The Big 3 and ESDP
France, Germany and the United Kingdom
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Table of Contents

Introduction: The Big 3 and ESDP ................................................................. 5
Klaus Brummer

France and ESDP ................................................................. 11
Hans Stark

Germany and ESDP ................................................................. 23
Franco Algieri / Thomas Bauer / Klaus Brummer

United Kingdom and ESDP ................................................................. 39
Richard Whitman

Authors ................................................................. 50

European Foreign and Security Policy ................................................................. 51
Introduction: The Big 3 and ESDP

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The Problem

With the international order in a state of flux, Europe's position – and importance – in the world is changing, too. This change is not only driven by economic developments, with the buzzword being “globalization.” The ascent of Asian powers, regained confidence in Russia, and the troubles facing the United States also contribute to a shift in the distribution of power in geopolitical terms – most likely to the detriment of Europe. In addition, Europe faces manifold threats to its security, including terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, consequences of state failure, organized crime and the disruption of energy supplies.

Taking into account those developments, Europe has no choice but to become a foreign and security player with global reach and thus a shaping power of the 21st century. Failure to act, in contrast, would inevitably entail challenges and risks for both Europe's economic well-being and its security. In addition, danger looms high that the continent would be marginalized in global affairs. Hence, one if not the central concern of Europe's political elites should be to increase Europe's proficiency in protecting its citizens, asserting its interests and assuming global responsibility.

So far Europe's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) have been pursued on an intergovernmental basis. While not dismissing the influence of the European Commission in external affairs particularly in the economic realm, the evolution of CFSP’s and European ESDP’s character and pace are determined by the member states. Thus, the foreign ministers and ultimately the heads of state and government of the EU–25 are the ones responsible for making courageous and farsighted decisions today in order to safeguard Europe's prosperity and security tomorrow. These objectives can be achieved only by further upgrading the European level. Transnational challenges call for transnational (yet not necessarily supranational) responses.

However, the gap between European aspirations and European reality is considerable. On the one hand, there is certainly no lack of declarations that proclaim a shaping role for the European Union in the world. The most prominent statement is the European Security Strategy of December 2003. Nor is there a lack of concepts that aim at putting the security strategy into practice. They include action plans and strategies for the fight against international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction as well as headline goals for the buildup of civil and military capabilities, to name but a few.

Adopting strategies and concepts seems to be the easy part, though. The devil lies in their implementation. More often than not, ambitious declarations are not followed by equally ambitious actions (the “implementation deficit”). The Capabilities Improvement Charts offer telling examples. In a half-year interval, the charts show that Europe's shortcomings persist. Due to insufficient
efforts of the member states, Europe in 2006 is not in a position to assume its postulated global role. Moreover, if there is no fundamental change, Europe will remain incapable of performing this role in the years and decades to come.

The most fundamental problem seems to be that the security interests of EU member states diverge significantly in certain areas. Europe is still lacking a shared “strategic culture.” This is also the reason why no overarching strategic framework of orientation exists that could define the target area of CFSP’s and ESDP’s development and thus guide European foreign, security and defense policy (the “vision deficit”). To be sure, European treaties speak about a “common defense policy” and “common defense.” It may be called into question, though, whether all EU members actually subscribe to these objectives. However, only if there is a generally accepted end point (or “finalité”) for Europe’s foreign, security and defense policy will member states muster the political courage to adopt the decisions necessary to walk the talk of assuming global responsibility.

Framework of Analysis

In order to identify potential causes for both the implementation deficit and the vision deficit, the Bertelsmann Stiftung is organizing a workshop series entitled “Overcoming National Impediments to ESDP.” The lead question of the series: Which factors influence or even determine a country’s attitude toward and engagement in European Security and Defense Policy? To operationalize this lead question and thereby to provide guidance for the various country studies, the following categories along with a subset of questions were developed:

• National Prestige, Past Glory, Self-perception: Historical and cultural legacies as impediments for the development of ESDP? Global aspirations: A mismatch between self-perception and reality?

• Foreign and Security Policy Imperatives: Two different tales: National interests and European interests? Widening the transatlantic rift: European integration vs. transatlantic relationship?

• Threat Perception and Response: Today and tomorrow: Who is a threat, and what is a threat? National autonomy in security matters, or ESDP to the rescue?

• Public Opinion: Materialism, post-materialism, security: What do people actually want? Clinging to pacifism or unease about the use of force: Lopsided public discourse on security and defense issues?

• Government and Bureaucracy: Turf battles: Who is in charge of ESDP? Together or apart: Cooperation or confrontation within and between ministries?

• Party Politics and Parliament: Does a lack of interest, expertise and capacity explain why parliament members grow weary of dealing with ESDP? Highly responsive: How do parties adapt to public opinion on Europe?
• Economy: It’s the money, stupid: What are the constraining effects of state and defense budgets? Protecting national champions vs. creating a European defense market?

• Military: The political and the military agenda: Worlds apart? Lack of military capabilities – lack of commitment?

The first workshop in the “Overcoming National Impediments to ESDP” series dealt with the so-called Big 3: France, Germany and the United Kingdom. The remainder of the introduction highlights some of the major threads of the workshop’s discussions. The specific situation and conditions in the three countries under scrutiny are discussed in detail in the subsequent country studies by Hans Stark on France; Franco Algieri, Thomas Bauer and Klaus Brummer on Germany; and Richard Whitman on the United Kingdom.

Big 3, Big 2 – or Big 25?

Political elites in the UK and France deliberately try to maintain or even increase their country’s ability to cover also high-intensity warfare. The UK wants to be capable of fighting alongside the United States. Concerned about its ability to act independently from the United States, France in turn aspires to equal status with the United States in military terms and therefore “must” be able to cover the entire spectrum. Germany’s case is different. At least in part still constrained by its past, and responsive to a public that is overwhelmingly critical when it comes to military action, German political elites focus on the lower spectrum of stabilization, peace building and post-conflict management.

Hence, at least as far as the preferences of decision-makers are concerned, it might be more accurate to speak of the Big 2 when it comes to describing the potential spectrum of military action. This gap highlights different ideas and mindsets as to what the military is all about and therefore what the purpose of European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) should be. Is ESDP solely about the lower/softer end of the intensity spectrum? Or must it also have a “hard edge”? As the cleavage runs between UK and France on the one hand and Germany on the other, the Franco-German engine seems ill suited to carry ESDP. Another gap exists between the UK and France. Although the picture draws on stereotypes, there is a certain truth in saying that France emphasizes a strategic approach whereas the UK pursues a more tactical/pragmatic approach, which stresses best value for money (not to mention the differences between the two countries concerning the role of the United States and NATO).

And yet, all three countries want ESDP to work. To make that happen, their views need to be aligned. This requires two things: First, ESDP must cover the entire conflict-intensity spectrum. Second, strategy and tactics must be thought out together in order to accommodate the interests and aspirations of all actors. In fact, tactics and strategy should be combined in any case. Furthermore, it is precisely this comprehensive approach covering the entire conflict spectrum that (potentially) distinguishes Europeans from the Americans – with the latter still trapped in
the middle of their Iraqi lesson that woefully illustrates the limits of military power. Europe’s comprehensive approach seems to be particularly promising in post-conflict situations. What is needed, thus, is that the Big 3 synthesize their approaches.

For this to happen, forging a common understanding about the use of force among the Big 3 as well as throughout the EU is crucial. Sooner or later this also means that Europeans will have to come to terms with “their” nuclear weapons. As France and the UK are not likely to give up their weapons in the foreseeable future (in fact, Chirac’s January 2006 Ile Longue speech indicates the opposite), Europeans might have to accept a nuclear dimension to ESDP.

Looking to the EU in general, it is probably fair to say that an agreement “digestible” among the Big 3 with their differences in background, aspirations, capabilities and expectations will find the support of the other member states – and a “Big 25” could emerge. To turn this vision into reality, the Big 3 must take a subtle as well as inclusive approach. Otherwise the impression of a trirectoire arises that is very likely to alienate other EU members, particularly the small ones. The latter, though, are very important in various respects, not the least as they provide legitimacy for those willing and capable to act.

Looking for “the Driver”

But who exactly can trigger or even lead such a process? Until now, the development of ESDP has been a reactive process. Both the creation and the “upgrading” of ESDP have been driven to a considerable extent by external developments (the Balkans, Iraq, etc.). Those signaled to Europeans that they have no alternative but to cooperate. Of course, one could rightly argue that ESDP is a success story so far, given the manifold achievements within a very short time span. However, the question is whether the “reactive” and “adaptive” posture is sufficient to carry ESDP in the future. This question is all the more relevant as several of the key decisions required to have a capable ESDP in 2020 must be taken not in ten years’ time but today (particularly when having in mind defense procurement cycles).

One key element for advancing ESDP is political leadership. It seems doubtful, though, whether today’s Big 3 leaders have a strategic vision for ESDP. Pragmatism and a process-oriented approach seem to prevail these days, with the focus resting on small yet achievable projects but not on long-term strategies. However, there is a systematic place for political ambition. Ambition grounded in a long-term vision for ESDP would serve as both the rationale and the narrative required for reaching landmark decisions for ESDP. It takes more than a “wait and see” attitude; one needs to have a greater good at stake.

For a strategic European vision for ESDP to succeed, it must accommodate the respective national visions of EU’s member states. Key seems to be the congruency of “being” (which includes values) and “doing” (politics). The level of congruency between the Big 3’s being and doing has changed dramatically over the last two decades. During the Cold War, France was able to com-
bine its being and doing with a European story. Germany and the UK, on the other hand, were not able to bring the two dimensions into harmony. The end of the Cold War ushered in considerable changes. Today, France is no longer capable of combining being and doing, and Germany can no longer sidestep doing. The United Kingdom, however, is now in the situation France was in before: Being (i.e., what the UK is) and doing (i.e., what the UK does) fit together.

Therefore, at least as far as ESDP is concerned, the UK clearly is no longer the “awkward partner” or the “odd one out” in Europe. Rather, the UK seems to be in a position to drive ESDP. Having a driver inside Europe seems all the more urgent as one can easily get the impression these days that the United States is no longer “in Europe.” However, as the UK has not even dared to sell ESDP at home, it is extremely unlikely that it will try to inspire and carry along others.

Operation “Hearts and Minds”

But how can the others be inspired? A key prerequisite for any major upgrading of ESDP is that Europe’s political leaders win public support for it. Thus far, however, ESDP has been an elite process. Political leaders all over Europe have not dared to explain to their people why Europe has a security and defense policy or convince them of its worth. In fact, one might wonder how often ESDP has entered the national agenda at all. This rather devastating judgment holds true for the Big 3 as well. This is even more troubling, as it is they who more often than not bear the heaviest burden when it comes to ESDP missions. What is more, they were the key drivers for the establishment of ESDP in the first place. Both factors, however, do not seem to be good enough reasons to tell the public why Europe “has” and “does” ESDP.

That situation is not sustainable. If Europe really wants to walk the talk of shouldering global responsibility, political leaders in EU’s member states in general and in the Big 3 in particular have no choice but to engage their people in a public debate about security and defense. During such a debate, political leaders need to make the case for ESDP while steering clear of overselling ESDP as the silver bullet. “EU-phoria” might produce counterproductive results as well. Open and frank discussions, which are needed both within and among states, should tackle a broad array of issues: Who and/or what is a threat? What are our interests? How can our interests be served best? Can there still be national solutions both to achieve our interests and to cope with the threats and challenges we are facing? Which contributions can ESDP make in both respects (pursuing interests and averting threats)? And what are Europe’s strategic challenges and interests as well as moral obligations in the field of external affairs in general?

If people conclude that ESDP is useless both for realizing interests and for fending off threats, the question would be why to bother with ESDP in the future at all. If, however, the conclusion is that ESDP could be useful or maybe even essential to preserving a country’s wealth and security, politicians would receive the legitimization needed to continue with ESDP more forcefully.
and more courageously than ever before. Public legitimization is particularly crucial for ESDP missions where European soldiers might pay with their lives for serving under the European flag. They deserve to be clear about the cause they risk their lives for.

**Sorting Out Europe’s Defense Industry**

But will soldiers also be properly equipped? There will be no more money for defense in the foreseeable future. Defense spending is not popular and therefore not forcefully advocated by national politicians, particularly when social and health systems at home urgently need fixing. Thus, as spending more is not likely to become an option, what it boils down to is the often-heard mantra of “spending better.” With some €200 billion on the table in the EU–25, quite substantial progress could be made by living up to this formula. Spending better could mean several things: pooling of resources, specialization of countries to fill certain niches, and, perhaps most importantly, the concentration and consolidation of the European defense industry, thereby creating economies of scale.

It is doubtful, however, whether this last objective can be realized. The biggest “obstacle” might be BAE Systems, which increasingly considers the U.S. market as the place to be. With the biggest European defense company eager to further widen its footprint overseas, BAE seems unavailable when it comes to the consolidation of Europe’s defense industry. Hence, if a European defense economy of scale becomes a reality, it might as well be the result of an “EU minus BAE” endeavor.

Yet at least for the foreseeable future, it is also by no means certain that the other key European defense players (above all France, Germany and Italy) are inclined to accept or even promote mergers of “their” key defense companies. The latest wave of a protectionist spirit sweeping over Europe’s internal market might serve as a foreboding. Hence, the consolidation of the European defense industry is as necessary as it is unlikely to happen in the years to come. The detrimental effects resulting from the existing messy system will therefore continue. However, if the Joint Strike Fighter fails, one might see a reorientation of BAE to Europe. A transatlantic failure might become the trigger for a noteworthy and genuinely European defense industry.

**Outlook**

The Big 3 could play the key role for the augmentation of ESDP if they get their act together and succeed in synthesizing their aspirations, expectations and capabilities into one comprehensive approach. Given their position within the EU, it is very likely that the other states will follow their lead if they act cautiously and inclusively. But for the time being, Big 3 leadership in ESDP seems unlikely, since both a long-term vision for ESDP and political leadership seem to be missing in all three states. On the other hand, none of the Big 3 is interested in seeing ESDP fail. Therefore, the piecemeal and reactive development characteristic for ESDP’s evolution thus far – driven mostly by external shocks, not by internal vision or leadership – is very likely to continue.
France and ESDP

Hans Stark

On May 29, 2005, the French people rejected the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe with 54.67 percent. Above all, this “no” epitomized the will to defend the social model “à la française.” However, the failure of the referendum also had a political, even geopolitical dimension, namely the hostility toward a European Union with uncertain borders and lacking a generally accepted political model. Of course, this lack of acceptance among the member states had its impact on the development of Europe’s Common Foreign and Security Policy and European Security and Defense Policy. Yet French experts (a good share of whom are high military staff) widely agree that the future of European defense is largely dissociated from the constitutional project.

In France, only few estimate that the Constitution would have brought major ameliorations to the Treaty of Nice, be it for the coherence of foreign affairs of the EU, for accelerating decision-making processes or for establishing consent between member states in foreign and security policy matters. Most French experts think that, on the contrary, the Constitution – even if it did not drop the entire issue – did not pay enough attention to European defense. With regard to the ESDP, it was said to content itself with blurry perspectives based on lame compromises, not even endeavoring to define objectives. According to this analysis, the future of European defense did not depend on the adoption of the Constitution. The failure to adopt the Constitution would thus have no decisive impact on the development of the ESDP.

ESDP’s future would merely depend on the European project and Europe’s political model that the states would adopt so as to act on the international stage. This model, however, which remained undefined by the constitutional project, can focus, in broad outline, on three possible scenarios for Europe: the “market,” “soft power,” or a “Europe puissance.” When one considers the divergences among European leaders, however, it would be pertinent to state that no choice has yet been made, and that France probably remains the only country of the Union that resolutely speaks out in favor of the concept of a “Europe puissance.” This is the reason for the marginalization of France, which has aimed at being the leading nation in European defense policies since the Maastricht Treaty. Moreover, it explains the disenchantment that Paris displays regarding CFSP and ESDP, which is not a good omen for the leadership role that France could take in company with Great Britain and Germany.

1. The Role of France in an Emerging European Defense Policy

Ever since the return to power of General de Gaulle, all French leaders have aimed at instrumentalizing “European politics” so as to attain, with European partners, national strategic objectives that France would not have had the means to pursue on its own. This is a constant trait of the Fifth Republic’s foreign policy. Like no other European country, France has wished for the
Community, then later the EU, to extend the power of the nation-state, so that France could go on in taking a pivotal role on the international stage. Be it the Fouchet plans (1961/1962), the emergence of the Paris-Bonn axis under Schmidt and Giscard d’Estaing, the reactivation of the Western European Union (WEU) in 1984 or the creation of the French-German brigade, France has always pursued one single goal: making Europe a “multiplier of power” for France. This policy regularly failed due to the transatlantic engagement and interests of its partners (except for West Germany, which was always ready to juggle with Washington and Paris). These partners were not too enthusiastic, given that France hardly camouflaged its goal of reinforcing its national “grandeur” and its role in world politics. Added to this, French initiatives were not taken seriously as they confronted an insurmountable taboo, which was not to question the “holy” autonomy of French decision-making in defense policy (in particular its nuclear policy).

1.1 The Reorientation of French Security Policy after Maastricht
From 1990 onward, France, just like its partners, has had to adapt its military policies to the challenges that emerged after the end of the Cold War. Humanitarian interventions and force projection “out of area” have replaced classic notions of defense and security. Just as Germany has lived through a process of normalization in defense matters, France needed to break with its traditional ideological concepts. In accordance with a priority set to protect the stability of the European continent and its Mediterranean neighborhood, France and its partners ended up with identical security interests. This is a development that has shaken traditional French perception in defense issues. Thus, the notion of autonomous action that had still prevailed at the time of the Maastricht Treaty was replaced by shared responsibilities and capacities, and even a voluntarily accepted interdependence.

In a similar manner, Paris’s stance toward NATO has radically changed since the beginning of Jacques Chirac’s presidency in 1995. France has of course not returned to the Alliance’s military organization that it left in 1966. Nonetheless, it fully participated in NATO operations in Bosnia (IFOR and SFOR1995–2004), in Kosovo (since 1999) and in Macedonia (2001). In 2006, France deployed 1,140 troops to Afghanistan for ISAF (International Security Assistance Force). Moreover, France is highly involved in supporting the NATO Response Force (NRF), whose air force it controlled for six months in 2005. It supplied the NRF with 1,700 troops (of a total 25,000) and eight Mirage 2000 airplanes. French defense policy has thus become compatible with the reorientation of NATO in recent years.

In return, the normalization of France-NATO relations has not been able to induce France to relinquish its wish to establish an autonomous European defense capacity. Understanding world politics as “multipolar” after September 11, Paris aspires to turning Europe into an independent actor, a “Europe puissance,” and diminishing European dependence on the United States, an objective it has pursued since the end of World War II. In order to attain this goal, France first relied on the integration of the WEU into the EU and then on “a European pillar within NATO,” epitomized by the ESDI (European Security and Defense Identity). Both concepts have failed. In the 1990s, the WEU moved closer to NATO, rather than to the EU. The ESDI was until quite
recently blocked by Greece and Turkey and hampered by the pre-eminent United States, which claimed the right to supervise every European operation without U.S. but with NATO participation. Above all, neither the WEU nor the ESDI have permitted Europeans to play a role in the former Yugoslavia, where hostilities were brought to an end by NATO (in Bosnia as well as in Kosovo). Those two concepts were thus doomed to fail before they even started.

In this context, Paris opened up to the ESDP in 1998/1999, due to the rapprochement between France and Britain, two countries that had learned the same lesson from the Yugoslav conflicts. Germany and other EU member states rapidly endorsed this French-British project in St. Malo in December 1998. The creation of ESDP at the end of the 1990s was the result of several parallel developments that rendered possible this project of autonomous defense policy: France had approached NATO, and Great Britain was convinced that it was necessary to reinforce the European pillar in the Alliance. At the same time, Germany had completed its process of normalization, and neutral countries had begun to accept that Europe could no longer remain powerful only in trade. Consequently, in 1999 and 2000 France played a decisive role in establishing ESDP in various ways: the French propositions in December 1999 (accepted by the EU) regarding decision structures and military instruments of the future ESDP; the report of Nice (December 2000) by the French presidency concerning the temporary instruments of the ESDP, as well as the “headline goals” established in the preceding months.

1.2 The Painful Europeanization of the French Defense Instrument

On February 22, 1996, Jacques Chirac announced that the French army would become professional so as to play a pivotal role in European defense policy. Objectives were to make available some 50,000 troops by 2002, of which 30,000 would be designated for coalition operations (e.g., in Kosovo or Bosnia), 5,000 for French operations (e.g., for Ivory Coast) and 9,500 overseas troops (DOM-TOM). However, this reorganization was accompanied by a constant decline of the military budget that the Jospin government had introduced and that highly contradicted French ambitions of becoming the leading nation of a “Europe puissance.” When the defense budget is expressed as a percent of GDP, a constant decline – from 2.3 percent in 1997 to 1.96 percent in 2001 – becomes apparent.

Professionalizing the army (on December 31, 2002) entailed raising administrative costs to the detriment of equipment spending, which threatened to make the army lose its operational coherence. The French army had thus been through a deep morale and financial crisis that was at the time denounced by Jacques Chirac himself. Only just re-elected for his second mandate in May 2002, the president had decided to present a law to parliament that adjusted the socialists’ military spending policy. The defense budget thus reached €32 billion (€29 billion in 2002), which made France one of the rare EU countries (with the UK and Greece) to augment its military spending and to spend more than 2 percent of its GDP on defense.

Simultaneously, Paris permanently deployed 30,000 troops outside its borders on its own in the context of UNO, EU or NATO interventions, about 20 per year. This effort, attained despite the
fact that the French economy entered a recessionary period in 2002, allowed France to have reached its proclaimed ambitions at the European summit in Helsinki, where the EU announced its intention of equipping itself with an intervention force of 60,000 soldiers by 2003. Added to this, Paris announced its strong intention of actively engaging in the creation of 13 battlegroups, three of which included French participation.

Thus, from a purely military perspective, France estimated that it had accomplished its objectives. It had at its disposal a professional army, observation satellites and an internationally competitive armaments industry. France deemed its military instrument, even though largely inferior to that of the United States, comparable to the UK’s and above all capable of commanding multinational operations. Nevertheless, European defense must have the UK’s and Germany’s participation. Nor can it exist without the commitment of the other leading European countries and neutral countries, even though their capacities are smaller. While France is at eye level with the ambitions of the ESDP, it is in return not sure whether the ESDP is at eye level with French ambitions.

2. French Perception of the ESDP: Criticism without Complacency

From 2003 to 2005, Europeans perceived European defense policy as a success. The ESDP became operational in 2003. Its first missions in Macedonia, Congo and Bosnia demonstrated the Union’s capability of conducting autonomous operations – and this in spite of European discordance concerning the Iraq crisis. On December 8, 2003, the European Council unanimously passed a European security strategy that was elaborated under the auspices of Javier Solana, the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy. In April 2004, the defense secretaries of all EU countries validated the initiative of France, Germany and Britain, aiming at the creation of battlegroups. On October 29, 2004, heads of state and government finally signed the Constitutional Treaty that institutionalized several requirements, notably a clause on mutual assistance and the possibility of establishing structured cooperation.

The European Gendarmerie Force adds up to this: About 800 gendarmes can be deployed in less than a month (3,000 men at full term). The European Defense Agency (EDA) supplies its research capacities, with a working team and a €20 million budget. The educational background is provided by the European Security and Defense College and completed, in France, by bilateral initiatives such as the French-Belgian “école de chasse” and French-German instruction for helicopter pilots. These initiatives are supposed to foster a common strategic culture and interoperable forces.

Despite these undeniable successes, which were only partially challenged by the (provisional?) failure of establishing a Constitutional Treaty, French experts take a very critical stance regarding European defense policy. This criticism, not (yet) uttered on a governmental or parliamentary level, tends to gain general approval, and epitomizes a veritable uneasiness, even disenchantment, vis-à-vis the ESDP, which the French population perceives as opaque and lacking a
precise political project. From this perspective, opaqueness is a result of the extreme complexity of the implied politico-administrative, operational and industrial strata. According to the French perspective, uncertainty that bears upon attributing responsibilities and missions and upon the emergence of a leadership role in the ESDP would be a constant cause for jamming the institutional machinery. Authors argue that a political project and a common strategic culture were lacking in the ESDP, making the role of the Union in strategic and military affairs highly ambiguous – a point that is made in most French articles dealing with ESDP.14

2.1 ESDP: No Vision and No Project
According to French public opinion, Europeans still do not want a European defense, while at the same time they proclaim their intention of making it succeed. The French public further criticizes the absence of a collective and coherent European vision for creating a common and sensible incentive for constituting a European defense policy. How else could the absence of a European defense be explained, even though this question has existed since the 1950s and since the Maastricht Treaty in particular? In fact, many think that the “imprisonment” of foreign and security policy to the second pillar is not the result of a misconception but rather an indicator for the limitation of the project. However, institutions established by the EU for CFSP and ESDP could very well lead to a common defense policy if there were a vision of common European objectives. As long as this vision is not provided for, CFSP and ESDP only prevent the EU from imposing decisions upon an unwilling member state. The real problem is thus not military, institutional or financial, but above all political.15

French authors reach the conclusion that none of the Union’s member states would really be in favor of a European defense. The UK de facto opposes it, despite its open-mindedness in St. Malo, due to its ties with the United States and its hostility toward a supranational Europe. France would certainly argue for an autonomous European defense but does not want to be deprived of using its military instruments nationally if its own interests are at stake. Nevertheless, France believes that its possession of independent military means enables it to influence the process of European integration in defense matters. Germany would certainly be very much in favor of the ESDP, but – in contrast to France – is reluctant to engage in operations for re-establishing peace that would necessitate the deployment of armed forces.16 “Small” European countries do not show more enthusiasm when it comes to European defense dominated by French, German and British leadership. In fact, the “small” member states do not fear a classic attack; rather, they fear being deprived of their identity and specificity by the looming “big” states of the Union. This is also why they opted for the United States, an ally that is both more distant and more powerful than the trio of Paris, Berlin and London.

It goes without saying that, from a French perspective, enlargement in the east of the Union with eight post-communist and decidedly pro-transatlantic states has weakened pro-integrationist currents within the Union. This weakening will be even more tangible with future enlargement that will create European borders with contiguous conflict areas, such as the Balkans, Moldavia, the Caucasus and the Middle East – not even to mention the deterioration of
relations between Europe and Russia in the case of the inclusion of Ukraine. In France, public opinion strongly doubts that Europeans will accept the idea of defending a body that is both heterogeneous and expanded, or welcome Europe's development of forming a political and military entity out of 30 member states. In fact, the majority of Europeans would harshly reject the notion of a “Europe puissance” and prefer a Europe of “civil power” that consigns its defense to NATO, as has been the case for a long time. This “non-choice” would evidently not happen in accordance with Britain, Germany and the new member states, let alone the United States. The greatest loser of this “commercial and neoliberal” Europe, however, would be France. Its ambition for global influence and its social model would be challenged and its dependence on Washington would rise.

2.2 NATO’s Predominance

Moreover, the constitutional project has in no way challenged the paramount role of NATO as a privileged organization in European defense. Quite the opposite is the case. All French authors who have studied the impact of the constitutional project on the ESDP have voiced the criticism that the Constitution blended in one article the obligations of mutual assistance from article 5 of the Brussels Treaty and article 5 of the Washington Treaty. Consequently, the clause concerning mutual defense, introduced into article 41.7 of the Constitutional Treaty, used certain elements of article 5 of the Brussels Treaty, stipulating that “if a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power.” However, the constitutional project has “forgotten” to specify “military and other” as in article 5 of the Brussels Treaty. The next indent clearly makes reference to NATO, “which, for those States which are members of it, remains the foundation of their collective defense and the forum for its implementation.” The mobilization of “all the instruments at its disposal, including the military resources made available by the Member States” is foreseen only in two extreme hypothetical events: “if a Member State is the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster” (Art. 43).

This compromise represents the lowest common denominator among the followers of a “Europe puissance” and the “atlanticist” countries. It bears witness to the fact that most of the Union’s member states oppose an autonomous European defense as suggested by France. They would rather do the contrary and limit the ESDP’s power so as to ensure the durability of transatlantic relations. In France, this compromise was interpreted as proof that a majority of member states want to maintain a privileged tie with the United States and NATO, and thus reject an autonomous European defense dominated by France (or by the French-German “couple”).

As a consequence, French authors argued that the Constitution has not brought about any novelty in what concerns the ESDP (except for the Petersberg tasks). No autonomous European defense is included because it is realized in the framework of NATO. Many authors ask themselves whether Europe should limit its political ambitions to the management of crises. By deliberately choosing to remain, at a militaristic and technical level, incapable of intervening in high-intensity conflicts, the Union would certainly respect NATO’s primacy – and even the primacy of
the “coalition of the willing” led by the United States with or without a U.N. mandate. Nonetheless, such a division of missions is not without risk in a military sense, as it would systematically oblige Europeans to intervene only after the United States, in an environment that is often far from pacified. Added to this, the division entails a redistribution of operations (combat operations for the United States with or without NATO; peacekeeping and stabilization after the conflict for Europe), which confronts the European Union with a major disadvantage: Europeans would be confined to ground operations, whereas aerial operations would be reserved to American forces. It is well understood that this debate on strategic orientations of the ESDP also has a major impact on the future of industrial capacities of the defense sector.22

2.3 Lacking a Culture of Dialogue
It is with great bitterness that France highlights the fact that the European Union is far from capable of acting in a wide range of conflicts. This incapacity was not only a consequence of refusing a “Europe puissance,” but also due to the lack of a military culture in the political elites who content themselves with the management of crises by means of prevention, dialogue and reconstruction of states. Certain French military officials even denounce the “latent European pacifism” that lulled Europe into a false sense of security and created the deceptive illusion that Europe had become “safe.” They contend that as the world grows ever more dangerous, new megapowers will arise and nobody can foresee the geostrategic situation in 30 years. According to these authors, this misjudgment of future challenges and threats would finally endanger French national security and the Europeans’ collective security. Europe's strategic security vision, as analyzed in Javier Solana’s document of December 8, 2003, is said to reveal this mindset of “making war without war.” French authors found the word “war” only twice in this text, whereas the term “conflict” appeared 28 times and “security” 31 times. The word “enemy” does not appear a single time.

Having totally stripped high military officials of their principal role in resolving crises, the Union would accord an absolutely disproportionate position to the diplomatic component of the ESDP for conflict resolution. The political and administrative functioning of the ESDP perfectly reveals this state of mind. Thus, the European Union Military Committee (EUMC) is subordinated to the Political and Security Committee. The PSC, however, consists of high officials and not politicians. Consequently, it is almost impossible for qualified military authorities to advise the European Council on behalf of the different commands. In fact, military expertise is not even asked for, which confirms the judgment held by a large number of French military officials vis-à-vis the ESDP, which they consider weakened by the absence of a debate within the Union on the military aspects of European defense policy.

Nevertheless, French experts fairly accept that the absence of a fundamental debate on military orientation affects not only the most pacifist among European countries, but to a certain extent all European countries, including France. According to General Lucien Poirier, French defense policy has undergone a “fundamental crisis” since the end of the Cold War. He attributes this not only to the skepticism toward French defense policy since 1990, but also to the absence of a
debate on its reorientation. This deficit is connected with the political culture of the French Fifth Republic, where the executive accords very little power to parliamentary debate on defense issues. Essential decisions were made by the head of state and prime minister without arrangement with the political class. Under Jacques Chirac, this was true for the introduction of a professional army, the nuclear test ban, as well as foreign and security policy in general. Similarly, the changed philosophy of employing armed forces and the emphasis on humanitarian action were realized without an in-depth discussion, which also goes for the reorientation of the nuclear doctrine.

In fact, the French executive gambles on the indifference of public opinion. In the French Parliament – and in the EU alike – the word “war” is more or less banned. Members of Parliament and government responsible, too, prefer the terms “humanitarian action” and “peacekeeping missions.” But only the future will show whether crucial questions such as the possible reintegration in NATO, revision of nuclear deterrence and transfer of command to the instances of the European Union – questions that are central to national sovereignty – can be decided without the complete agreement of the political class, high military responsible and public opinion. It is certain, though, that the absence of a debating culture concerning military challenges is not a phenomenon restricted to the EU itself. It is equally rooted in the political landscape of France, which does not facilitate France’s stimulation of pivotal initiatives to make the ESDP resolve the crisis.

3. What Can Be Done?

French criticism regarding the ESDP does not mean that France turns away from the process of constructing a European defense. Paris is perfectly aware that the ESDP can survive only if France actively participates. Nonetheless, the question arises whether France is actually capable of co-leading on a European scale, be it only for the ESDP. France has been undergoing a profound political and identity crisis over the last years. This was expressed most alarmingly in its referendum on May 29, 2005, the “suburb crisis” in the same year and the students’ revolt in the spring of 2006. France only very sorely adapts to globalization, perceiving it not as an opportunity for its economy but as a menace to its social model. The same is true for EU enlargement, which in French eyes represents a jeopardizing of fundamental European beliefs (originating from its “founding fathers”) and a victory of neoliberal, “Anglo-Saxon” ideas. Certainly, it will take some time before France can surmount its internal crisis and regrasp its role as a political leader of the EU. This will not happen before the presidential and legislative elections in 2007, maybe not even before the French EU presidency in 2008.

But France will not renounce its ambitions for the ESDP, which – imperfect as it may well be – remains crucial for French foreign policy. This is particularly the case in Africa, where French influence has diminished. France no longer has the means to maintain the same presence in Africa as ten years ago, nor the same recourse to unilateral policies that De Gaulle or Giscard
d’Estaing once had. At the same time, France neither can be nor wants to be indifferent to mass murder, civil war and the despair of populations of black Africa. As far as civil and military peacekeeping and reconstruction operations are concerned, the ESDP represents for France a means to assure its position in Africa by covering for its growing disempowerment in its ancient colonies. Involving its European partners in interventions in Africa puts France in a position to make up for its own lack of capacity and demonstrate its conviction that the mythical term of “Françafrique” belongs to the past. Nevertheless, the Europeanization of French policy in Africa bears major risks. By entrusting the task of managing crises to the EU, France might lose its right to act on its own. However, French unilateral action might be considered indispensable in Paris, in the case that Europeans refused to engage in Africa for lack of means or political motivation. For France, the immediate consequence of a Europeanized African policy would be that it would need to accept, if necessary, participation in non-francophone regions of Africa where France has no particular interest (e.g., Liberia).³¹

However, Africa is not the single reason for a remobilization of Europeans in the ESDP. From a French perspective, other obstacles need to be surmounted that are notably of budgetary, capacitive and political nature. Thus, France speaks out in favor of a contribution to the defense budget by European countries that is fixed and relative to the GDP (at least 1.5 percent of the GDP). In military and capacitive matters, the Union’s “small” countries as well as neutral states are to get more involved in European defense, by contributing more specialized troops, which will complement the EU’s capacities. In return, the “big” countries should accept the notion of duplicating forces, if they want to remain complete military powers (this currently applies to France and Great Britain). Similarly, the military dimension of the ESDP’s institutions needs to be reinforced. The EUMC would have to free itself of the PSC’s guardianship and take up direct contact with the European Council. The European Defense Agency, whose creation all French experts welcomed as a great advancement, could equally be headed by a military official. The EU also needs to have sufficient ground troops at its disposal for two reasons: facing missions such as the Petersberg tasks, and ensuring the defense of its national territory – an objective greatly neglected in recent years, while terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction have become a looming menace for Europe’s security.

4. Conclusion

Without a doubt, European defense will not come into its own until a serious and tangible menace hits Europe and provokes the EU member states to change their attitude toward the ESDP and agree on precise political objectives. Without this perspective, the evolution of ESDP will remain paralyzed. As long as the need for strong and autonomous European defense is not felt among Europeans, not even the “ESDP working on several different levels” is going to work; the positions of Britain, Germany and France are simply too divergent. Britain will stick to NATO’s primacy and transatlantic ties. (How would Britain react to an American opposition?) Germany would draw back as soon as the EU were confronted with applying force. (Is it possible to imagine Germany taking part in a peace mission in the Near East?) France, while lauding a “Europe
puissance”, has no intention of totally renouncing its national independence in foreign policy issues. (How would Paris react if the ESDP forced France and Britain to give up their U.N. seats in favor of the EU? Is France ready to detach itself from the Council’s unanimity rule concerning the CFSP and ESDP?)

Unanimity is indeed one of the first problems that must be solved. The different conventions for structured and reinforced cooperation are only a second best. It is true that Europe needs an in-depth debate not only on its security and borders, but also on its political finality. This discussion will have a decisive impact on the ESDP’s evolution. However, this debate must also be resumed among leaders, in parliament and in the military. It must address national sovereignty and independence, the EU’s federal project, the relation between “big” and “small,” “old” and “new” member states – as well as the position of France in the enlarged European Union.

Endnotes

4 Similarly to the “Weißbuch” (White Paper) of 1994, the “Livre blanc,” published in the same year, underlined that French borders were no longer threatened by a direct attack but that the principal threats had changed in nature.
6 In 1997 Paris even considered returning entirely to NATO. However, this “return” failed due to a refusal by the United States to yield to Paris’ demand in Naples to assign the AFSOUTH command to a European officer as a “return service” (in this case a French officer).
11 See Patrice Buffotot (2005): Un engagement européen fort. La défense en Europe. La Documentation française, pp. 67–82.
17 See Henri Burgelin: La politique européenne de défense.
22 See Bastien Iondelle: L’Europe de la défense à la croisée des chemins?
23 See Colonel François Chauvancy (January 2005): Quelles forces militaires pour quelle Europe de la défense? Défense Nationale, January 2005, pp. 29–40. Colonel François Chauvancy was a student at the école militaire de Saint-Cyr and is now lecturer at the CID (Collège interarmées de défense).
24 See General Pierre Menanteau: La politique de défense de l’Union.
The original title of this document is Une Europe sûre dans un monde meilleur.

See Colonel François Chauvancy: Quelles forces militaires pour quelle Europe de la défense?

General Lucien Poirier (1994): La crise des fondements. Paris: Economica, 188 p. General Poirier is a reserve general of the French army and a theorist on nuclear deterrence. He very actively participated in elaborating the French doctrine concerning its nuclear weapon and developed the nuclear doctrine from the weak to the strong.


Germany and ESDP

Franco Algieri, Thomas Bauer, Klaus Brummer

Germany is facing an ongoing debate concerning its commitment to and participation in international crisis management and stabilization operations led by the United Nations, NATO or the European Union (EU). This debate is essential for defining the role of Germany as an international actor. However, discussions seem to run in circles, avoiding a clear statement of Germany's interests and strategy. Germany remains politically a “hesitant power” while working at the same for the improvement of capabilities and the overall effectiveness of the three institutions mentioned to conduct crisis management operations.

With the European Security and Defense Policy gaining in maturity, the EU dimension is growing increasingly important for Germany. Three years ago, ESDP operations started in the Balkans, first with a civilian operation (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and shortly thereafter a military operation (the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). Today, the EU is engaged in more than a dozen missions – either military or civilian – on three continents (Europe, Africa, Asia).

Against this backdrop, and notwithstanding the continued importance particularly of NATO for Germany's security and defense policy, ESDP rapidly gains relevance as an option for Germany's engagement in global security affairs. Hence, it seems imperative to identify and delineate those factors that influence the country's position toward and role in ESDP. To do so, this paper proceeds as follows: First, the influence of Germany's past on its present ESDP policy is examined. Next, the focus shifts to the particularities of Germany's threat perception. Then, decision-making and party politics are examined. This is followed by a discussion of the Federal Armed Forces’ state of transformation. The paper concludes with a brief outlook on the major determinants of and impediments to the ESDP policy of Germany.

1. The Power of History

More than in the case of many other states, history influences the development of German foreign policy in a specific way. During the Cold War, Germany's role as a foreign policy actor was clearly defined and embedded in a transatlantic and European integration context. Probably the most outstanding example of a truly German foreign policy during that period was the Ostpolitik under Chancellor Willy Brandt. Analyzing today's role and function of Germany in the ESDP requires specific attention to the transatlantic dimension, because until European states agreed to establish a common security and defense policy in the Maastricht Treaty and later developed the ESDP, security and defense matters were mainly subject to the NATO framework. From the 1950s on, German governments followed a policy of continuity and close partnership with the United States, although diverging perceptions were expressed in different periods and with respect to specific events in international relations. While the protests against the war in Vietnam were not exclusively a German phenomenon, it can be argued that in the case of the
European peace movement in the 1980s, an important impulse to critically question transatlantic relations came from Germany. NATO’s double-track decision in 1979 and the Strategic Defense Initiative of 1983 triggered strong and critical public opinion in Germany against parts of U.S. foreign policy, which was also supported by the then “young” Green Party.

With the end of the East-West antagonism and the subsequent developments in Europe, German foreign policy was largely influenced by the unification process and the changing European political and security-policy environment. Pushing – together with France – for a political union, and consequently the creation of CFSP, Germany actively shaped the creation of a framework for the further development of its own foreign policy. The European integration process became even more needed as a legitimate framework to define a differentiated foreign policy profile. Additionally, the transatlantic partnership had to be confirmed. Consequently, German foreign policy during the Christian Democratic/Liberal government of Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher (later Klaus Kinkel) became to a certain extent more self-confident and, at the same time, remained accountable and reliable for the European and transatlantic partners. In that period, German foreign policy had not only to confirm but also to fine-tune specific relationships, in particular toward the United States of America, France, Eastern Europe and especially Russia, as well as toward smaller member states inside the EU, thus playing a role as mediator between bigger and smaller EU states.

The year 1998 brought a historic change in government when the coalition government of Christian Democrats and Liberals led by Helmut Kohl for 16 years met defeat in national elections. The new coalition government, formed by the Social Democratic Party and the Green Party, came under intense observation within Germany, within the EU, and from all the other states mentioned above. Would Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer develop a new foreign policy for Germany? In hindsight, it can be argued that this government was forced to develop a much higher foreign policy profile than initially expected. The first signs of this came in early 1999, when Germany held the EU presidency and at the same time faced the Kosovo war. A further test evolved with September 11, 2001, and the subsequent developments.

The terrorist attacks in the United States had a tremendous influence on international relations as well as the transatlantic relationship. Germany’s Social Democratic/Green coalition government did not challenge the coalition against terrorism, and the support of the military campaign in Afghanistan was seen as part of the NATO Article 5 commitment. “Gerhard Schröder and his government clearly have seen military participation in the effort against international terrorism as a way to enhance German influence on U.S. policies.” Furthermore, it was argued that Schröder tried “to rid Germany of its negative image as a proponent of ‘cheque-book diplomacy,’ and to demonstrate foreign policy leadership.” Be it Germany’s role and presence in the stabilization and transition process of Afghanistan, the commitments in the Balkans or the participation of Germany in other international crisis management missions – all this indicates a high degree of engagement. But in the runup to the federal election in September 2002, doubts about a U.S.-led military strike against Iraq were growing, and both the Social Democrats and
the Green Party expressed their skepticism toward U.S. foreign-policy planning more clearly. Chancellor Schröder considered such a strike a mistake that would make the situation in the Middle East more dangerous. Foreign Minister Fischer called a possible military intervention in Iraq a “wrong priority.” In his view, involvement of the German Federal Armed Forces, the Bundeswehr, would not be a matter of national interest; moreover, he thought it necessary to find a common European position. It was argued that the government’s position had to be seen in context of the electoral campaign in Germany. Shortly before the elections in Germany, the climax of misperceptions had been reached and a rather damaged relationship could be identified. Soon after the election, efforts increased on both sides of the Atlantic to reduce the tension. But this did not mean that skepticism in Germany and the United States toward the policy of the other partner immediately disappeared.

Linked with the German-American security debate, it is important to briefly examine Germany's relationship with France and the United Kingdom. German-French cooperation has always been considered essential to the European integration process. Even though Germany and France, at their 2002 summit meeting in Schwerin, described themselves as the engine that drives the European integration process and declared their intention to push for further development of the ESDP, critical remarks about the quality of this engine are becoming louder. When it comes to the security and defense policy dimension, France never left a doubt about the commitment to a strong Europe, though with a clear rejection of too much influence of the United States. On the other hand, the United Kingdom always kept its position as the most important European ally of the United States. Both France and Britain supported the development of the ESDP, but each for different reasons and with different perceptions of the transatlantic dimension. This meant that Germany could not be placed in one or the other camp. With a further change of the governmental constellation in Germany in autumn 2005, when the grand coalition of the Christian Democratic Party and the Social Democratic Party succeeded the Red/Green coalition government, the question whether Germany could serve as a bridge between French, British and U.S. interests in the determination of European foreign and security policy became relevant again.

After one year, the grand coalition government’s foreign policy can be considered as a logical continuation of the path Germany chose at the end of the 1990s and in the early 21st century. However, two features deserve highlighting. First, transatlantic tensions have decreased; Berlin wants to emphasize that Washington can again rely on Germany. Second, in the context of multilateral operations, Germany’s military commitments and engagements are further growing. Moreover, as can be observed from the current political debate, Germany is becoming a little more outspoken as concerns its national interests – yet still without clearly delineating the very substance of the latter.
2. Particularities of German Threat Perception

Germans do not feel threatened these days – at least not by what might be called a “traditional” military threat such as the one posed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War. In the foreseeable future, no military attack looms from the East or any other direction. However, this is not to say that Germans feel absolutely secure. A recent poll by the Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut of the German Bundeswehr outlines the individual threat perceptions of Germans. When asked what they feel threatened by, Germans put social and economic issues such as the reduction of social security services (60 percent), an economic crisis in Germany (56 percent) or unemployment (42 percent) on top of the list. “Traditional” security threats such as weapons of mass destruction (29 percent) or war / military conflict somewhere in the world (29 percent) trail behind. Germans feel even less threatened by a terrorist attack on German soil (27 percent) or, as mentioned above, by a military attack on Germany (14 percent).

In line with this focus on domestic and personal issues, Germans are increasingly skeptical of a more active role of their country on the global stage. In 2001, 54 percent of Germans were in favor of an active German foreign policy. In 2003, the number dropped to 38 percent, and in 2005 it slid further, to 34 percent. In contrast, 43 percent are of the opinion that Germany should keep out of problems, crises or conflicts of others and focus instead on its domestic affairs. Taking a closer look at “Germans,” it turns out that people with low income are particularly skeptical about a more active foreign policy of Germany, while people with high income view such a role more favorably. In addition, there is a strong correlation between people afraid of further cuts to social security services and the rejection of an active German foreign policy.

Even though the Germans are inclined to focus primarily on the domestic arena, they are very well aware of the challenges and threats that confront the world today. According to a recent poll by the Bertelsmann Stiftung and TNS Emnid, Germans rank the destruction of the environment / climate change (53 percent) on top of the list of global challenges. Runner-up is international terrorism (52 percent), followed by poverty and overpopulation (45 percent), war (34 percent), scarcity of natural resources (28 percent) and weapons of mass destruction (28 percent). The bottom four challenges and threats are contagious diseases / pandemics (16 percent), aging populations (15 percent), fundamentalism (10 percent) and weak / failed states (5 percent).

As none of the aspects scores much more than 50 percent, the poll indicates that no singular threat or challenge to global security exists these days that Germans consider to be of utmost importance or concern. Moreover, with the destruction of the environment / climate change and poverty / overpopulation ranking first and third, and international terrorism and war ranking second and fourth, the list exhibits an intertwining of hard or traditional and soft or novel challenges. Hence, according to the threat perception of Germans, there is neither “the” threat to global security nor a clear prioritization concerning the nature of the threat or challenge.

Yet when it comes to identifying the instruments deemed appropriate for tackling global challenges and threats, Germans have decidedly clear preferences that in turn are rooted in pacifism.
The majority of Germans reject military power and force and are of the opinion that all intra- and interstate conflicts can be solved peacefully. In addition, they hold the perception that economic power is far more promising than military power when it comes to influencing the international agenda. This preference for nonmilitary actions and qualities is mirrored in Germans’ views on the qualities a country must possess to be considered a world power. Also in this context, Germans ascribe no major role to hard security in the form of the military. To the contrary, military power finishes last in a list of eight qualities of a world power, scoring 7 percent. Instead, Germans consider political stability (64 percent), strong education systems along with research and development (54 percent), economic power and potential for growth (49 percent) and innovativeness and adaptability (41 percent) as the most important factors for determining world power status.

What are the consequences for Germany’s ESDP policy? As far as external security challenges and threats with the mixture of hard and soft issues are concerned, the perception of Germans by and large corresponds with the European Security Strategy (ESS), which was adopted in December 2003 by the heads of state and government of the EU member countries. The ESS singles out terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, state failure and organized crime as the five “key threats” to Europe’s security. In addition, the ESS mentions poverty, development and competition for resources as major global challenges.

Furthermore, the perception of the German public also reflects the “official” German threat perception (which in turn corresponds with the ESS). The most recent German Defense Policy Guidelines published in 2003 emphasize that “Germany’s security environment is not free from military and nonmilitary risks jeopardizing and threatening its security and stability.” The subsequent elaboration of those risks puts the following issues at the center: international terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the possibility or existence of intrastate conflicts at Europe’s southern and southeastern periphery but also inside Europe, threats to information and communication systems and the vulnerability of transport routes and means.

It is a safe bet that the forthcoming German White Paper on Defense will also include those issues when describing the geostrategic challenges and risks Germany is most likely to face in the years ahead, probably supplemented with energy security, climate change, poverty and pandemics in order to paint an even more comprehensive and “ESS-like” picture.

Equally important is the fact that Germans ascribe a prominent role to the EU or, to be more precise, to ESDP when it comes to confronting those challenges. On a regular basis, the surveys of the Eurobarometer demonstrate the overwhelmingly positive attitude of Germans toward ESDP. In the most recent survey, 87 percent were in favor of a common security and defense policy among EU member states, placing Germany fifth among the EU–25. Perhaps even more interesting, Germans do not just see a role for the EU in confronting global challenges. They also put greater trust in the capacity of the European Union to do so than in the capacity of their country. Thus, 75 percent of Germans consider the EU today a world power, compared to 41 percent with respect to Germany. Looking ahead, the gap further increases, as 77 percent of the Germans think that the EU will be a great power in 2020, while only 40 percent share this opinion for Germany.
However, similar to the situation described above concerning the priority areas of action Germans would like to see their government engage in, they also stipulate that the EU should concentrate on internal security issues in a broader sense. According to the Eurobarometer, Germans hold the view that the EU’s two priority areas of action should be the fight against unemployment (60 percent) and that against poverty/social exclusion (41 percent). Third comes the maintenance of peace and security in Europe (38 percent). Trailing behind are the fight against organized crime and drug trafficking (24 percent), the fight against terrorism (15 percent) and the assertion of the political and diplomatic importance of the EU around the world (4 percent).23

The perceptions Germans hold concerning challenges and threats to their security and the appropriate means to confront them exert two important constraints on Germany’s ESDP policy. First, security concerns related to economic and social well-being and welfare are the ones Germans focus on – and thus would like to see their politicians attend to. Such issues are concrete, easy to grasp and possible to experience or suffer daily. Conversely, today’s “hard” security threats might be far too remote and imprecise for people to grasp as major issues. As a result, Germans ascribe little importance to them and thus to the very substance of ESDP. Hence, politicians who put little emphasis on those security issues covered by ESDP while focusing on economic and social security issues are not likely to encounter strong resistance domestically. Unless a major catastrophe happens, ignoring the former is politically far less costly than neglecting the latter.

Second, even though Germans are aware of global security challenges, they do not see the military as an appropriate means to confront those challenges. In addition to the at times rather blurry rationale for military missions, this is one of the major reasons for the lukewarm support for German engagement in multilateral military operations, be it in a U.N., NATO or ESDP framework. Even though the majority of Germans do not oppose German participation, for instance in KFOR (NATO mission in Kosovo), ISAF (U.N. mission in Afghanistan) or EUFOR-Althea (EU mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina), they are also not strong supporters. Rather, their support is conditioned by various caveats.24 Furthermore, ESDP missions have not faced heavy resistance on the spot thus far. Should they do so, resulting in the loss of a high number of German soldiers, public support for German participation in multilateral operations is likely to become even more hesitant than it already is. Yet, ESDP involves the build-up and pooling of military capabilities as well as their subsequent use in potentially dangerous missions, for instance in the Balkans or in Africa. Military capabilities and military operations are one element by which the EU seeks to tackle global threats and respond to emergencies. Under these circumstances, justifying Germany’s present engagement in ESDP, let alone convincing people of the need for an even stronger financial and personal German input, will turn out to be quite a challenge.
3. Decision-making and Party Politics

The existing institutional structure presents no major impediment to Germany’s ability to develop its ESDP policy or implement decisions agreed upon on the European scale. If certain processes drag on or reach an impasse, it is therefore likely that this is due to political quarrels and not the result of organizational malfunction. The time consumed during interministerial coordination of the draft white paper might serve as a case in point. Even though there are also differences in substance between the ministries involved that require further coordination, the entire process could be speeded up considerably if only there were sufficient political will to do so. The white paper process might also indicate a more general challenge the present grand coalition faces. With two by and large equally powerful coalition partners, a clear-cut hierarchy among the ministries held by either side is less likely to emerge than under a big/small party constellation. At the same time, the checks and balances resulting from different party affiliations must not be discounted either.

The dispersion of competencies – or, with a more positive spin, the “institutional pluralism”26 that characterizes Germany’s European policy-making in general – also holds true when it comes to Germany’s European security and defense policy. At the Federal Ministry of Defense, the Armed Forces Staff Division Fü S III, which works under the Bundeswehr Chief of Staff, is responsible for military policy and arms control.27 Either by order, following its own initiative or as a response to European requests, the main branch inside the division with respect to the drafting of Germany’s ESDP positions is Fü S III 4. It covers EU and WEU questions, among others, and the Commissioner for European Affairs of the Ministry of Defense is also located there. Another key role is played by the Policy Planning Staff. The staff provides direct support to the Defense Minister and reviews positions drafted by other actors such as Fü S III, making the staff one of the centers for policy formulation and policy coordination.

The other major institutions are the Federal Foreign Office and the Chancellery. In both cases, a separation of ESDP and other – more traditional – European issues can be discerned. At the Federal Foreign Office, Division 202, a branch of the Political Directorate-General 2, deals with ESDP.28 Also part of this Directorate-General is the European Correspondent responsible for the coordination of CFSP (including ESDP) and of the Political and Security Committee (PSC). On the other hand, the more traditional European issues (e.g., constitutional treaty, Lisbon agenda, internal market, enlargement) are covered by the European Directorate-General. Furthermore, ESDP issues are dealt with inside the Policy Planning Staff. Finally, the Political Director must be mentioned, not least because of his coordinating role concerning the Foreign Ministry’s cooperation with the Defense Ministry and the Chancellery. At the Chancellery, Directorate-General 2 is in charge of foreign, security and development policy.29 Among its divisions, there are units dealing with ESDP and CFSP, the military dimension of security policy and the Federal Security Council. In turn, basic issues of European integration, Germany’s relations with other EU members and the coordination of European policy are handled by the European Directorate-General 5.
Taking this dispersion of competencies into account, the key for German ESDP policy-making lies in vertical and horizontal coordination within and between ministries. There are various institutions in place to achieve this end. Inside the Ministry of Defense, for instance, regular top-level meetings bring together the Minister of Defense, the Chief of Staff of the Bundeswehr, the secretaries of state and the head of the policy planning staff. On the working level, there are various ad-hoc or informal fora (jour fixe, etc.) for coordination. These include meetings of the heads of divisions or between the responsible secretary of state and the heads of the policy planning staff and Fü S III. Interministerial coordination in turn also exists on both the working and the top level. There are, among others, the EU Coordination Group, as well as meetings of the heads of EU affairs in the federal ministries, of the State Secretaries Committee for European Affairs, and of the European affairs commissioners of the federal ministries. The final authority, of course, rests in the Cabinet and ultimately in the hands of the Chancellor.

And yet, even though the structures are largely functional, there is room for further improvement. In order to enhance strategic thinking on ESDP in general, one institution to bear in mind is the Federal Security Council, whose current focus rests on arms exports. Since the council is supposed to coordinate Germany’s security and defense policies and has all the relevant players as members, including the Chancellor and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defense, it might as well also be the place for discussing strategic issues with regard to ESDP. One might also tap the potential of the planning staffs of the Defense and Foreign Affairs Ministry more fully. Given their strong involvement in the day-to-day business, this would of course require deliberate decisions to expand the capacity of the staffs to engage in strategic thinking.

Establishing a minister of state for European affairs in the Chancellery is another option. Such a position, supported by appropriate staff, should bundle the activities of the various ministries and thereby enhance coordination. A minister of state could also give more visibility to European affairs in general. Furthermore, one could think of introducing cabinet and official-level committees. With all the relevant actors included in the drafting and development phase of ESDP policies, such committees could contribute to both policy coordination and the adjudication of policy differences. If this set-up functions, only the most intractable issues would be left to reach the Cabinet level.

In order to improve interministerial responsiveness, one might also think of greater cross-posting between the Defense Ministry, the Foreign Office and the Chancellery. Participants would become more aware of the mindsets, interests and practical constraints of other houses. Moreover, they would broaden their overall security and defense expertise, leading to a general strengthening of the country’s security and defense community. A similar effect would be generated by a more frequent and effective inclusion of outside experts from universities and think tanks in the administration as well as by secondments of government officials to nongovernmental organizations.
Finally, the roles of political parties and the parliament need to be mentioned. The parliamentary debate and decision in September 2006 concerning the participation of the Bundeswehr in the UNIFIL mission in Lebanon indicate that at least for the time being, a considerable majority favors an active German role. The Christian Democratic Party and the Social Democratic Party are largely in agreement on this. The Green Party has also adopted a pragmatic approach, tending to support the mission as well. Opposing positions were taken by the Liberal Party and the Left Party. Particularly with respect to the Liberal Party, though, that position seems to have been motivated primarily by tactics and short-term political gains and not by a strategic vision for the overall evolution of Germany’s foreign policy. In short, there is a vast majority among the political parties and hence in the German Parliament, the Bundestag, that is in favor of an active German role in global security affairs.

Two features are and will be essential in context of the debate about German participations in multilateral missions. First, parliamentarian consent has to be guaranteed. In addition to their control and oversight, a mandate by the elected representatives of the German people provides psychological support for the military personnel to be deployed. In addition, public deliberations of the Bundestag have the potential to spark discussions on security affairs in Germany. Yet, contrary to the deployment of the German military, one must keep in mind that the German Parliament does not mandate the participation of German civilian experts in international missions where they could face challenging and dangerous situations. It remains to be seen whether this “blind spot” of parliamentary oversight will be filled anytime soon.

Second, missions have to be part of a multilateral endeavor. Whether the parliament’s political power will be weakened due to multilateral commitment structures like NATO’s Response Force (NRF) or the EU’s battlegroups is an open question, though. If the Bundestag were to block Germany’s fulfillment of its NATO or EU obligations even though the government had de facto given the green light months or even years ahead by agreeing to fill an NRF or battlegroup spot during a certain period of time (necessarily unaware of the specific situation when action will be required), the consequences of a German “no” would reach a new quality. It might impair Germany’s standing in the respective organization as well as the organizations themselves. In other words, the government’s consent to contribute to NRF and battlegroups might already have limited the Bundestag’s room for maneuver.

4. The Federal Armed Forces in Times of Change

The Federal Armed Forces of Germany, the Bundeswehr, has been suffering from the political administration’s lack of a strategic concept and vision of what the German forces should generally be tasked with. The same deficit affected the German defense industry. In the twelve years after the last White Paper on Defense, the Federal Armed Forces went through a “learning by doing” as well as a “lessons learned” process. Its contribution to various international missions provided the opportunity to analyze and address deficits in equipment and training. In addition, conceptual thinking has been pursued with respect to both security and organizational / trans-
formational challenges. The work of the Weizsäcker Commission (1999/2000)34 and the Defense Policy Guidelines (2003) are two of the most prominent examples. Today the German military is still in a transformation process, but the changes of the last decade have led to steady reorientation, adaptation and hence progress.

At the beginning of the 21st century, Germany contributes to international conflict management operations with both civil and military means, making it one of the biggest force-provider nations. Participating in almost a dozen international missions, some 10,000 German soldiers are currently supporting and securing peacekeeping operations in the Balkans, nation-building efforts in Afghanistan and the first free presidential elections in more than four decades in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Moreover, German naval forces are part of the United Nation’s UNIFIL mission, supporting the Lebanese navy in surveillance of the Lebanese coast in order to prevent illegal arms trafficking. In all, the Bundeswehr has become an important and reliable partner for international commitments of NATO, the EU and the United Nations.

Public awareness of those fundamental changes seems very little, though. A representative survey has shown that only one-third of the public reads or hears information concerning the Bundeswehr once a month.35 Personal contact via relatives or friends is even lower and is decreasing even further. One reason for this lies in the reduction of the overall manpower of the Federal Armed Forces to 250,000 military personnel, leading to a smaller number of conscript forces serving in the Bundeswehr. The closure of over 100 garrisons as part of the new deployment concept will help to concentrate the forces. At the same time, this also means that contact between civilians and military personnel in some regions will be lost.

This development, though useful and necessary for transforming the Bundeswehr into a more effective and capable force for future commitments to international crisis management operations, is contrary to the original idea of conscript forces in Germany. The experiences of World War II and the fear of another Reichswehr-like “state within the state” development after World War I led in the 1950s to the idea of creating the “citizen in uniform” (Staatsbürger in Uniform). Together with the concept of “civic education” (Innere Führung), it was meant to support identification of the public with its armed forces and embed the military in the society. With the growing numbers of people who served in the Bundeswehr and the general acceptance of the armed forces as part of territorial defense against the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact forces, the public agreed to this partnership of convenience. Most important, all administrations in the Federal Republic of Germany supported the existence and the mission of the Bundeswehr as a whole.

With the end of the Cold War and the reunification of Germany in 1990, this partnership of convenience lost its main linking point. The common enemy was gone; the public demanded a “peace dividend,” especially after it became obvious that reunification would cost much more than expected; and the military was not sure which enemy they should train their troops to oppose. The emergence of ethnic conflicts in the Balkans and the vast number of peacekeeping and conflict resolution operations all over the globe gave political and military leaders an idea...
of the upcoming threats and challenges for security in and for Europe. The last (1994) White Paper on Defense in Germany mentioned some of the changes needed to deal with the new situation. However, it did not provide a strategic answer for the next administrations, for the military, or for the public. Nevertheless, despite the lack of a strategic vision, the Ministry of Defense and the Bundeswehr had to adjust to the new challenges in order to show their commitment to the establishment of a comprehensive European foreign, security and defense policy and the strengthening of the European Defense Identity within NATO.

4.1 The Relationship between the Administration and the Bundeswehr

The decline in the defense budget after 1990 affected the development and acquisition of new equipment and defense goods urgently requested by the Bundeswehr. In the mid-1980s, the Bundeswehr had started a major modernization process, but the projects under development were mostly connected to the Cold War-era type of engagement. Without the political definition of Germany’s strategic security interests, the modernization process after 1990 came to a standstill and remained in a status of uncertainty for quite some time. The same problem affected the national defense industry. During the 1990s, the number of people working in the German defense industry declined from 280,000 to 80,000.36 Smaller and medium-sized companies disappeared from the market or were forced to consolidate with competitors in order to survive. All of this took place in an environment with little strategic guidance by the administration. Decisions were made case by case. For example, most of the recent procurement decisions in the area of armored transportation vehicles are strongly related to experiences of the forces abroad in the operation areas.

One critical and enduring aspect of the relationship between the political administration and the Federal Armed Forces since the mid-1990s is the military’s concern about being pushed into too many operations in too distant regions. Although the Bundeswehr and the Ministry of Defense know full well that Germany must demonstrate its willingness and ability to play a major role in the European security and defense integration process, the missions and operations abroad strain the soldiers remaining at home as well as those deployed. Equipment urgently needed for training and maneuvers is being redirected to the operation areas. Because the costs for the force contribution are covered by the overall defense budget, international operations also affect funding for modernization efforts and investment programs. And because the force planning and force enabling process in the European Union still lacks a streamlined and effective decision-making process, linked to a strategic approach to how the EU wants to conduct international military operations, most of the officers in the ministry seem to lean more toward NATO and its existing and well-established structures and procedures than toward ESDP.

Then Minister of Defense Peter Struck (Social Democratic Party) was one of the driving forces for the transformation process. Supporting him was Bundeswehr Chief of Staff Wolfgang Schneiderhahn, the link between the ministry and the armed forces and a strong advocate for the far-reaching reorientation process. New deployment planning, new force structuring, new equipment and procurement planning and the publication of the Defense Policy Guidelines
(2003) all aim at preparing the Bundeswehr for future tasks. What is still missing is a new White Paper on Defense that would both underscore and outline the overarching strategic approach defined by the administration. Moreover, transformation also affects the civilian-controlled administration of the Bundeswehr. Under the heading “internal optimization,” the objective is to adapt and streamline the resource-intensive administrative structures in order to make them demand-oriented, customer-oriented and more efficient.

4.2 German Defense Industry
As already mentioned above, the German defense industry has decreased in size since 1990. The consolidation process following the breakdown of several companies followed the American example of building national champions that could compete on the international market for defense goods.37 But unlike the U.S. administration, the German government neither supported this process nor offered a strategic guideline of what was expected from the defense industry in the future. Especially in the field of small and medium-sized companies, this led to the loss of thousands of jobs, while at the same time the European Aeronautic Defense and Space Company (EADS) was established as a model for future defense industry consolidation in Europe.

Today one can see that the EADS development was a unique process, not comparable to the circumstances in the naval or land warfare sectors of the defense industry. On the other hand, it still has not become a European company but rather is a four-nation consortium (since summer 2006 also with some Russian influence38) under Dutch law, strongly affected by political power games of the two major players France and Germany. After the reform of the external trade law in Germany, the government has the right to block an attempt by a foreign investor to take over more than 25 percent of a German defense company. This protectionist attitude is not limited to Germany. All member states of the European Union that have relevant defense industrial resources have undertaken similar steps in order to secure their industry. Everybody is preparing for the European consolidation race by creating big and strong national champions.

For Germany, three questions will be critical for the future. First, can the country secure its influence in the EADS leadership? Second, will the German naval consortium Thyssen-Krupp Marinesystems be robust enough to compete against its French rival, which gained new strength after the naval operations department of the defense electronics company Thales merged with the state-owned shipyard Direction des Chantiers Navals (DCN)? Third, can the unconsolidated national land-warfare sector in Germany, with the main players Rheinmetalle Landsysteme (RLS), Krauss-Maffei Wegmann (KMW) and Diehl, survive a possible takeover attempt by foreign investors? Even more important will be the question whether the German administration can finally agree, in the near future, on something like an armaments or procurement strategy in which they define their major security interests concerning the German defense industry, specify the centers of excellence they want to secure from foreign takeover attempts, and identify the technology and capacities they expect the industry to provide in both the short and the long term.
Conclusion

Germans’ major security concerns relate to economic and social issues, not to external challenges and threats. In addition, Germans remain very skeptical about the adequacy of military answers to global challenges and threats. But all of this does not imply that today’s threats are any less dangerous than those of the past. Nor does it mean that Germans cannot be persuaded of the importance of security issues and the sometimes unavoidable necessity of using military means in global affairs to achieve stability and thus the preconditions for peace. For instance, the explosion of a nuclear device or a “dirty bomb” in a German city or the disruption of transport routes for energy resources would inflict heavy costs on Germany’s economy – with major repercussions for the economic and social well-being of its people.

Therefore, security issues today are no less salient than they were during the past decades. They are just different. This makes it imperative for political decision-makers to explain to their populace the nature of the challenges, the consequences for their individual well-being of leaving those challenges unaddressed, and the means and instruments required for dealing with the challenges and averting security threats. Of course, because the perception of one’s individual economic and social well-being seems to be the key determinant for opposing or favoring a more active German foreign policy that shoulders the country’s global responsibilities, fostering economic growth is another key task if one wants to generate broad public support. Hence, with respect to the evolution of Germany’s and Europe’s security and defense policy, at least part of the truth lies in “the economy, stupid”.

Endnotes

2 Chancellor Schröder called it “selbstverständliche Beistandspflicht eines Bündnispartners.” See the interview with Gerhard Schröder and Edmund Stoiber in Süddeutsche Zeitung, August 14/15, 2002.
4 Ibid.
5 See the interview with German Foreign Minister Fischer in Süddeutsche Zeitung, August 7, 2002.
12 Ibid., pp. 3–5. This is in line with the findings of Eurobarometer 63. When asked about the two most important problems Germany faces today, people answered unemployment (82 percent) and the economic situation (42 percent). In contrast, terrorism scored 3 percent and defense / foreign affairs 1 percent. European Commission (2005): Eurobarometer 63. September 2005. Brussels, p. 32.


15 This mixture of hard and soft security issues is mirrored in the responses of Germans with respect to the main objectives a world power should pursue. Here, the most important objective is the fight against international terrorism (45 percent), followed by poverty reduction (44 percent), environmental conservation (38 percent), democracy and human rights (35 percent), peace building / conflict management (35 percent) and the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction (30 percent). Bertelsmann Stiftung and TNS Emnid (2006): World Powers in the 21st Century. The Results of a Representative Survey in Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. June 2006. Berlin, pp. 21–22.


20 Ibid., points 18–27.


22 Equally interesting is the discrepancy between the views of the Germans on the one hand and the (anxious) French and the (self-confident) British on the other. As mentioned, 75 percent of the Germans consider the EU as a great power today, but only 41 percent see Germany in such a position. In France, 49 percent see the EU and 33 percent see their country as a great power today. In the UK, the numbers are 53 percent for the EU and 68 percent for the UK. Looking ahead to 2020, the numbers for France are 49 percent EU and 19 percent France, and for the UK they are 53 percent EU and 54 percent UK. Bertelsmann Stiftung and TNS Emnid (2006): World Powers in the 21st Century. The Results of a Representative Survey in Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. June 2006. Berlin, pp. 13–16.


24 Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der Bundeswehr (2005): Bevölkerungsumfrage 2005. Repräsentative Befragung zum sicherheits- und verteidigungspolitischen Meinungsbild in Deutschland. Ergebnisbericht. August 2005. Strausberg, p. 31. The skepticism of Germans toward a military engagement of the Bundeswehr became even more obvious during the discussion of the pros and cons of an EU military mission in Congo. A poll carried through mid-March 2006 showed that 63 percent of the respondents were against German participation in an EU military mission in Congo, while 33 percent were in favor. The poll was published in the April 2006 issue of Internationale Politik, p. 5.


27 See http://www.bmvg.de/portal/PA_1_0_LT/PortalFiles/C1256EF40036805B/W26N5ZD6SINFODE/Organisationsplan+B MVg.pdf?yw_repository=youtweb.


29 See http://www.bundesregierung.de/Bundeskanzleramt-,13009/Organigramm.htm. The department is headed by Christoph Heusgen, the former Head of the Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit in the General Secretariat/ Policy Unit of the Council of the European Union.


38 VTB, a state-owned foreign trade bank from Russia, has recently acquired a 5 percent stake in EADS.
United Kingdom and ESDP

Richard Whitman

The United Kingdom can take some credit for reinvigorating the EU’s defense aspirations with its rethink on European defense in 1998, encapsulated in the Anglo-French Declaration at St. Malo. However, the UK government’s subsequent stance during the 2003 Iraq war has colored views as to the extent of British enthusiasm for collegiality through a European security and defense policy pursued through the EU. The Iraq war illustrates characteristics of British foreign, security and defense policy that aim to retain a freedom of policy maneuver while ensuring that the UK does not see itself become detached from the global strategy or military endeavors of the United States.

Consequently, the question arises as to how the UK reconciles its national foreign and security policy objectives with a developing European Security and Defense Policy? The policy pursued by the New Labor government has been to ensure that the ESDP does not develop in a direction that present the British government with difficult and unpalatable choices. The UK’s key interests remain in ensuring that the ESDP neither conflicts with the preservation of NATO as the key vehicle for the UK’s military security and that the development of the ESDP is not a source of transatlantic tension.

The current British government is interested in the “added value” of the ESDP to its existing military security arrangements and defense reforms. Independently of the ESDP, the UK has embarked on a restructuring of its defense policy, armed forces and defense procurement. These reforms dovetail with, rather than being driven by, the ESDP. The current UK government feels that the key measure of success for the ESDP comes through other member states’ conducting reforms similar to those pursued by the UK to enhance capabilities. Successfully pursued action by other member states would enhance British enthusiasm for the ESDP as a political project.

1. Government and Defense Policy Objectives

There are a number of key factors in the UK’s current stance on the ESDP. These factors are significant for comprehending the degree and form of commitment that the British government gives to the ESDP and the depth of understanding of (and support for) a developing European Union defense capability.

Since coming to power in 1997, the New Labor government has seen military intervention and the development of an expeditionary warfare capability as two inextricably linked elements of its conception of the UK’s international role. Prime Minister Tony Blair has been a key actor in driving the British government to adopt a policy of sustained military intervention in third countries. The operational tempo for British Armed Forces has thus been one of responding to the need for expeditionary warfare.
Alongside the New Labor conception of the UK’s international military role has been the political commitment of the government to the development of the ESDP since the St. Malo Anglo-French summit of 1998. The British government has been an animating force behind the development of the ESDP and, as illustrative, used the UK’s 2005 Presidency of the EU to push enhancements of the ESDP. The core of its EU defense diplomacy has been to ensure that the ESDP develops in a direction that dovetails with the domestic defense reform agenda pursued by UK governments since the early 1990s.

Since 1990, there have been three major reviews of the UK’s armed forces: Options for Change, Front Line First and the Strategic Defense Review. The 1990 Options for Change led to major manpower cuts and a major scaling down of UK military deployments in Germany. The 1994 Front Line First led to further personnel cuts as defense expenditure was further reduced. The Strategic Defense Review (SDR) in 1998 was the product of the New Labor government and the outcome of a foreign policy–led review of the UK’s national interests and its likely overseas commitments to the year 2015. This document made clear that “there is no direct military threat to the United Kingdom.”

The military defense of the UK is no longer the rationale for British defense policy. Rather the purpose of the armed forces was expeditionary tasks, with the intention that all three armed services should be more effectively coordinated to ensure effectiveness and efficiencies. In force terms, this led to the creation of Joint Rapid Reaction Forces (JRRFs) that were intended to create improved expeditionary capability. These new arrangements for the role of UK armed forces have also had a guiding impact on defense procurement, with the need for new aircraft carriers, amphibious vessels, heavy airlift capability and lighter, more mobile infantry. In July 2002, a new chapter to the SDR was published to reflect the post-9/11 environment. This new chapter added three key aims for addressing terrorism and asymmetric warfare:

- prevention / stabilization – using defense diplomacy to create stability;
- deterrence / coercion – maintaining a wide and flexible range of military and nonmilitary options to deter terrorists;
- military force – to be used to “detect and destroy” terrorists.

This was “effects-based” warfare, and the new chapter set out the new forces and capabilities required and two areas where future efforts should be concentrated: Network Enabled Capability (for real-time intelligence gathering, decision-making and use of force) and Homeland Defense.

The most recent comprehensive statement of how the British government sees the UK’s defense is the Defense White Paper Delivering Security in a Changing World published in December 2003.¹ This built upon the 1998 Strategic Defense Review and the 2002 SDR New Chapter. The 2003 Defense White Paper (and an additional chapter entitled Future Capabilities, published in July 2004)² encapsulates how British defense priorities have evolved over the last decade and has three visions for British Armed Forces:
The White Paper is also a good starting point for assessing the collective mindset of the Ministry of Defense and government defense and security professionals in the UK, because it sets out the conception of the future security environment and the UK’s strategic priorities. The document identifies international terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and failing states as the main threats to UK security. The White Paper is of crucial importance for understanding how the UK government intends to develop its armed forces in the future, because it provides a baseline from which the structure and size of the British Armed Forces are to be developed.

The normal role expected for the armed forces overseas, and the planning assumption, is multiple, concurrent, small- to medium-scale peace enforcement or peacekeeping operations – while retaining the ability for large-scale interventions. For planning purposes, this means that the UK, as a norm, should be able to conduct three simultaneous and enduring operations of small to medium scale. And, given sufficient lead-time, the UK should be capable of undertaking a demanding large-scale intervention operation while maintaining a commitment to a small-scale peace support operation.

A key assumption is that the UK participation in international crises will be as part of a coalition and that the most demanding operations involving intervention are unlikely to happen without the United States. But it is also recognized that the UK must maintain the ability to lead, or act as a framework nation for, an EU-led or similar ad-hoc coalition operation when the United States is not involved.

These requirements of the British Armed Forces generate particular force requirements and, in turn, have consequences for the structure of their air, land and sea components. A key change is the wholesale restructuring of the British infantry, a reduction in these forces and the merger and elimination of regiments. Aside from the decision to use military force in Iraq, this has been the most politically charged aspect of recent debate on defense in the UK.

Consequently, the dominant view in the governmental defense community in the UK is that ESDP is an adjunct to the wider reforms of UK defense policy and restructuring of the British Armed Forces. The UK defense sector has had a greater preoccupation with defining and implementing reform agenda in a context facing personnel and defense expenditure cuts. In particular, these include tri-service streaming, a new metric in effects-based warfare, and the defense procurement changes guided by this role envisioned for the UK’s armed forces: new aircraft carriers, amphibious vessels, heavy airlift, lighter and more mobile infantry. The Iraq war has been a greater cause of tensions and worries about overstretch than the ESDP.

A key concern of UK defense experts and practitioners is the overstretch of UK forces, with around 17 percent of all British forces currently deployed overseas. There is currently the heavy
overseas commitment in Iraq and a recently increased deployment in Afghanistan, alongside continuing (but diminishing) commitments in Northern Ireland. However, the largest UK overseas deployment is still in Germany. The most recent large-scale deployment came with the UK assumption of command of NATO forces in Afghanistan.

The UK has made military force commitments to the ESDP in two respects: first, through its commitments to ESDP operations to date (and in particular through the ongoing commitments to EUFOR) and second, through battlegroup commitments. The UK was on standby with a national battlegroup during the first half of 2005 and will be so again in 2008. The UK and Dutch governments have also offered a joint UK-Dutch amphibious battlegroup in the full operational capacity period in 2010.

The UK was instrumental in the development of the battlegroup concept, and this provides insight as to where British enthusiasm for the ESDP can be engaged. The development of battlegroups was a capabilities-driven undertaking in which EU member states created a facility that requires actual (rather than rhetorical) commitments for meaningful-sized forces (1500 troops plus support) available in a timely fashion (within 15 days of a crisis) and for a sustained undertaking.

Domestically, the UK government has been keen to reassure the public that the decision of the UK to involve itself in such arrangements does not compromise British freedom for maneuver. As Geoff Hoon (then Secretary of Defense) made clear: “Policy decisions on the EU Battlegroups initiative will be taken by unanimity of all the member states. Decisions to deploy national forces are for national governments to take. Any decision to commit the United Kingdom forces to an EU Battlegroup operational deployment would be taken by the Government on a case-by-case basis.”

There is a consensual view across government on the UK’s position on the ESDP, which has not been the cause of bureaucratic politics. Intra-departmental tensions are minimal, with wide agreement between the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defense (MOD) on the UK’s position with respect to the ESDP. The predominant view is that the ESDP should be seen as complementary and not competing with NATO. The UK’s aspirations for the ESDP are clear: “Everything we can do to make the EU more usable actually provides a capacity that is available also to NATO.” And there is a consensus that the relationship between NATO and the ESDP should remain one in which “… in the areas of security and defense the European Union is, at the very best, second fiddle to NATO.”

2. Party Politics and Parliament

Outside Whitehall, the ESDP has a low level of salience in British political life. Other defense issues such as decisions to intervene militarily in third countries, the restructuring of the British Armed Forces (particularly the merger and closure of regiments) and the future of Britain’s
nuclear deterrent attract greater interest and attention. The low level of salience of the ESDP in UK political life can be indicated through its presence as a concern in public opinion, as an issue in the most recent general elections and in parliamentary politics.

The ESDP has not been an issue that has attracted considerable interest and/or concern. More pressing issues of public concern on defense have been the Iraq war in 2003 and continuing military involvement in Iraq. The latter have highlighted differences between public and elite opinion within the UK and with public opinion more critical on Atlantic relations. There is no active public hostility to the ESDP, primarily due to ignorance of European defense developments. There has been the absence of any exercise to actively inform the public or lead public opinion. ESDP is also a relatively insignificant parliamentary political issue measured in terms of the parliamentary time devoted to the issue. Defense reform is a much greater key issue of division across the three main political parties. The primary disagreements are on the ways to reform military. The Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats oppose Labor’s plans to reduce the size of the UK’s armed forces.

The ESDP does, however, act as key dividing issue between New Labor and the Conservative Party. The Conservatives’ position on the ESDP has been consistently hostile, objecting to the future aspirations of ESDP and expressing the fear of competition and dilution from the ESDP diminishing NATO’s capabilities. The view of the Conservative Party is that the “EU should avoid competing with NATO’s military role.” The Conservatives want NATO to be not just the basis of Europe’s collective defense but also the key crisis-management actor. “The EU does not have any ‘unique role’ to play in this field – it duplicates NATO and brings no added military value.” Rather, they envision a more limited role for the EU. “This is not to say that there is no role for the EU in crisis management. It can offer trade incentives, humanitarian aid and development programmes as part of its solution. These are the areas where the EU should concentrate its effort, leaving military operations exclusively to NATO…In cooperation with NATO the EU could make a useful contribution, but in competition with NATO it is a dangerous diversion.”

A particular concern for the Conservatives is the impact on the “special relationship” with the United States, with St. Malo viewed as a turning point: “In 1998 at the French port of St. Malo, Tony Blair reversed Britain’s earlier Atlanticist defense strategy. He did so not, of course, because he was anti-American. He did it simply because he wanted to prove his European credentials in a way that he thought would have only a small political cost. In cooperation with France, Europe’s only other nuclear power, he pledged the integration of Britain’s defense effort with that of Europe. The implications of that decision have only gradually become apparent. At each stage, assurances have been given to the United States, and these assurances have even, it seems, been taken at face value by some in positions of authority within the Administration. Unfortunately, while politicians’ words fade with the setting sun – and few fade faster than Mr. Blair’s – the goals of European institutions do not. One of these goals is to use defense procurement as a means to lock Britain irrevocably into a European megastate with its own government, laws, and armed forces.”
There is consistent Conservative hostility to the development of the collective defense procurement developments and, in particular to the European Defense Agency (EDA). “Defense procurement is a powerful instrument for integration, because individual decisions often receive little public attention... For those who would seek to see a European army replace NATO, defense procurement offers the perfect means of undermining the Special Relationship by stealth.”11 The Conservative’s shadow defense secretary, Liam Fox, has expressed concern that cooperation among member states on defense technology and research will undermine NATO as well as UK relations with the United States. “It will not just be technology. They will be looking for common European procurement, and once we get the Commission involved in that, then we are well on our way to having an integrated European defense policy.”12 In particular, the EDA is a concern for the Conservative Party as the thin end of a wedge: “[I]t is baffling why it [the government – R.W.] would want to sign up to an EU arrangement that puts two dozen other countries on the board of management. This will do nothing to redress Europe's military failings and will certainly not improve the ability of Europeans to operate alongside our most powerful and reliable ally, the Americans.”13

In summary, the Conservative Party has consistently viewed NATO as the vehicle for European defense. The Tory party also views the EU’s defense aspirations as duplicating NATO. The Conservative Party is also opposed to the Constitutional Treaty and, consequently, the provisions on the ESDP. This includes hostility to the EDA. The absence of a Parliamentary consensus on the ESDP presents a significant obstacle to the UK pursuing a consistent policy on European defense irrespective of the political party in power.

Despite this party political divide, the ESDP did not feature as a significant issue in the most recent British general election in 2005. Each of the three main parties did, however, set out their respective positions on the ESDP in their 2005 general election manifestos. The New Labor manifesto provides a clear indication as to the government’s current line: “We will continue to lead European defense cooperation. We will build stronger EU defense capabilities, in harmony with NATO – the cornerstone of our defense policy – without compromising our national ability to act independently. We will ensure the new EU battlegroups are equipped and organized to act quickly to save lives in humanitarian crises.”14

The Conservative Party manifesto lambasted the government for foreign policy mistakes: “…under this Government, Britain’s ability to defend its interests and secure valuable freedoms has been undermined. Our Armed Forces, the vital muscle which allows us to punch above our weight, have been allowed to weaken. And our relations with the European Union have been mismanaged in a way which threatens not just British interests, but the capacity of the continent to adapt flexibly to the future.”15 The Conservative Party position on the ESDP was made clear: “A Conservative Government will support European cooperation on defense, but we strongly believe that such cooperation should take place within the framework of NATO.”

The new Conservative Party leader, David Cameron, appointed after the general election, has held out the prospect of a rethink of policy of foreign and security policy through the creation
of a Policy Group on National and International Security, announced on January 12, 2006. The intention is for the group to “examine all aspects of the UK’s national security, from both a domestic and an international perspective.”16 The Group will be chaired by Dame Pauline Neville-Jones, a former chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee and a onetime political director of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Deputy chairman is Lord King of Bridgwater, a former Conservative defense secretary and ex-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, who also served as chairman of the parliamentary Intelligence and Security Committee between 1994 and 2001.

The intention is for the group to examine issues including terrorism, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, threats from failed and failing states, the proliferation of unconventional weapons, the nature of our open society, and the need to build community cohesion in an increasingly diverse culture. The group will also investigate the structure of policing in the UK and international policing challenges, including international terrorism. The effectiveness of border control, the security services, and administrative structures in Whitehall to deal with the threat of terrorist attack will also be analyzed.

The group “will examine the UK’s geopolitical positioning vis-à-vis the EU, NATO, relations with the United States and with Commonwealth Countries, as well as with less-developed countries and the emerging giants, and will also examine UK defense policy in the light of the current and emerging security challenges which the country faces.”17 When, or indeed whether, a Conservative Party shifts its orientation away from hostility to European integration will be a key determinant of whether the UK becomes an overwhelmingly committed and consistently reliable partner in the ESDP no matter which political party is in power in the UK.

Although the ESDP is an issue that divides the UK’s two main political parties, the more extensive Parliamentary expertise on European defense is concentrated in the House of Lords rather than the House of Commons. Members of the House of Commons who declare an interest in Europe and in defense are equal in numbers, with 83 of the 646 members of Parliament registering these as particular areas of interest.18 The members of the House of Commons who take the keenest interest in defense are those with military bases located in their constituency, with regiments based there (particularly regiments slated for merger), and with defense industries as a major employer. There are also a number of former foreign and defense ministers sitting in Parliament who take a continuing informed interest in defense issues. There is, however, minimal organized cross-party lobbying and interest in the ESDP in Parliament. The normal method for organizing interests in Parliament is the creation of an “all party group,” which is not in existence for the ESDP (though there is one group on the future of Europe).

The most detailed Parliamentary attention and scrutiny of the ESDP comes through the committees of both Houses of Parliament. In the House of Commons, the relevant committees are the Defense Committee, the Foreign Affairs Committee and the European Scrutiny Committee. Each of these select committees has a majority of Labor members, and none has been a source of hostile opinion on the ESDP in Parliament.
The House of Lords has kept a close eye on ESDP developments. Its European Union Select Committee has considerable European expertise, and subcommittee C (Foreign Affairs, Defense and Development Policy) has taken a particular interest in the ESDP. A particular concern of the Lords has been accountability and parliamentary scrutiny of the ESDP. The House of Lords has called for more accountability of ESDP at both the national and the European level (through the WEU Assembly, the NATO Assembly and the European Parliament). The government does not see a need for an enhanced role of the supranational EP, but possibly through a second chamber. The EU Committee of the House of Lords (2005–2006) has been generally satisfied with the increased commitment to the scrutiny process shown by the FCO over the previous two years, with criticism of the MoD approach. Particular concerns have been raised about the ability of Parliament to provide effective scrutiny of the EDA.

The House of Lords provides a key resource in the oversight of the ESDP and a source of creative and original thinking on the European defense developments. The Lords European Union Select Committee demonstrates the added value that engagement of informed parliamentarians can have on the ESDP if time is taken to examine the issue area in depth. The generally positive assessments of the ESDP reached by the Lords illustrates that an informed understanding of European defense does not automatically generate hostility among UK parliamentarians.

3. The Political Economy of British Defense Policy

The political economy aspects of defense are an important dimension for comprehending the UK’s perspective on the ESDP. The UK is the second largest market for defense products in the world, with an annual military equipment budget of €22 billion, in addition to being the second largest exporter of military equipment. The UK is also home to BAE Systems (the fourth largest international defense company, the largest European defense company and a top-ten U.S. defense contractor) and Rolls Royce and a major location for Thales. This makes the UK a global player in the international political economy of defense.

The UK defense industry is an important manufacturing sector left in the UK. BAE Systems is particularly crucial to UK defense procurement; it provides 95 percent of the UK’s armored fighting vehicles and all of its fast jets. The British government has embraced the company as its national champion in weapons building. The government retains a keen interest in the defense industry sector as a customer, as a source of manufacturing employment and export earnings for the UK, and as venue for significant inward investment (for example the recent purchase of RACAL by Thales). However, the government has not sought to intervene directly in the corporate strategy and investment decisions of key UK defense players such as BAE systems to create a European defense champion, and it remains relaxed about the possible sale of BAE’s 20 percent stake in Airbus, which would be used to fund the acquisition of U.S. companies.

The government’s strong interest in preserving a defense industrial sector is illustrated by the 2005 Defense Industrial Strategy: Defense White Paper. This document sets out the govern-
ment’s strategy for meeting its defense equipment needs. The “strategy is squarely aimed at ensuring that our Armed Forces are provided with the equipment that they require, on time, and at best value for money.”

The British government wants to ensure that it can “procure from a sustainable industrial base, which retains within the UK those industrial capabilities (including infrastructure, skills, intellectual property and capacity) that are required, from a national security perspective, to ensure our appropriate sovereignty.” A key aspect of this strategy has been to declare BAE as the MoD’s partner of choice for air, sea and land equipment. This is not intended to be in conflict with the British government’s ambition for the rationalization and restructuring of the European defense industry. It also aligns with intergovernmental agreements with other EU member states (for example, the November 1999 Joint Declaration on European Defense issued by France and the UK; the July 2000 Letter of Intent Framework Agreement between France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, and the UK; and the OCCAR (Organization for Joint Armaments Cooperation) with France, Germany, Italy and Belgium) that aim to remove barriers to cooperation, assure interoperability, and promote cooperation on R&T.23

The UK has a significant number of long-term commitments and large defense projects (£2,000 million plus) in its current defense budget and as part of future defense expenditure ambitions.24 A number of these projects are multinational endeavors such as the Eurofighter Typhoon (£11,291 million) and the A400M (£2,644 million). Other expensive projects are national undertakings and include the Future Carrier program (two new aircraft carriers); the Type 45 Destroyer, which is an anti-air-warfare vessel (£5,896 million); the Astute Class Attack Submarine program (£3,492 million); the Nimrod Mk 4 Reconnaissance and Attack Patrol Aircraft (£3,808 million); the Future Joint Combat Aircraft (fighter and attack aircraft) (£1,914 million); and BOWMAN and the Skynet satellite communications system (£2,775 million). Significant future calls on the budget include the Future Joint Combat Aircraft, the two aircraft carriers that the UK has committed to procure and a new strategic nuclear weapons delivery system to replace the Trident system.

This also gives context to the British government’s strong enthusiasm for the EDA. The UK has been eager to promote the development of the EDA and the Code of Conduct on Defense Procurement as measures to enhance efficiency in European defense procurement. The government was instrumental in ensuring that the Code of Conduct on Defense Procurement was adopted at the 21 November GAERC during its EU presidency. Just as the British government views battlegroups as requiring governments to go beyond rhetorical commitments, it sees the EDA as a key indicator of seriousness of intent on the part of other member states.

The UK government’s intention is to secure the greatest possible effect from the defense budget. The UK’s defense budget has been shrinking in recent years, but the rate of reduction has been slowing. Expenditure in fiscal year 2005–06 represented about 2.4 percent of GDP, having fallen from around 2.5 percent of GDP in FY 2001–02. In 1985, UK defense expenditure represented 5.2 percent of GDP. In its 2004 spending review, the Government promised to increase defense expenditure by 1.4 percent per annum until 2007–08 (in real terms).
For FY 2005–06, the UK government planned to spend £32,506 billion on defense, out of an estimated total UK government expenditure of £520.5 billion. Over a third of the budget goes to personnel, and almost a further third to depreciation and the cost of capital. This allocation of resources, of course, involves a certain amount of budgetary politics, with the Treasury and Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as key players.

In general, the reallocation of expenditure in recent defense budgets to facilitate a developing capacity for expeditionary warfare dovetails with the defense expenditure required for enhancing the capabilities needed under the ESDP. The UK is taking steps that will strengthen the resources it will be in a position to make available to the ESDP. Greater enthusiasm for the ESDP would be generated among the UK political and defense community if they were persuaded that other member states were engaged in similar undertakings.

4. What Does It Take to Make the UK (Even More) Committed to ESDP?

The UK’s particular difficulties with European integration are well rehearsed. Other EU member states have found ways to deal with the specificities of the British in particular policy areas by creating arrangements to accommodate British concerns (for example, Economic and Monetary Union and the Working Time Directive). The ESDP, however, is a policy area in which the UK is a central actor and has, in recent years, played a generally positive role in the development of an EU defense policy and capability.

The UK “problem” with the ESDP, however, is the lack of consensus on the benefits to be derived from European defense collaboration. Rather, the UK’s two main political parties actively contest the issue. This situation could conceivably be overcome through a campaign to widen (beyond party politicians) the constituencies who are interested in, and informed about, the ESDP and who have a stake in its success. At present the UK suffers from neither an over- nor underwhelming enthusiasm for the ESDP but rather from the small size of the informed constituency. This means that major changes in defense strategy, force structure and the UK’s defense procurement are taking place largely disconnected from (if not uninformed by) a wider discussion on European defense policy and how this might shape national policy decisions. A more active attempt to inform UK opinion leaders on the roles and ambition for the ESDP is a key necessity if there is to be a more embedded and widened debate on what the UK can contribute to the ESDP and how an EU defense policy can benefit the UK.
**Endnotes**

4 House of Commons, October 2004.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
13 Geoffrey Van Orden, op.cit.
16 Cameron announces Policy group on national and international security. January 12, 2006. See http://www.conservatives.com/til... &obj_id=127202
17 See http://www.conservatives.com/til... &obj_id=127202
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