THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

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Abstract:
The European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) marks an important political moment when European integration has been extended to the issue of defence. Understandably, there has been extensive commentary on the ESDP, most of which has focused on the ESDP’s institutional, industrial or military deficiencies. These commentaries have been illuminating but by concentrating on the manifest weaknesses of the ESDP, scholars have perhaps neglected to discuss explicitly how a coherent ESDP could develop. Drawing on recent work by Ben Tonra, this paper discusses the social conditions which are likely to be necessary if the ESDP is to develop into a robust policy. Above all else, a coherent ESDP depends upon the development of a binding sense of mutual obligation between France, Germany and Britain. These nations need to commit themselves to collective defence goals. The paper goes on to argue that for this collective commitment to be developed between these nations, the ESDP requires missions. Only through missions, in which these nations together experience a shared threat, will enduring shared interests and the collective will to address them be developed. The future of the ESDP will thus be finally determined by the actions which are carried out in its name. In the end, this may mean that a European defence identity develops not through an independent ESDP but through NATO.

Introduction
The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) was developed as the second, intergovernmental pillar of the Treaty of European Union, signed at Maastricht in December 1991. However, the decisive moment for the development of the CFSP occurred when Britain finally committed itself to a common European defence policy. In 1998, Tony Blair announced his intention to contribute to the development of CFSP at Portschach and in December, at St Malo, the French and British governments formally tied themselves to co-operative military action. As a result of this announcement, the European Defence and Security Policy (ESDP) was developed as a specific programme within the CFSP and was ratified at the Treaty of Nice in 2000. The European Defence and Security Policy denoted a quite dramatic shift in European defence orientation. It committed the Union to the ‘Headline Goal’ of a European Rapid Reaction Force by 2003. This would consist of a force of 60,000 troops, deployable anywhere within the world within 60 days, capable of fulfilling the Petersberg tasks and sustainable for a year. The ESDP has effectively created a European Defence Community for the first time, some fifty years after the initial efforts to create a union foundered. Given the potential political importance of the ESDP, there has been understandably extensive discussion about it in the academic literature. Commentators have focused on the implications of the ESDP for transatlantic relations, the development of an industrial policy in relation to it, its military and political deficiencies and its institutional structure. The problem is that although it is implicit in their discussions, few commentators describe explicitly how the ESDP can be developed into a coherent and robust policy. Commentators not unreasonably focus on the weaknesses of the ESDP rather than its possible future.

In a recent paper about the CFSP, however, Tonra has illustrated at a theoretical level how the ESDP might develop. Drawing on sociology, Tonra rejects the notion that humans interact on the basis of rational self-interest, seeking in every instance to
maximise their individual preferences. In fact, in the course of interaction, humans form social groups. As members of these social groups, humans are together able to produce collective goods which are not available to them as individuals. So indispensable are these collective goods that humans typically prioritise group interests and goals above their own private self-interests. The benefits of collective goods are a powerful incentive for co-operating with others rather than pursuing a self-interested course of action. However, the group also has a sanction to ensure that group members contribute and do not merely free-ride on others. The group can exclude those who are regarded as non-contributors from the collective benefits of membership. Given the importance of collective goods to human existence, the threat of exclusion is an effective means of enjoining members prioritise collective interests and contribute to the group. Tonra’s work on the CFSP applies this sociological insight to the processes of European integration. He highlights the way that the intergovernmental bargaining process transforms the perceptions and understandings of those politicians involved in it. ‘The creation of this common information pool and language contributes crucially to the identity change in national foreign policies as a result of their participation in EPC or CFSP’. Tonra notes that in Denmark and Ireland, the CFSP placed core foreign policy interests under pressure and contributed to their redefinition. Self-interested national bargaining was transformed into collective action. As they became active members of the CFSP, Ireland and Denmark oriented themselves to the needs of the group because the collective goods it offered were not available for these states when they acted independently. Significantly, the negative sanction of exclusion also operated on these members states. Denmark and Ireland committed themselves to these collective goods out of concern for their political standing with the European Union. If they rejected the CFSP outright refusing to contribute in any way to it, they would be excluded from its benefits and from other benefits of being part of the European Union. Member states,
aggrieved at their recalcitrance over the CFSP, might marginalise them from other group discussions and would limit their access to the collective goods which the European Union created for its members. In this way, Tonra illuminates the way member states commit themselves to collective goals and mutually compel each other to contribute to the collective good. Through interaction in policy discussion, European member states are able to establish certain common goals beneficial to all. Member states orient themselves mutually to these goals and are able to force each other to contribute to them with the threat of being excluded from the group and the benefits it offers. Only contributing group members can benefit from the collective goods which membership brings. Tonra applies the universal sociological process in which collective goods are produced and access to them restricted to contributing group members to the CFSP.

Tonra’s sociological approach to the CFSP is illuminating and can be applied to the ESDP. The ESDP will be a meaningful policy only insofar as the member states collectively commit themselves to the stated shared goals. As Tonra noted of the CFSP, if the ESDP is to be a meaningful policy, the collective benefits of the ESDP must sufficiently attractive that member states are prepared alter their own individual goals and force structures to attain them. Member states will only change their individual policies, if they are dependent upon collective action for the delivery of critical security interests. Member states must feel themselves compelled to contribute to the ESDP because the collective security which it offers is vital to their interests. In this situation, the sanction of exclusion will also be a powerful motivation. States will seek the approbation of other group members and will want to avoid being shamed as non-contributors since this will lead to marginalisation and exclusion from collective security goods. For a viable collective security policy to develop in Europe, the social process of group formation which Tonra describes must take place within the ESDP.
European member states need to recognise that security can be delivered only by co-operative action and that exclusion from the collective project would be individually disastrous. If security can be delivered in another way so that there are no significant individual costs incurred for being outside the ESDP, this policy will be a dead letter.

**A European Strategic Concept?**

Although the ESDP is a European venture, many commentators emphasise the central dynamic in the development of European defence policy; the tri-lateral relationship between Britain, France and Germany. While smaller nations, such as Italy, Spain and Holland, have considerable armed forces, any feasible ESPD has finally to be built around Britain, France and Germany; this is the decisive European security triangle. Thus, in considering the future of the ESDP, it is ultimately necessary to focus on whether these three major European powers can co-operate sufficiently closely to produce a distinctively European defence capability. In 1999, Germany, France and Britain held a trilateral meeting shortly before the 19 October European Council in Ghent and again in London on 4 November. Further summits were held in late 2001, in October 2003 and, most recently, a mini-summit (which will be discussed in more detail below) was held in Berlin in February 2004. While the summits have offended the smaller excluded powers, they constituted important social processes when these three member states increasingly committed themselves to shared security interests. That commitment to shared interest is critical to transforming these member states from independent states into active members of a group, in the manner Tonra describes. Significantly, since the end of the Cold War but especially after the Kosovo crisis of 1999, Britain, France and Germany have moved towards increasingly compatible strategic concepts; they are beginning to recognise important areas of shared security. All three nations recognised that territorial defence of Western Europe has been
superseded by the need to project power against the threat of terrorism and failing states. As Peter Struck, the current German minister of defence has noted: ‘The security of Germany is also defended in the Hindu Kush’. Recognising their collective interests, Germany, France and Britain have developed a broadly similar strategic concept. Indeed, this strategic convergence has been formally recognised by the European Union with the publication of the European Security Strategy.

Although Atlanticist, Britain has adopted a more European perspective since the late 1990s as the St Malo declaration decisively demonstrated. It is notable that in Bosnia, Britain opposed the United States’s lift and strike policy, while in Kosovo Tony Blair insisted that a ground option had to be available in order to make air-strikes credible. Britain’s strategic concept is moving closer to those of its European partners. Significantly, although France remains Europeanist, it too has begun to alter its strategic orientation. In the late 1990s, France finally reconciled itself with NATO’s command structure after a thirty year breach. Although this rapprochement stalled somewhat between 1999 and 2003, France has recently committed 1700 troops to the new NATO Response Force, in which senior French officers will have command positions. France no longer reject NATO automatically as an example of US hegemony over Europe and is drawing together in a series of bilateral and multilateral military projects with Britain and Germany. As various commentators note, France is changing its traditionally unilateralist approach to defence, accepting that multinational deployments – unconscionable in the past – will become the norm in the future. Of the three major European member states, Germany’s strategic concept is changing the most. Although Germany is, like Britain, deeply committed to NATO and the United States, it increasingly recognises the growing relevance of a potentially independent European defence capability for global force projection. Germany’s special history now increasingly demand global interventions for the sake of peace and stability as
deployments during the Kosovo crisis in 1999 and again to Afghanistan in 2002 demonstrated. Indeed, although Gerhard Schroeder insisted that under no circumstance would military deployment to Iraq be legitimate, Peter Struck, recently suggested at a NATO conference that it is not inconceivable that Germany might deploy troops to Iraq under a future UN mission. Germany, France and Britain still pursue their foreign, security and defence policies independently of each other and have significant interests which are not mutually shared, as the Iraq war demonstrated. Nevertheless, France, Germany and Britain are converging on a strategic consensus if not a precise strategic concept. As Tonra noted of the CFSP, as social interaction between these three powers increases, they are adapting their individual strategic concepts towards a more common, collective vision.

**Common Force Structures**

The ESDP was itself fundamentally a result of the failures of European defence capabilities in Bosnia and subsequently in Kosovo. Europe’s collective shortcomings has driven Germany, France and Britain together, forcing them to recognise their shared security and defence interests. From the 1990s, it became clear that no single European member state unilaterally possessed the necessary military forces to be politically effective at a global level. Thus, despite the difficulties of international co-operation on arms production and procurement as joint ventures like the A400M transport plane and the Eurofighter demonstrate, EU member states have begun to develop a common arms policy. EU States have committed themselves to the Organisation for Joint Armaments Cooperation (OCCAR) and signed the Letter of Intent signifying their intention to cooperate further on arms development. Since the 1990s, there has been a conscious attempt to offset economic pressures and to produce interoperability which will improve Europe’s military capability. This constitutes the initial stage of group
formation which Tonra described. The critical question is whether Britain, France and Germany can create sufficiently dense social relations so that their collective interests converge further and they are mutually able to enjoin each other to address them. There is some evidence that these member states are beginning to orient themselves consciously to collective goals.

Significantly, there have been some important changes to European force, structures, especially in France and Germany. The performance of French troops in the Gulf – and the dismay which it evoked in the French military and in the government - led to the publication of the 1994 ‘Livre Blanc’ which outlined military reform. Following this, Jacques Chirac announced in 1996 that the French military would be converted to an all-volunteer force by the 2002 and initiated the Military Planning Act as the legislative framework in which this transformation would take place. France’s Military Planning Act has sought to re-orient the French strategically and doctrinally. Significantly, Jacques Chirac has explicitly announced that the British armed forces are the model towards which France should strive. France is now deliberately imitating Britain so that it can contribute effectively to the ESDP. France is recognising that collective security from which France will benefit individually will be assured only if it actively contributes to this emergent European axis. Moreover, France will only influence the direction of collective security policy by acting as a willing and constructive member of this group. It is in France’s individual national interest to reform itself in line with collective goals. By contributing to the emergence European defence axis, France can help establish a social group which can deliver a collective good – effective military capability – which is becoming impossible for France to guarantee for itself. As Tonra noted, because France is increasingly dependent on the collective security which the emergent military axis offers, it is willing to transform itself in line with the requirements of this group. France is actively reforming its force
structure in line with collective needs precisely because it cannot do without the
collective good – security – which Europe offers.

Following the Scharping reform programme, the Bundeswehr is undergoing
similar changes. The recently down-sized 240,000-strong Bundeswehr is currently
being divided into the three tiers consisting of a 35,000-strong reaction force, a 70,000
stabilisation force and a 135,000 support force.27 This triadic force structure is a
reformulation of the traditional Cold War Bundeswehr structure of an intervention
force, a main defence force and a ‘basic military organisation’ dedicated to territorial
defence in the face of a new strategic threats. Interestingly, Scharping’s reforms and the
Weizsaeccker and Kirchbach reports on which they were based stressed that the
Bundeswehr need to be more ‘Bundnisfaehig’; the German armed forces had to be
more capable of contributing to the multinational alliances of which they were part.28
The Bundeswehr must become more interoperable with other nations. One of the
driving forces behind the reform of the Bundeswehr has been the inability of Germany’s
armed forces to sustain operational alliances with other key partners in NATO and in
Europe. Germany can remain a respected and influential member of these international
alliances only insofar as it transforms its Bundeswehr in line with collective needs. Like
France, Germany’s internal reforms reflect the process which Tonra noted of Ireland
and Denmark. The group of which Germany wishes to be a member is compelling
Germany to transform itself so that it can contribute to collective goals if Germany
wants to continue to receive the shared benefits of membership. Germany’s
contributions to KFOR in Kosovo and to ISAF in Afghanistan demonstrate its
increasing commitment to its European partners. It is interesting that Germany has also
contributed to the NATO Response Force, demonstrating its commitment to the
production of the highly mobile and deployable forces which will be essential to a
robust ESDP.
Missions

In the light of strategic and economic changes, Britain, France and Germany have mutually influenced each other into altering their respective strategic concepts and force structures. The question is now whether this axis can be deepened and strengthened. There is an obvious route open to the three major powers here. Social groups are effective when their members contribute to the collective goals from which all subsequently benefit. Members are most likely to contribute fully to collective goals when the threat of exclusion from the group is likely to be catastrophic for the individual. Then individual and group interests are indistinguishable. Consequently, social groups tend to be most solidary when they come under serious external economic or political – and above all military – pressure. In the face of external aggression which may threaten the very existence of individual members, it will be in their immediate interests to contribute fully to the group. Exclusion – on the grounds that a member is not contributing sufficiently – would be disastrous in such a situation. Faced with this sanction, in almost every historical circumstance, group members have been willing to contribute to the group in order to enjoy the security which it offers as a collective benefit. It is noticeable that under the threat of the Axis Powers in the Second World War, the Allies collectively developed prodigious military capabilities extremely rapidly. The dynamics of group action suggest that the most effective way of creating a robust ESDP is for European member states – and above all the triple alliance of France, Germany and Britain – to conduct serious military missions together. On these missions, the collective interests of these states will be necessarily unified and these states and their militaries will be forced to contribute to collective goals if missions are not to fail with serious consequences for each state. The future of the ESDP lies, consequently, in its mission.
On 31 March 2003, the EU took over from NATO’s peace-keeping mission, Operation Allied Harmony, in FYROM. The EU mission Concordia, under French command, patrolled the ethnic Albanian-populated regions of Macedonia that border Albania, Serbia and Kosovo. The force, to which all EU Member States are contributing except Ireland and Denmark, consisted of 350 lightly armed military personnel with France as the lead nation. The mission drew on NATO assets under the Berlin-plus arrangement. The link with NATO was further emphasised by the structure of command. The headquarters was located at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers in Europe (SHAPE) in Belgium. Deputy SACEUR, Admiral Rainer Feist of the German navy was operation commander while French General Pierre Maral was force commander in theatre. In June 2003, the EU responded to a UN appeal for humanitarian assistance in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Under the ESDP, a force of 1800, mostly French, troops were deployed to the Congo on Operation Artemis to stabilise security conditions and assist in improving the humanitarian situation in Bunia, the capital of the Ituri region in the Congo where the problems were most serious. France was again the ‘framework’ nation; the force was under the command of Brigadier General Thonier and the headquarters was located in Paris. The French combat contingent was supported by small numbers of British and Swedish troops, while Belgium and Germany deployed non-combat personnel.

The structure of these deployments is illuminating. They have been conducted from within NATO command structures, employing NATO assets. In the medium term future, any viable ESDP will have to operate within NATO because member states lack some of the critical physical and command assets for the deployment of troops. Without NATO, the ESDP would be unworkable. There is an important political dimension to the ESDP’s dependence on NATO. By operating within NATO and especially by drawing upon NATO’s command structure, the ESDP necessarily ties itself to the
United States. The Operation Commander of *Concordia* was the immediate subordinate of NATO’s always American Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR). The close professional relationship between these two commanders ensures that ESDP deployments are carried out under formal and informal American aegis. By drawing on NATO and by ‘double-hatting’ commanders and units, the ESDP ensures that the crucial political connection with the United States is maintained. In this way, the ESDP will avoid the de-coupling against which Madeleine Albright warned. Whatever reservations Europeans have about American unilateralism, the ESDP is viable politically and militarily only so long as a close relationship is maintained with America, minimally because it still relies on US assets.

The Congo intervention, in particular, revealed another interesting prospect for the ESDP. Since the end of the Cold War, there has been extensive debate about NATO out-of-area deployment. Some commentators have dismissed the capability and the political will of the European Union to deploy to outside of traditional NATO areas: ‘It is clear, however, that ‘in-area’ does not include sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East or Central Asia. It is still difficult to see either NATO or the EU playing a significant role in organising collective military operations in these ‘out-of-area regions’’. Yet, the Congo deployment demonstrates the ESDP’s ability to perform precisely these interventions. Moreover, unilateral interventions by France and Britain into the Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone have further demonstrated that there is significant political will for military interventions if historical precedent and political circumstances demand it. In the case of both these deployments, British and French troops were engaged in combat missions, suppressing rebel groups. In both cases, casualties were taken. These African operations demonstrate that there are sufficient national interests to promote military intervention on a global scale in France and Britain. The question is whether
these national security interests can become collective European interests to which member states are willing to contribute.

The *Artemis* and *Concordia* missions are important demonstrations that collective interests – and the commitment to act upon them – are beginning to appear. The problem with current ESDP operations is that they are so small. In military terms, Operations *Concordia* and *Artemis* are miniscule. For collective European interests to develop further, European member states – and above all Britain, France and Germany – must conduct more and bigger missions with each other. Significantly, in 2004 the EU has some 30,000 soldiers in Bosnia and a further 7000 in Afghanistan, commanded by a German general in Kabul.\textsuperscript{33} These forces effectively represent ‘coalitions of the willing’ but it may be precisely out of these *ad hoc* forces that a coherent defence axis emerges in Europe. These missions constitute an important realisation of common European defence interests, even if they are not formally part of the ESDP. In 2005, the European Union is taking over responsibility for Bosnia-Herzegovnia from NATO. This is without question the EU’s most serious deployment up to date and is likely to be critical to the future of the ESDP. For the first time, European member states will be operating autonomously in a strategically sensitive area. This mission will demand strategic coherence from European member states; each member state will have to contribute to the collective good if the mission is to work. In the end, national self-interest will be best served by contributing to this collective effort. The ESDP will develop as an effective policy only insofar as European member states commit themselves to these missions where their collective interests are realised in a concrete fashion.

**The NATO Response Force**

The ESDP will require missions if it is to develop into a serious policy. However, if missions are crucial to the development of collective interests and commitments, this
suggests that the future of European security may not finally take the course of an independent ESDP. On the contrary, its future may lie in a reformed NATO. Significantly, the European members of NATO already share over fifty years of joint history and the experience of the same threat. This means that not only have they developed shared standard operating procedures but that they have established the dense social commitment to one another through this alliance. Under Article 5, the members of the Alliance have been formally committed to each others’ common defence. More recently, French, German and British troops have worked closely as part of the NATO KFOR in Kosovo and ISAF in Afghanistan. Moreover, Operations Artemis and Concordia were dependent on NATO assets and the infrastructure for the EU’s mission to Bosnia-Herzegovinia is a product of NATO’s ten-year deployment in the country and will draw on some NATO assets under the Berlin-plus agreement. If restructured appropriately NATO could become the viable institutional framework and military capability of the ESDP.

The current transformation of NATO structures may promote the use of the Atlantic Alliance as a basis of the ESDP. Over the last ten years, NATO has developed flexible rapid reaction forces and, in specific response to the terrorist attacks on September 11, the formation of a NATO Response Force was announced at the Prague Summit in November 2002. There, the 19 existing members of NATO voted unanimously to modernise the alliance so it can confront threats from international terrorism, hostile dictatorial regimes and rogue states. The NATO Response Force will consist of joint air, maritime and ground forces deployable within 5 to 30 days to international trouble spots and remain operational for up to three months if required. It will be based on a brigade of 3 to 5 mobile ground battalions including logistic support supported by 3 to 5 fighter squadrons, 7 to 15 naval combatants. It will be commanded by senior general under SACEUR. The Land Component Command (LCC) element –
the brigade on which it is based - will draw on six existing high-readiness NATO headquarters; Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps (Rheindalen), the Eurocorps (Strasbourg), the German-Netherlands Corps (Munster), NATO’s Rapid Deployable Corps-Turkey (NRDC) (Istanbul), NRDC-Spain (Valencia) and NRDC-Italy (Milan). LCC will be rotated on a six-monthly basis around these six formations.37

The NRF will undergo specialised training to ensure they are capable of fighting together effectively on short notice under the command of a Combined Joint Task Force Headquarters.38 The NRF was inaugurated on 15 October 2003 and it conducted an initial demonstration exercise (Exercise Allied Response) in Turkey in November of that year.39 In October 2004, an operational capability exercise (Operation Destined Glory) took place in Sardinia.40 The first full exercises of the NRF are scheduled for 2005 and the force should be fully operational with 21,000 troops by 2006.41

Significantly, among both European military and political leaders, there is an increasing consensus that Europe will require a more robust interventionist force than the Headline Goal provides. General Klaus Naumann, the former Deputy SACEUR, has emphasised this point, claiming that Europe should not be satisfied merely with ‘clearing up work’ (Aufraumenarbeit).42 For him, Europe must develop their defence capabilities so that they are a credible military force actor in global politics.43 For Naumann, the EU needs to transcend merely Petersberg tasks. Reflecting Naumann’s concerns, in February 2004, following a mini-summit, France, Germany and Britain proposed a ‘battle-group’ concept which was approved by the EU in April. Instead of the Headline Goal of 60,000 troops restricted to Petersberg tasks, the three premiers sought to create a strategic concept which would be better adapted to the post 9/11 context. They emphasised that Europe needed a more responsive and flexible military, capable to deploying to a number of concurrent contingencies. The proposed battle-groups based on battalion units would consist of about 1500 troops including
supporting elements and should be ready for deployment within 15 days. The aim is to create two to three high readiness battle groups by 2005 and up to nine by 2007. The battle-groups will to be more robust than the Headline Goal.

The emergence of the battle-group concept is an important moment for the ESDP. It demonstrates a thickening of strategic coherence between Britain, France and Germany but it also suggests that the ultimate form which the emergent alliance might take. The battle-group concept represents a confluence of NATO and ESDP strategic concepts. With the battle-group concept and the NRF, both the ESDP and NATO are now committed to the creation of smaller, more flexible and more deployable joint forces. However, if the battle-group concept is the future of the ESDP, then the NRF seems to be the most effective vehicle for delivering this capability. The units which the ESDP will deploy as its battle-groups will be those deployable, light units already earmarked for the NRF. Since they will draw on NATO assets when deploying as part of the ESDP, the distinction between an ESDP and a NATO deployment will become operationally irrelevant. Moreover, in actuality, the NRF is likely to provide more robust and more rapidly deployable forces. The spearhead units of the NRF will be on 5 days notice to move. In comparison, the ESDP’s proposed battle-groups cannot ultimately be described as genuinely rapid reaction forces as they will take over two weeks to deploy. In addition, it is questionable how effective a force of 1500 could be in military terms. Certainly, the missions which such a force could perform would be minor – like Artemis and Concordia. The brigade-size force of the NRF would provide a far more potent and flexible military option. While the NRF could be deployed for larger missions, it could easily be task-organised for smaller deployments. Moreover, NATO consciously recognises that future contingencies will be met by coalitions of the willing and, as SACEUR General James Jones has emphasised, the NRF has been structured in a flexible way to facilitate the deployment and interoperability of ad hoc
The NRF is intended to be a forum which will facilitate future coalitions of the willing. The ESDP’s battle-groups by contrast are based on autonomous national battalions; they cannot act as the vehicle for either formal or *ad hoc* multinational coalitions. Military practicalities are likely to favour the deployment of the NRF in the face of crisis rather than the ESDP’s battle-groups. Although Tony Blair’s comments about the need for a European reaction force capable of deployment to Africa in October 2004 may have been designed primarily to appease African leaders, it was notable that he announced that this force should be 15,000 strong; that is, approximately the projected size of the NRF rather than the ESDP’s 60,000 Headline Goal or the proposed 1500-strong European battlegroups. Blair’s comments cannot be taken as a definitive statement of policy but they do suggest that for practical military reasons, the future of the ESDP may be in NATO.

There are several political transformations which suggest that in the future of NATO and the NRF, in particular, will subsume the ESDP. In 2004, the European Union expanded to include 10 new member states from central Europe. Three of these new member states (Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary) entered NATO in 1999 while the rest joined in 2004. The reformed NATO has advantages over the ESDP in mobilising the military forces of new member states like Poland. The ESDP has insufficient institutional structures to conduct more than minor operations. Even with the recent reforms to NATO which allows the ESDP to draw on some of its planning and command cells, the European Union Military Committee and its advisory body the European Union Military Staff is not capable of operational planning and command on any serious scale. In practical terms, it would be extremely difficult for the ESDP to co-ordinate a multinational coalition of any size. The ESDP also lacks independent unified doctrine and standard operating procedures. By contrast, NATO has a robust institutional framework, consolidated over fifty years, with a coherent doctrine and
standard operational procedures. NATO cannot ensure that European member states will act in defence of their collective interests but it is institutionally more able to co-ordinate their armed forces should they choose to do so than the ESDP as it is currently constituted.

In the late 1990s, Turkey’s exclusion from the EU created very severe political problems about the use of NATO-assets. Partly in response to its exclusion from the EU, Turkey opposed the Berlin-plus arrangements whereby Western European members might draw on shared assets to conduct missions, which might not be in Turkey’s interests. Indeed, Albright’s concerns about the ESDP’s discrimination against non-EU member states referred specifically to the problems created by Turkish objections. However, if the proposed accession of Turkey into the EU, by perhaps 2010, occurs, the contradiction between NATO and the ESDP may be substantially resolved. At that point, it is likely that all EU member states would also be members of NATO. In this situation where NATO and the EU overlapped so closely there would be little political role for an independent ESDP outside of NATO. Whatever policy the EU decided to follow would overlap with the policy of European NATO countries and certainly the policy of politically and militarily significant NATO nations. NATO may become the de facto defence institution of the EU and the military means by which the ESDP is prosecuted.

There are further political developments which promote NATO as the most likely vehicle for European defence in the future. Various commentators have noted that while America stress the NATO connection as a means of retaining political control over Europe, the United States is in a de facto process of withdrawal from NATO; it no longer sees the alliance as relevant or useable. Thus, while the evocation of Article 5 was appreciated as an expression of political solidarity after 11 September attacks, the United States did not even consider drawing on NATO in the subsequent Afghan and
Iraqi campaigns. While NATO remains very important to Europe as a means of sustaining international alliances with each other – and of engaging the United States politically – it is increasingly irrelevant to the United States. Given the slow military, if not political, disengagement of the United States, NATO could become a primarily European organisation, connected politically and supported militarily by the United States. NATO could organically develop into the institutional and military basis of the ESDP. The re-integration of France into NATO command structures and the entry of ten central European countries into the alliance have weighted the alliance further towards Europe. It is noticeable that the NRF itself denotes the growth of an increasingly autonomous European pillar within NATO. The NRF consists of only 300 American personnel and, although the force is under the nominal command of SACEUR, it will, in fact, be commanded by a European general. The withdrawal of the United States from NATO is likely to continue in the future, matched by a concomitant Europeanisation of the Alliance.

There are other processes which are promoting further Europeanisation of the Alliance. Britain’s decision to go to war in Iraq with the United States was in line with its traditionally Atlanticist position but it threatened to undermine the ESDP. Indeed, the Iraq War seemed to demonstrate the political impracticality of any serious European defence co-operation. The collective security interests of the EU are negligible. The ultimate result of this intervention may, ironically, be quite the reverse. As Britain becomes embroiled in an increasingly unpopular civil war in Iraq which may ultimately cost Tony Blair his premiership, the Iraq intervention may not vindicate Britain’s special relationship with America but mark its culminating point. The Iraq intervention may demonstrate that Britain’s interests no longer lie in so close a relationship with a United States which is becoming so unilateral that even its closest ally, Britain, cannot influence its foreign policy in any serious way. Rather, out of the current difficulties of
Iraq, an increasingly Europeanist consensus may emerge in Britain. Britain is likely to promote an increasingly effective European pillar within NATO and to become less resolutely Atlanticist. Over the next decade, NATO’s centre of gravity is likely to shift eastwards from the Atlantic to Continental Europe and to the emergent British-French-German axis. In the light of the unilateralism of the United States and the new strategic threats which Europe faces, the national interests of Britain, France and Germany may be converging into a genuinely collective interest to which each nation will need to contribute. The future of the ESDP, the means by which this axis addresses their collective security interests, may lie with a reformed NATO.

**Conclusion**

Military alliances – for whatever purpose – are effective only when the members of these coalitions commit themselves to common goals. The behaviour of group members must be influenced by their membership of the group so that they prioritise collective goals above individual rewards. The very fact that there is an ESDP at all signifies that the major European member states are beginning to recognise certain shared interests and to act upon them; they are recognising their common strategic interests, deliberately re-forming their force structures and looking to co-operate with each other militarily. Yet, ultimately, a meaningful defence community will come into being only so long as the European Union faces a shared threat of sufficient magnitude that collective action becomes essential and exclusion from this project is potentially disastrous. A viable ESDP requires missions which unify military professionals and consolidate collective interests in a way which mere statements of policy never can. However, if missions are critical to the formation of a European defence identity, there may be an easier way of promoting these European interests than by attempting to build a new alliance from the ground up. It is likely that European member states – especially since these now
involve 10 new members from central Europe – will find that NATO provides a more robust institutional setting for them to develop a collective response to shared threats. However, whether NATO or an autonomous institutional complex becomes the basis of European security, missions will be essential. The core European nations must be mutually committed to prosecute their collective interests if there is to be anything which might be termed collective security. Consequently, these nations must go on military missions together, through which they can develop a collective commitment to shared goals. Specifically, Britain, France and Germany must engage in multinational ventures with each other so that their interests do increasingly cohere. Without these missions, without the demonstration that these three countries have shared security interests and collective will to prosecute them, the ESDP will remain merely hypothetical. Europe will have no collective security interests but only the diverse interests and military capabilities of its member states.

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NOTES

2 Howorth, ‘Britain, France and the European Defence Initiative’, p. 36.


(Summer 2001), pp.115-32.


9 Tonra, p.745.
In their discussion of the CFSP, Andreani et al. adopt a very similar position to Tonra. They note the importance of peer pressure and shame in forcing member states to contribute more to the ESDP, see Andreani et al., pp. 63-4.

In his interesting article on the ESDP, Mikkel Rasmussen expresses a similar point. The viability of the ESDP requires a unified strategic culture and concept in the first instance. Capabilities are irrelevant if there is disagreement on when and how to use them: see Mikkel Rasmussen, ‘Turbulent Neighbourhoods: how to deploy the EU’s Rapid Reaction Force’, Contemporary Security Policy Vol. 23, No.2 (August 2002), pp.39-60. Rasmussen goes on to discuss the criteria when the European Rapid Reaction Force might be deployed rather than analysing the conditions in which a unified strategic culture might emerge.


Clarke and Cornish, p.783.


nations to the East of the new 25 nation EU and the borders of the Mediterranean but he also noted that EU states had intervened in the Balkans, Afghanistan, East Timor and the Congo and it was likely that such deployments would continue to be necessary, see Solana, p. 11. Solana’s vision of a European Security Concept has informed those articles of the Draft Constitution of the European Union which deal with security and defence issues. Like Solana, the Constitution expands the security and defence definitions which had appeared in previous Treaties since Maastricht. Significantly, the Draft Constitution goes some way beyond the Petersberg tasks which were central to the St Malo Declaration and the subsequent Treaty signed at Nice; see Martin Ortega, ‘Beyond Petersbug: Missions for the EU Military Forum’ in Gnesotto, N. (ed.) EU Security and Defence Policy: the first five years (1999-2004) (Paris: Institute for Security Studies, 2004). Solana’s document draws on and reflects the understandings of European member states and, above all, those of France, Britain and Germany.


26 Utley, p.28.


29 Since its formal ratification at the European Council meeting at Nice, the ESDP has been invoked for four interventions; the European Union Police Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina from January 2003, a military peace support operation to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) from March 2003, crisis management in the Democratic Republic of Congo from June until September 2003 and a further police mission in FYROM from December 2003 called Operation Proxima. See Missiroli, A. ‘ESDP – Post-Iraq. Building a European Security and Defence Policy: what are the priorities? The Cicero Foundation, (2003)


32 Paul Williams, ‘Fighting for Freetown: British military intervention in Sierra Leone’,


36 Binnendijk and Kugler 2002, p.127

37 See [http://www.nato.int/nrdc-it/docu/brochure/041001.pdf](http://www.nato.int/nrdc-it/docu/brochure/041001.pdf)


40 See [http://www.nato.int/issues/nrf/](http://www.nato.int/issues/nrf/).

41 See [http://www.nato.int/issues/nrf/index.html](http://www.nato.int/issues/nrf/index.html)


43 Naumann, p.47.


45 See [http://www.nato.int/issues/nrf/index.html](http://www.nato.int/issues/nrf/index.html)


Currently, Austria is the only EU member state outside NATO. It is likely that by 2010 Austria, would also have become a member of the Atlantic Alliance but, even if it did not it is unlikely that it would object to the EU employing NATO as its military means.


Gordon, p.92.