

GCSP

Geneva Centre for Security Policy
Centre de Politique de Sécurité, Genève
Genfer Zentrum für Sicherheitspolitik

NATO Parliamentary Assembly

The State and Development of ESDP

By

Julian Lindley-French

November 14, 2004

Introduction

Chairman, distinguished parliamentarians, Ladies and Gentlemen good morning. It is indeed an honour for me to address you on the challenging subject of the state and development of ESDP at an important moment. First, Operation Althea starts in Bosnia next month. That represents a step change in the EU's responsibilities and those of its member states. Second, 2004 marks the end of the defence planning cycle that started with the end of the Cold War. Only now are many Europeans are really beginning to think about 21st century forces for the 21st century.

Thus, my mission this morning is first to give you a sitrep on the military state of ESDP, recognising that ESDP also possesses a civilian security component, and then provide you with my view as to the future.

Following this introduction, I will address the state of ESDP before moving on to explore short-term and long-term development of ESDP before concluding with the role of NATO and NATO-EU relations.

My central messages are these and I am in a sense sorry that I need to re-state them:

1. I am a European and an Atlanticist who believes in both the EU and NATO. So much of the debate is focused on a simplistic whiter ESDP or NATO;
2. Given the stated security and defence ambitions in both the European Security Strategy and the EU Constitutional Treaty the next two to three years will be vital in demonstrating the extent or otherwise of our collective will. We Europeans I fear are going to have to pay up or shut up.

Sometimes I feel very lonely expounding my firmly held belief that both the EU and NATO are vital and complementary tools in the engagement of the Euro-Atlantic community in a complex world.

My two central themes are thus the enigma that is ESDP, and the potential that resides therein.

It is an enigma that can, to some extent be explained by the strategic political context:

1. for all its understandable imprecision the European Security Strategy of December last year marked the first time in a generation that Europeans as a whole have made a truly autonomous assessment of, and a commitment to, strategic engagement in the security environment beyond Europe.
2. What Europeans saw beyond the EU parapet was not radically different from that which North Americans see. Driven by the big European powers the ESS therefore sets out both implicitly and explicitly what Europeans are going to have to do in security.
3. ESDP instrumentalises the European Security Strategy and must certainly be seen as part of an attempt to both re-establish European strategic self-confidence and re-negotiate the terms of engagement of transatlantic relations;
4. The context of transatlantic relations is changing. May 1st, 2004 and the enlargement of the EU represents the end of the grand US, post-World War Two European project. Consequently, we are witnessing an extra-European re-orientation of American grand strategy;
5. The big European powers at least recognise that they have global responsibilities. However, they face a pivotal question (and this includes the British); is American leadership worthy of their support? The US must not take leadership for granted.

One final introductory remark. The new Atlantic Alliance, for that is what we are negotiating, NATO and the ESDP will be forged or fail in the Greater Middle East. The long-term relevance of both CFSP and ESDP will at some point be measured there.

The State of ESDP

So, the state of ESDP. First, some basic stats.

The EU's strategic picture changed this year.

- The EU 25 represent some 450 million people;
- 25% of global GDP.
- The EU now shares some 2,400 km of border with Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.
- Some 100,000 European troops are deployed abroad in 2004.

However,

- EU 25 spend on average 2% of GDP on defence and much of it not very well.
- The EU 25 spend just under half that of the US on defence but get only 20-30% of US capability. In some areas, such as SIGINT and C4ISR the EU 25 get only 10% of the US capability.
- Operating costs represents some 60% of the defence budgets of most EU member-states.
- Only the UK spends the same proportion of the defence budget as the US on R&D and procurement.
- Overall the EU 25 will need to invest at least 50bn Euros on capabilities to realise the expanded Petersberg Tasks.

You will recall the Headline Goal which was agreed as part of the Helsinki Declaration of December 1999 and grew out of the Anglo-French St Malo Declaration of 1998. It set as its original target July 2003 for the creation of a European Rapid Reaction Force capable of deploying 60,000 troops, at 60 days and sustainable for a year to take on operations 'in and around Europe' within the framework of the Petersberg Tasks 'at there most robust'.

Whilst the Petersberg tasks were expanded in the EU Constitutional Treaty to include *inter alia* counter-terrorism, it is clear that the number of deployable forces have not increased. Thus by definition, the ESDP suffers from exactly the same problem as NATO, particularly for high-end operations – not enough usable troops. You know the figures, they vary from place to place but the message is essentially the same. The Venusberg Group estimates 1.7 million uniforms there are 170, 000 or so soldiers of which 40-50,000 could be deployed at any one time. This is clearly a work in progress.

So, what is being done? In October 2003, Javier Solana admitted that the Headline Goal would not be realised until 2010 and thus Headline Goal 2010. This took place in parallel with a series of other developments designed to maintain the political momentum of ESDP.

First, the UK, France and Germany agreed at Naples in November 2003 to develop the following:

- a new force packaging concept;

-
- an EU cell to be embedded at SHAPE to improve preparation for EU operations using NATO assets through Berlin plus emphasising transparent liaison between the EU Military Staff and NATO;
 - a civil-military cell to be created within the EU Military Staff to enhance early-warning, situation assessment and strategic planning;
 - an implicit division of labour with NATO whereby EUMS would take on operational planning responsibility with particular emphasis on operations in Africa.

In February 2004, the UK, France and Germany presented the Battle Group concept to improve the capacity of the EU for rapid reaction. 1500 strong, plus support elements, they are also known also as 'tactical groups'. A Deployed Battle Group would, therefore, be some 2500 strong with logistics and combat support components. A Battle Group would be deployable within 15 days from the Activation Order and designed to stand alone or act as initial entry force for larger operations. They are specifically, but not exclusively, designed to act in response to UN requests.

It is envisioned that there will be 2-3 high readiness Battle Groups by 2005. 7-9 high readiness Battle Groups by 2007. Battle Groups can be formed by one nation leading alone, a lead nation with others providing capabilities or a multinational formation. Air and naval components are also being identified.

You will find more detailed information in the briefing kit I have prepared as an aide memoire.

So, that is where we are at.

Short-Term Developments of ESDP

The short-term development of ESDP, it seems to me, will be founded upon several components:

1. The balance between civilian and military instruments.
2. An ongoing definition of the Solidarity Clause within the EU Constitutional Treaty.
3. The development of structured co-operation by which those states wishing to move ahead faster in the field of security and defence can do so.

-
4. To what extent important new ESDP initiatives prove effective, such as the Civilian/Military Unit and the nucleus of an EU Operational Centre, which might controversially in time evolve into an EU Strategic Headquarters.
 5. What variety of tiger the European Defence Agency turns out to be – the aggressive kind or the paper version. The former is vital if the EDA is to facilitate European capability objectives through co-operative arms programmes and research and development.
 6. The development of a European security and defence culture, the fostering of which a European Security and Defence College has been created.

Why? Because these are all fundamental building blocks of a European Strategic Concept, without which such talk is but fantasy. Make no mistake ESDP is a process not an end-state.

Longer-Term Development of ESDP

Let me now turn to the longer-term development of ESDP. It will necessarily be focused on five key elements:

1. Europe's role and responsibility for its own security and defence in a new age;
2. The role of legitimate coercion in a strategic ESDP and by extension, European foreign and security policy;
3. The nature and scope of European defence transformation;
4. The affordability of security effect; and
5. Downstream structures and agencies:

Thus, the future development of ESDP will necessarily be organised around two levels of transformation – the grand strategic and the security-operational.

Transformation 1: the search for a European strategic concept that harmonises the understanding of European leaders how to 'do' security. Europe must re-learn grand strategy.

Transformation 2: the European provision of sustained security effect.

The development of what I might call a strategic ESDP will therefore involve and require the following:

1. Elaboration of the aforementioned European strategic concept (the what, when, why and how of engagement) of which the European Security Strategy is a part.
2. Elaborated defence roles and missions that flow from such a concept
3. The development of a command hub led (but not exclusively so) by Britain, France and Germany.
4. Broad force posture for the big 3 (plus Italy, Spain and Poland) if they so choose.
5. Specialisation and niche roles for smaller states.
6. A progressive military task-list that over time expands in both the scope and intensity of operations.
7. Security investment decisions driven by the strategic concept, defence roles and missions and the military tasklist.

Timeframe? It will take at least one defence planning cycle of ten to fifteen years. So, here is my central thrust. Investment decisions taken within the next two to three years will also show whether are talking strategy or walking it.

What role NATO?

A key question for this august body is what role NATO? I flatly reject the 'NATO is dead' argument. To me the central role of the Alliance will remain for the foreseeable future;

1. To preserve transatlantic co-operability and interoperability when the partners choose to act together;
2. To ensure and assure American leadership of high-intensity missions. No Europeans question that.
3. To generate, command, project, sustain and protect European coalitions involved in global projection, through Berlin-plus.
4. To ensure planning and command transparency and escalation dominance;
5. To help prevent security and defence re-nationalisation;
6. To keep a formal American presence in the Greater Europe; and
7. To ensure emerging autonomous European capabilities and structures are grounded in Alliance planning and command concepts and doctrine.

NATO-EU Relations

Let's face it NATO-EU relations are not what they should be. Some of you in this room may well deny it but they ain't! Frankly, the PSC-NAC meetings are amongst the most sterile of the Brussels meeting culture, which is saying something.

What needs to be done? I would propose several initiatives and enhancements.

1. The NATO-EU dialogue need to come up front and centre in both ESDP and ESDI rather than the parallel whispering campaigns that seem to characterise it at present.
2. Keep on refining Berlin Plus to enable autonomous EU ops that will help to restore Europe's strategic self-confidence and reinforce the rationale for capability investments. This will make Europeans better allies, America.
3. To that end, strengthen the dialogue in the NATO-EU Capabilities Group. It is vital that we harmonise the PCC/ECAP processes.
4. Reinforce that convergence by anchoring the Battle Group/NATO Response Force, force rotation cycle within a formal agreement. We must move beyond the sterile NATO First/EU First debate.
5. Recognise what powerful tools we have in both NATO and the EU for dealing with catastrophic terror, WMD proliferation and strategic crime. Indeed, only the EU and NATO can forge a truly strategic civil-military security model that brings all security partners into our security picture – including civil society.

The NATO-EU strategic dialogue must be focused on producing effect in the Greater or Wider Middle East. NATO will go global and ESDP will go intercontinental but the security centres of gravity of both organisations will be engagement with that broad swathe of humanity.

Such a dialogue will only be truly forged when Europeans and Americans have agreed a three-level approach to engagement therein. An over-arching political concept for engagement which gives Europeans a true voice in shaping policy, clear roles and a division of labour for NATO and the EU in a civil-military engagement in the region and a joint commitment and demonstrable preparedness to use coercion if needs be to interdict the terrorist threat if needs be. The Istanbul Co-operation Initiative is a good

start but we need a lot more. I will wager you this. The new Atlantic Alliance will be forged or fail in that region.

My penultimate message is this: The two organisations are strategic security enabler that furnish us with the ability to engage is security development, project security coercion if needs be and defend us from catastrophic security penetration.

Indeed, the EU and NATO must be integral parts of the Euro-Atlantic Communities armoury of projection and protection and a fundamental element in Europe's Homeland Defence.

My final message is this. However we organise our security and defence, whatever the centres of gravity – NATO-EU, civil-military – it is up to you parliamentarians, particularly national parliamentarians though august bodies such as this and others to stiffen the backbone of our peoples. That will take political courage, particularly here in Europe because you will have to tell your citizens that the strategic vacation is over. We must prepare to pay and pay to prepare.

It is called leadership.

Thank you.