chief CIMIC, Naqura HQ, August 2008.

[2] Along the Blue Line, the French battalion uses to patrol with its Leclerc tanks; it experimented several stone throwing from locals exasperated by the harm caused by this 56-ton tracked vehicle.

[3] Interview with Lt-Col. DE WOLF, Camp Scorpio, August 2008.

[4] *Le Monde*, 24 March 2007.

In 2008, UNIFIL main concerns focussed on three Palestinian groups, consisting in a few hundreds armed men ideologically related to Al Qaida: Jund al Sham, Usbat al Ansar and now well-known Fatah al-Islam^[1]. Indeed, UNIFIL contingents were targeted by Improvised Explosive Devices (IED). On 24 June 2007, six Spanish soldiers were killed when their armoured vehicle was severely damaged by the explosion of a bomb-car. One month later, a road-side bomb targeting a UN convoy only caused material damages, while a Tanzanian military police section luckily escaped the blast of an IED. More recently, on 8 January 2008, two Irish soldiers were wounded when their vehicle was hit by a road-side bomb, 25 km far from Beirut.

Additional security measures have been implemented after these incidents. UNIFIL contributing countries have accelerated several acquisition programs related to personnel protection. As far as Belgium is concerned, most old Pandur vehicles that initially equipped BELUFIL were replaced by brand new multi-purpose protected vehicles (MPPV) *Dingo 2* with enhanced armour protection against mines and IED. In addition, an emergency procedure has been launched for the acquisition of jamming systems aiming at protecting convoys against remote-controlled explosives.

As UNIFIL component, BELUFIL has to face the multiple challenges that faces the UN mission in Lebanon. The first is the overall political situation in the country. Tensions remain very high between “pro and anti” Syrian — for what this cleavage is worth, far below the arcane intricacies of Lebanese political landscape. On one hand, the terrorist threat haunts the everyday life of Lebanese people, as shown by recurrent, almost usual political assassinations perpetrated these last years. In addition, the awkward situation of the Palestinian people in the country remains a destabilizing factor, and has turned into a major security issue again — along with the emergence of several islamist groups claiming allegiance to Al Qaida, as mentioned *supra*. Summer 2007 was marked by the Fatah al-Islam insurgency in the Nahr el-Bared Palestinian camp, near the northern city of Tripoli. Notwithstanding the Cairo agreements, the Lebanese armed forces (LAF) pursued the siege during months, almost completely destroying the camp.

These events took place outside the UNIFIL area of responsibility and therefore did not affect its day-to-day operations. Nevertheless the Nahr el-Bared siege resulted in about 30,000 displaced, most in the neighbouring camp of Baddaoui, but also in Southern Palestinian camps. For the UN mission, this has meant a possible spill-over of hard-lined elements in the three camps neighbouring Sour (Tyre, the

[1] Briefing by Sector West Brigade, Italbatt HQ, Tebnin, August 2008.

main urban centre next to Naqura), and especially in Ein el-Helwe camp (Saïda), half-way to Beirut. This was pointed out as a major threat to UNIFIL security by most officers met^[1].

On the other hand, the political confrontation between the majority and the opposition gradually worsened in 2007-early 2008, as the Parliament was unable to elect the new President of Lebanon. During months, the election was postponed and the political life stuck into a blockade, as illustrated by the two-year protest sittings freezing all activities in Downtown Beirut — the very middle of the city centre, between the Hariri Mosque, the Parliament and the Martyr's Square. In May 2008, the long-lasting crisis burst out when the majority, led by Saad Hariri, voted measures jeopardizing Hezbollah's communication network. Twenty days of street-fighting between Sunni and Shiite Beirut, the blockade of the airport and combats in the North and the East put the country on the edge of a new civil war. After Hezbollah proved its ability to take to the capital rapidly, the majority renounced and the Doha agreement blazed a trail out of the crisis. A crisis which was watched from far away by UNIFIL.

Since June 2008, important developments took place regarding internal and international politics. President Sleiman was elected, a national union government set up, and a governmental declaration adopted — though not addressing the issue of the Resistance's (Hezbollah's) arsenal. Naqura also host a major prisoner swap between Lebanon and Israel, under the aegis of the ICRC, backed up by the UN. Last but not least, in the wake of Sarkozy's Summit for *Méditerranée*, President Sleiman visited his Syrian homolog — first visit of a Lebanese President since the Syrian military withdrawal in 2005. Notwithstanding the continuation of unclaimed bomb attacks and political assassinations, *plus* punctual street fights in the North, the global yet recent improvement of the political situation in Lebanon allows actual UNIFIL to remain a relevant, adapted, stabilization factor.

Another challenge, on the operational side, is the frequent violation of the Blue Line from both sides. Several though minor "katioucha" motor-shelling, on behalf of Hezbollah, have happened since the war ended. But the Israeli airplanes violations are of more frequent occurrence. Tension was rather high during the first week of the enhanced UNIFIL deployment. Multiple high speed and low altitude Israeli flights over UNIFIL positions brought the Force Commander to issuing official protest. Apparently, Israeli top military officers did not appreciate the deployment of French middle range anti-aircraft missiles. The Israeli flights were a way

[1] Interview with Sector West Brigade, Italbatt HQ in Tebnin, August 2008.

of challenging the missiles battery meaning: “We know you are there, we are not impressed at all”. This military dialogue through military movements and postures also occurred on the ground. Edifying enough, almost every day, French patrol along the Blue Line with their Leclerc tanks. It happens they stop and operate a 90° turn — thus pointing their 120mm gun toward Israel — to observe the other side of the border. Within a few minutes, the Israelis issue a protestation message questioning the “aggressive posture” of the French vehicles. While the “UNIFIL factor” no doubt eased the ending of the 2006 war, it is still considered with suspicion on both sides of the Blue Line. Either the peacekeepers are accused of protecting the Israeli border against Hezbollah “Resistance”, or they are suspected of accommodating towards Hezbollah’s arsenal — which might have been displaced northward during UNIFIL’s enhancement.

Moreover, the third challenge for UNIFIL’s mandate is precisely the porosity of the Syrian border and the possible military activity of Hezbollah inside its area of operation. These issues are very touchy, considering the mandate and the necessary cooperation with LAF in a context where local authorities are mostly of Hezbollah (and Amal) obedience. Several episodes bear witness to the pitfalls met in this regard: in Spring 2008, an Italian patrol following a suspect vehicle for possible control with LAF was stopped by armed men suddenly interposing — blocking the way while the vehicle disappeared. Meanwhile, during engineering and mine clearance operations, Belgian soldiers have occasionally uncovered Hezbollah’s military positions as well as arms, ammunitions and explosives stocks, though being unable to prove whether these sites were established before or after the August 2006 cease-fire. Whatsoever, the official UNIFIL position, confirmed by BELUFIL commander, is that the UN mission has not noticed any unauthorized military activity within its zone of operation.

But, while most officers recall that UNIFIL’s job has nothing to do with disarmament, the preventing of arms trafficking included in the 2006 mandate might be likely to intensify risks encountered by peacekeepers. Indeed, as a Belgian officer explained^[1], the June 2007 bombing occurred just after the rotation of the Spanish troops. He pointed out that the newly arrived contingent was evincing too much energy, during first patrols, in controlling possible arms trafficking — and was therefore targeted. The Hezbollah officially condemned this attack, but it is hard to believe — he also reflected — due to its tight social network and intelligence power in the South, that the Party could have been completely unaware of the IED attack going on.

[1] Interview at Naqura Headquarters, 11 April 2008.

This, of course addresses the touchy issue of intelligence. As a peacekeeping operation established on basis of Chapter VI of the UN Charter, UNIFIL is not allowed to perform active intelligence activities at the operational level, except basic visual observation. In New York, two single officers form the Intelligence Section of the SMC, but they only perform strategic intelligence analysis. They attempt to enhance information gathering, coordination and analysis among the DPKO structures; they even drafted some innovative proposals in that regard. Nevertheless, on one hand, due to the cultural DPKO reluctance regarding intelligence, the situation is likely to evolve rather slowly. On the other hand, despite intelligence and early warning do constitute one of the main concerns of the Europeans involved in peacekeeping — and a core issue in most peace operations — playing intelligence in Lebanon can entail the seeds of further confrontations.

* * *

Initially, Belgium planned to stay 6 months in South Lebanon, “renewable once”. As Minister Flahaut told Lebanese newspaper *L'Orient-Le Jour* in September 2006, “to give troops commitment a limit is contributing to pressure diplomacy, in order to find solutions that do not come from permanent military occupation”^[1]. A valuable *parti pris*, which also stems from the limited capabilities of the country’s armed forces, as highlighted *supra*. However, two years later, BELUFIL is still going on. In April 2008, most officers and soldiers in Tebnin were waiting for a crucial decision about to be made 3,000 km North, in Brussels.

Indeed, within a few months, the political situation in Belgium had changed a lot: Belgium had experienced enduring crisis after the June 2007 legislative elections, resulting in several months of governmental vacuum, and no one knew if BELUFIL engagement would be reiterated by newly arrived in office Minister Pieter De Crem. Moreover, Belgium was about to deploy 69 soldiers in the ESDP mission EUFOR-Tchad, and remained under pressure to send more troops to Afghanistan^[2]. Finally, on 11 April, the Ministers’ council decided to extend the mission until the end of 2008 and even to add a naval component^[3]: multifunctional frigate F930 *Leopold I*, embarking 158 personnel, to be deployed for Maritime interdiction Operations (MIO) under UNIFIL command from August to December 2008. The same day, UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon acquainted the Security Council with its

[1] *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 25 September 2006.

[2] Decision was made in that respect next August, with about 100 other troops and four F-16 planes sent to ISAF.

[3] Both decisions were confirmed by Ministerial Meeting of 6 June 2008.

intention to appoint the Belgian diplomat Johan Verbeke as Special Coordinator for Lebanon.

5. CONCLUSION: BETWEEN REALISM AND IDEALISM? BELGIAN PEACEKEEPING AND THE COMMON INTEREST

Belgium practice of peacekeeping since 1988 has accompanied a general evolution that saw UN peace operations go through several stages: from hibernation to excess of credibility (1988-1991), then through a series of dramatic crises (1992-1994) and to self-criticism and introspection (1996-2000), opening the way to a more realistic approach of peacekeeping (since 2000).

It was rather foreseeable that, coming back for two years in the Security Council as non-permanent member from 2007 on, Belgium would have to reconsider dealing with United Nations peacekeeping again. In August 2006, the enhancement of UNIFIL provided Brussels with a unique opportunity to fulfil several commitments simultaneously. The preference for a “support” contingent relying on a “three-pillar +” structure^[1] is still informed with the post-Rwanda posture, but definitely consistent with the specific capabilities of the country’s armed forces — and coherent with the idea of “ethical diplomacy”, that ran for almost a decade like a silver thread throughout its political approach of international conflicts and crises. In the aftermath of the 2006 War between Israel and Lebanon, with about 400 soldiers in Tebnin, 30% of the Belgian deployment capacity — and 40% of the average troops deployed abroad — is under UN command. Moreover, even if UNIFIL II is not a European Union operation, the close political and military coordination woven by the main European stakeholders expresses a common will to carry weight in the Middle East peace process. In that sense, the Belgian presence in UNIFIL also does fulfil a duty of European solidarity.

Through its approach of peacekeeping, Belgium intends to support a diplomacy based on the protection of the international and “public” security, a diplomacy based on the promotion of the common interest — within the European Union as well as among the UN bodies. The inscription of the common interest at the head of the Belgian diplomatic agenda should not be reduced to unselfishness and altruism. It is, at the same time, a remarkably smart and indeed realistic approach enabling Belgium to exert influence in these very multilateral forums to the reinforcement of which the country is untiringly attached.

[1] Engeneering, medics, demining *plus* force protection.

The EU and the European Security Strategy

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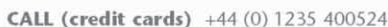
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