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Evaluating the potential for a coordinated European Security Policy. An assessment of present and future challenges.

Daniel Guilherme Alvarenga Rodrigues

Estudante da licenciatura em Relações Internacionais e Ciências Políticas
School of Social Sciences and Cultural Studies
University of Sussex

Introduction

On 10 December 1951, Alcide De Gasperi, President of the Italian Council of Ministers, gave a speech to the Assembly of the Council of Europe underlining the importance of plans for a European Defence Community (EDC).

“What is the choice before us in this present-day? We all agree that our homes, our institutions, our civilisation must be defended in the hour of danger. But the rising generation, which is attracted by a coherent and dynamic view of life, hesitates before a choice upon which its very fate may depend — whether to return to the road that was ours before the war, a road strewn with claims and conflicts based on the moral concept of the nation as an absolute entity, or else to move onwards to the co-ordination of

certain forces, at times ideal and rational, at times instinctive and irrational, in the hope that life may broaden further, and the brotherhood of man be extended far and wide.”¹

The European Defence Community never came through but in the early years of the 21st century we encounter ourselves at a similar crossroads. This essay will analyse it in three sections. We start with a brief historical summary of the evolution of Europe’s post-war security dynamics and a brief description of the path of the Common European Security and Defence Policy (CESDP), within the larger framework of the third pillar of the union: the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). We then launch our core debate over what the key factors shaping the EU foreign policy will be and why we chose them, concluding with a foresight exercise where the chosen variables are systematized in two scenarios. Following the foresight methodology, each of the scenarios describes a different future for the CESDP based on different patterns of response to the challenges. This will help develop an understanding of what is beyond the European Union’s control, and what is a matter of choice; what is pre-determined and what is uncertain. We argue that the key strategic EU decisions dictating the future of the CESDP encompass the following elements: the development of the European Military Industry; the choice between internal or external focus of European security policy; the choice between stabilizing borders either by fostering multiethnic or homogenous state-building; decision on the role of smaller states within the CESDP; and finally the unfolding of the EU-US relationship. In sum, revamped global threats (such as terrorism) have changed the nature of the instabilities, moving them beyond nation-state geopolitics but putting EU’s security high on the priority list. Whilst very important, all the described institutional measures do not single-handedly supply the EU with a straightforward security solution. We argue that they do not exist in a vacuum and are part of a vaster policy-making process that should be analysed. The institutions of decision-making need to be underpinned by clear strategic options, and as such, the CESDP relies not only on the

¹ De Gasperi, Alcide, (1951) speech in the Council of Europe - Consultative Assembly. Reports. Third session. 26th November - 11th December. Part VII Sittings 37 to 41, pp.88-91.

effectiveness of its bureaucratic mechanics but most specifically on the political approach taken towards each security challenge.

The changing contexts of security in Europe

The sixty years after “Victory in Europe day” saw the continent go through a mix of wicked tensions and outstanding promises. Geopolitically, within an international Cold War bipolar framework, the United States of America and NATO guaranteed security in the continent in an adversarial attitude against the Soviet Union. At the same time, the post-war trauma together with American investment (through the Marshall plan) triggered the emergence of the European integrationalist project amidst tensions of a nuclear race to arms. The Western European Union was then created (after the failure of the EDC), composed by state members of both NATO and the EU, constituting a sub branch of the former. The creation in 1970 of the European Political Cooperation underpinned from an early stage the Intergovernmentalist nature of this pillar, limiting its attempts of cooperation to “extensive policy consultation and exchange of information”². It was only when the last decade before the end of the 20th century arrived, and with it, the end of the Cold War, that the breakdown of the Soviet bloc introduced a novel challenge for Europe’s security capabilities. On the dawn of the European integrationalist nineties the Maastricht treaty was signed and the Common Foreign and Security Program (CFSP) born. When in 1999 the EU Member states stepped up, and signed the Amsterdam treaty, an upgrade for the CFSP was already deemed necessary. Amsterdam introduced the CESDP putting in place more resolute policy procedures and innovative early warning mechanisms. It also designed a policy unit working for the Council of Ministers, an interim political and security committee as well as a parallel military committee to counsel governments on crisis management. Today, it is not yet certain

² Staden, A. (1994) “After Maastricht: Explaining the Movement towards a Common European Defence Policy” in (Carlsnaes, W. (editor) *European Foreign Policy, the EC and Changing Perspectives in Europe* (London: Sage), p.139

whether the old WEU will remain an independent organisation or if it will be eventually merged into the EU. This will be discussed further ahead as one of the processes to be decided upon.

On contemporary Europe, 60 years of peace and stability have pressured defence budgets down thanks to investment constraints in competitive globalised markets and money going for “butter and not for arms” This, indeed leaves some doubts on the question if today, the “EU, born from war, can survive peace”³. Europe’s impotence before Kosovo, the terrorist actions of September the 11th and 11th March, together with the divisions over the invasion of Iraq are just some of the episodes that have recently revealed the shortcomings of Europe’s national and collective military capabilities. Room is then left for critiques claiming it to be no more than an “intergovernmental framework that little had advanced since its inception in 1991”⁴. Its Intergovernmentalism has from the start made it the less fluid of the EU pillars, still relying on orthodox high majorities (usually consensual) which partially undermines the process. However, the current situation also shows increased cooperation and integrated “securities of scale”, especially after the Treaty of Nice entered into force on 1st February 2003. It, above all, increased the areas under qualified majority voting and enhanced the role of the Political and Security Committee in crisis management operations. These measures allowed for some of the first coordinated efforts to be achieved. The first operation concluded by the EU in the CESDP context was in D.R. Congo (2003) (the first one not including NATO assistance) and there are now ongoing operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (since 2003), Macedonia (2003) and Georgia (2004) showing that a “one voice EU” is more than a non-attendant of crisis situations or a minor actor in someone else’s “play”.

Despite being into a large extent dependent on the “willingness of the US to assume initiative and military leadership”⁵, we argue that the EU holds the potential for a comprehensive conflict-prevention “toolbox“. Its foreign relations have historically gravitated around diplomatic and civilian power. Traditionally relying on financial

³ Bowley, G. “Can the EU, born from war, survive peace?” International Herald Tribune, [Saturday, May 7, 2005]

⁴ Duke, S. (editor) (2000) *Between Vision and Reality, CFSP’s Progress on the Path to Maturity* (The Netherlands: European Institute of Public Administration), p.3

⁵ Duke, S. (editor) (2000) *Between Vision and Reality, CFSP’s Progress on the Path to Maturity* (The Netherlands: European Institute of Public Administration), p.4

assistance, trade negotiations, membership conditionality, sanctions and limits on arms export distinguishing it “from other international organizations which have a clear mandate to prevent conflicts”⁶. The evolution in the CESDP has been trying to deal with its difficulties in short-term crisis situations and improve its rapid response capabilities. Indeed, its intricate bureaucratic negotiations processes and lack of military means have been an impeditive, but its press forward might supply it with some orthodox means of conflict resolution based on force and military assets. This will prescribe the EU with full-range flexibility and panoply of solutions when engaging in pro-active security policies which in turn has the downside effect of challenging the union with a wider “capabilities-expectations gap”⁷ to overcome.

Here comes the crossroads

It is important that, before beginning our discussion, we explain the criteria used in the selection of each process. The processes chosen will try and walk through a different path to the one observed by Rummel when he states that “a large part of the debate on West European foreign policy and security cooperation is focusing almost entirely on internal and institutional questions.”⁸

We will focus more broadly on the strategic options of the CESDP, discussing the empirical policy-making challenges which seem more likely to arise given the present conjuncture. As such, we will highlight specifically the possible decisions and their outcomes and not the decision-making process⁹ (and its well known problems) behind the decisions. By starting with present uncertainties, we will ponder the pros and the cons together with the implications of each path taken. Simultaneously, we will try and divide

⁶ Smith, K. (2003) *European Union Foreign Policy in a Changing World* (Cambridge: Polity), p.170

⁷ *ibid*, p.169

⁸ Rummel, R. (editor) (1992) *Toward Political Union, Planning a Common Foreign and Security Policy in the European Community* (Oxford: Westview Press), p.6

⁹ Although included in the final scenarios and despite its structural importance for the mechanics of a coordinated security policy, we decided to avoid a detailed analysis of the consequences of the incoming European Constitutional treaty.

the processes between those over which the EU will have more weight on, and those somewhat beyond its control which will nonetheless equally require a reaction.

One should start by analysing the processes over which the EU does not especially have exclusive control or influence. In rough geopolitical terms, a one-voice EU will be seen with more legitimacy and more argumentative/persuasion power in an intervention or in a conflict-prevention situation. The international community and individual state actors will, as expected, be more receptive to a collective EU approach than to a unilateral one. However, some processes that deeply influence the procedures of the CESDP are somewhat beyond Europe's control. Processes encompassing: the evolution of areas of tension (China, India, the Islamic World, etc.); a possible UN enlargement/institutional reform; and a likely transformation of the G8 into G9, etc. The degree of uncertainty is high and Europe's agency capacity limited, a stable external environment may provide the time and room for an expansion of the CESDP but radical changes may also affect the process. On the one hand, as Norgaard puts it, radical changes may lead to a "paralysis by overloading the adaptive capacity of the community"¹⁰, however Norgaard failed to realize that radical changes may also propel the Union to faster and more decisive steps towards more integrated security (imagine for example the institutional response to hypothetical simultaneous terrorist attacks in Paris and London).

The first process to take into account is the EU's interaction with its defence industry and what transformation it will put it through. The choices made in terms of research and development in areas affecting security, the harmonisation of equipments among the Member States (MS) and the integration of production in the form of co-production are the technicalities that will determine the potential of the EU's defence industry. In this sense, the European defence industries group¹¹ (EDIG) together with the evolution of the Galileo and the military Airbus projects will be crucial towards an effective industrial policy. This is part of the wider processes encompassing an efficient security and military mechanic. For the industry it is equally important the degree of

¹⁰ Norgaard, O. (editor) (1993) *The European Community in World Politics* (London: Pinter), p.13

¹¹ Formed in 1976 the Mission of EDIG is to be the forum for the co-ordination of European Defence industry advice and policy recommendations to EU states, the European Commission and the European Parliament, on all initiatives concerning the European defence technology and industrial base, including the European defence equipment market.

openness of the markets, reaching a coordinated export policy will be especially important in terms of the competitive advantages achieved in relation to the American market. The dynamics of these two markets will establish a dialectic relation of interdependence with the other strategic security processes affecting the regions. The EU's negotiation capabilities and choices in dealing with U.S market impediments of all sorts will say much about the success of its defence industry. How will the EU cope with issues such as American taxation over foreign defence goods, high financial support for internal American production, technical barriers making more difficult technology transfer, together with several "buy American" legislations? These difficulties in integrating with the American defence market leads Woodcock¹² to call for a fight against "the fragmentation of the European defence market" and an improvement in European defence autonomy.

Another important strategic decision will have to be taken in terms of the basic stance of its security strategy: either primarily opting for a collective and broad territorial defence as a whole (similar to what happened during the Cold War) or setting as its priority, external crisis-management and pro-active quick intervention strategies. These are not self-excluding as an effective strategy requires both an external and an inward look at security but a priority will nevertheless have to be set.

The enlargement "bait" is a key negotiation joker and is seen as a prime manner to endorse security and stability eastwards. However, one should also note when analysing the Petersberg Tasks of the CESDP (with their spotlight on promotion of democracy, regional integration, sustainable development and human rights), that these do not single-handedly mean a positive "one size fits all" intervention. In fact, as Smith¹³ argues, "democratization can also unleash extreme nationalism and political instability". The same case applies for economic development and regional integration, both of them may aggravate tensions in sensible areas by accentuating the gaps between winners and losers, exacerbating social ethnic and national minorities. For example, the tensions brought about by the prospect of enlargement to the Republic of Cyprus. Two choices are

¹² Woodcock (2000) "Problems and Perspectives on Europe's Defence Industries – A Glimpse at the Future" in Duke, S. (editor) *Between Vision and Reality, CFSP's Progress on the Path to Maturity* (The Netherlands: European Institute of Public Administration), p.224

¹³ Smith, K. (2003) *European Union Foreign Policy in a Changing World* (Cambridge: Polity), p.146

out there to be followed in terms of state rebuilding. The first one, traditionally prioritized by EU's policy-making, relies on the promotion of borders encompassing multiethnic communities, centred on cooperation, reconciliation and integration (economic but mostly political). The second strategy in crisis recovery state-building is fostering the compartment of state borders according to specific ethnic maps. This will provide wider panoply of short-term solutions but increase the likelihood of medium and long-term tensions between the neighbouring divides. This happens because old ethnic resonances of dissent are given a "quick geo-political fix" through formal divide which in turn does not necessarily reflect a formal (or informal) conciliation.

The role of smaller states in particular might be important in the setting of an enlarged Union. An eventual blurring away in a vast bureaucratic process, populated by a large group of asymmetrical and fragmented actors, will be an issue. A flexible but effective participation should be fostered allowing for these smaller states to act as pivot countries in what Gartner calls "selective engagements"¹⁴. A selection that might be strategically desirable thanks to specific interests, know-how or historical backgrounds between the actors. Their integrated participation as well as enlarging an emerging market for defence equipment will also ease the creation of "flexible packets of multinational forces"¹⁵

The EU-NATO relationship will be crucial when deciding the institutional shape and the underpinning degrees of autonomy of the CESDP. Two nuances should be analysed: one the one hand the role the US attributes to NATO and on the other hand the "spin" that the EU gives towards an eventual move in favour of more autonomy for its NATO old branch, the Western European Union (WEU). Will it disappear in a mature phase of the CESDP or is it doomed to remain a feeble "skeleton structure"¹⁶ of the Atlantic Organization?

¹⁴ Gartner, H. "European Security : a small state perspective" in¹⁴ Duke, S. (2000) *Between Vision and Reality, CFSP's Progress on the Path to Maturity* (The Netherlands: European Institute of Public Administration),p.111

¹⁵ Duke, S. (editor) (2000) *Between Vision and Reality, CFSP's Progress on the Path to Maturity* (The Netherlands: European Institute of Public Administration),p.28

¹⁶ Duke, S. (editor) (2000) *Between Vision and Reality, CFSP's Progress on the Path to Maturity* (The Netherlands: European Institute of Public Administration), p.27

The Scenarios

Although exploratory, these scenarios attempt to go beyond mere speculation. They posit a chance for systematization of the previously analysed pressures and explore the alternatives for both a coordinated and a “not so coordinated” European Security Policy.

2020 EU: A Land divided in fear and (in) security

The golden years of integrated Europe are gone. A succession of splitting events has damaged innovative decision-making processes and blocked institutions. The constitutional treaty and its security pillar is now a dusty, forgotten document, long ago rejected by the peoples of Europe. A huge investment in human and material resources within the European machine has failed expectations. The EU is slowly fading into an obsolete amalgam. Turbulence on the first two pillars of the union had long ago (in the first years of the century) halted what were the first breakthroughs in a communitarian defence budget. The EU failed to find a middle ground in the Greek-Turkish clash over Cyprus and the CESDP strategy of promoting multiethnic states within stabilized borders crumbled in the Balkans, amidst ethnic tensions. External crisis-management interventions have been relegated to second place, in face of the re-nationalization of the fluxes (political and financial) that were being invested on the CFSP. “Go it alone strategies”¹⁷ returned and now cease the stage. Smaller states were the first to pull out when they sensed their voices were being lost in a cacophony of dissent and power games held in distant Brussels’ offices.

NATO re-emerged in American hands, not only encompassing the CESDP but pretty much steering it altogether. The EU failed to harmonise and integrate equipments, people and coordinator bodies between its member states. Both the Galileo and the Airbus military projects have struggled, witnessing a fragmented European defence market incapable of penetrating or integrating with the still very protective American

¹⁷ Taylor, P. (1979) *When Europe speaks with one voice, The external relations of the European Community* (London: Aldwych Press), p.96

one. The fears surrounding the emergence of two security fortresses that “would have the effect of weakening the security both of Europe and the US”¹⁸ were only partially fulfilled, partly because the EU was even incapable of achieving the “fortress” status.

2020 EU: Peace haven and peacekeeper

The tone of insecurity and malaise brought about by terrorist activities in the beginning of the decade fostered an increased Atlantic and international collaboration between powers. This tone of collaboration started long ago, with the publication of a document on the Thursday 17th of February 2005 whereby a compact between the United States and Europe, signed by 55 prominent foreign policy and national security experts from both sides of the Atlantic, was drafted in the form of a diplomatic agreement between the US and Europe. This document was the first step to “show that agreement on a comprehensive trans-Atlantic strategy is possible, even on the hardest issues we face and that trans-Atlantic partnership must endure, not because of what it has achieved in the past, but because our common future depends on it.”¹⁹ The European Constitutional treaty, adopted by all EU MS, followed this policy-making outline supporting itself “on the Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, acting under the authority of the Council and in close and constant contact with the Political and Security Committee”²⁰. The document was a stepping stone towards an effective coordination of the civilian and military aspects. The Security Council has been enlarged and is now better prepared to face security challenges. By cunning diplomatic moves, the EU found a solution in the Greek-Turkish clash over Cyprus with its addition to the EU first of its Greek part and then the Turkish one. This proved its value, as some scholars argued, as “the only international organization with the capacity —through a stick/carrot policy—to impact a political

¹⁸ Adams, G. “Convergence or Divergence? : The Future of the Transatlantic Defence Industry” in Duke, S. (editor) *Between Vision and Reality, CFSP’s Progress on the Path to Maturity* (The Netherlands: European Institute of Public Administration), p.195

¹⁹ Gordon, P. & Grant, C. (2005) “A concrete strategy for mending fences” *International Herald Tribune*, [Thursday, February 17, 2005]

²⁰ “European Constitutional Treaty” in http://europa.eu.int/constitution/index_en.htm [15 May 2005], Section 2 The Common Security and Defence Policy, article III-309

settlement.”²¹ The ethnic tensions in the Balkans were overcome thanks to a great effectiveness of the CESDP’s strategic bet on multiethnic and stable borders approach and the resulting advent of a confederacy between Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo.

Smaller states too have taken stage, participating in integrated, and “selective engagements”. These in turn, increased the CESDP’s adaptability to specific and unexpected situations while strengthening the lively defence market behind the now unique EU conflict-resolution “toolbox”.

NATO endures, well balanced between its American and European pillar, the latter having autonomous military decision-making means at its disposal. The effectiveness of these means came about thanks to breakthroughs in satellite projects and dynamic European Defence industry groups operating on a competitive, but well regulated, military defence market. This market was able to pool the best potential in this field of both the EU and the US. The principle of flexibility was triumphant encompassing both an effectiveness of the CESDP on most immediate challenges occurring on the EU’s periphery and a more or less intense involvement (according to strategic interests) by the main EU powers when it concerns to challenges of a more global nature.

Conclusion

The EU, born from war, has always been propelled by an ideational utopia of peace between its peoples and has unarguably attained some success along the last 60 years. Today, despite political and institutional ups and downs, victories and setbacks, the CFSP and its CESDP security branch has unprecedented potential to become institutionally and politically concrete. In order to do so it will have to be successful at two levels: first at the level of the policy-making institutional mechanics and secondly at the level of the broader strategic policy-making. A fluid, flexible and effective political

²¹Muftuler-Bac, M. (1999) “The Cyprus debacle: what the future holds” in *Futures* Vol.31 No.6 (London: Pergamon), p.569

machine needs to be underpinned by wise and clear-cut strategies capable of answering both to the expected and unexpected challenges that might be posed in a symptomatic way. Not claiming to have scientifically delineated all the problems on the horizon, this essay collects from the literature that we saw as the major crossroads on sight. Respectively: the development of the European Military Industry; the choice between internal or external focus of European security policy; the choice between stabilizing borders either by fostering multiethnic or homogenous state-building; the decision on the role of smaller states within the CESDP; and the unfolding of the EU-US relationship.

The posterior “spin” given to these challenges, in their systematization into scenarios, showed that the CFSP and the CESDP hold great potential. The future might just be promising, providing that no “wild card” uncertainties dramatically shake its grounds and as long as the European people together with its policy-makers are prepared for some inevitable crossroads the EU is on the verge of arriving to.

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