

EUROPEAN DEFENSE: WHY THE EU SHOULD PLAY A BIGGER ROLE

This article assesses the development of ESDP in the context of relationships among EU states and makes certain suggestions as to how to minimize potential rifts among member states to move forward constructively. As Charles Grant relates NATO's positive initiatives to broaden the area of stability, he also points out that NATO is the most seriously taken transatlantic vehicle for all involved parties and thus increasingly will serve as a platform for transatlantic cooperation. Predicting the gradual convergence of the foreign policy interests of the EU states and the development of a common European approach to military operations, Grant takes a futuristic "glance" into this evolution. He also predicts that the challenges faced in the relationship between NATO and ESDP will be overcome.

Charles Grant*

* Charles Grant is director of the Centre for European Reform, London, UK. This essay is based on a contribution to a Centre for European Reform pamphlet, "The European way of war," published in May 2004.

The conventional wisdom on the Europeans' attempts to build a common defense policy is that they have achieved little of significance. Many regard the effort as doomed, given the political divisions over how to handle the US, the huge gap in military capabilities between the best- and the worst- performing EU countries, and the lack of consensus on when and in what circumstances force should be used. The reality, however, is that shared interests, challenges and experiences are pushing Europe's governments and armed forces to develop a more common approach to warfare. Both NATO and the EU's nascent defense organization are encouraging this convergence. The result will be a more capable and action-orientated EU – the kind of Union the US should welcome.

The Europeans' hesitant steps towards working together in defense should be viewed in the context of the Union's overall development. The member-states have already integrated the management of their economies to a significant degree—unifying their trade policy, establishing an independent competition authority in Brussels, building a single market and creating the euro. In the coming decades it will be cooperation on justice and home affairs (JHA), and also on foreign and defense policy, that drives European integration. In JHA, practical problems such as terrorism, cross-border crime, asylum-seekers and illegal immigration are motivating governments to work towards common policies. In the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), too, the rationale is not integration for integration's sake—as if the heads of government had said to each other “we've done the single market, wouldn't it be fun to build a common security policy?” Rather, there are pressing problems in the real world that make it essential for governments to act together at EU level.

The many challenges that will shape the CFSP include the need to stabilize the arc of instability which runs around the EU's eastern, south-eastern and southern flanks; and the need to prevent the worst kinds of disaster in those parts of the world, notably sub-Saharan Africa, which the US is likely to steer clear of.

The EU must therefore make a better job of coordinating its policies and those of the member-states towards problem countries that may become sources of terrorism and instability. As the December 2003 European Security Strategy acknowledges, EU institutions and governments have seldom joined together their various policies on trade, aid, development, immigration and counter-terrorism. One potential strength of the EU—in contrast to NATO, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) or the World Bank – is that it can draw on a broad spectrum of soft- and hard-power resources. It should be able to calibrate its various policies to prevent a trouble-zone from erupting into war (in Macedonia, the diplomacy led by the EU's Javier Solana and NATO's George Robertson in the summer of 2001 did just that: the result was a political settlement that prevented the outbreak of war). However, if a war does break out, the EU needs to be able to deploy rapid-reaction forces to end the conflict, and then provide peacekeepers and other essential personnel – such as policemen, engineers and judges – to help rebuild the country.

In addition, four specific challenges face the EU:

- The need to tackle the growing threat from biological, chemical, radiological and nuclear weapons. That means working with the US to strengthen existing non-proliferation regimes, such as the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and to develop new tools, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative. When

confronted with states that make, trade or use weapons of mass destruction, the EU and its member-states must be ready to apply a broad range of policies and instruments, including, as a last resort, military force.

- The need to present a strong and united voice to governments and other partners in the Middle East. That will make it easier for the EU to help the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians, and also to encourage the modernization and democratization of the wider region.
- The need to forge a common EU policy on Russia, so that the Union can build a more balanced and fruitful political and economic partnership with its large eastern neighbor.
- The need to encourage the US to listen to European views, and to take account of European policies. The US is not likely to do so unless the EU becomes a more coherent and effective international actor.

Europe cannot fulfill these objectives without a more effective CFSP. And part of that must be a meaningful European defense policy. As the European Security Strategy puts it, “we need to develop a strategic culture that fosters early, rapid, and when necessary, robust intervention.”

Plenty of commentators, particularly those of a Euroskeptic bent, argue that it is hard to take the idea of EU foreign policy seriously. Haven't Iraq and numerous other intra-European disputes shown the futility of attempts to build EU foreign policy, and thus of EU defense policy, they ask? It is true that if the European states could not develop any common foreign policy, there would be little rationale for much closer military co-operation. Defense policy is a tool that should work in the service of foreign policy. There is not much point in the EU as such deploying military force—whether to provide humanitarian relief, to keep the peace, to intervene in a conflict, to destroy a terrorist base or to topple a dangerous regime—unless the member-states share a common view on the nature of the problem, and how best to deal with it.

However, notwithstanding the rows on Iraq, Europeans have more in common on foreign policy than many people realize. Europeans agree on Iran, where they support a policy of conditional engagement rather than the US policy of isolation.¹ They agree on the Middle East Peace Process, believing that the ‘road map’ offers a way forward towards a Palestinian state that would be based on the Gaza Strip and most of the West Bank (and they think that if Israel keeps part of the West Bank it should compensate the Palestinians with land swaps); since April 2004 President Bush appears to have taken a different line. The Europeans have common policies on the principal international arms control treaties and agreements, several of which the US has rejected. They agree on the future of the Balkans, the Kyoto protocol and the International Criminal Court. And the Europeans believe that the United Nations should play a central role in global governance.

In some important parts of the world, notably Russia, the EU countries have failed to agree on effective common policies—but they do have very similar interests. Silvio Berlusconi, Tony Blair, Jacques Chirac and Gerhard Schröder have each sought a special relationship with Vladimir Putin. They have cosied up and refrained from criticizing the Russian president, lest they lose their privileged position to another

¹ See Steven Everts, “Engaging Iran: a test case for EU foreign policy,” *CER*, March 2004.

European leader. Sooner or later they will learn that they stand a better chance of fulfilling their objectives if they concert their efforts.

The member-states went through a not dissimilar learning process in the Balkans during the 1990s. When Yugoslavia fell apart, Britain, France and Germany had their own policies and backed different parties in the conflict. But the painful experience of having to contain the wars soon taught them and the other EU governments that they could achieve much more through acting together.

Indeed, the idea that the EU should be able to run its own military operations originated in the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s. During the wars in Croatia and Bosnia, Slobodan Milosevic and others of his ilk took little notice of what the Union said: they knew that it could pass resolutions, but never dispatch battalions to enforce them. The Europeans also learned that the US was very reluctant to deploy troops to a region that it did not consider strategic: not until the Dayton accords ended the Bosnian war in 1995 did the US send ground troops to the region, to join the Europeans who had been there for three years. A few years later, when Kosovo was on the brink of exploding, the EU saw that its own diplomacy counted for little in the efforts to reconcile Serbs and Kosovars.

The EU's inability to tackle these Balkan crises spurred British Prime Minister Tony Blair and French president Jacques Chirac to launch the idea of EU defence at their summit in St Malo in December 1998. Other EU governments rallied to their lead, and the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) was born. In the spring of 1999, during the Kosovo air campaign, the EU governments – against expectations – held to a common line of supporting the NATO action. Scarred by the July 1995 Srebrenica massacre, which they had been unable to prevent, they wanted to ensure that that kind of tragedy did not reoccur in Europe. One reason why the ESDP has made progress in subsequent years is that Europe's political leaders have not forgotten the lessons of the Balkan wars.

Five years of progress

Britain and France have sometimes held differing views on the underlying purpose of the ESDP. Both hope that it will make the Union a stronger international actor. They differ on whether the point is for the EU to become a more effective partner for the US, helping it to sort out global problems, or rather to promote a multipolar world that would serve to constrain US power. Yet they have always managed to agree on the next steps forward for European defence, including on the thorny issue of how the ESDP should fit in with NATO; and they have always managed to persuade the other governments to follow them. In that sense ESDP is a microcosm of the whole EU. The fact that the member-states have never agreed on what the EU is for has not prevented them from building the world's most successful and effective multilateral organisation.

The progress that the EU has made in the five-and-a-half years since St Malo is impressive. It has organised policing missions in Bosnia and Macedonia; a peacekeeping mission in Macedonia that is supported by NATO ('Berlin-plus' in the jargon); and an autonomous military intervention in the Congo.

Some of the progress has been institutional. The EU now has a Political and Security Committee of senior national diplomats, tasked with, among other things, the management of ESDP missions; a Military Committee of senior national officers and a full-time Military Staff, to advise the Council of Ministers; an embryonic civilian and military planning unit, that will help to co-ordinate military and non-military resources during autonomous EU missions; the OCCAR (Joint Armaments Cooperation Organisation) project management agency, which brings together the four member-states with the largest defense industries and allows them to run multinational equipment projects more efficiently than in the past;² and a plan for a European defense agency, to monitor the performance of governments on delivering the capabilities they promise, to coordinate R&D spending and to promote a more common armaments market. The European constitution, if adopted, will commit the member-states to aid each other in the event of a terrorist event or military attack.

One can certainly be cynical about the obsession of some EU states—often those that have the weakest military capabilities—with building new institutions. EU governments should focus more on improving the skills and equipment of their armed forces. But one should not underestimate the potentially benign impact of some Brussels institutions. By bringing together officials and officers from the various member-states, and exposing them to each others' views and ways of thinking, they should – in the long run – help to forge a more common strategic culture. The result is unlikely to be a homogenized, lowest-common denominator culture. The institutions facilitate a transfer of expertise from the more capable nations to the less capable. They encourage peer-group pressure among the various national military elites. For example, Britain and France have strongly influenced the recent German plan to increase the number of troops that will be available for overseas interventions. The new defense agency could play a crucial role in institutionalizing peer group pressure among the national military establishments. It must therefore be allowed to name and shame –in public– those governments which fail to fulfill their pledges on capabilities.

Not only the Germans are engaged in military reform. France has introduced an all-professional army, Italy will have one in 2005 and Spain is following suit. Europe's defense ministries have undertaken to provide elite troops for the NATO Response Force and also for EU battle groups, both of which should be able to deploy at short notice. These two formations will develop in a mutually reinforcing way, sometimes drawing on the same units, and will increase the total number of soldiers available for serious combat missions.

Few Europeans, let alone Americans, have noticed that the number of European troops deployed outside the EU and NATO areas has roughly doubled over the past ten years. The 15 EU states had about 60,000 soldiers deployed during 2003 – exactly the number the Union had pledged to be capable of deploying in the 'headline goal' adopted in December 1999. If one includes the ten countries that joined the Union in May 2004, plus the other European members of NATO, the number rises to an average of 70,000 troops during 2003. That figure peaked at 90,000 during the British deployment in Iraq.³

² See Daniel Keohane, "The EU and armaments co-operation," *CER*, December 2002.

³ For a thorough analysis of European troop numbers, see Bastian Giegerich and William Wallace, "Not such as soft power: the external deployment of European armed forces," *Survival*, Summer 2004.

The Europeans also have new weapon systems entering into service – though some of them, it must be acknowledged, are probably not worth the huge cost. The Eurofighter is a very capable interceptor, but the Russian air force that it was designed to fight is no longer a threat. Similarly, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Sweden have invested in the Meteor air-to-air missile, which is apparently more capable than the equivalent American missile. But it is hard to imagine why any European air force would need the Meteor.

Nevertheless other procurement decisions have endowed the Europeans with more useful sorts of equipment. The Franco-British Storm Shadow air-to-ground cruise missile has entered service and is more accurate than American Tomahawks, while seven nations are building the A-400M transport plane. Britain, Finland, France and Sweden have invested heavily in new telecoms equipment for their ground forces. Britain, France, the Netherlands and Portugal have bought new ships for amphibious warfare. Several countries are developing unmanned aerial vehicles. Several have bought chemical and biological warfare protection suits.

Many of the new sorts of equipment will be used by several member-states. That in itself will do something to encourage the emergence of common tactics. But a more powerful factor promoting convergence will be the missions that Europeans undertake together. They have already had the experience of working with other Europeans under a NATO hat in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan, and under an EU hat in Macedonia and the Congo. The number and scope of such missions is likely to grow in the years ahead. By the end of 2004 the EU is likely to be running a seven thousand-strong peacekeeping operation in Bosnia.

The ESDP's progress has depended not only on the availability of troops and equipment but also of civilian capabilities. One of the new EU institutions is a committee of national officials known as CivCom. Its task is to develop the civilian capabilities that may be needed to support crisis management missions. At the 2001 Gothenburg summit EU leaders adopted a set of civilian targets, including the ability to deploy:

- five thousand police officers, of whom a thousand would be deployable within 30 days;
- two hundred legal officials, to help the police with criminal justice procedures;
- a pool of experts to take on tasks of civil administration; and
- two thousand personnel for intervention teams for disaster relief.

These targets have been met, thanks to voluntary contributions from the member-states, though so far only policemen have been deployed. More work needs to be done before missions involving the other kinds of expert become feasible. These personnel are available not only to the EU but also to the UN and the OSCE. Any EU decision to deploy civilian capabilities requires unanimity.

Europe's big three

One reason why EU defense has progressed so far is that the 'big three'—Britain, France and Germany—have viewed the project as significant and committed themselves to its success. Ever since St Malo, a certain pattern has repeated itself:

Britain and France argue about a new initiative and then agree on the details; Germany lends support; the other member-states follow; and finally, after a lot of grumbling from the Americans, Britain persuades them to tolerate the change.

This trilateral cooperation survived the bust-up over Iraq, but only just.⁴ In April 2003, when relations between London, on the one hand, and Berlin and Paris, on the other, were at an all time low, the French, German, Belgian and Luxembourg leaders met in Brussels. They announced plans for a defense organization involving an ‘inner core’ of EU members, and a permanent military headquarters at Tervuren near Brussels. This summit, coming in the midst of the poisonous diplomacy surrounding the Iraq war, nearly killed off the ESDP: the initiative seemed to confirm the worst fears of British and American policy-makers, namely that France’s ultimate ambition was to build a defense club that excluded Anglo-Saxons and East Europeans, and undermined NATO. Even the most moderate policy-makers in Washington concluded that ESDP had been a big mistake. Yet the Tervuren initiative made sense to the Chirac and Schröder camps, which felt that the Blair government had become so close to the Bush administration that it was no longer capable of working constructively on European defence.

During the summer President Chirac and Chancellor Schröder pulled back from their strongly anti-Anglo Saxon stance. They observed that the overwhelming majority of EU governments was hostile to the Tervuren initiative. Their advisers stopped talking about a triple alliance between France, Germany and Russia. The French and German governments came round to the view that their alliance, on its own, was not enough to forge effective European foreign and defense policies. They needed the British, too – for their diplomatic and military resources, for their contacts in Washington, and for their influence in Central and Eastern Europe on military issues.

Tony Blair also repositioned himself during the summer. He saw how his passionate support for the foreign policy of George Bush had lost him friends in Europe. Not only in Paris and Berlin, but also in other countries that had not taken sides during the diplomatic rows over Iraq (such as the Nordic states), Blair was a diminished figure. Blair believes that Britain should both lead in Europe and be the US’s best European ally. He had sacrificed the first objective to secure the second. He needed to show European governments that he was, Iraq notwithstanding, a committed European. What better way than to reaffirm his commitment to European defense, an area where Britain’s expertise made it a natural leader?

The consequence of these shifts was a trilateral summit in Berlin in September 2003. Blair, Chirac and Schröder shared a common concern that enlargement would make decision-making increasingly hard, and they thought that regular meetings *à trois* would help to move along EU business. More specifically they wanted to strengthen EU foreign and defense policy. Soon after this summit they sent their foreign ministers to Tehran, to negotiate with the Iranians on their nuclear facilities.⁵

⁴ For an optimistic overview of the recent history of ESDP, see Anand Menon, “Every cloud...ESDP after Iraq,” *International Affairs*, July 2004 (forthcoming).

⁵ In the short term, at least, the mission was a success: the Iranian government accepted more stringent International Atomic Energy Authority inspections of its facilities, and announced a suspension of uranium enrichment; in return the EU left open the possibility of a trade agreement and agreed not to refer Iran’s violations of the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty to the UN Security Council.

The summit also led to a series of discussions between Berlin, London and Paris on three contentious issues in European defense: the question of enhancing the EU's planning staff, the mutual defense clause in the draft constitution, and the 'structured co-operation' clause in the same document. By November the three governments had forged compromises on those issues, and the other EU governments signed up in December.⁶ With some difficulty, Blair persuaded the Bush administration to accept these agreements.

This pattern repeated itself early in 2004, with the British-French proposal for EU battle groups. Germany gave support at a trilateral summit in Berlin in March, and in April the other governments backed a plan for the EU to have nine deployable battle groups by 2007.

Big three cooperation will continue to be a condition for progress in European defense, for two reasons. One is that each of the three represents a very different tendency: the British are strongly Atlanticist, the French stress the need for Europe to be able to act autonomously, and the Germans are the most reluctant to deploy troops overseas or to use force. Therefore if these three can agree on a policy or an action, there is a good chance that most of the other member-states will go along with it.

The other reason is that the big three have the means to act. Between them they spend roughly three quarters of the total sum spent by EU governments on procurement, and three quarters of the sum spent on military R&D. They have about three quarters of the European defense industry's capacity.⁷ And although an exact figure is hard to pin down, they provide the overwhelming majority of the troops who are able to serve outside the EU on peacekeeping or combat missions.

Italy is still perceived as a country that punches below its weight in foreign and defense policy. It has suffered from a tradition of relatively unstable governments and inefficient administrations, from having been more peripheral to EU decision-making than France and Germany, and from lacking the intimate ties in Washington that Britain enjoys. Yet the Italians score far better than any country apart from the big three on most military criteria. They spend only a little less than Germany on arms procurement. In spring 2004 they had about 10,000 troops active on overseas missions, including in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. The Italians distinguished themselves in Iraq in April, when their forces recaptured several towns from Muqtada al-Sadr's militia. If Italy could find a way of improving its equipment – it has inadequate transport planes, yet has pulled out of the A-400M project – it could make a strong case for some trilateral meetings becoming quadrilateral.

Co-operation among the big three is evidently a sensitive matter that is bound to upset some states, particularly those which are not so small, like Italy, Spain and Poland. In order to ensure that trilateral meetings do not provoke hostile alliances of those excluded, the big three will need to observe certain principles. They should run their meetings in a transparent spirit, explaining to the rest of the EU exactly what, if

⁶ For more details, see Charles Grant, "Reviving European defence co-operation," *NATO Review*, (Winter 2003); and Charles Grant, "Big three join forces on defence," *E!Sharpe*, March 2004.

⁷ See Marc Perrin de Brichambaut, "Peut-il y avoir une defense européenne autonome?" transcript of conference speech, 24 February 2004, Les Entretiens d'Europartenaires.

anything, they agree upon, as soon as possible. They should include EU officials where appropriate, to enhance the legitimacy of their gatherings (for example if the three foreign ministers had taken Solana to Tehran, they could have more easily sold the resultant deal to the other EU governments). And, depending on the subject under consideration, they should invite other countries to join them. If the three met to discuss a security crisis in Ukraine, for example, they should involve Poland and Ukraine's other neighbors.

What role for NATO?

Without any doubt, NATO has become a less important organization for both Americans and Europeans in recent years. The experience of the Kosovo air campaign, with its war-by-committee management structure, made a big impact on American generals and strategists. "If anyone thinks that the US is ever going to use the North Atlantic Council [NATO's supreme body] to run another major military campaign, they must be smoking pot", a senior Pentagon official explained to this author in April 2004. Europeans note some decline in the quality of US personnel sent to NATO's European headquarters. For their part the Europeans—excepting those from Eastern Europe who have recently joined the organization—talk about NATO rather less than they used to. This is partly because they observe the lower level of American interest, and partly because they have been spending more time and energy on ESDP. A more important factor, however, is that the rows over Iraq have weakened the transatlantic bond which sustains NATO, and thus diminished the political salience of the alliance.

And yet, in both Washington and the European capitals, senior officials and politicians still view NATO as very useful organization, albeit one that is less significant geopolitically. The alliance is showing signs of vitality: the new Transformation Command in Norfolk, Virginia is helping Europeans to understand 'network-centric warfare,' while the creation of the NATO Response Force (NRF) is encouraging them to train and equip more troops for war-fighting. NATO has learned to deploy troops outside its European base, to Afghanistan, and may do the same in Iraq, where a majority of its members are engaged in the US-led coalition. Seven East European states joined the alliance in April 2004, while the Western Balkan countries are queuing up to join. These countries want to join because they understand that membership will enhance their stability and security.

There is widespread recognition on both sides of the Atlantic that NATO serves many valuable, if humdrum purposes. In the words of the Pentagon official quoted above, "the real value of NATO is its peacetime preparatory work for what in wartime will become coalitions of the willing." He referred to NATO's efforts to promote common standards and inter-operability among its members' forces, to the training and exercises that it organizes, and to the positive effect of armies working together on peacekeeping missions. "The human contact is important. Then when there is a crisis you can pull the team together more easily."

Something that not all Pentagon officials are aware of is that France, since the Iraq war, has decided to take NATO much more seriously. This policy has been laid down by President Chirac himself. The French government sees NATO as the only multilateral organization that is valued by the hard-liners in the Bush administration,

and understands that it is, potentially, a constraint on US unilateralism. Hence France's enthusiasm for participating at a senior level in the Transformation Command and the NRF.

NATO remains the only transatlantic institution of any substance, and for that reason alone is probably condemned to something close to eternal life. It provides a vehicle for Europeans and Americans to talk about security challenges. The NATO-Russia council is a forum in which Russians, Europeans and Americans can discuss common problems (and one which the Russians find useful). The Partnership for Peace programme now extends far into Asia and probably has a benign if modest effect on spreading good practice to some rather undemocratic regimes. And NATO's formal dialogue with seven countries in the Middle East could become a part of wider plans to assist that region's transformation.

A lot of the things that NATO does are making a positive impact on European defense. Its institutions and procedures encourage a convergence of thinking and the transfer of best practice. So why should the EU itself bother with a role in defense? Why not leave European security to NATO?

The answer is that the EU and NATO are different organizations with different purposes. Europe needs a defense capability because it has, on some issues, a common foreign policy. The EU can better promote its common interests by reinforcing its foreign policy with a military component. NATO serves a different – though usually complementary – purpose to the EU, which is to promote transatlantic co-operation on security policy and military affairs. Of course, if the EU had nothing significant to say about foreign policy, there would be an overwhelming case for scrapping the ESDP and leaving all of Europe's security to NATO. But that is not the case. The ESDP is needed for when the alliance as a whole is not engaged. For example, in 2003 the UN needed elite forces to intervene rapidly in the Eastern Congo. The US did not want to become involved so it made sense for the EU rather than NATO to organize the mission.

Although the political objectives of NATO and the ESDP are distinct, there is much overlap in the nitty-gritty practical work that they engage in. For example, each of them is trying—with much effort but not yet great success – to improve the military capabilities of European forces. If either of them succeeds, both will reap the benefit. The 'Berlin-plus' agreements, which allow the EU to borrow NATO military assets, show that the EU does not intend to engage in the most demanding types of mission without NATO support. The same soldiers and equipment which embark on EU missions will later serve under a NATO flag, and vice versa. There is still some mutual suspicion between the two organizations, which is the natural consequence of two bureaucracies being asked to work together. In long run, each will influence and better understand the other. NATO and the EU are condemned to partnership.

A glimpse of the future

The EU needs a defense capability not to fulfill some federalist dream, but rather to help it tackle the challenges mentioned at the start of this chapter. Of all those challenges, the most crucial is the need to ensure the security, stability and prosperity of the EU's near abroad. Otherwise the EU will be surrounded by countries that are

sources of armed conflict, illegal immigration, organized crime and terrorism. It needs to make a better job of exploiting its innate strength, which should be the ability to integrate the use of civilian and military instruments for managing crises. It must not forget the lessons learned in the Balkans during the 1990s: soft power alone is often unable to resolve conflicts. Equally it must take account of the recent experience of Afghanistan and Iraq: hard power can overthrow a noxious regime, but on its own cannot steer a war-torn country along the road to recovery. As the European Security Strategy puts it: “In almost every major intervention, military efficiency has been followed by civilian chaos.”

The Americans, quite rightly, assume that the EU should be able to look after its own neighborhood. It is highly unlikely that the US will want to send troops to places like Moldova, Montenegro, Tunisia or Sudan. The Europeans need to be able to improve their ability to act—through NATO for major security crises, and through the EU for other crises, especially those close to home. The need for European troop deployments in the EU’s near abroad is unlikely to diminish and will probably grow.

How will European defense evolve in the coming decades? European armies will employ more women, people from ethnic minorities, scientists, information technology experts and linguists. More Muslims will serve in European forces—as will mullahs – which may be useful for peacekeeping in some parts of the world.

European defense budgets are unlikely to rise a great deal. But Europe will have more usable and better-equipped troops, thanks to further progress with the conversion of conscript armies designed for territorial defense into smaller, professional forces that can deploy overseas. Long before it joins the EU, Turkey will become an active participant in ESDP, providing large numbers of extra troops for peacekeeping missions. As a European member of NATO it has the right to take part in any EU mission that is mounted with NATO support.

The smaller European countries, well aware that they will not fight wars on their own, will specialize in military roles that could be useful to the EU or NATO. Certain countries could focus, for example, on mine clearance, anti-submarine warfare, field hospitals, jamming enemy radar, defending troops against hostile missiles, protection against biological and chemical weapons, and so on. In Denmark there is already discussion of leaving air power to others, so that the Danes can invest more in land and sea forces.⁸ The smaller countries are also likely to club together to form multilateral forces; they will need to do so in order to provide the size of unit that will be required for participation in EU and NATO missions. Multinational forces will become more feasible because English will be the unquestioned military lingua franca.

There will be more pooling of military equipment and support functions. NATO’s decision in April 2004 to establish a common fleet of ‘airborne ground surveillance’ manned and unmanned aircraft—a fleet that would also be available to the EU—will set an example.⁹ Governments are most likely to apply pooling to the less-sensitive sorts of military task. There will not be a multinational fighter squadron, but there may be a

⁸ See Giegerich and Wallace (2004).

⁹ The UK, having developed its own Airborne Ground Surveillance System, will opt out of the NATO fleet.

multinational organization to train fighter pilots. Within a few years the EU governments may be lending their transport planes to a central pool that would service requests from the UN, NATO or the EU – though each member-state would be free to withdraw its aircraft if national needs were pressing. The countries buying the A400M transport plane may establish a single organization to provide maintenance. And since Britain and France are building similar types of aircraft carrier, a joint support operation for those ships would make sense.

National defense bureaucracies will resist such pooling, for it would force them to change the way they work and to accept job losses. Some generals and politicians will complain about having to trust ‘Johnny Foreigner.’ But finance ministries, understanding that pooling permits a higher level of output for a given financial input, will drive it forward.¹⁰

If and when the constitutional treaty enters into force, the EU will be better equipped to bring together the many policies and instruments that it can target on security crises. The new EU foreign minister will be able to draw on the resources of both the Council of Ministers and the Commission, hitherto divided into separate ‘pillars’ within the EU bureaucracy. His or her job will be to co-ordinate foreign policy, trade policy, economic aid, humanitarian assistance, intelligence analysis and troop deployments. Within a few years the foreign minister will be able to call on the member-states to deploy not only 5,000 policemen, but also a further force of 5,000 gendarmes, armed police who can operate in a rougher environment (the French and Italian governments have already discussed the creation of such a force). These men and women will normally serve in national police or gendarme units, but be available for EU missions at short notice. The EU will also develop a ‘civilian rapid reaction force’, consisting of skilled professionals such as judges, prosecutors, doctors, nurses, customs experts, aid workers, water engineers and electrical engineers, all ‘ear-marked’ as ready to fly to a trouble zone at a few weeks’ notice.

The net result of all the military co-operation within the EU and NATO will be a transfer of expertise from the most capable EU states to the less proficient. A European staff college (already under discussion at the time of writing) will encourage this transfer. More countries’ armed forces will adopt the mentality, training and equipment that are appropriate for engaging in the kind of high-intensity warfare at which France and Britain excel. The gap between Europe’s most capable and least capable forces will remain large, but be less wide than it is today. For their part, the British and French forces and defense ministries will have to adapt to working in a more multinational environment than is their wont. They will have to learn to listen to the views of other EU countries and be willing to take their preferences into account. But they will do so, in order to legitimize their informal leadership role. There will be no formal *directoire* of large countries to lead EU military operations. Those countries which provide the most troops, with the best equipment and the capacity to take on arduous missions, will inevitably fill the senior command positions.

¹⁰ See Tim Garden and Charles Grant, “Europe could back a bigger punch by sharing,” *Financial Times*, 18 December 2002.

In the coming years the foreign policy interests of the EU states are more likely to converge than diverge. They will therefore continue to develop a more coherent CFSP—and it will seem natural for them to step up cooperation on military operations. Public opinion, although generally skeptical of much that the EU does, is unlikely to object very much to EU military missions. Opinion polls show that the public is more appreciative of EU involvement in defense policy than in most other areas. According to the February 2004 Eurobarometer poll, 70 percent of EU citizens support a common defense and security policy, while 19 percent do not; there is a majority in favor of the principle of a common defense and security policy in every member-state, Britain included.¹¹

In any case, EU military operations will not involve member-states giving up sovereignty through, for example, majority voting on troop deployments. Unanimity will be the rule. Those countries that wish to become involved in a mission will do so, and those which do not will opt out. Very slowly, the practice of working together on crisis-management missions will foster a more common European approach to warfare.

¹¹ http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb60/eb60_rapport_standard_en.pdf.