

Executive Summary Backgrounder

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Shaping the NATO–EU Relationship: What the U.S. Must Do

Sally McNamara

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the West has rightly invested its time, energy, and resources into fighting asymmetric warfare and combating Islamist radicals. Russia's immoral and illegitimate invasion of Georgia on August 7, 2008, however, demonstrated that the threat of traditional military confrontation has not disappeared. Europe must, therefore, rebuild its militaries to undertake operations in both security contexts, determining what threats they are likely to face and how best to approach them.

Traditionally, NATO has been the primary alliance architecture in which to discuss Europe's security. But when France assumed the six-month EU presidency on July 1, 2008, the advancement of a military identity anchored within enhanced EU power structures, independent of NATO, was made a top priority. The British Conservative Party has described these plans as "a manifesto for an EU takeover of our armed forces." With the recent Franco–American détente, however, the Bush Administration has been sufficiently convinced that the European initiative does not threaten NATO and has given it a warm welcome.

With the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) in existence for nearly a decade, average European defense spending has decreased and NATO has seen little or no valuable complementarity, while serious questions remain about the EU's motivation in pursuing a military identity. The EU's cautious and ambiguous response to the

Georgian–Russian war highlights just how far Brussels is from assuming a strong and united foreign policy. The structural and organizational relationship between the EU and NATO must, therefore, be reassessed—as must the purpose and value of pursuing further integration.

Ten Years After St. Malo: ESDP of Little or No Help to NATO

After the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, the newly liberated countries of Central and Eastern Europe rushed for membership in NATO first, and the European Union second. Having experienced more than half a century of Soviet dominance, the need for a strategic security relationship with America was paramount, followed by the economic benefits of EU membership. These countries' relatively peaceful and successful transition to democracy, achieved in part through NATO membership, paved the way for the vast majority of Central and Eastern Europe to join the EU in 2004. Today, NATO and the EU share 21 members. EU integration in the field of defense was already well underway when Central and Eastern Europe

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acceded, and the newer members have largely seen fit to defer to founding older members.

NATO–EU relations are underpinned by the Berlin Plus Agreement signed in December 2002 and implemented in March 2003. It is easy to see why Washington thought it was receiving a good deal out of Berlin Plus: While the agreement assured the EU access to NATO’s planning capabilities and assets for EU-led crisis management operations (CMO), the United States also anticipated a bigger commitment by the EU to upgrading its military capabilities. The premise of Berlin Plus was essentially that the ESDP would reinforce NATO, not undermine it, and that the long-held American policy doctrine of the “three Ds” would be upheld: no decoupling from NATO, no duplication of NATO resources, and no discrimination against NATO members that are not part of the EU. The U.S. Congress and Administration must also have been encouraged to see its closest friend, the U.K., in agreement with this project. (Then-Prime Minister Tony Blair initiated a significant reversal of British policy to back an EU defense identity at St. Malo in 1998).

But there has been no increased defense commitment by the Europeans in terms of spending or manpower, and Tony Blair has now departed the European stage to be replaced by a weak and ineffective government in London. There is also significant evidence that the three Ds doctrine has long been abandoned by the EU. It has become clear that the European Union signed Berlin Plus for the purposes of elevating its own status and gaining access to NATO assets (largely American), with no genuine commitment to increase defense spending. Blair’s original intention—that NATO would obtain added value and significant complementarity from the ESDP—has not occurred, and he was outwitted by Paris. As a Congressional Research Service report noted in January 2005: “French officials

have long argued that the EU should seek to counterbalance the United States on the international stage and view ESDP as a vehicle for enhancing the EU’s political credibility.” Therefore, there is a significant case for the U.S. to review the terms of the Berlin Plus Agreement.

Conclusion

NATO’s purpose continues to remain essentially the same: “to safeguard the freedom and security of its member countries by political and military means.” The ESDP has played little or no role in fulfilling this goal and nothing has occurred since the signing of the St. Malo Declaration that has significantly improved Europe’s military posture. Advocates of ESDP continue to assume the benefits of further European integration, while ignoring its inherent weaknesses and poor track record. The accrual of power is the main motivating force driving the European Security and Defense Policy, accompanied by the assumption that NATO is no longer the cornerstone of the transatlantic security alliance.

As a military alliance, NATO has the right to expect its members to undertake the responsibilities of membership as well as enjoy the benefits. But America’s desire to see Europe play a larger role in world affairs has led to a misplacement of trust that this can take place under the leadership of the European Union. European members of the NATO alliance, operating as sovereign and independent nations, will be better placed to serve transatlantic security interests within the alliance than as members of a supranationalized and anti-democratic institution.

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Background

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Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the West has rightly invested its time, energy, and resources into combating Islamist radicals and fighting asymmetric warfare. Russia's immoral and illegitimate invasion of Georgia on August 7, 2008, however, demonstrated that the threat of traditional military confrontation has not disappeared. Europe must, therefore, rebuild its militaries to undertake operations in both security contexts, determining what threats they are likely to face and how best to approach them.

Traditionally, NATO has been the primary alliance architecture in which to discuss Europe's security. But when France assumed the six-month EU presidency on July 1, 2008, the advancement of a military identity anchored within enhanced EU power structures, independent of NATO, was made a top priority. The British Conservative Party has described these plans as "a manifesto for an EU takeover of our armed forces."¹ With the recent Franco–American détente, however, the Bush Administration has been sufficiently convinced that this EU initiative does not threaten NATO and has given it a warm welcome.

With the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) in existence for nearly a decade, average European defense spending has decreased and NATO has seen little or no valuable complementarity, while serious questions remain about the EU's motivation in pursuing a military identity. The EU's cautious and ambiguous response to the Georgian–Russian war highlights just how far Brussels is from assuming a

Talking Points

- The threat of traditional military confrontation in Europe has not disappeared. Key European allies must rebuild their militaries to undertake both conventional and asymmetric military operations.
- NATO must be the cornerstone of the transatlantic alliance and the primary actor in European security. France should be readmitted into NATO's integrated military command structures only if Paris is willing to uphold the primacy of NATO in European defense cooperation.
- A European defense identity should be a civilian complement to NATO and represent additional resources for European security. It should not be an alternate option for EU–NATO members to withdraw from their NATO obligations.
- The United States should work closely with its allies in Europe and continue NATO's open-door policy by expediting Georgia and Ukraine's accession to the Membership Action Plan.

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Ten Years After St. Malo: ESDP of Little or No Help to NATO

After the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, the newly liberated countries of Central and Eastern Europe rushed for membership in NATO first, and the European Union second. Having experienced more than half a century of Soviet dominance, the need for a strategic security relationship with America was paramount, followed by the economic benefits of EU membership. These countries' relatively peaceful and successful transition to democracy, achieved in part through NATO membership, then paved the way for the vast majority of Central and Eastern Europe to join the EU in 2004. Today, NATO and the EU share 21 members.² EU integration in the field of defense was already well underway when Central and Eastern Europe acceded, and the newer members have largely seen fit to defer to founding older members.

NATO–EU relations are underpinned by the Berlin Plus Agreement signed in December 2002 and implemented in March 2003. It is easy to see why Washington thought it was receiving a good deal out of Berlin Plus: While the agreement assured the EU access to NATO's planning capabilities and assets for EU-led crisis management operations (CMO), the United States also anticipated a bigger commitment by the EU to upgrading its military capabilities. The premise of Berlin Plus was essentially that the ESDP would reinforce NATO, not undermine it, and that the long-held American policy doctrine of the “three

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But there has been no increased defense commitment by the Europeans in terms of spending or manpower, and Tony Blair has now departed the European stage to be replaced by a weak and ineffective government in London. There is also significant evidence that the three Ds doctrine has long been abandoned by the EU. It has become clear that the European Union signed Berlin Plus for the purposes of elevating its own status and gaining access to NATO assets (largely American), with no genuine commitment to increase defense spending. Blair's original intention—that NATO would obtain added value and significant complementarity from the ESDP—has not occurred and he was outwitted by Paris. As a Congressional Research Service report noted in January 2005: “French officials have long argued that the EU should seek to counterbalance the United States on the international stage and view ESDP as a vehicle for enhancing the EU's political credibility.”³ Therefore, there is a significant case for the U.S. to review the terms of the Berlin Plus Agreement.

Kosovo

*Kosovo is a profoundly European matter.*⁴

—Olli Rehn,
EU Enlargement Commissioner

1. Euractive.com, “France Seeks to Revitalise European Defence,” June 6, 2008, at <http://www.euractiv.com/en/opinion/france-seeks-revitalise-european-defence/article-173103> (September 30, 2008).
2. The Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia were among the enlargement countries that acceded to the EU on May 1, 2004. Bulgaria and Romania acceded on January 1, 2007. NATO and the EU share the following members: Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and the U.K.
3. Kristin Archick and Paul Gallis, “NATO and the European Union,” Congressional Research Service *Report for Congress*, January 4, 2005, at <http://www.fas.org/man/crs/RL32342.pdf> (September 30, 2008).
4. BBC News, “Donors Pledge Funds for Kosovo,” July 11, 2008, at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7501328.stm> (September 30, 2008).

The EU was made profoundly aware of its military shortcomings during the Kosovo War in 1999, where it lacked serious military hardware in terms of strategic airlift, precision-guided munitions, and command and control structures, among other things.⁵ It was these shortcomings that were highlighted in justifying the advance of an EU defense identity.

Therefore, the EU has been determined to take a leadership role in Kosovo upon its declaration of independence, albeit in a civilian rather than a military capacity. On February 15, 2008, the EU “launched” the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX Kosovo) with the goal of developing an independent and sustainable police force and criminal justice system in the fragile new democracy. In a display of support for the under-fire country, the European Union attempted to demonstrate strength and resolve toward the question of Kosovar independence and announced a 16-month, €205 million mission headed by French Lieutenant General Yves de Kermabon. The EU also announced the appointment of a “special representative,” Pieter Feith, whose mandate was to beef up the EU’s political involvement in guiding and supporting Kosovo at this delicate time.⁶

The EU argues that one of its major strengths is its ability to carry out civilian missions and wield its enormous diplomatic power to ensure a comprehensive approach to defense. This mission is the EU’s largest civilian mission to date, with a planned 1,900-man deployment of police officers, judges, a customs unit, and significant command and sup-

port staff.⁷ Keen to increase its engagement with the Western Balkans, the EU planned to undertake the lead from the multiple other international agencies there, led by the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). They announced in February 2008 that after a carefully planned 120-day build-up, the EU’s two-year mission would be ready for full deployment by mid-June 2008.⁸ In fact, the EU had almost two years to prepare this ESDP mission. On April 10, 2006, the EU deployed a substantial planning team for precisely the purpose of preparing for a future civilian mission.⁹

However, not a single EU police, justice, or customs officer was deployed in the field according to schedule, and the 120-day countdown period has recently been re-started. Even under optimistic circumstances, the EU’s deployment will not be complete until a November–December timeframe.¹⁰ A dedicated page on the EULEX Web site asks, “So, what has EULEX achieved?” Sadly, despite the EU’s initial show of enthusiasm and substantial bureaucratic planning, the Web page does not have any achievements to record.¹¹

With other priorities, not least of which the ramifications of Ireland’s rejection of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU has lost its passion and zeal for leading in Kosovo, blaming its lack of progress on an uncertain legal position within the United Nations. However, Kosovo has been recognized by 47 U.N.-member countries including a majority of Security Council members, with 11 recognitions currently pending.¹² It has applied for membership of the World Bank

5. Archick and Gallis, “NATO and the European Union.”

6. Press Release, “Kosovo: Council Establishes an EU Rule of Law Mission, Appoints an EU Special Representative,” Council of the European Union, February 16, 2008, at <http://www.eupt-kosovo.eu/new/home/eng/st06613.en08.pdf> (September 26, 2008).

7. “Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the CFSP, Welcomes the Appointments of Pieter Feith as EU Special Representative in Kosovo and Yves de Kermabon as Head of Mission of EULEX Kosovo,” Council of the European Union, February 16, 2008, at http://www.eupt-kosovo.eu/new/home/eng/080216_EUSR_and_HoM_Kosovo.pdf (September 26, 2008).

8. Press Release, “The EU in Kosovo,” European Union, February 2008, at http://www.eupt-kosovo.eu/new/home/eng/080216_EU_in_Kosovo_Global.pdf (September 26, 2008).

9. Council Joint Action 2006/304/CFSP, Official Journal of the European Union L112/19, April 26, 2006, at http://www.eupt-kosovo.eu/new/legalbasis/docs/060426Joint_Action_Kosovo_EN.pdf (October 2, 2008).

10. Patrick Jackson, “Failing to Start the Blue Car in Kosovo,” *BBC News*, July 29, 2008, at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7510181.stm> (September 26, 2008).

11. EULEX Kosovo, “So, What Has EULEX Achieved?” at <http://www.eulex-kosovo.eu/?id=16> (September 26, 2008).

12. “Who Recognized Kosova as an Independent State?” at <http://www.kosovothankyou.com/> (September 30, 2008).

and the International Monetary Fund. It has even issued its own passports in place of those issued by UNMIK.¹³ The hope of gaining a U.N. agreement on Kosovo was unlikely in the first place and the EU should have been prepared to take the long route, especially considering its substantial planning period. The EU however, seems determined to launch missions only when a conflict arises under perfect EU–U.N.-compatible conditions.

At present, Serbia's President Boris Tadic has said that Serbia will accept EULEX only if the deployment is approved by the U.N. Security Council and if EULEX does not support the Ahtisaari plan, the U.N.'s comprehensive proposal for Kosovo status settlement. Setting aside the fact that Russia is practically guaranteed to once again wield its veto power in the Security Council to deny Kosovo's independence, the EU has been a forceful proponent of the Ahtisaari plan from the beginning. Martti Ahtisaari, the U.N. special envoy on Kosovo's future status, also enjoyed the support of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), NATO, the United States, the Western Members of the Kosovo Contact Group, and U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. It is difficult to imagine a situation where the EU could have greater international legitimacy for its mission. EULEX's deployment should not be contingent on the consent of Serbia, but rather in accordance with Kosovo's constitutional obligations.

The EU has been a weak partner in comparison to NATO in Kosovo. With a 15,000 in-country force, and an Operational Reserve Force on standby for rapid-reaction missions, NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR) has provided the logistical, military, political, and moral impetus to guarantee the safety and security of Kosovo, crucially with a mandate to use force where absolutely necessary as it did during the ethnic riots in March 2004.¹⁴ In practice, it has undertaken a range of tasks including border security, medical assistance, and support for the estab-

lishment of civilian institutions.¹⁵ As opposed to the prevarication and lack of leadership on the part of the European Union, KFOR has been doing the work of normalizing Kosovo. Even when EULEX is dispatched, it is KFOR that will ensure its security.

EULEX will likely be a welcome instrument when it finally deploys to Kosovo. However, it will deploy in an arena which NATO has already secured and where NATO will continue to take on the bulk of responsibility. It will deploy vastly behind schedule and with a reduced confidence in its own legitimacy. The EU has lost a prime opportunity to demonstrate the supposed added value of ESDP of which it continually boasts.

Georgia

Having conducted a small rule of law mission, EUJUST THEMIS, in Georgia in 2004, the EU immediately took the helm at the outbreak of the Georgian–Russian war in an attempt to broker peace and resolve the crisis. France's weak efforts in the wake of Russia's invasion on August 7, however, exemplifies what the United States can expect in a future EU foreign and defense posture—a Franco–German-dominated approach with a low common baseline for action.

From the outset of the crisis, the EU—under the direction of French President Nicolas Sarkozy—took all military options off the table, starting negotiations with Moscow from a position of weakness. Only after more than a week of disproportionate military action by Moscow, including multiple incursions into sovereign Georgian territory within miles of Tbilisi, did Russia sign the French-led ceasefire agreement agreeing to six key points. Sarkozy ultimately negotiated the ceasefire on Moscow's terms and provided no enforcement mechanisms in the event that it would be broken by Russia. Moscow proceeded to brutally expose the weakness of Sarkozy's shuttle diplomacy by flouting the ceasefire at every turn and soon tore it up com-

13. Philippa Runner, "Kosovo Passport Holders Face Uncertain EU Welcome," euobserver.com, July 31, 2008, at <http://euobserver.com/9/26568> (September 30, 2008).

14. U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999, was passed under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, which permits the use of both military and non-military action.

15. NATO Factsheet, "Kosovo Force," February 15, 2008, at <http://www.nato.int/issues/kfor/index.html> (September 28, 2008).

pletely by unilaterally recognizing the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Through this recognition, Russia is attempting to set the redrawing of borders by the use of force as a precedent. The EU's response was so pitiful it left Moscow praising it as "common sense."¹⁶ At its emergency summit on September 1, 2008, the EU failed to meaningfully address even basic questions such as upgrading its European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan for Georgia. The EU is completely out of ideas about its future relationship with Russia and it has not laid out any concrete steps to oppose the unilateral state boundary changes resulting from Russia's recognition of South Ossetian and Abkhazian independence. The weak resolutions at its emergency summit have sent Russia the message that the worst it can expect from the EU is a slap on the wrist and that its action will escape serious punishment.

Worse still, the EU agreed on a military deal with Russia on the same day that it issued its statement on Russia, securing a Russian commitment of four helicopters and 200 military personnel for its ESDP mission in Chad.¹⁷ The French-dominated mission has been desperately short of helicopters since its inception in March 2008 and the Russian year-long donation of four Mi-8MT transport helicopters will relieve a significant operational shortcoming for the mission. But the timing of this deal supports a massive conflict of interest on the part of the EU and especially President Sarkozy, who has been the driving force behind both the mission to Chad and the EU's response to the Russian invasion of Georgia.

The Georgian–Russian war has demonstrated deep divisions among European powers about how to handle Russia, with Central and Eastern Europe and the Nordic states on one side and Continental Europe led by France and Germany on the other. It should come as no surprise that "New" Europe wants to see a stronger reaction to the reawakening of Russian aggression, but President Sarkozy and

German Chancellor Angela Merkel have claimed primacy to act as "commanders in chief" as they do on all major foreign policy questions where the EU is involved. If the war in Georgia is a signal of Russia's geostrategic ambitions and a preview of what the West can expect from Moscow in the future, it is also true that a Franco–German axis will dominate any common EU foreign response.

French Ambition: All Talk, No Action

Under the French presidency of the European Union, President Sarkozy set forth an ambitious agenda to increase Europe's defense identity and capabilities, laying out plans for a new security strategy and how it will undertake a full range of missions from stabilization and reconstruction, to combat and reconnaissance. Paris is hoping to make significant progress in developing the ESDP in time for the EU presidency's concluding summit in December 2008 where it expects to announce multiple initiatives, including an operationally ready 60,000-man force capable of a year's deployment at a time, a full-fledged rapid reaction intervention capability, and European military exchange programs, among other things.¹⁸ Although significant legal hurdles should, in theory, prevent the progression of defense integration in light of Ireland's rejection of the Lisbon Treaty, the French intend to use their EU presidency to press ahead regardless.

It is certainly the case that Europe as a whole desperately needs to increase military capabilities. Yet it is highly unlikely that the EU will see this through. As is already perfectly demonstrable, the EU has been successful in acquiring political and bureaucratic power, and much less so on defense spending and military manpower.

Sarkozy's ambition for EU defense is less concerned with increasing Europe's defense capabilities, and wholly concerned with the accrual of power for a highly centralized European Union.

France's insistence that the EU should have its

16. "EU Showed 'Common Sense' on Georgia Crisis: Putin," Agence France-Presse, September 2, 2008.

17. Jamie Smyth, "Russian Military Force to Assist EU Mission in Chad," *The Irish Times*, September 4, 2008, at <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2008/0904/1220372097381.html> (September 28, 2008).

18. French Presidency of the Council of the European Union, *Work Programme*, Ue2008.fr, July 1–December 31 2008, pp. 23–25, at http://www.ue2008.fr/webdav/site/PFUE/shared/ProgrammePFUE/Programme_EN.pdf (September 28, 2008).

own permanent operational planning cell exemplifies French aspirations in this field. Berlin Plus was negotiated specifically on the understanding that autonomous EU operations would be directed from national capitals or from Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Belgium. Prime Minister Blair was adamant on this point when drawing up the St. Malo Declaration with French President Jacques Chirac. For Blair, a permanent EU planning cell represented not just a wasteful duplication of NATO assets, but a definite decoupling of the two organizations. Of course, it is highly likely that Chirac intended these very consequences, but he gave way to Blair initially, knowing that the centralization of power within the European Union occurs only in a one-way direction.

Chirac was correct that the St. Malo agreement was only the beginning of the EU's wholesale centralization of defense policy. The EU's Brussels-based operations center (OpCen) was declared open on January 1, 2007, and put to the test in a fictional exercise in June that year. It is a separate, non-permanent EU operational headquarters that is intended for civilian or civilian-military operations, and only under limited circumstances. These limitations were put in place after British objections failed to eliminate the idea completely, but will certainly be removed as the EU military identity takes shape. The French White Paper on Defense and National Security states explicitly: "Reinforce considerably European planning and command capability. The EU must have an independent European standing strategic planning capability. The growing number of EU interventions abroad also requires more military operational planning and command capability."¹⁹

OpCen is just the thin end of the wedge that opens the back door to a fully operational permanent EU military headquarters. When the proposal was initially floated in Brussels, U.S. Ambassador to NATO Nicholas Burns described it as, "the greatest threat to the future of the Alliance."²⁰ However, the idea gained real momentum in 2003 in the midst of

Europe's deep divisions over the Iraq war. France, Germany, Belgium, and other nations were incensed by the U.S. action in Iraq and took the opportunity to put the idea of an independent EU headquarters firmly on the table in response to this divisive foreign policy question.

Britain originally threatened to veto any such proposal, but as with the advancement of all European security and defense elements, they ensued incrementally and stealthily. Equally, Britain has lacked any real leadership capacity within Brussels since Margaret Thatcher's departure from office. The United States and the U.K. have now been hoodwinked into supporting a policy they initially objected to, and into agreeing to a proposal that will rip the heart out of NATO. There is absolutely no evidence that OpCen will add military value or defense capabilities to Europe's overall defense needs.

France's intention to rejoin NATO's integrated military command in exchange for American backing of an independent EU defense identity is a political masterstroke on Sarkozy's part, but represents nothing less than the death knell for the NATO Alliance. Paris is joining NATO's integrated military command structure while at the same time building a duplicate one in Europe which will decouple the alliance and ultimately destroy NATO. When U.S. Ambassador to NATO Victoria Nuland announced in February 2008 that the Administration would support a strong EU military identity, she reversed years of carefully crafted American policy. Washington has been blinded by the recent détente in Franco-American relations spearheaded by the enigmatic Sarkozy.

French-led plans for an autonomous and independent military wing within the EU will also damage the U.S. ability to operate effectively within the NATO alliance. An enhanced EU defense identity will create an internal conclave in NATO whereby European nations will caucus with one another in advance of NATO meetings. It already happens to a limited extent, as was demonstrated when Germany

19. "The French White Paper on Defence and National Security," June 2008, Chapter 7, at http://www.ambafrance-ca.org/IMG/pdf/Livre_blanc_Press_kit_english_version.pdf (September 28, 2008).

20. "EU Military Plans Under Scrutiny," BBC News Online, October 21, 2003, at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3210246.stm> (September 30, 2008).

colluded with France to exclude Georgia and Ukraine from receiving a Membership Action Plan (MAP) at the NATO Summit in Bucharest in April 2008. The United States will continue to find itself in a profoundly weakened position to negotiate with individual NATO allies in advance of summits and will find itself on the sidelines of transatlantic security debates.

The largely pacifist ideology of the European Union is bound to infect NATO, and EU policy will reign supreme. It is hugely ironic that a separate EU defense identity will probably be more about the demilitarization of Europe than re-equipping it to confront global security threats. As the entire European project has demonstrated thus far, the political horse-trading associated with EU politics demands concessions that effectively castrate it from taking effective action. When considering foreign policy, Franco-German interests are the priority, and decisions are made only when Berlin and Paris are sure their national interests are upheld. By Germany and France using the EU as a cosmetic cover for their foreign policy interests and corraling other EU members in advance of NATO meetings, the United States loses valuable traction with traditional allies. Since all NATO decisions are made on a consensus basis, the EU will turn one of NATO's greatest strengths into a significant weakness by agreeing on its positions in advance and leaving little room for the U.S. to maneuver or even form ad hoc coalitions of willing European partners.

Europe's Defense Crisis: Centralizing Power, Failing on Manpower

*The Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises.*²¹

—Franco-British Summit Joint Declaration on European Defense

When then-Prime Minister Tony Blair signed the St. Malo Declaration, he was adamant that an EU defense identity should represent added value for

transatlantic security. When Blair oversaw the EU's 1999 Headline Goal—aiming to have up to 60,000 troops available for up to one year's deployment for crisis management—he wanted to enable a serious crisis-management capability that could genuinely collaborate with NATO rather than create a standing European army. The United States was clearly excited at the prospect of the EU accepting more responsibility for Europe's security, and the two organizations dovetailed their defense planning strategies to identify key areas where gaps needed to be plugged. NATO's Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC) and the EU's Capability Action Plan (ECAP) identified multiple areas for cooperation, including strategic air and sea lift, air-to-air refueling, and nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons defenses.

Unfortunately, very little has come of Europe's big talk, and rather than adding value, the EU is now simply offering a distraction from members' NATO obligations. In fact, more conflict has arisen than complementarity. For example, when the African Union (AU) requested airlifts for Darfur from the EU, the U.S., and Canada in June 2005, the EU refused to coordinate with NATO, insisting on European "branding" for the operation. In the end, two separate airlifts were established, which the AU was then required to coordinate, since France insisted that the EU assert itself as the primary player in African security affairs.

The creation of EU Battle Groups (BGs) epitomizes the EU's quest for power at the expense of NATO. The BGs are either national or multinational battalion-sized units of 1,500 men, capable of deployment to remote and hostile areas within 10 days. These numbers are meant to be in addition to Sarkozy's plan for an EU army of 60,000. BGs reached full operational capacity in January 2007 and now stand on roster for deployment. However, they are not a permanent reserve force on standby because the majority of contributing nations are either unwilling or unable to invest in resources and manpower to create additional capacity. Therefore, the EU will inevitably have to draw down the same reserves that are on standby for call-up under NATO.²²

21. "Franco-British Summit Joint Declaration on European Defense," Saint-Malo, December 5, 1998, at <http://www.atlanticcommunity.org/Saint-Malo%20Declaration%20Text.html> (September 28, 2008).

The BGs are also a duplication of the NATO Response Force (NRF). The NRF was proposed by then-U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in 2002 as an innovative and useful mechanism whereby 20,000 to 25,000 highly capable, highly trained troops could be deployed to any theater of action in the world to undertake a range of missions for up to 30 days. Crucially, the majority of these troops would come from Europe, rather than the United States. The NRF represents a key transformational aspect of the NATO alliance and has already been deployed successfully, including its quick response to the humanitarian crisis precipitated by the devastating Pakistani earthquake in late 2005, and during Afghanistan's presidential election in October 2004. But the NRF will invariably be left short of its requisite forces if the EU calls on its BGs at the same time. National governments are of course careful to avoid such a conflict, but there is only so much that can be done when resources are in such short supply. Without new defense euros and new European soldiers, the EU's battle groups should be seen as nothing less than a direct duplication of the NATO mechanism—and a challenge to NATO's transformational initiative.

It will invariably become more difficult for NATO's military planners to know which assets are genuinely available to them, especially when the EU realizes its dream of a permanent planning and operations headquarters outside of SHAPE. Sarkozy is well aware that all but 10,000 of Europe's NATO troops are already committed, making a mockery of his flagship proposal for a 60,000-man deployable EU force.²³ However, he is not concerned with counting soldiers twice from the same national force pools because he foresees EU preeminence in the arena of European security.

In a seminal report, *European Military Capabilities*, the International Institute for Strategic Studies

(IISS) found that just 2.7 percent of Britain and Europe's 2 million military personnel are capable of overseas deployment.²⁴ This contrasts sharply with NATO's goal that 40 percent of its land forces be deployable, which in itself was a modest and under-reaching goal in the first place. The IISS report highlighted a number of critical shortcomings of Europe's military capabilities—a lack of niche skills, lengthy and costly procurement procedures, and a lack of defense research and development.²⁵ Clearly, members are failing to invest sufficiently in either NATO or EU capabilities, making a stronger case for a sharper focus in only one arena. Considering that the EU's civilian instruments are not available to NATO under any type of reverse Berlin Plus agreement, it is difficult to see any value to NATO from the ESDP at all.

Another NATO benchmark that has not been reached is defense spending. Just four of the 21 EU-NATO members spend the NATO benchmark of 2 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) on defense (Bulgaria, France, Greece, and the U.K.). Average EU defense spending has significantly decreased over the past 10 years, indicating that valuable resources will merely be diverted from NATO to the ESDP.

One area in which the EU has excelled is in the creation of permanent political and bureaucratic structures. With a Political and Security Committee (PSC), a Military Committee, and a Military Staff, the EU has created a complex web of working groups, consultation forums, and permanent arrangements to encroach on NATO's space. By its very nature, the EU is a technical bureaucracy and, therefore, has a ceaseless will for institution building. It does not, however, have the political will for serious action or the means with which to carry out such endeavors.

22. "NATO-EU Relations," World Security Institute, Brussels, January 16, 2006, at <http://www.wsibrussels.org/showarticle.cfm?id=191> (September 30, 2008).

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Press Launch for European Military Capabilities: Building Armed Forces for Modern Operations*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, July 9, 2008, at <http://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-dossiers/european-military-capabilities/press-statement> (October 8, 2008).

25. *Ibid.*

Failing on Political Leadership

One area where the EU and NATO have traditionally worked well together is on the question of enlargement. Generally, EU enlargement has mimicked NATO enlargement, reflecting a sense of shared political commitment to aspirant countries. However, this EU policy appears to be shifting away from its historical behavior.

Croatia and Albania signed NATO accession accords in June 2008, and provided that their membership is ratified by their parliaments and the 26 existing members, the two countries will accede to full membership. The United States sent a positive signal to the rest of the NATO alliance when the Senate became among the first to ratify NATO membership for Croatia and Albania. The United States has demonstrated leadership to the rest of the NATO alliance by stating that it considers NATO still open for business and a vital part of the transatlantic security architecture.²⁶

In contrast, Merkel and Sarkozy are now threatening to block any further EU enlargement if the Lisbon Treaty is not ratified (despite the Treaty's rejection by Ireland's voters), seriously jeopardizing Croatia's timely accession to the EU. This unfair and purely political move by France and Germany has been roundly criticized, most recently by the EU Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn, who states that it is possible to conclude technical membership negotiations with Croatia before the end of 2009.²⁷ A serious and unfair delay to Croatia's accession to the EU would place Albania and Macedonia on a permanent back burner and send a message of instability to the region.

In addition, at NATO's Bucharest Summit, Chancellor Merkel led a Franco-German coalition to defer Georgia's accession to MAP until December 2008 in a failed attempt to avoid "provoking" Russia. This act reversed the previous German position supporting an open-door policy for NATO and stood in direct contrast to President Bush's visible support for Kiev and Tbilisi at the summit.²⁸

The EU should reappraise its approach with regard to EU membership for Croatia and Europe should consider acceleration of Georgia and Ukraine into NATO's MAP. This will continue one of the transatlantic community's most positive post-Cold War policies and send a message that membership in NATO and the EU is a possibility for those who actively seek it.

A New Relationship for NATO and the EU

*NATO...proudly boasts that there is a 'strategic partnership' between NATO and the EU. There is no such thing, only an incipient strategic competition between America and Europe.*²⁹

—Robin Harris,

Advisor to Lady Thatcher, May 2006

There is no better time to look at NATO-EU relations than now, as NATO approaches its 60th-anniversary summit in 2009. The Strasbourg-Kehl Summit will produce a Declaration on Allied Security outlining NATO's purpose and potentially paving the way for a new Strategic Concept for the Alliance. NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer has described the Declaration as "a major deliverable" of the summit.³⁰

26. "White House Welcomes Senate NATO Votes for Albania, Croatia," Agence France-Presse, September 26, 2008, at <http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5jv0sY3GywaT6c6VEYtbf7tl9IHA> (September 30, 2008).

27. Tony Barber, "Lisbon Treaty Rejection 'No Excuse to Block Expansion,'" *The Financial Times*, September 19, 2008, at http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/fc32fd36-85e2-11dd-a1ac-0000779fd18c.html?ncklick_check=1 (September 28, 2008).

28. German Minister of Defense Franz-Josef Jung stated in February 2008: "NATO is not only a military alliance. It was and still is a community based on values. Our door is open to those who are prepared to adopt the principles that govern our Alliance." Franz-Josef Jung, "The World in Disarray—Shifting Powers, Lack of Strategies," Munich Conference on Security Policy, February 8, 2008, at http://www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?menu_2008=&menu_konferenzen=&sprache=en&id=203 (September 28, 2008).

29. Robin Harris, *Beyond Friendship: The Future of Anglo-American Relations* (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 2006), May 24, 2006, p. 91, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Europe/wm1091Ch5.cfm>.

30. NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, speech at a seminar on relations between the EU and NATO, Paris, July 7, 2008, at <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2008/s080707b.html> (September 28, 2008).

It is certainly the case that Europe and America have mutual security interests. Under the ESDP, however, the EU is duplicating NATO's role while simultaneously decoupling the alliances. This does *not* add to global security. Therefore, if the summit intends to clarify NATO–EU relations, it should not be in the vein of accelerating an EU military identity, but rather explicitly stating two non-negotiable points:

1. NATO's primacy in the transatlantic security alliance is supreme; and
2. The EU's relationship to NATO is as a civilian complement, and the EU is defined as a civilian actor in the transatlantic security alliance.

NATO has many partnership arrangements; in fact, that is one of its strengths. Its Partnership for Peace and Mediterranean Dialogue programs have resulted in several fruitful and collaborative relationships. The rush to elevate its relationship with the EU above all others is a mistake. Since the vast majority of EU members are already NATO members and there are no additional EU-only forces, the concept of holding joint exercises or combining rapid reaction forces is unnecessary. In fact, the overlapping membership negates the military value of the EU's involvement in this area. At a time when NATO needs to be concentrating on learning in-the-ater lessons from Afghanistan, developing a new strategic concept, and addressing transformational issues, its relationship with the EU is an unnecessary distraction.

Therefore, a new category must be formulated to define the EU's relationship status with NATO. Since conflict resolution requires a comprehensive approach, the EU offers the possibility of being primarily a deployable, civilian complement to the NATO alliance. The momentum for NATO and the EU to work together in the military field is fraught with problems and driven by a desire to secure an EU powerbase. The EU has an army of bureaucrats, police trainers, aid workers, and jurists to complement a more cohesive approach to reconstruction and development. As Afghanistan has demonstrated, it is often necessary for these professionals to work alongside the military. Civilian missions are tasks that the EU naturally favors, and which the EU has some capacity to perform. Following the Feira

Summit in 2000 when the EU outlined its goals for EU-level civilian crisis-management, it quickly exceeded expectations with 5,700 police officers, 630 legal experts, 560 civilian administration experts, and 5,000 civil protection experts currently available to the EU.

In that respect, NATO's consultative mechanisms can be simplified, with little need for the complex web of security clearances and political committees. The EU has long resisted the concept that each institution should work where its strengths lie, and instead has focused on developing duplicate roles. It has since been proved that its limited contribution to global security can perhaps be provided in the civilian sphere, if it is willing to concentrate its efforts in this arena. Ideally, a simpler, modified European Security Strategy should be adopted.

In practice however, the EU will continue to institutionally and programmatically arm itself for an independent defense identity, and it must be prepared to undertake the political and financial investment necessary to make it happen. If the EU wants to act in areas of the world where NATO does not, then there is no reason why NATO should be expected to provide its resources for these missions. If the EU genuinely believes that global security is enhanced by engaging in military missions in which NATO is not acting, then it should pay for them exclusively from European budgets, and use European assets and manpower. In determining a new NATO–EU relationship, it must be required that those assets and resources must be provided *in addition* to members' contributions to NATO, not at their expense. First and foremost, any investment in the ESDP must not obfuscate members' commitments to NATO.

What Needs to Happen

- **NATO must be the cornerstone of the transatlantic alliance and the primary actor in European security.** This must be stated explicitly in the on-going negotiations for a revised strategic concept for NATO, and at the 2009 NATO Summit. In defining its role in the transatlantic security architecture, the EU must be encouraged to develop its civilian role, working with NATO's Allied Command Transformation

to coordinate what role it can play in assisting NATO.

- **The U.S. should reserve NATO resources exclusively for NATO missions.** All European military missions should be funded exclusively by EU member states. U.S. taxpayers should not subsidize European military adventures. The terms of Berlin Plus should be revised to reflect this, as NATO–EU cooperation is defined in terms of the EU’s civilian complementarity to NATO. The assets and capabilities of a newly reformed civilian European Security and Defense Policy should be at NATO’s disposal under the terms of a revised Berlin Plus agreement.
- **The ESDP should represent *additional resources for European security*.** It must not be an alternate option for EU–NATO members to withdraw from their NATO obligations. The creation of an ESDP as a civilian component in the global security architecture should provide added value, rather than allow EU–NATO members to opt out of NATO missions or open the door to a two-tiered Alliance.
- **NATO members should commit to the NATO benchmark of spending 2 percent of their GDP on their national defense.** Where necessary, members must approve long-term and supplemental budgets to fund ongoing and future commitments.
- **The United States must urge the French president to make an unequivocal statement on NATO’s primacy at NATO’s Strasbourg Summit in 2009.** France should be readmitted into NATO’s integrated military command structures only if Paris is willing to uphold the primacy of NATO in European defense cooperation, and the alliance can be confident that Paris will be a cooperative rather than a confrontational partner.

- **The United States should encourage NATO alliance members to expedite ratification of Croatia’s and Albania’s NATO membership, and restate its support for accelerated MAPs for Georgia and Ukraine.** The United States should work closely with its allies in Europe and continue NATO’s open-door policy.

Conclusion

NATO’s purpose continues to remain essentially the same: “to safeguard the freedom and security of its member countries by political and military means.” The ESDP has played little or no role in fulfilling this goal and nothing has occurred since the signing of the St. Malo Declaration that has significantly improved Europe’s military posture. Advocates of ESDP continue to assume the benefits of further European integration, while ignoring its inherent weaknesses and poor track record. The accrual of power is the main motivating force driving the European Security and Defense Policy, accompanied by the assumption that NATO is no longer the cornerstone of the transatlantic security alliance.

As a military alliance, NATO has the right to expect its members to undertake the responsibilities of membership as well as enjoy the benefits. But America’s desire to see Europe play a larger role in world affairs has led to a misplacement of trust that this can take place under the leadership of the European Union. European members of the NATO alliance, operating as sovereign and independent nations, will be better placed to serve transatlantic security interests within the Alliance, than as members of a supra-nationalized and anti-democratic institution.

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