

## **THE EU AND TURKEY IN EUROPEAN SECURITY**

The dangers confronting Europe today are less specific than during the cold war. Instability is the new threat and the existence of powerful international institutions is the main element against this new threat. In order to establish a post cold war cooperation framework it should be sufficient to retool and adapt the existing institutional framework by giving priority to mutual interests and shared dangers. The evolution of the ESDP throughout the last fifty years bears with itself all the ups and downs caused by the lack of political will and the differences of opinion between the leading European states. September 11<sup>th</sup> has been instrumental in reminding the value of the cooperation spirit already developed within NATO, and this spirit of cooperation helped the finalisation of a solution to the ESDP which constitutes a remarkable achievement.

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## **Interdependence and Stability**

Europe's security and defence have undergone through radical changes since 1989, first with the collapse of communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and then with the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It is now possible to say that the end of the Cold War diminished the risks of a massive military confrontation in Europe arising from ideological division. But paradoxically, the collapse of the communism has not made Europe secure- at least not as envisaged. Regional conflicts, ethnic strife and unresolved border disputes will be on the European agenda at least for a while in the new disorder. In order to overcome this disorder, a cooperation-based post-Cold War security system needed to be established. The Cold War's nuclear deterrence led to a predictability in international relations. The relative stability established in Europe by the bipolar system of the Cold War years, therefore, gave way to a stability vacuum. Today the European continent faces new security risks and uncertainties arising both from within its own borders and from its strategic periphery. In order to establish this post-Cold War cooperation framework, we do not need to invent new institutions. It should be sufficient to retool and adapt the existing ones.

The dangers confronting Europe today are less specific than during the Cold War. For nearly five decades, there was very little separating ominous signs and open conflict; the moment Soviet tanks moved across a tripwire, war would be unleashed and no one knew how far it would escalate. . Whereas today, the space between disturbing events and conflict is wide and there is no tripwire anymore.<sup>1</sup> Threats to European security are not eliminated by the end of the Cold War, but they are transformed.

### **Instability is the new threat**

As referred to in this paper , stability will be used to mean “resistance of an immaterial thing to destruction or essential change, enduring quality; steadiness and continuity of a

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<sup>1</sup> BERTRAM Christoph, **Europe in the Balance: Securing the Peace Won in the Cold War**, A Carnegie Endowment Book, 1995, p. 13.

condition, institution.” Similarly stable means “firmly established, not liable to destruction or essential change.”<sup>2</sup>

The existence or absence of sufficiently powerful international institutions, so long as member governments are determined to make use of them, is an important factor influencing the direction of the conflict, in that the procedures established by these institutions provide the necessary grounds for the international community to act. Generally, problems can be suppressed by a set of standard operating procedures and by the relative predictability of the international order. In short, the notion of an international order implies a set of relationships which produce regularities and expected patterns of behaviour.

Another important factor that necessitates the continuation of cooperation is that international institutions and the procedures that they create, diminish the surprises of uncertainty when the threats to security and stability are vague and when there is no clear coordination of power and priority. During such times, in order to reduce uncertainty, states should tie their hands to be able to tie those of others. By doing this, the European structures may have a chance to reduce the risks of a problem turning into a threat. This becomes especially true when the risk comes from a change that is pervasive and convulsive.

European stability very much depends on its ability to extend stability to its east and south and to the stability of European institutions. This means giving priority to mutual interests and to shared dangers.

The assumption is that, first, stability can not be effective and continuous if it does not become a part of standard operating procedures among states. This can only be obtained via international institutions. Second, the European continent's, hence West Europe's stability cannot be assured without extending stability to the east and its periphery where there are many challenges to European security. Third, even if an extended security is

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<sup>2</sup> The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary.

obtained, it can only be temporary if not backed up by institutional procedures where interdependence is most necessary and natural.

### **Evolution of the ESDP**

European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) finds its roots in the early years of the European integration process after the second World War. Its most remarkable first step dates back to the aborted European Defence Community initiative of 1952. The gap left in the European defence policy by the rejection of the EDC treaty by the French National Assembly in 1954 was at that time filled by the initiative of the United Kingdom to include Germany and Italy in the Brussels Pact which became the Western European Union (WEU) and by the entry of Germany into NATO.<sup>3</sup> But the failure of the Defence Community in Europe brought with it the failure of the Political Community, too.

The problems in the evolution of the ESDP continued throughout the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Time has proven that a genuine European Security and Defence Identity necessitated operational capabilities as well. In time this brought up the Atlanticist versus Europeanist dilemma on defence issues.

Indeed nobody in principle was against an ESDI, but also nobody wanted to discard NATO. A duplication in the operational capabilities- apart from pushing the US towards isolationism- would also be too costly at an era when there were serious cuts in the defence budgets of the European states. A solution to this stalemate during the 1990's was the use of WEU as the bridge between the European Union and NATO. But this interim solution brought with it problems of practicality, particularly in the complex membership structure WEU developed after Maastricht. Nevertheless, despite its deficiencies WEU managed to play a role in bringing together a wider European structure.

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<sup>3</sup> NUTTALL Simon J., **European Political Co- operation**, Clarendon Press, 1992, p. 36.

The structure created with WEU definitely had shortcomings for Associate Members (Iceland, Norway and Turkey) which were members of NATO but not of the EU. Still, Associate Members have been able to develop a certain *acquis* within WEU, where they had the right of full participation and even in practical terms could steer the direction of the institution as much as full members.

However the blossoming of WEU ended with the compromise reached between France and the United Kingdom on the role of the EU in security and defence matters. In December 1998 these two countries came to an agreement in St. Malo on the role the EU should play in crisis management operations in which the USA did not intend to participate in. St. Malo has proven to be the beginning of a new era.

### **The EU and Turkey's approaches to the new structure**

The cornerstone of the agreement reached between France and the UK in St. Malo was the cooperation between NATO and the EU. The European Union was aiming at developing its own autonomous decision-making mechanism. While doing this the EU was willing to make use of NATO assets and capabilities, to avoid duplicating something already developed by NATO and increasing the defence expenditures.

The new structure brought with itself the risk of marginalising an ally like Turkey, just because she was not yet a member of the European Union. Turkey indeed was not against Europe developing a more effective crisis management capability. Turkey was even ready to sincerely contribute to this development provided she was a part of it. She had already fought hard within WEU in order not to be left out. Therefore she was keen on taking the *acquis* developed within WEU as a benchmark in the new structure. However, the EU was keen on keeping the developments limited to its membership structure.

The EU's summit at Nice where the elements of the ESDP were determined was not helpful in overcoming the differences. Indeed with the Nice arrangements the EU was clearly increasing the gap between the parties, since it was providing nothing but weak

consultation mechanisms for non-EU European allies. This difference in understanding was pre-empting the development of a cooperation between NATO and the EU.

However history has its own turning points.

### **September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks**

On the morning of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 United States and the whole world woke up to a human tragedy. The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, while leaving thousands of innocent people dead, drew attention to the dangers of an evil called terrorism.

It was then certain that with the end of the cold war the threats had not come to an end but had evolved. The terrorist attacks were clearly meant to be an attack on stability.

The international community's reaction to the attacks was quick and consistent. All existing cooperation mechanisms, such as the UN and NATO immediately started working. The procedures established by these institutions provided the necessary grounds for the international community to act. NATO, for the first time in its history invoked Article 5 of its Treaty. An international order characterised by standard operational procedures had been set in motion and was working.

September 11<sup>th</sup> has been instrumental in reminding the EU of the indivisible nature of security and defence matters. The United States still keeps a considerable number of troops on the European continent. This is a heavy economic burden. Given the fact that the war against terrorism is a lengthy and involved process which will require enormous human and financial resources, the US may at anytime wish to reconsider the number of troops stationed in Europe. This created the necessity for European countries to take more responsibility in that area..

## **ESDP instrument of cooperation**

The Turkish armed forces have important military and strategic capabilities. Moreover, Turkey with its Muslim population and democratic structure also has an ideological role to play in the battle against terrorism. Turkey's geostrategic location is another important factor. Overall Turkey's weight on security and defence matters increased considerably after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. Moreover the Alliance was going through a sensitive period in terms of solidarity, which could in no way permit a gap to occur between the EU and Turkey because of the abstract institutional difficulties of ESDP. Therefore finding a solution to the ESDP problem became all the more urgent. The timeframe for the creation of the EU's Rapid Reaction Force and prospects of Turkey's EU membership were other important factors that forced the parties to find a compromise.

The developments increased the importance of the trilateral meetings between Turkey, the UK and USA, which had started in May 2001 in Istanbul and whose aim was to bring a solution to the long-debated ESDP issue.

These efforts were not in vain and it was not to be long before their fruits were seen. In December 2001 Turkey announced she was ready to accept the compromise reached on the trilateral meetings and which were reflected on the Ankara Document. Indeed all the EU members except Greece were ready to go along with the Ankara Document. However it took almost a year to convince Greece and this was only done by making some cosmetic changes in the document, which was then renamed as the Brussels Document.

In short the document is laying the parameters of the NATO-EU cooperation framework. The essence is that non-EU European Allies will be able to participate in EU-led operations and their preparations in the event that NATO assets and capabilities are used. In the kind of operations where EU will not use NATO capabilities, those non-EU European Allies can participate upon the invitation of the EU Council. But in any case the agreement assures that the sensitivities of the European Allies are taken into consideration by the EU via a well-developed consultation mechanism. The same spirit of

cooperation will also apply to peace time preparations such as exercises and routine consultations between NATO and EU.

Naturally, there will still be certain difficulties arising from the asymmetry in the membership structures of the EU and NATO, which is likely to be solved when Turkey becomes a full member of the EU.

Nevertheless, this solution, which was finalised in December 2002, is a remarkable achievement in the history of ESDP. For half a century there has been debate regarding Europe's role in security and defence matters and now it has come to an important turning point, where Europe has all the operational capabilities it needs for peace-keeping operations. The achievement also brings an end to the differences of opinion between the leading European countries. In other words there is now more room for developing political will and putting together operational capabilities should there be a need.

With the resolution of the ESDP issue, another very important building block on the road to full Turkish EU membership is laid between the EU and Turkey. This working relationship will surely contribute to the development of a better understanding between the EU and Turkey. ESDP could also be instrumental in opening up a much needed strategic vision in the EU, where Turkey has much to contribute.

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