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***EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY:***

***CREATED WITH THE UNITED STATES  
OR AGAINST THE UNITED STATES?***

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# RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN STUDIES

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### Abstract

ESDP was created in order to enable Europe to perform its global role. The great expectations following ESDP's creation were moderated as soon as it became clear – and that is still a reality – that it was going to share the same fate with its predecessors. A number of factors restrain ESDP from performing the task for which it was created and consequently make EU security issues something that has to be dealt with the United States. As a result of ESDP's dysfunctionality Intra and inter-European security is left to a large degree to the United States.

### Introduction.

“...there is no security for Europe without the Americans”

General Klaus Naumann.

This phrase by a professional army officer contains nothing else except the bitter truth that unless radical changes take place, the question of European security will always be the result of an equation which will always include the American factor. Since 1947 Europe has been constantly in search of its own way to a common defence and security policy, a process which took a variety of forms in the context of European integration. However it was the priority that was given by the community first, and the Union later, to the completion of the common market and the monetary union in combination with the fact that Europeans had to depend for their own security on the other side of the Atlantic, that made security planning an issue of a second priority to Europeans.

As a result I will rephrase the question of this paper from “*Is ESDP created with the U.S. or against the U.S?*” to “*Is ESDP created with the U.S or **without** the U.S?*” to depict that the United State's contribution will be of a continuous importance for the Europeans in issues of defence and security. The current debate consists of two different approaches, one supporting

the view that the European Union through the ESDP is able to achieve a certain level of autonomy in security and defence issues mainly within Europe and, another supporting the view that Europe will always have to rely on U.S. support and that actually we are experiencing a division of labor between the U.S and Europe<sup>1</sup>. Each of these approaches however is fragmented into the different national approaches of the European states and the different approaches of the American policy-makers in the other side of the Atlantic.

This paper, through a five pillar analysis, will argue that ESDP is created in accordance to the U.S strategic needs, thus emerging not as a choice of the Europeans but as a necessity due to important factors. These factors which will be analysed are first the CFSP-ESDP intergovernmental decision – making procedures. Second the capabilities gap between the Europeans and the U.S. Third the U.S. – European relationship as a relationship between “security providers” and “security consumers” and the U.S. role as “Europe’s pacifier”<sup>2</sup> since 1945. Fourth the division between *Atlanticists* and *Europeanists* that characterizes the major European powers and finally the fact that Europe has regional and not global interests. The above indicate that ESDP is formed in a supplementary way to the U.S security policy with its global interests.

## **Analysis**

The story, very briefly, begins in 1947 when Ernest Bevin and George Bidault proposed the Western Union which declared that “Western Europe should be independent both of the United States and of the Soviet Union”<sup>3</sup>. In 1950 it was EDC which had as objective to create an “autonomous supranational defence capacity with common institutions, common armed forces and a common budget”<sup>4</sup>. In 1960 we have the Fouchet Plan aiming to a “politically independent Europe with its own defence policy and capacity”<sup>5</sup>. In 1970 its EPC’s attempt to achieve “better mutual understanding, harmonization of views, coordination of positions and a common approach to foreign policy”<sup>6</sup>. In 1980 Western European Union comes to the foreground with the Hague declaration of October 1987 stating “the construction of an integrated Europe will remain incomplete as long as it does not include security and defence”<sup>7</sup>. Finally since 1991 Europe has the CFSP which includes ESDP.

CFSP was tested twice, first in the Yugoslav Wars in 1991-1995 and second in the Kosovo crisis and the war against Serbia in 1999. In both cases “U.S bombers and U.S. diplomacy achieved in some weeks what the Europeans were trying to achieve in some years”, as it was very nicely putted by an anonymous high ranking officer. This shows that the use of diplomatic means should have the priority but at the same time it must be backed by credible military means. The “carrot” is good but the “stick” is sometimes better.

## **CFSP – ESDP Decision-Making.**

The first pillar of my analysis deals with the decision-making procedures of the CFSP-ESDP that are the primary institutional constrain that does not allow the Union to perform a more independent role in the international environment. With regard to the decision making procedures, the Treaty of Nice, did strengthen further the role of the member states. According to the Treaty (Article 23) all the decisions relevant to military and defence policies have to be unanimous. Consequently the European Council decides only by consensus in order to protect the various national interests.

The nature of CFSP remains still completely intergovernmental. Another element that contributes further to the perpetuation of the current situation is the so called ‘Brusselizing the CSFP’.<sup>8</sup> That means that while all the relevant abilities remain in the hands of the member states, the implementation of the policy will be conducted by services in Brussels. The outcome of this is that different means apply to the decision-making stage and different means implement the obtained decisions. Thus CFSP-ESDP becomes even more complex and dysfunctional for the following reasons: a) the divergent foreign policy objectives of the member states, b) the current ineffective decision-making system and c) the retention of the sovereignty of the member states.

## **Capabilities Gap.**

The second pillar of my analysis is the capabilities gap between the Europeans and the U.S. Europe today is in the same position like the U.S. found themselves in the beginning of the twentieth century. The then President Roosevelt foresaw the gap between America’s growing strategic vision and its lagging military means. Europeans today face the same problem, they have a growing strategic vision but lagging military means.<sup>9</sup> Consequently there is a growing capabilities gap between Europe on the one hand and the U.S on the other. According to Yost the European – U.S. capabilities gap is the aggregate of many gaps especially in technology and in investment and procurement. The U.S are superior in strategic mobility assets like aerial refueling and air transport, nuclear submarines, various types of ships (destroyers, cruisers, transport-suppliers and landing ships etc.), long range and precision strike munitions and electronic warfare.<sup>10</sup> The U.S are the only country that possesses the ability to deploy a fully equipped army division at any place in the world within 24 hours and sustain it for as long as it take. Also the U.S.<sup>11</sup> possesses what is called C4ISR (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance) a crucial capability for the planning and execution of operations.<sup>12</sup> That is the



consequence of the fact that U.S. has a defence budget which easily overcomes the defence budgets of the 25 European countries together.

On the other hand Europeans as mentioned by the former Secretary of Defence William Cohen “*spend 60 percent of what the United States does and they get about 10 percent of the capability. That has to change*”<sup>13</sup>. As Guay argues “the lack of political will to change this, is responsible for much of the “capability gap” among NATO members”<sup>14</sup>. The size of the gap in the operational level was first made clear during operations *Desert Shield* and *Desert Storm* in the Persian Gulf in 1990-91. Europeans didn’t manage to improve their capabilities since and as a result 46 of the 48 satellite channels that IFOR used in Bosnia in 1995-96 were provided by the U.S. Furthermore in operation *Allied Force* C4ISR and other capabilities were provided totally by the U.S. Consequently Europeans were able to provide only 29 percent of the SEAD (Suppression of Enemy Air Defence) missions due to lack of relevant capabilities. In general the gap emanates from the rapid pace of U.S innovation, modernization and research and development compared to that of the Allies.<sup>15</sup> This capabilities gap indicates that ESDP in terms of means depends mainly on NATO-U.S. assets. This means that the Europeans find themselves often ‘hostages’ of their Atlantic allies when they want to execute a major operation both outside and inside of Europe. As a consequence ESDP has as a prerequisite a certain degree of accordance with the U.S. security policy.

### **Inability to manage European security affairs.**

This failure in the management of the Yugoslav Wars first and the Kosovo crisis secondly leads to the third pillar of this analysis which is the security relationship between U.S. and Europe and the America’s role as “Europe’s pacifier”. Europeans manage to cooperate politically and to integrate monetarily, under the unilateral security guarantee provided to them by the U.S. As Josef Joffe argued “by extending its guarantee, and by sparing the West Europeans the necessity of autonomous choice in matters of defence, the United States removed the prime structural cause of conflict among states – the search for an autonomous defence policy”<sup>16</sup>.

This took place through the establishment of NATO. NATO is not just a coalition but as Joffe points out again, an integrated force with a unified command structure under the command of a supreme allied commander which always “happens” to be an American. What is NATO’s ultimate achievement? NATO simply managed-or to put it better-NATO was created in order to denationalize defence policy, that prime structural cause of conflict among states.<sup>17</sup> Thus NATO provided a vital precondition for the survival of the Western Europe during the early decades of the Cold War first and the launch of the Western European integration later.

Hence at the same time the United States induced another factor: the formation of a European security and defense policy (CFSP-ESDP) complementary to their strategic needs for the following reasons: 1.lack of capabilities of the European states, 2.intergovernmental nature of these policies and 3.not global but regional European strategic interests. There are times that this complementary policy fails. This takes place when Europe is left alone to manage its own security affairs (Yugoslav Wars – Kosovo crisis). Even in that case U.S is ready to perform their role as “Europe’s pacifier”, thus performing according to Art “a quasi-governmental function: providing a reassuring degree of security that otherwise would be absent. The U.S. is able to play this balancing role because it is *in*, but not *of*, Europe”.<sup>18</sup>The outcome is an ESDP created with the U.S just because simply Europe is not able to manage its own security affairs without the U.S.

This inability extends further to Europe’s immediate periphery and the security affairs that arise in that periphery. Europe was totally absent during the Israel-Lebanon War in 2006 and additionally was not able to present a unanimous position on the crucial issue of the missile defence shield that the US wanted to install in Eastern Europe and faced Russian reaction. Furthermore during the 2008 August short war between Russia and Georgia again Europe played a role inadequate for its size leaving the terrain open to solitary initiatives from countries like France. Initiatives like those though can only be undertaken by countries like France or Britain in order to be wrapped up with the necessary credibility and political / diplomatic weight. To all the above mentioned cases US position – in combination with the many different European views – on each issue influenced the attitudes of certain European states, thus contributing to the formation of a European position reflecting all these different views. The final outcome is an ESDP with moderate results, an ESDP of lower expectations.

### **Atlanticism – Europeanism**

The fourth pillar of my analysis is about one further factor, contributing to European inability to manage their own security affairs, the division between *Atlanticists* and *Europeanists* that characterizes them. The “three big” of Europe, France, Germany and the UK, often find themselves unable to agree on ESDP issues. This is an outcome of their different strategic cultures and

subsequently of their different defense and security policies. French, British and Germans, each one has its own-often different-approach to EU security issues. The French Gaullist legacy and its security policy commands always played a crucial role in France’s stand in European security issues.<sup>19</sup> What happens actually is that the French are trying to graft ESDP with their Gaullist principles and consequently allow Europe to follow an independent security and defense policy, thus performing its role as a great power. In terms of resources

that mean that Europeans will be able to produce their own defense systems (such as the A400M transport aircraft) that will enable them to acquire power projection capabilities and consequently engage in military operations outside the European territory without relying on NATO-U.S assets.

On the opposite side stand the British with their traditional Atlanticist approach. A former empire with troops deployed almost in every part of the world the British have fought over the past centuries to prevent the domination of Europe by one single power. As Chuter argues “a united Europe...always carries the risk of being a Europe united against Britain”.<sup>20</sup> Therefore Britain always faces with suspiciousness everything has the title “common” or “European” in front of it. Also the special relationship with the United States after the Cold War and the strong commitment to the Atlantic Alliance form the core of the British strategic culture and influence British defense and security policy. We must not forget also the very high degree of interoperability that exists between U.S and British Armed Forces as well as the harness that exists in the intelligence field.<sup>21</sup> As a result the British are always trying to restrain the limits of any “common” or “European” policy, especially in the defense field and always try to adjust it, as much as possible, to the needs of their Atlantic partner.

Finally in the middle stand the Germans, who are always trying to balance between the *Europeanists* French on the one side and the *Atlanticists* British on the other. German strategic culture is the outcome of the lessons learned from the experiences of the Wilhelmian militarism first and National Socialism second.<sup>22</sup> Consequently as a result, “this shaped a strategic culture deeply colored by its foreign policy role conception as a civilian power”, according to Hyde-Price.<sup>23</sup> Subsequently the Germans always strive not to find themselves on the one edge but also not in the other. Postwar Germany never sought to perform any global role like France and Britain and accordingly manage to shield itself against any desires for power projection capabilities e.g. aircraft carriers or nuclear weapons. Thus, Bundeswehr’s main mission was territorial defence.

### **Regional Strategic Interests**

Finally the fifth pillar of this analysis supports that Europe so far has only regional and not global strategic interests. Europe has strategic interests *in* and *around* the European territory. The reason for this is simply the fact that crises in areas *in* and *around* Europe have a direct impact over Europe. This means that Europe with ESDP substitutes the U.S. in areas in which non vital or second category U.S. security interests are jeopardized. As a result we are experiencing an emerging division of labor within NATO between Europe and the U.S. This means that Europe deals with what is called “soft power” missions like peacekeeping and stabilization missions (operations *Proxima* and *Concordia* in Skopje) and police missions

(EUPM in Bosnia and Herzegovina). Only once so far has Europe engaged outside the European territory, in a humanitarian mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (operation *Artemis*). As Dassu and Menotti argue “In brief, the American and the European pillars of NATO would be responsible for their respective territorial defences, and together would engage in crisis management outside their own territories”.<sup>24</sup> In overall ESDP tends to be viewed as a project for low – intensity conflicts, peace – keeping operations and humanitarian aid. The result is the formation of an ESDP with compromises combined with a degree of subordination to Washington’s policies.

## Conclusion

This paper, through a five-pillar analysis, has argued that ESDP is created with the U.S. It has so by examining five factors in support of this. The factors that were examined were first the intergovernmental decision-making procedures and second the capabilities gap between Europe and the U.S. Third the U.S. – European relationship and the role of Americas as “Europe’s pacifier”, fourth the division between *Atlanticists* and *Europeanists* that exists among the three big of Europe and last the factor of the European strategic interests with emphasis on their regional character. From the above analysis I will extract a number of useful assumptions for the prospects of Europe and ESDP through the prism of the transatlantic relations. One first assumption is that ESDP will continue to be supplementary to - and to substitute - U.S security policy in areas *in* and *around* Europe. The constant interaction between Europe’s ESDP and America’s security policy will continue to have an impact on the first. This will take place due to the global focus and impact of United State’s security policy and the following adjustments that Europe will have to apply on ESDP.

One second assumption is the fact that Europe eventually will become a full – spectrum superpower, but in its immediate periphery, while globally will continue to act as a U.S. partner. This rests on the fact that United States still enjoy – and will continue to enjoy for many years in the future – a privilege of vast superiority in crucial capabilities. Europeans at the moment are lagging in military means. Europe needs military means that match its priorities and obligations. Military means that will improve ESDP’s capabilities. And the most important, military means that will not only have the quality of the equivalent U.S. systems – something in which Europeans have little progress to do still - but which will be available in the necessary quantity also. Quality is not the problem in Europe, but quantity is. Therefore ESDP will go hand in hand with United State’s security policy and its preferences. One last assumption is this “security providers” - “security consumers” relationship between U.S. and Europe. Since 1945 America guarantees Europe’s security. Within this environment Europe created the ESDP with United State’s consent. Therefore as long as this particular

relationship continues to exist, ESDP's formation and implementation will follow –to a large degree– Washington's advices and desires. The final outcome though is an ESDP which is increasingly viewed as a project for low – intensity conflicts, peace – keeping operations and humanitarian aid.

## ENDNOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Whitman supports that this division of labour is not consciously being sought by either the EU and ESDP or by NATO but this is taking place due to the following factors: first the development of an EU consensus on military security, second the new NATO dynamic, third the atrophy in transatlantic relations and fourth the operational developments. Richard G. Whitman "NATO the EU and ESDP: An Emerging Division of Labour?" pp. 431-432 *Contemporary Security Policy* Vol.25 No.3 December 2004.

<sup>2</sup> The term "pacifier" is borrowed from Josef Joffe's article "Europe's American Pacifier" *Foreign Policy* No. 54 Spring 1984.

<sup>3</sup> John Lewis Gaddis "The U.S and the question of a Sphere of Influence in Europe" in O. Riste, ed., "Western Security: The Formative Years" p. 78 Oslo 1985 cited by Jolyon Howorth and John T.S. Keeler in Jolyon Howorth and John T.S. Keeler (eds) "Defending Europe: The EU, NATO and the Quest for European Autonomy" p. 18 Palgrave MacMillan 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Edward Fursdon "The European Defence Community: A History" p. 153 London Macmillan 1980 cited by Jolyon Howorth and John T.S. Keeler in Jolyon Howorth and John T.S. Keeler (eds) "Defending Europe: The EU, NATO and the Quest for European Autonomy" p. 18 Palgrave MacMillan 2003.

<sup>5</sup> George – Henri Soutou, "Le General de Gaulle et le plan Fouchet", in "De Gaulle e son siecle: 5 L' Europe" pp. 126-144 Paris: Plon 1992 cited by Jolyon Howorth and John T.S. Keeler in Jolyon Howorth and John T.S. Keeler (eds) "Defending Europe: The EU, NATO and the Quest for European Autonomy" p. 18 Palgrave MacMillan 2003.

<sup>6</sup> David Allen, R. Rummel and W. Wessels, eds "European Political Cooperation : Toward a Foreign Policy for Western Europe" p. 2 London Butterworth 1982 cited by Jolyon Howorth and John T.S. Keeler in Jolyon Howorth and John T.S. Keeler (eds) "Defending Europe: The EU, NATO and the Quest for European Autonomy" p. 18 Palgrave MacMillan 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Western European Union, "The reactivation of WEU: Statements and Communications 1984 – 1987" p. 37 London: WEU, 1988 cited by Jolyon Howorth and John T.S. Keeler in Jolyon Howorth and John T.S. Keeler (Eds) "Defending Europe: The EU, NATO and the Quest for European Autonomy" p. 18 Palgrave MacMillan 2003.

<sup>8</sup> For this and for an extensive analysis of the CFSP-ESDP decision-making system of the EU see Gisela Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet "The New CFSP and ESDP Decision-Making System of the European Union" *European Foreign Affairs Review* 7 2002 pp. 257-282 Kluwer Law International.

<sup>9</sup> In Gary J. Schmitt and Thomas Donnelly "Of Men and Materiel: The Crisis in Military Resources", p. 6, American Enterprise Institute Press, Washington D.C. 2007.

<sup>10</sup> David Yost "The U.S – European Capabilities Gap and the Prospects for ESDP" p. 83 in Jolyon Howorth and John T.S. Keeler (eds) "Defending Europe: The EU, NATO and the Quest for European Autonomy" Palgrave MacMillan 2003.

<sup>11</sup> Among the European countries only France has two Helios optical reconnaissance satellites which are the only intelligence satellites operated by a European country.

<sup>12</sup> David Yost as above p. 83 in Jolyon Howorth and John T.S. Keeler (Eds) "Defending Europe: The EU, NATO and the Quest for European Autonomy" Palgrave MacMillan 2003.

<sup>13</sup> William Cohen quoted in Elizabeth Baker's article "European Allies to Spend More on Weapons" *New York Times* September 22 1999 p. A13.

<sup>14</sup> In Terrence R. Guay "The Transatlantic Defence Industrial Base: Restructuring Scenarios and their Implications", p.1, *Strategic Studies Institute*, US Army War College, April 2005.

<sup>15</sup> David Yost as above pp. 83-91 in Jolyon Howorth and John T.S. Keeler (Eds) "Defending Europe: The EU, NATO and the Quest for European Autonomy" Palgrave MacMillan 2003.

<sup>16</sup> Josef Joffe "Europe's American Pacifier" pp. 66-68 *Foreign Policy* No. 54 Spring 1984.

- <sup>17</sup> Josef Joffe “The Future of Transatlantic Security Relations” Keynote Address p. 34 in Richard A. Chilcoat, Joseph R. Cerami and Patrick B. Baetjer (eds) “*The Future of Transatlantic Security Relations Colloquium Report*” “U.S Army’s Dwight D. Eisenhower National Security Series, September 2006, available at [www.eisenhowerseries.com](http://www.eisenhowerseries.com) .
- <sup>18</sup> Robert J. Art “*Why Western Europe Needs the United States and NATO*” where the author analyses why the United States and NATO are essential for Europe’s security. p. 36 *Political Science Quarterly* Vol. 111, No. 1 Spring 1996.
- <sup>19</sup> For a detailed analysis of the Gaullist factor and its influence on French security and defence policy see Philip H. Gordon (1993) “*A Certain Idea of France: French Security Policy and the Gaullist Legacy*”, Princeton University Press.
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