

National Conceptions of European Defence: Media Coverage of the European Defence and Security Policy in French and British National Newspapers.

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Cyrille THIEBAUT

PhD Student in Political Science

University of Paris I Panthéon – Sorbonne, France

Centre de Recherches Politiques de la Sorbonne – CRPS

Centre d'Etudes en Sciences Sociales de la Défense – C2SD

thiebautcyrille@free.fr

Abstract:

The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) which is associated to it, are considered as the next challenge in the political construction of the European Union (EU). Indeed, in 1992, with the treaty of Maastricht, creating the European Union, the idea of a European diplomacy and defence emerged as a real political issue. It has steadily progressed ever since, leading to first European operations in 2003. From this point of view, many consider that European defence has become an effective reality.

Plus, according to different polls – Eurobarometer, Transatlantic Trends, and national surveys – the public opinion of the different member states largely supports the ESDP in general: around 70%. But if we look closer at the answers to different questions related to European defence, we realise that a general support does not mean that all the member states have the same conception of what it should be: is it a way to reinforce a European pillar inside NATO or is it a way to become more independent of the Unites-States? Is it a way to achieve a real European political union?

As France and Great-Britain could be considered as the two countries that have a role of leader in this matter, we would like to study more specifically their newspapers and compare them. This should allow us to determine if there is some sort of national culture concerning defence issues that would explain the different conceptions that these countries have about what ESDP should be.

However, we want to go a little further in our interrogation: if these countries defend different conceptions of European defence, would these conceptions be compatible and allow the European Union to become a main player on the international scene concerning defence issues?

Introduction

At the summit of Maastricht in December 1991, the monetary union was finalised. The realisation of a political union was considered as the next step, and next challenge, that European countries were facing. In the area of political integration, member states agreed on a Common Foreign and Security Policy, raising the issue of a European defence: “*The common foreign and security policy shall include all questions related to the security of the Union, including the eventual framing of a common defence policy, which might in time lead to a common defence*”¹.

As France and the United Kingdom are the first military powers of Europe, this common defence would have to emerge from their agreement. From the beginning, France is considered as the champion of European defence, promoting two main points: a political union – and power – without military capacities would not be credible on the world stage; the EU should be able to act independently from the United States (and so from NATO) in a post cold war context. On the contrary, the UK rejected it until the Saint-Malo summit in 1998 since the Atlantic Alliance was already in charge. And even then, it promoted a very different European defence. If they finally compromised and made a European defence come true, France and Great-Britain represent two very different, sometimes even opposed, stands on this issue.

On the people side, public opinions appear rather close, although the British opinion seems a little less enthusiastic. According to an IPSOS-EADS² poll in 2006, 82% of French people and 75% of British people think that a European common defence policy is essential; according to the Transatlantic Trends (TT) 2006³, 67% of French people and 66% of British people consider desirable that the European Union exerts strong leadership in world affairs; 57% of the public in both countries think that the European Union should take a more independent approach from the United States in security and diplomatic affairs, even if 59% of French people and 62% of British people consider that NATO is still essential to their country's security. According to the same poll, 57% of the public opinion of both nationalities disagree that if the European Union should decide to use military force, their country should abide by that decision even if it disagrees, revealing both states attachment to their sovereignty, and *in fine*, to the intergovernmental character of the ESDP.

Nevertheless, there are also important divergences. According to the Eurobarometer⁴, concerning defence and foreign affairs, 67% of French people think that decisions should be

¹ Maastricht treaty, Title V “Provisions on a Common Foreign and Security Policy”, art. J.4.

² “L’Europe et ses moyens de défense”, IPSOS-EADS, February 2006. However, in the Eurobarometer 66 (2006), only 57% of British people say that they are in favour of a European Security and Defence Policy.

³ http://www.transatlantictrends.org/trends/doc/2006_TT_Topline%20Report%20FINAL.pdf

⁴ Eurobarometer 66 and 67, 2006 and 2007, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/standard_fr.htm

made jointly within the EU, rather than by their government (29%), against 40% (and 56%) for British people. About decisions concerning European defence policy, both countries favour the EU level but with a strong difference (59% for France, 33% for the UK) due to the fact that the UK is more attached to the NATO level than France (23% against 10%) or to the national level (28% against 19%). According to the TT 2006, 56% of the French people but only 46% of the British people agree that the EU should strengthen its military power in order to play a larger role in the world; for 30% of French people, it is very or somewhat desirable that the US exert a strong leadership in world affairs, against 48% for Great-Britain; and finally, 52% of British people agree that the EU should have its own Foreign Minister even if their country may not always agree with the positions taken, whereas 69% of French people share this view.

It is not the point here to question polls, their reality and their meaning. Even if we have to take them with precaution, we consider that they give us the big lines. And so, it seems that both public opinions agree with the positions taken by their elite on European defence. French opinion approve a EU that would act in defence and foreign affairs, whereas British opinion is more divided between their attachment to their sovereignty and NATO and their wish to see the European Union gets stronger on the world stage.

Several criteria have to be taken into account to explain an opinion. One of them is what representation people have of the issue and what their belief about it is. Where do people get their representations and beliefs from? As European defence is neither a domestic nor a daily issue, but on the contrary, an international one – it concerns Europe - and an expert one – it concerns defence -, these representations should depend, in part, on media discourses. As William Gamson pointed out, *“resource strategies are heavily issue specific. They use combination of experiential knowledge, popular wisdom and media discourse in framing issues, but the particular mix varies”*⁵. We assume that people would use a *“cultural”* resource strategy to express an opinion about European defence (a combination of media discourse and popular wisdom, but no experiential knowledge). Consequently, we should ask ourselves in which terms do the media talk about European defence, and if their discourse may explain these opinions.

*“Media discourse can be conceived of as a set of interpretative packages that give meaning to an issue. A package has an internal structure. At its core is a central organizing idea, or frame, for making sense of relevant events, suggesting what an issue is”*⁶. Frames organize the reality both for the media and for their audiences, *“constructing meaning over time, incorporating new events into their interpretative frames”*. Most of the time there are

⁵ GAMSON William A., *Talking Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 134.

⁶ GAMSON William A., MODIGLIANI Andre, “Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach”, *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 95 (1), July 1989, p. 3.

competitive frames about the same issue - focusing on different relevant considerations - between which people choose, and which would influence their opinions. Keeping this in mind, we have studied European defence framing in French and British national newspapers

As William Gamson said, “*public discourse must be studied historically; the discourse of the moment cannot be understood outside of this necessary context. Media discourse on each issue is a continuing story that develops over time. Only in looking at the whole story can we see ways of thinking and assumptions, once taken for granted, that are now contested*”⁷. That is why we will briefly present the history and stakes of European defence, as it will help us to establish what we are looking for in the press, before studying its media coverage.

A brief introduction to European defence

ESDP history may be described as linear: from an institutional point of view, since the Maastricht treaty on the European Union in 1992, the idea of a European foreign policy and defence policy has steadily progressed, from treaty to treaty (Amsterdam in 1997, Nice in 2000 and even the treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe in 2004)⁸, from summit to summit (French-British summit at Saint-Malo in 1998, European Council at Helsinki in 1999 and Brussels in 2003 for example)⁹, until it became a reality.

It has also been an operational policy since 2003. First military operations were led in Africa (Artemis operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2003; EUFOR Congo operation in 2006) and in Europe (EUFOR Althea operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which began in December 2004; Concordia operation in Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) in 2003). Operational also because the European Union has developed capabilities (from the European Rapid Reaction force in 1999 to the battle groups and the European gendarmerie force decided at the end of the year 2004)¹⁰ and politico-military structures (Political and Security Committee (PSC), Military Committee (EUMC), Military Staff (EUMS)). The EU has also created a political function (the Secretary-General/High Representative for the CFSP, position held by Javier Solana since 1999); a European Security Strategy was adopted at the European Council of Brussels in December 2003; and at last, since January 2007, the EU

⁷ GAMSON William A., *Talking Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 25.

⁸ There is almost no difference between the constitutional treaty and the treaty of Lisbon 2007 concerning defence.

⁹ European Union Institute for Security Studies, *Chaillot Papers* n. 47, 51, 57, 67, 75, 87, 98.

¹⁰ In 1999 at Helsinki, a first *Headline goal* was defined: by the year 2003, EU member states will be able to deploy 60,000 soldiers in 60 days, that is a European Rapid Reaction Force (along with other capabilities). A new headline goal, the *Headline goal 2010*, was set in 2003 and adopted in 2004 (European Council communiqué of 17-18 June 2004) which led to the *Battle groups* proposal from France, Germany and Great-Britain.

Operations Centre has begun to work in Brussels. Finally, the European security and defence policy has been more and more specifically characterized as both civilian and military ways of dealing with crises, as the European Union is not a military organization but mainly a political one. Consequently, it has developed tools according to its goals, interests and values, which were not only military capabilities but also civilian (as it was shown, for example, by the European Police Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Proxima Police Mission in Macedonia, the European Union Aceh Monitoring Mission in Indonesia)¹¹.

Fortified by these developments, the Permanent representation of France to the European Union has written in the first sentence of the *Guide to the ESDP* that “*the European Security and Defence Policy [...] is today one of the most dynamic areas of the European project*”¹². But this does not mean that it has been easily developed, or that it has never slowed down. Indeed, progress in European defence have always been the results of long negotiations and compromises, since the project of a European Defence Community failed (1954), mainly for two reasons.

First, all the member states do not share the same conception of what European defence should be, especially because of their relationship with the United States and NATO. For most of them, NATO remains the only military organization that should handle the security and defence of the European continent. Consequently, a European defence is seen as possible only if it does not undermine NATO’s commitment in Europe and the commitment of European countries to NATO.

Second, the CFSP and ESDP come under the second pillar of the European Union, which means that they are not community but intergovernmental policies. They are under the authority of the European Council and of the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC, which gathers Foreign affairs ministers of the member states and Defence ministers when needed). Thus, they differ from other European policies because of the requirement for unanimity in decision-making. Consequently, making a decision concerning diplomacy, security or defence is always a long and heavy process. Indeed, diplomacy and defence are, above all, a national preserve that the unanimity rule should guarantee. This is the second issue at stake here: Are the member states willing to share their sovereignty or, on the contrary, will they maintain a national control and thus prevent further political integration not only in this area but also in general? Behind this sovereignty question, the political integration of the European Union is at

¹¹ Treaty of Lisbon, 2007: “*The common security and defence policy shall be an integral part of the common foreign and security policy. It shall provide the Union with an operational capacity drawing on **civilian and military assets***”.

¹² http://www.rpfrance.eu/IMG/Guide_PESD_EN.pdf, November 2006.

stake. And as for the NATO/EU relationship issue, all the countries do not share the same conception: some would like a union more politically integrated – which means that diplomatic, security and military tools should be developed - and so would accept to share more of their sovereignty, whereas others conceive it mainly as an economic and civilian union. European defence supposes a consensus on the political project that does not exist yet.

Regarding these two issues at stake, France and Great-Britain have both historical traditions that make them particularly relevant. First of all, only France and Great-Britain have a substantial defence among European countries. For example, after the United States, they are the main contributors to NATO. Their defence budgets are higher than those of other countries¹³. Their capabilities are stronger. Plus, both of them have a seat at the UN Security Council and have nuclear weapons. It is very unlikely that France or Great Britain would give up their seat at the UN Security Council or would europeanize their nuclear weapon.

France is particularly attached to its sovereignty and responsibilities in this domain, for a reason that could be described as a culture of strategic independence developed since President de Gaulle withdrew from NATO command structure in 1966¹⁴ (but has continued to participate in the activities of the political structures)¹⁵. However, France is an active member of NATO today, both in political and military structures. But this particular history seems to affect the way French political leaders and citizens conceive European defence, and consequently how French newspapers deal with it. If the EU/NATO relationship is a central issue in developing ESDP in general, it may be even truer in France.

So, it could seem paradoxical that France once left NATO command structure for a reason of independence, and is now willing to reduce its autonomy by the institution of the ESDP. Actually, all European countries, including France, acknowledge that today they cannot act on the international scene by themselves, and that if they want to weigh in the international debate, they have to work together. But as far as most European countries are concerned, NATO remains the organization where this cooperation should take place concerning security and defence issues. France considers that there should be alternatives to NATO, and so conceives European Union as another structure for action, not in competition with NATO, but along with it in a

¹³ (Except for Greece and Turkey). *Annuaire statistique 2005 du ministère français de la défense*. French defence expenditures represent 1.8% of the gross domestic product in NATO structure; 2.2% for United-Kingdom; 1.1% for Germany; 1% for Spain; 0.9% for Italy.

¹⁴ As he said in a letter to US President Lyndon B. Johnson on 7 march 1966: “*This is why France is determined to regain the full exercise of its sovereignty on its whole territory, at present diminished by the permanent presence of allied military elements or by the use which is made of its airspace; to cease its participation in the integrated commands; and no longer to place its forces at the disposal of NATO*”.

¹⁵ In 1995-1997, President Chirac negotiated a return to NATO command structure, under the condition of a real europeanization of the Atlantic Alliance. It did not happen then. This return was discussed again at the NATO summit of April 2008 by President Sarkozy.

multipolar world. All the more so as the EU is not only an economic organization anymore, but also a political one, and France considers that a political project without defence capabilities would be meaningless¹⁶. So, it defends an independent “Europe-puissance” model. Plus, because of its capabilities, France would have a role of leader in the European defence institution, which might explain why it is particularly active in defending this project. Because of all these considerations on sovereignty, on NATO and the EU, France may be qualified as “schizophrenic”, or at least ambiguous.

As the first European army is British, a European defence is not conceivable without Great-Britain. Consequently, it could pretend to a role of leadership also. All the more so as it is out of the Euro zone, so taking part into a common defence would be a way for GB to influence the European Union construction. However, until the Saint-Malo summit and the Kosovo crisis that revealed the weakness of Europe, Britain was opposed to an autonomous European defence. Even then, because of its “special relationship” with the United States, its way of conceiving a common defence policy differs from France. Actually, because the British feared a disengagement of America on the European continent, they got involved in the ESDP. Indeed, if the European countries develop capabilities through a common defence policy, this should strengthen the transatlantic relation according to the British point of view. It is not about creating a new pole of power that would counterbalance US influence but about reinforcing the one that already exists. However, the Iraq crisis revealed that Great-Britain’s preference still goes to NATO. For example, the UK has always been opposed to a European operational headquarter, since the EU can use the assets and capabilities of NATO according to the “Berlin Plus” arrangements.

To conclude, if all the Western countries, the United States included, agree on a better sharing of the defence burden, they do not agree on what this means. We may say that France and Great-Britain represent the two extremes of the axis of possibilities. For France, the European Union having its own independent security and defence policy is the way to preserve its sovereignty from the United States influence as an alternative to NATO. On the contrary, for Great-Britain, a European defence should aim at strengthening the European pillar inside NATO, and that is how its sovereignty would be preserved¹⁷.

¹⁶ Jacques Chirac, intervention on TV, 14th July, 1999: « *L'Europe n'existera véritablement que lorsqu'elle aura une capacité d'intervention et de défense* ». Discourse IHEDN, 8th June 2001: « *Disposant déjà d'une large gamme d'instruments économiques, financiers, humanitaires, l'Europe, en se dotant d'une capacité d'action militaire, devient un acteur politique complet* »

¹⁷ 10 November 2003, Prime Minister Tony Blair outlined the Government's foreign policy at the annual Lord Mayor's Banquet: “*And I would take the dire predictions more seriously were it not for the fact that the naysayers said exactly the same after the Anglo-French summit at St Malo began the process of European defence 5 years ago; since when we have done Kosovo through NATO, Afghanistan through the UN and NATO, Iraq with the US and Sierra Leone on our own. It has not inhibited us one iota from acting exactly as we would wish. Neither will it.*”

This brief overview of European defence aims at showing that it is both easy and difficult to analyze it. Easy, because, as we have already said, its history has been linear since Maastricht: the summits and treaties that followed are easy to date, the evolutions in the texts easy to quote. So, we can put the stress on the rapid progress European defence has made, especially if we consider that ESDP was really launched in 1998 when Great-Britain agreed to be part of it at the Saint-Malo Summit. But European defence history is not just about its linear progress: it is also about the political construction of the European Union, the relationship between the United States, NATO, the European Union and the member states, and about the conception each member state has of its own defence policy and of the European Union as a political project. Because of this ambivalence, the media coverage of European defence is particularly interesting to analyze. Our study should try to find a way to reflect this ambivalence.

Finally, this brief overview allows us to assume that there should be two political¹⁸ reference frames when European defence is discussed. The first one might be called “**the transatlantic frame**”. It deals with the relationship between the European Union, the United States and NATO concerning the worldwide security organization: Should the European defence be independent from NATO and the US, only autonomous, or should it be developed under the American control, via NATO? Should there be a division of labour, and which one: an unbalanced one, which we could summarize by Robert Kagan’s famous sentence: “the US cooks the dinner and the Europeans wash the dishes” or a more balanced one, which would rely on the best features of both approaches to international relations? Should the European Union be another pole of power, but at the same time a partner of the American pole, or should it be part of it (in a Western pole)?

The second frame will be called the “**sovereignty frame**” or the “**European construction frame**” and concerns the national conceptions of the European Union, and the acceptance (or non-acceptance) to transfer competences to it: What part is the European Union willing to play on the international scene? Would it only be an economic power or a political one too, and therefore a diplomatic and military one if needed?

Of course, these frames are related to each other, and we cannot separate them just like that. But they should guide us in our media coverage analysis: do French and British newspapers follow them? Is there some divergence in their interpretation and articulation from one paper to the other? They should also allow us to estimate if there is something like a “**national defence**

The fact is British participation on the right terms, will ensure that European defence does indeed develop in a way fully consistent with NATO”.

¹⁸ As opposed to “media frames” that might not be the same, as the media space and the political space are two different social “fields” and do not follow the same rules. See Pierre Bourdieu about the notion of “social field”.

frame". Each country has its own defence culture, according to its history, values, and interests. This is particularly true for countries with strong defence policy and capabilities, such as France and Great-Britain in Europe. At the same time, as we have already mentioned, all member states, including France and Great-Britain, are aware that none of them has the financial, human and material means to lead an independent defence policy in the post Cold War world. And so, all of them agree on the fact that they should cooperate, that is to give up some autonomy at a national level to the benefit of a supranational level, either NATO or the Union. From this point of view, do the newspapers reflect a national culture about defence?

Methodology

We have analyzed European defence media coverage in three daily French national newspapers: *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, and *Libération*, and in two daily British newspapers: *The Guardian* and *The Times*. We should add that each newspaper is known for its particular editorial line. Justifying if the political adjectives "right" and "left" should be used to describe these papers is not the point here, but to make a long story short, we will rely on their common reputation: *Le Figaro* and *The Times* are right-wing newspapers, *Libération* is a left-wing one and *Le Monde* and *The Guardian* are centre-left. This may be important because if their editorial line differs, it is likely that their coverage of European defence also will, and therefore that their readers will not have the same references, representations and arguments in mind when they are questioned about the subject. All the more so as it is not in the "factual articles" that the debate about European defence is framed but mainly in what we call "comment papers" (editorial, comment and analysis from journalists or outsiders), on which the editorial line is based.

We began our study in December 1991, with the European Council at Maastricht, for three reasons. First, in 1991, the Cold War ended, the Warsaw Pact was dissolved. Thus, the United-States were the only great power left, the worldwide balance changed, and the future of NATO, in charge of Europe's security and defence, was at stake. Would the Alliance still exist if its reason for being had disappeared? Would the Americans let the Europeans be in charge of their security? Actually, Europe did not have time to answer this question. In 1991-1992 also, war came back on the European continent, opening a nine-year period of crises in the Balkans. It rapidly appeared that Europeans were not able to handle these crises by themselves and that they needed the help of the US, giving NATO a new reason for being. The war in Bosnia gave Europe reasons to think about the future of its security and defence. And this occurred at the same time as "the European Economic Community" changed to "the European Union", a political organization, by the Maastricht treaty. Because there was a will to go further in the way of

political integration, the idea of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and of a potential European Security and Defence Policy associated to it, emerged at that time.

Since it would have been impossible to look at every recurrence of European defence since December 1991 in five different newspapers, our intuition was to analyze the coverage of each summit (European, NATO, bi- or multilateral summits), each progress in the treaties, each operation, each new decision, in brief to analyze each “*critical discourse moment*”¹⁹ that makes discourse on the issue especially visible and helps us to identify these time periods in which efforts at framing issues are especially likely to appear. But as Gamson pointed out, there is a disadvantage to proceeding this way: “*we ended with a small series of snapshots of media discourse at irregular intervals instead of the more desirable movie*”²⁰. Plus, as we look at events that provide us with public discourses about European defence, we cannot really conclude anything about its visibility in the public space in general. But as we will see, newspapers do not very often deal with European defence for itself: first, because its progress took place mainly at European, multilateral or NATO summits during which other questions were discussed; and second, because the debate about European defence being very abstract, newspapers look for *pegs*, “*that is topical events that provide an opportunity for broader, more long-term coverage and commentary*”²¹ and that will make sense for the readers. It should be possible to draw some conclusions about its visibility during the studied periods, first, by comparing its visibility with the visibility of other issues discussed during the same events; second by comparing the events during which European defence is broadly treated with those during which it is not; and finally, by comparing its visibility between the different newspapers.

According to what we have just said and based on European defence history, we have made an extended list of events of which we have analyzed the media coverage. However, the list should not be too long to make the analysis possible and not repetitive. Indeed, there is no need to analyze events that do not teach us anything new for the debate, even if they seem important in the progressive development of European defence. So, we tested this list first with *Le Monde*, as it is considered to be a newspaper of reference in France. It revealed that *critical moments* from a historic point of view are not necessarily *critical moments* from a media point of view. Some events that may seem important for history are absent in the media, such as the creation of the European Defence Agency in July 2004. Sometimes a progress in European defence policy happened at the same time as another event the media considered as more important. For example, on December 2002 and in March 2003, the “Berlin Plus” Agreements - that would give an effective framework to EU/NATO relations - were signed, but as it happened during the

¹⁹ GAMSON William A., *Talking Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 26.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

diplomatic crisis about Iraq, the media barely reported this event (one article in each newspaper for each date) although it was one of the most important issues about ESDP that were at stake then. So from these remarks, we have established a shorter list of events, which is presented at the end of this document.

Once this list was made, we have read newspapers from three days before to seven days after each event for those we could easily date (consequently, for all of them except the Kosovo war and the Iraq crisis, for which we have read newspapers during a longer period). As news comes and goes quickly, this ten-day period – that we have tested – was enough to study the full coverage of each event.

As the corpus is important²², we had to find a way to classify the articles that would help us to have a general overview of the media frames before analyzing the content itself, regardless of the differences of presentation from one newspaper to the other, and regardless of the evolutions of the presentation of each newspaper over the years. Two sets of criteria have been used. The first set of criteria concerns **visibility**: The event to which the article is related (according to the list in annex). This way, we will be able to see which events provide us with more or less articles; The date of publication of the article, in order to know if there is only one or several articles published a day; The place of the article in the newspapers (is it the most important news of the day (“Une”)²³ or is it isolated news?); The length of the article.

The second set of criteria deals more precisely with **framing**. Besides “headings”²⁴, titles and subtitles, and the authors (a specialized journalist, another journalist, or “outsiders”: experts, political leader, etc.), two criteria really matter for us. *The topic* which reflects our analysis in terms of “framing”: Is European defence the main topic of the article (MT) or a secondary one (ST)? Which other topic is it related to (NATO, European construction, etc.)? And the *type of article*: According to the “journalistic grammar”²⁵, we should differentiate factual articles from commentary articles. It is not always that obvious, and sometimes the journalists cross the border, but the factual articles are: “report” (the main factual article, which gives an account of the event); “synthesis” (the second main factual article: it stops the action to give background information in order to replace the event in the media framework of the issue); “brief”. And the

²² More than 1 000 articles all newspapers included.

²³ Even if the front page gives important information for us, we do not count it as an article since there are differences between the front pages of the different newspapers.

²⁴ As the different newspapers have different names for the different headings, we have chosen a typology that would allow us to compare them: International; Politics Economy; Society; Debate (page with the editorial - most of the time – analyses, and outside opinions); other.

²⁵ Chapter 3. in LEMIEUX Cyril, *Mauvaise presse. Une sociologie compréhensive du travail journaliste et de ses critiques*, Paris: Métailié, 2000, 467 p. A “grammar” could be defined here as a set of practical rules that should be followed to act in a correct way expected by the partners of the action.

commentary articles are: editorial, analysis (most of the time by a journalist from the paper), opinion (by someone outside the paper: expert, political leader, etc.), plus interviews.

Finally, to collect the articles, we have read the newspaper's archives on microfilms, and then we have used Internet databases to print them: Europress, LexisNexis and Factiva. So, in our analysis, we have to keep in mind that we lose some information about the presentation and the place of the article in the column even if we have the full text.

Media Coverage of European Defence in French and British Newspapers

Before looking at the media coverage in details, we would like to note a strong difference between French and British press concerning European defence: whereas the British press reveals a national debate about the issue, French newspapers reveal a national consensus. Indeed, the media coverage is very similar in *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *Libération*, both in quantity (visibility) and quality (framing). It reflects the elite consensus that exists in France. As a common defence concerns the European Union and as French political parties – those which govern – do not share the same view about political integration, we thought there would have been some divergences that newspapers would report concerning European defence. Actually, it is more about national foreign policy than about European stakes. To schematize, the support of France to a European defence is more about promoting the French defence policy than the European integration. In France, to say it briefly, there is a consensus among political parties about foreign and defence policy since de Gaulle, all the more so as it comes under the executive power, the French Parliament taking no decision in this area (except for the budget). In this context, French press seems to simply reproduce this national consensus about European defence, alternative views coming from foreigners in “comment papers”. This may explain why French public opinion is far less divided than the British opinion and that its support to ESDP is so strong: the *framing* being so identical and consensual from one paper to the other, it should create what we might call a very coherent “interpretative environment” that influences the public. Due to this situation, we will focus on *Le Monde* to make the comparison easier, all the more so as it proposes twice more papers on European defence than its British counterparts.

1) Chronological framing

Our first observation concerns the dynamic of the media coverage, which is strongly linked to the history of European defence. After reading the articles, three phases could be identified concerning the construction of the object “European defence”, revealing a media framework very

dependent of external constraints rather than following an internal logic. Of course, media depend on the facts: they cannot report anything anytime they want. But they also have a central role to play in constructing an event and/or an object by the choices they make, and consequently, in proposing a reading of the reality. We should note that the three newspapers rely a lot on political leaders' declarations to report the different events we have studied. This emphasizes the dependence of the media frames to political frames. So, how does the debate evolve during these phases? Would European defence become a media object or would it remain a political one?

(1) The first phase goes from Maastricht (1991) to Saint-Malo (1998). This phase could be identified as a "pre-phase of debate". It began with François Mitterrand (Socialist) and John Major (Tory) as head of France and the UK, and ended with Jacques Chirac (RPR, right) and Tony Blair (Labour). So, from both sides, the official national discourse evolves, leading to Saint-Malo, and so does the media discourse.

Although this phase is strongly marked by summits, the Yugoslav war is used in French newspapers to initiate the debate about a necessary independent European defence from the US, whereas the British press sticks to the institutional argument. At this point, the institution that is discussed is the Western European Union (WEU), described as the "defence arm" of the Union. The debate opposed the "Europeanist" view of France against the "Atlanticist" view of the UK: France would like the WEU to be subordinated to the EU, and then integrated into the EU. Great-Britain sees it as "the European pillar of NATO" that would preserve its sovereignty.

What is actually striking is that the British press constructs the whole debate around the opposition of the UK government to France's position. It is by resisting French views that Great-Britain defends NATO predominance. This opposition is the central point of the English media discourse: almost all articles refer to the French point of view.

Guardian: "THE Nato Secretary-General, Manfred Wornier, yesterday gave a points victory to Britain over France in negotiations on the EC's future defence role", 12/12/1991 *After the Maastricht Summit, Nato declares points win to Britain*;

Times: "The reason other Nato members have not rushed to join the Euro-corps is that they are more inclined to trust their instincts about French motives. Whatever Paris or Bonn may say about the Euro-corps being linked to Nato and to the nine-nation WEU, the fear is that it will duplicate, not complement the security organisations that already exist and that it will be seen as a deliberate move away from Nato", 21/0/1992, *Birth of Euro-army spurs Nato unease*.

On the contrary, in *Le Monde*, the British position takes part into the wider debate about the future of Europe's security and defence and the place of NATO, which is the central issue.

"Comment les Européens, quand ils considèrent leurs intérêts menacés, pourraient-ils agir eux-mêmes, en l'absence de toute intervention américaine ? De quelle institution et de quels moyens devraient-ils disposer ? Il est clair que, dans la pensée traditionnelle des Britanniques, les capacités européennes ne doivent pas faire double emploi avec les moyens de l'OTAN, ni, a fortiori, leur faire concurrence. Mais Tony Blair a accepté à Pörschach ce

qu'il avait encore refusé en juin 1997 à Amsterdam, à savoir que l'Union européenne soit compétente en matière de défense", 01/12/1998, *Le débat sur l'initiative européenne de défense est rouvert*.

In this context, France is presented as having to constantly justify its position to the US and other member states, stressing the point that it is not looking for weakening NATO but strengthening Europe.

The Guardian presents 32 papers for this period. For almost 50% of them, European defence is the main topic. 8 papers are "comment papers": mainly they are positive. However, as the stakes and the object "European defence" are not yet well defined, *The Guardian* view may also seem ambivalent or sceptic (but not opposed).

"The British interest, despite the rhetoric of sovereignty, is to have collaborative European structures, too - and that extends from defence through to common rules on maternity leave. But we cannot cherry-pick between bits we like and bits we do not: essentially the package stands or falls as such. The EC must have a monetary, trade and budgetary order - and it cannot have that without a political constitution that democratizes decision-making, and beyond that provides for a common defence and foreign policy" Will Hutton, 09/12/1991, *New EC order will mean more choice*.

"The Defence Secretary, George Robertson, trumpeted the agreement signed at St Malo on Friday as the start of a new era in defence co-operation. But this new era has the character of a New Year's resolution. It rings with good intentions, has minimal substance, and of course we heard it last year and the year before that", 07/12/1998, *New Nato for old: St Malo didn't help much*.

The Times presents 29 papers. For 12 (41%) of them, European defence is the main topic. 7 are comments. But only one of these comments deal with European defence [*In Defence of Europe*, 19/06/1992], stressing the role of Great-Britain : "Thanks largely to the British, it will adopt a policy that gives it a coherent role in the defence of Europe, allaying American suspicions while finessing a threatened conflict over the Franco-German corps".

Le Monde presents 71 papers. For almost 59% of them, European defence is the main topic. 23 are "comment papers", including 5 from foreigners (John Major and Madeleine Albright for example), 5 from French leaders and 3 leading articles. 12 of these "comment papers" deal mainly with European defence.

"Les Européens vont pouvoir assumer des missions de maintien de la paix sous leur propre contrôle politique et militaire. Qui plus est avec le feu vert, voire la bénédiction des Américains ! [...] Les Européens sont face à un défi. Ils ont réclamé leur émancipation aux Américains qui, avec de grandes précautions, semblent finalement les avoir écoutés. Il leur reste à faire la preuve qu'ils sont à la hauteur de leurs ambitions. Sinon, ils conforteraient ceux qui, aux Etats-Unis, continuent de penser que les Européens sont décidément trop inconstants pour qu'on leur confie une responsabilité dans l'Alliance atlantique", 05/06/1996, *Un défi*.

(2) The second phase is the most important one. It goes from the Kosovo crisis (1999) to the end of 2002 (beginning of the diplomatic crisis about Iraq). This phase is characterized by the concrete development of European defence inside the EU as the European Security and Defence Policy (the WEU will be officially integrated into the European Union in 2000). It is also a phase characterized by contradictions, which may explain the differences between French and British newspapers. It made it clear that the St-Malo agreement, as a compromise, was differently interpreted by both states. Finally, this is when the terms of the debate are crystallised.

Inside this period, two sorts of discourse categories may be identified. The first one refers specifically to the Kosovo crisis, which appears as an opportunity to link what we might call a "symbolic debate" to reality. The second one deals with NATO and European summits that took place between 1999 and 2002. We should note that from Laeken summit to the European Council at Copenhagen, there is almost nothing new. The real important events for European defence framing are Cologne (June 1999) and Helsinki (December 1999) for *Le Monde*, the first "Capabilities commitment" conference in Brussels (November 2000) and Nice (December 2000)

for *The Guardian*, and Helsinki, the first "Capabilities commitment" conference in Brussels and Nice for *The Times*.

Different lessons drawn from the conflict in Kosovo are stressed by the press. In the three newspapers, a new theme emerges: the gap between the economic power of the EU and its military weakness (“*economic giant but military dwarf*” to use an expression from *Le Monde* and *The Guardian*). Whereas *The Times* stops at underlining the capability gap between the US and Europe that explains European dependence on American assets, *The Guardian* and *Le Monde* go a little further: as the United States were not that much willing to intervene in Kosovo, the EU should be able to act on its own. *Le Monde* insists also on the fact that the US domination inside NATO leaves no choice to European countries but to agree to their strategy in Kosovo (their refusal for an intervention on the ground, sticking to air strikes). So it is not just about being able to act without the US, it is also about being able to decide without referring to them. Which means that a Europeanization of NATO (inside the Alliance or via a European defence policy) is not enough for French leaders if the EU aims at being a real and credible political power on the world stage.

“The lesson for Europe is clear: America remains crucial for our peace and security, but Europe has got to assume more responsibility for its own defence [...] This requires a big shift in defence budgets, both to address the gap with American technology and to develop rapidly deployable forces”, *The Times*, 28/06/1999, *Europe must learn to defend itself*.

“‘In Kosovo, we have come face to face with the European future, and it's frightening.’ That was George Robertson, our defence secretary in Bremen this week. He meant it positively - Europe has to have a defence capability so as never again to be where we are now, over-reliant on American arms (and the vagaries of a weak White House)”, *The Guardian*, 14/05/1999, *Standing on our own feet*.

“La leçon kosovare est simple : l’Europe politique restera incomplète sans sa béquille militaire”, *Le Monde*, 07/06/1999, *Un nain militaire*.

The other major issue deals with the burden sharing expected by America, and hence, the contradictions of the US point of view, or at least its ambivalence. As *The Times* points out the lack of European capacities, European defence is presented as an answer to share the responsibility of European security with the US. So the suspicions of Washington do not appear as a major topic. On the contrary, *The Guardian* and *Le Monde* refer more frequently to the ambiguity of the US position.

“Reste une inconnue de taille: la réaction du grand allié américain, qui a toujours encourage les Européens à prendre en charge une plus grande part de leur défense aussi longtemps qu’ils en étaient incapables, mais qui a toujours regardé avec suspicion leurs velléités de passer à l’acte”, *Le Monde*, 20/03/1999, *Triple entente pour la défense européenne*.

On the institutional side, the main discussed progress is the integration of the Western European Union into to the EU, raising different problems that are presented but not debated in the media. Nevertheless, the relationship between NATO and the European Union is the main discussed topic. And it is in reference to it that other issues are framed.

In the British press, the stress is put on the national debate that opposes the Tories to the Labour. In *The Guardian*, this opposition is mainly stated as a fact (“*Angry Blair lambasts anti-EU “non-sense”*”, 22/11/1999), the comments articles taking the side of Tony Blair. In *The Times*, the debate takes also place in comments papers. This opposition lays on several issues. The first one – and most visible in both British newspapers – concerns the denunciation of the French view of European defence, especially during the Nice summit (*The Times*: “France fires fresh salvo at Britain over Euro army”; “France opens new front in battle over EU army”; “French trigger Nato future”).

“Mr Hague [Tory] said France wanted to create a parallel EU defence structure to NATO. Mr Blair insisted he had thwarted that goal”, *The Guardian*, 23/11/1999, *Irate Blair savages Thatcher*.

The second topic concerns the rapid reaction force that was pledged at Helsinki and finalised at Brussels in November 2000. Whereas *The Guardian* takes over the Labour government to guarantee that this force is not a European army (for example, by underlining the fact that this force would be assigned to the “Petersberg missions”, so peace missions, and not to collective defence that remains in NATO tasks), *The Times* keeps talking about a “Euro army”, especially in its titles (“Thatcher launches attacks on Euro army”; “MPs warn EU army could isolate Nato”; “Phantom army”; “Beware this Euro army’s licence to meddle”; “Euro army sparks an outbreak of hostilities”, etc.).

Finally, this second topic introduces the last one: the denunciation by the Tories of a transfer of sovereignty, whereas the Labour government assured that the troops would remain under British control. The European army is presented by the Conservative as a step towards a super-state or a federal union and as an initiative that would undermine NATO. As the Atlantic Alliance represents the sovereign choice of the UK for its defence policy, European defence is considered as a threat to both British sovereignty and NATO, revealing the Euro-scepticism of the Tories. For British press, a common defence is not only a European issue but also a national one.

In *Le Monde*, there is no such debate. Actually, the stress is put on the consensus gathering the political leaders (« Les responsables politiques font chorus pour une défense européenne » 16/04/1999). Nevertheless, two main topics emerge: the constant justification that France is not looking for undermining NATO and the EU as a political power that would balance the US domination.

“Mais M. Richard à la question de savoir si les Européens subordonnent l’emploi de leurs forces à une sorte de “feu vert” de l’Otan a répondu qu’il n’était pas question d’un lien de “subordination politique, mais d’un partage des rôles””, 22/11/1999.

“L’Europe de la défense n’est pas concurrente de l’OTAN ; elle est un moyen pour les Européens de devenir des partenaires à part entière des Etats-Unis”, *Un succès de l’Europe*, éditorial du 24/11/2000.

“Si la défense est, avec la monnaie, l’un des deux piliers de la souveraineté, l’Europe a franchi, vendredi 10 décembre à Helsinki, un pas décisif dans l’affirmation de son identité”, *L’Europe puissance*, éditorial du 13/12/1999.

The Guardian presents 59 papers (16 about European defence in the Kosovo crisis) for this period. For 46% (27) of them, European defence is the main topic. 26 papers are “comment papers”: 4 leading articles (2 with European defence as the main topic), no paper from foreigners except a discourse of Javier Solana as NATO Secretary General. Mostly, the tone is positive towards the initiative launched by Tony Blair and Jacques Chirac at Saint-Malo.

The Times present 79 papers. For 66% of them, European defence is the main topic. 33 are comment papers, including 5 leading articles (3 dealing with European defence as main topic). The tone is not strongly negative, even if few comments state their opposition to the European defence initiative (ex: “*Beware this Euro army’s licence to meddle. Do we wish our servicemen to lay down their lives for Javier Solana and his ilk?*”, 21/11/200). It is rather sceptical (ex: “*There are real risks in the Anglo-French defence initiative*”, 25/11/1999) or critical towards Tony Blair’s policy (ex: “*The EU’s new defence strategy is indefensible*”, 03/06/1999).

Le Monde presents 139 papers (85 about European defence in the Kosovo crisis). For 56 (40%) of them, European defence is the main topic. 77 (55%) are “comment papers”. These “comment papers” are particularly numerous during the Kosovo crisis: this is where the link between the need of a common defence and the lesson of this war is established. 9 are leading articles (4 dealing with European defence as main topic). 36 “comment papers” are from outsiders (non-journalists), including 13 foreigners. As we can observe, the coverage in *Le Monde* is wider than in *The Guardian* or *The Times*. The tone is mostly positive towards European defence. The divergences we note from one paper to the other concern France-US relationship (some writers denouncing the US domination, some emphasizing the European responsibility in the operations in Kosovo...) rather than a European defence itself.

(3) The third and last phase begins in 2003 with the Iraq crisis and goes to G.W. Bush’s first official visit to the EU in 2005. Actually, this phase is the least interesting one from a *media framing* point of view. On the one side, the Iraq crisis deals more with the transatlantic relations than the European defence itself. It may even obliterate it, if it was not for indirect references. On the other side, in 2003 the first military missions are launched (in Macedonia and Congo), and may have been an opportunity to make European defence visible. But they are barely covered. Finally, there is no shift in the frames from the report of European summits. For example, a European planning cell discussed at Tervuren is strongly rejected by the UK (and especially by the Tories) as it would unnecessarily duplicate NATO structures and hence weaken the Alliance. So, in the British press, we will find the same rhetoric about the particular and undesirable French position, about the Tories attack against an assumed transfer of sovereignty, and the predominance of NATO in European security. The French press takes over the French political discourse, and promote a “Europe puissance” and a “multipolar world” that appears more like the extension of French independent defence policy than a real European commitment. Whereas the British newspapers focus, once again, on the opposition to French discourse, *Le Monde* insist on the collaboration between London, Berlin and Paris. However, due to the diplomatic crisis about Iraq (and also to the adoption of the treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe in 2004), this third phase may have brought European concerns to a public level.

To conclude, the European defence debate has always made progress under the influence of both “external” events (Balkans) and “internal” improvements (the European institutional construction). However, external events (Kosovo and Iraq) were better opportunities to make the debate public rather than internal improvements, although the influence of the Kosovo crisis on the public debate was more immediate than the influence of the Iraq crisis. Indeed, with Kosovo, European countries acknowledge their weakness and hence, the need for a common defence policy and capabilities besides NATO (American) means. Plus, European elections took place at the same time (June 1999), favouring a public debate. On the contrary, the Iraq crisis revealed the gap that remains between “Atlanticist” and “Europeanist” member states. On the other side, it is during institutional coverage that the media framing has gained both in visibility and substantiality.

2) Two sides of the same story: the overwhelming transatlantic frame

If after reading these articles we wanted to summarize the different positions, this would give on the British side: “European defence should not undermine NATO”, and on the French side: “European defence is not a threat to NATO”. This may be a little caricatured, but it actually reveals the overwhelming transatlantic frame used by the press. This is mainly due to the fact that on this issue, the newspapers rely mostly on political leaders discourse to construct their own discourse. Since European countries’ defence policies are defined in reference to NATO, this is not surprising that it is main issue of our corpus.

However, an impression of vanity of the debate results from this domination of the transatlantic frame. Indeed, even if some real progresses are reported, even if European countries always find a compromise, by focusing on their country position toward NATO, the media emphasize the long and painful bargaining that precedes each agreement. As a result, it may not be the same decision that is discussed, but it is always with the same rhetoric. From Maastricht compromise to the Anglo-German-French summit in Berlin in 2003, it feels like the stakes have remained identical and pretty much symbolical (in a pejorative way).

To conclude, we may say that some national conceptions of European defence emerge from the media discourse. It also appears that the differences between French and British newspapers should explain the differences between French and British opinion we have noted in introduction.

Annex: List of events

European Council at Maastricht, 9-10th December 1991: the member states agree on the EU treaty, which establishes, among others, the CFSP and an eventual common defence policy.

Franco-German Summit at La Rochelle, 22nd May 1992: France and Germany agree on the constitution of a Franco-German military corps, the Eurocorps, that other countries are invited to join (Belgium, Luxembourg and Spain will join it in the following years).

Petersberg Declaration, 19th June 1992: WEU Ministerial Council at Petersberg, near Bonn (Germany), defines the so-called “Petersberg tasks” (*“humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks, and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking”*) that European member states could lead.

Official Ceremony for the Eurocorps at Strasbourg, 5th November 1993.

NATO Summit in Brussels, 10-11th January 1994: Creation of the Partnership for Peace which associates NATO to former communist countries in order to strengthen the security of the Euro-Atlantic area, and which prepares them to join NATO.

NATO Berlin Council, 2-3^d June 1996: NATO Foreign ministers agree that a European Security and Defence Identity will be created within NATO and that NATO structures and assets can be made available for future WEU-led military missions (first step towards “Berlin Plus” agreements).

European Council at Amsterdam, 16-17th June 1997: the EU revisited treaty incorporates the “Petersberg tasks” into the CFSP and opens up the possibility of WEU’s integration into the EU. It also creates the position of Secretary General of the EU Council / High Representative (SG/HR) for the CFSP (this treaty entered into force in May 1999).

Anglo-French Summit at Saint-Malo, 3-4th December 1998: Tony Blair and Jacques Chirac agree on a “joint Declaration on European Defence” that calls for the establishment of “autonomous capacities”, backed by credible military force. It is considered as the act of birth of the European Security and Defence policy.

Kosovo war, 24th March – 11th June 1999: after the negotiations of Rambouillet between Serb and Kosovo Albanian representatives failed because of the refusal of the leaders of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) to sign them, NATO initiated air operations against military targets of the FRY.

NATO Enlargement: Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland Join NATO, 12th March 1999.

NATO Washington Summit, 23-25th April 1999: Fiftieth anniversary of NATO. A new Strategic Concept and a Defence capabilities Initiative are approved. Tentative support is also

given to EU-led missions on a “Berlin Agreements” (1996) basis. The principle of “separable but not separate” forces is formulated.

Franco-German Summit at Toulouse, 29th May 1999. The Eurocorps will be at the disposal of NATO.

European Council at Cologne, 3-4th June 1999: Javier Solana became the first (and only one until now) SG/HR. Agreement to transfer WEU assets to the EU (So only the Brussels Treaty of 1948 remained from the WEU).

Anglo-French Summit at London, 25th November 1999, in order to prepare Helsinki Council.

European Council at Helsinki, 10-11th December 1999: EU member states agree on the Headline goal (European Rapid Reaction Force: 60,000 troops by 2003, deployable within 60 days and sustainable for one year); A new institutional structure is to be set up: PSC, EUMC, EUMS.

First "Capabilities commitment" conference in Brussels, 20th November 2000. Member states agreed on a rapid reaction force.

European Council at Nice, 7-9th December 2000: the decisions taken in Helsinki in 1999 are integrated in the new EU treaty revisited (this treaty entered into force in February 2003). Transfer of WEU's operational role to the European Union.

European Council at Laeken, 14-15th December 2001. A Convention presided by Valéry Giscard-d'Estaing to prepare a constitutional treaty is set up. The EU declared being capable of conducting some crisis-management operations.

NATO Prague Summit, 21-22nd November 2002: seven former communist countries are accepted to join the Alliance by May 2004; the creation of a NATO Response Force (NRF) is decided.

European Council at Copenhagen, 12-13th December 2002: Ten new countries are accepted to join the Union by May 2004. A final agreement is taken between Turkey and the EU, which allows the Union to have access to NATO's assets and capabilities for operations in which NATO is not involved.

Consequently, the **EU-NATO Declaration on ESDP (“Berlin Plus”)**, 16th December 2002, was made possible: this declaration gives the EU access to NATO's assets for crisis management. In return, the EU agrees to the “fullest possible involvement” of non-EU members of NATO within ESDP.

Diplomatic crisis on Iraq, 22nd January 2003 (40th Anniversary of the Elysée Treaty: France and Germany took a common position on the use of force in Iraq) to the end of March 2003 (beginning of the war).

Completing the “**Berlin Plus**” **Agreements**, another agreement on **the use by the EU of NATO command structure for European operations** was adopted, 17th March 2003.

Launch of operation *Concordia* in FYROM, 31st March 2003: first EU operation that draws on NATO assets and capabilities under the “Berlin Plus” arrangement. It involved 350 lightly armed military personnel and ended on 15th December 2003.

“**Tervuren Summit**”, 29th April 2003: Belgium, France, Germany and Luxembourg agreed to cooperate more closely on defence matters. The most controversial proposal concerned the establishment of an independent EU military headquarters in Tervuren.

Launch of operation *Artemis* in Democratic Republic of Congo, 12th June to 1st September 2003: first EU military operation outside Europe without NATO assistance. 1,800 troops, mostly French, were deployed to secure Bunia, the capital of the Ituri province, on the demand of the UN.

Informal British-Franco-German Summit at Berlin, 20th September, 2003: the United Kingdom backed Franco-German plan for an EU Planning Cell (compromise about the “Tervuren” proposal), but a common position on Iraq was not found.

The European Council agreed on a European Defence Agency, 17th November 2003.

European Council at Brussels, 12-13th December, 2003: the European Security Strategy, based on J. Solana’s paper “A secure Europe in a better world”, is adopted.

British-Franco-German proposal on “Battle groups”, 10th February 2004 (groups of 1,500 soldiers deployable quickly on trouble spots at the UN request). The decision on the creation of 13 battle groups is final on 22nd November 2004, during **the Military Capability Commitment Conference** in Brussels.

NATO Istanbul Summit, 28-29th June 2004. It is decided that the EU will establish a follow-on mission, which will be supported by NATO under existing NATO-EU agreements in Bosnia.

Launch of operation *Althea* in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2nd December 2004: EUFOR has taken over from the NATO force (SFOR). This operation is being conducted in the “Berlin Plus” framework.

First official visit of G. W. Bush to European institutions, 21-22nd February 2005.

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