

## **The Underlying Dynamics of the European Security and Defence Policy\***

Sinem A. AıkmeŖe\*\*

### **Introduction**

Throughout the last decade, the European Union (EU) has been engaged in a broader debate about its functioning. At the apex of these discussions are the issues of economic and monetary integration, enlargement and institutional reform. At the same time, the EU's role in the security and defence realm is being questioned by what has become known as the 'Common European Security and Defence Policy' (CESDP) project. Anglo-French cooperation became the motor of this project immediately after the British Prime Minister, Mr. Blair and President Chirac of France agreed, at Saint-Malo in December 1998, on adding a defence dimension to the EU's existing structures. From this early initiative, through the lessons of the humanitarian war in Kosovo, the pace of development has been rapid, resulting in the CESDP project that derived from the earlier concept of 'European Security and Defence Policy' (ESDP).<sup>1</sup>

The main purpose of this article is to explore the evolution and the general framework of the CESDP with a view to clarifying why the Europeans, with Britain sitting in the driving seat, have embarked upon such an unprecedented journey to give the Union a genuine defence identity. Alongside the Europe-wide idealistic intentions of pushing the pace of integration and of presenting the EU as an efficient, credible and respectable actor on the international stage, the domestic considerations of some member states (mostly Britain's) along with external dynamics, such as the lessons drawn from the Kosovo conflict and the strategically important US support for Europe's efforts to build autonomous security and defence structures, 'let

---

\* *The present article is a revised version of the author's Master's thesis approved by the European Institute of London School of Economics and Political Science in 2002.*

\*\* *Sinem Akgül AıkmeŖe is a Research assistant, Department of EU Studies, Institute of Social Sciences, Ankara University.*

<sup>1</sup> Most commentators regard the concepts of 'ESDI' (European Security and Defence Identity) and 'ESDP' (European Security and Defence Policy) as synonymous. ESDI is a NATO project, aiming at the creation of a European pillar that draws upon the 'Combined Joint Task Forces' – a military structure based in NATO-; the ESDP is an autonomous politico-military project of the EU which was launched at the Cologne Summit of June 1999. In order to avoid this confusion at the level of acronyms, the ESDP became the CESDP at the Helsinki Summit of December 1999.

the genie out of the bottle'<sup>2</sup> and the CESDP project began to take on a life of its own. After analysing each of these motivations, with their pros and cons, this article seeks to answer the most controversial question in this context: 'Which momentum, with what reasons, prevails in understanding the member states' desire to formulate a common defence policy?'

The main argument of this study is that the determination to forge a defence role for the EU is directly related to the Kosovo conflict; during which the Europeans realised how predominant the US was in terms of decision-making and military capabilities in conducting an operation, how inadequate their military capacity was when compared to the US, and therefore how dependent they were on the US for any military operation even on Western Europe's very doorstep; and finally, how reluctant the Americans were in dealing with Europe's crisis when their national interests were hardly at stake. In other words, while explaining the contents and the implications of all the internal and external motivations contributing to the launch of the CESDP project, greater emphasis will be put on the decisive role Kosovo played, where the member states became aware of the necessity to equip the EU with autonomous military capabilities.

Obviously, understanding the origins and the future of the CESDP project mostly depends on the conceptual analysis of the terms 'security' and 'defence'. In the 1970s and the 80s, within the framework of the European Political Cooperation (EPC), these two formerly interchangeable concepts became differentiated at the EU level. *Security* was transformed into a notion which means 'reducing or eliminating threats, risks and uncertainties in a number of activities - political, economic, environmental as well as threats of a military nature' - whereas the concept of *defence* which refers to the 'use or threatened use of organised military force' was unchallenged.<sup>3</sup> In other words, while security can be maintained by economic and political instruments wielded by the EU, defence can only be ensured by the projection of military power. The main axis of the present article is based on the assumption that maintaining a distinction between security and defence has always been useful to national policy-makers because of the delicate relationship between defence and national sovereignty.

Within this framework, bearing in mind the impossibility of exploring the evolution, the current nature and the final destination of the CESDP without understanding the origins of this project, the first part of this study evaluates a sequence of developments beginning in the 1950s and culminating in the 1998 St.Malo watershed. The assessment of the milestones

---

<sup>2</sup> Jolyon Howorth, *European Integration And Defence: The Ultimate Challenge?*, Chaillot Paper no. 43, (EU Institute of Security Studies, Paris, 2000) p.31.

<sup>3</sup> Brian White, *Understanding European Foreign Policy* (Palgrave, New York, 2001) p.143.

in the achievement of the CESDP, and the present situation of this policy in the context of the latest developments with regard to the 'war on terrorism' and the Iraqi crisis falls within the scope of the second part. The third part raises the following question: 'To what degree does the internal dynamics of the European Union explain the evolution of the CESDP?' More specifically, this part seeks to determine whether the logic of integration and the argument of credibility in international relations are viable as a means of understanding the impetus behind this initiative, and whether these EU-wide idealistic intentions or the domestic politics of member states prevail, taking account of British motivations in assuming the leadership role in the launch, as well as the conduct of this project. Finally, the last part analyses the external momentums -namely the Kosovo conflict and the support of the US - without which an EU adventure in the defence realm would have never begun.

### **The Background**

#### *European Security and Defence Framework in the Cold War Era*

The saga of European integration after the Second World War began in the defence realm. The Treaty of Dunkirk signed between France and Britain in March 1947, which was designed to prevent Germany's re-emergence as a military power, constituted the first step in establishing a defence framework for Europe. After the inclusion of Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg in this framework, (with the Brussels Treaty of March 1948), a regional defence organisation - namely the Western Union - was built in Europe.<sup>4</sup> However, as Urwin argues, the apparent military weakness of the Western Union 'vis-à-vis the perceived strength of the Soviet Union' necessitated an American military commitment to continental defence.<sup>5</sup> The result of this concern was the signing of the Washington Treaty in April 1949 and the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). However, none of these efforts to formulate a defence framework for Europe was aimed at creating fully integrated military structures.

The idea of a common defence policy in Europe can be traced back to the Paris Treaty, of May 1952, which established the European Defence Community (EDC). The Plevin Plan of October 1950, calling for 'German remilitarization under the aegis of supranational European defence community' as a response to US demands for German rearmament following

---

<sup>4</sup> G.Wyn Rees, *The Western European Union at the Crossroads: Between Trans-Atlantic Solidarity and European Integration* ( Westview Press, Oxford, 1998) pp.2-4.

<sup>5</sup> D.W.Urwin, *The Community of Europe: A History of European Integration Since 1945*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Longman, London, 1995) p.23.

the Korean War, constituted the basis of the EDC.<sup>6</sup> After the rejection of the EDC Treaty by the French Assembly in 1954, owing to French obsessions about supranationality, defence became a taboo subject in the integration process. However, US demands for German rearmament and French fears about constraining German military power had to be reconciled. In 1954, Anthony Eden took the lead in the creation of the Western European Union (WEU) from the former Western Union. The WEU, which is an intergovernmental actor without any supranational features, remained dormant during the long years of the Cold War owing to the fact that the territorial guarantees of the treaty were made operational through NATO; furthermore, it possessed no integrated military structures. As a result of these desperate initiatives, 'transatlanticism became the overarching framework for defence and European integration was channelled to the economic sphere'.<sup>7</sup>

By the late 1960s, Europeans were determined to increase the weight of the European Community in international relations. This desire culminated in the establishment of European Political Cooperation (EPC) in 1970, which provided a consultation mechanism for foreign policy matters'.<sup>8</sup> Defence was not considered within the scope of EPC; but the impossibility of excluding security concerns from foreign policy discussions was soon recognised. As a logical consequence of the growing concern in Europe about the US commitment to the continent's security after the renewal of East-West tensions in the early 1980s, Britain took the lead in the adoption of the 1981 London Report, which included discussions of the political aspects of security, such as arms control, terrorism and armaments within the EPC. Moreover, the revived momentum of the integration process paved the way for extending the 'parameters of allowable areas of security in EPC', which led to the inclusion of the economic aspects of security alongside the political ones within the EPC framework, with the Solemn Declaration of Stuttgart in 1983.<sup>9</sup> The Single European Act emphasized the need to coordinate political and economic aspects of security and excluded the discussion of defence issues.<sup>10</sup>

Obviously, none of these endeavours created a defence identity for the EC because of the negative effects of the emergence of that identity on

---

<sup>6</sup> Desmond Dinan, *Ever Closer Union: An Introduction to European Integration*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Palgrave, New York, 1999) p.26. For detailed information on EDC, also see; P.M.R. Stirk, *A History of European Integration Since 1914* (Pinter, London, 2000) pp. 126-133.

<sup>7</sup> G.Wyn Rees, *op.cit.*, p.17.

<sup>8</sup> Jan Zielonka, 'Constraints, Opportunities and Choices in European Foreign Policy', Jan Zielonka (ed.), *Paradoxes of European Foreign Policy* (Kluwer Law International, London, 1998) p.1.

<sup>9</sup> Brian White, *op.cit.*, p.146.

<sup>10</sup> Title 3, Article 30 of the Single European Act.

transatlantic relations, on NATO's dominant role in defence matters and, finally, on the concept of national sovereignty. Until the end of the Cold War, security was perceived as a legitimate issue on the integrationist agenda. Acting as a civilian power, the EC had the ability to promote European security by economic and political means, rather than by military instruments. The end of the Cold War paved the way for extending that agenda to include both security and defence.

### Post-Cold War Security Architecture

The end of the Cold War created favourable conditions for the development of a European security and defence identity. In the words of Sjursen, 'although the idea of a European security and defence identity was not invented by the end of the Cold War, it was given a new life with the breakdown of bipolarity in Europe'.<sup>11</sup> The recognition of the reduced value of military power, with the decline of a direct military threat; and therefore the lessened importance of relations between defence and national sovereignty, contributed to the opportunity to forge a defence role for the EU. Moreover, the emergence of a broader security agenda, which included the issues of economic and political instability, ethnic unrest, border problems, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, migration, terrorism, human rights, environmental hazards, organized crime and drug trafficking,<sup>12</sup> fostered the establishment of a security identity for the EU. In this new security architecture, the EU, well aware of the fact that having a common security and defence policy would increase its international credibility, injected this view into the 1990-1991 Intergovernmental Conferences which resulted in the Maastricht Treaty.

The Maastricht Treaty, under the second pillar, title V and Article J, 'proudly proclaimed' the creation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), which was to cover all the areas of foreign and security policy.<sup>13</sup> The Treaty contained the aspiration to include defence as well as security on the Union's agenda, with the quoted formulation of the 'eventual framing of a common defence policy, which might in time lead to a common

---

<sup>11</sup> Helene Sjursen, 'Missed Opportunity or Eternal Fantasy : The Idea of a European Security and Defence Policy,' John Peterson and Helene Sjursen (eds.), *A Common Foreign Policy For Europe : Competing Visions of the CFSP* ( Routledge, London, 1998) p.95.

<sup>12</sup> Fraser Cameron, *The Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union: Past, Present and Future* (Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, 1999) pp. 69-70.

<sup>13</sup> Jan Zielonka, *op. cit.*, p.2.

defence'.<sup>14</sup> Despite the fact that EU members did not designate a timetable, defence was now within the scope of European integration. In the meantime; the task of elaborating and implementing decisions that had defence implications was given to the WEU, which would be the defence arm of the EU.<sup>15</sup> As a result of the Maastricht provisions, the EU did not become a defence actor, but the taboo over discussing defence matters, which had existed since the 1950s, was broken. Moreover, the EU was expected to formulate a common defence policy as soon as possible.

Until the expected common defence policy could be realised, the WEU was to serve as the EU's defence arm. - However, in the early 1990s, the WEU which did not possess the necessary command structures, military or planning capabilities for fulfilling its function as the defence agent of the European Union, was deemed as a paper organisation. Therefore, in order to wake up the *Sleeping Beauty* of the Cold War<sup>16</sup> and make it operational, the WEU was given a number of modest tasks and capabilities. In this context; at the Petersberg ministerial meeting in Germany, members of the WEU tasked the institution with 'low-intensity, out-of-area missions', in addition to its historical Article V tasks concerning collective defence, for which they confirmed NATO's supremacy and vitality.<sup>17</sup> The so-called 'Petersberg tasks' are operational missions, including humanitarian and rescue tasks, peace-keeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management including peace-making.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the capabilities of the WEU were enhanced by the establishment of a 'Planning Centre', a 'Satellite Centre' an 'Intelligence Section' and a 'Military Committee' in the early 90s.

During the 1990s, the enhancement of the tasks and capabilities of the WEU and the transformation of NATO progressed simultaneously. According

---

<sup>14</sup> Roper defines the common defence policy as a policy with respect to the use of the armed forces of the member states. Common defence refers to the organisation of the armed forces of those states. Brian White, op.cit., p.144.

<sup>15</sup> Christopher Piening, *Global Europe: The European Union in World Affairs*, (Lynne Rienner Publishers, London, 1997) p. 42.

<sup>16</sup> Mathias Jopp, "The Defence Dimension of the European Union: The Role and the Performance of the WEU," Elfriede Regelsberger et al.(eds.), *Foreign Policy of the European Union: From EPC to CFSP and Beyond* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, 1997) p. 154.

<sup>17</sup> Petersberg Declaration, WEU Council of Ministers, Bonn, 19 June 1992, [www.weu.int](http://www.weu.int).

<sup>18</sup> *Humanitarian and rescue tasks* would mean 'assistance to a country suffering from a natural disaster or it could amount to the distribution of essential supplies by a heavily armed force in the midst of a large-scale conflict'. *Peacekeeping* mission refers to 'policing function with the approval of both combatants, at a time when they have either decided to stop fighting or have reached the state of exhaustion'. *Peacemaking tasks*, require 'acting in situations that could demand the controlled use of force'. G. Wyn Rees, op.cit., pp.65-66.

to Sjursen, during this period ‘NATO seemed to emerge at the apex of security arrangements in Europe, with the EU playing a minor role and the concept of ESDI developing inside the framework of NATO’.<sup>19</sup> By the same token, although defence appeared linguistically on the Union’s agenda, the EU’s progress in the achievement of a common defence policy in the post-Cold War era was overshadowed by the institutional primacy of NATO, and by the concept of ‘European Security and Defence Identity’ in the same period. The first attempt to re-brand NATO for the post-Cold War era was the introduction of NATO’s ‘New Strategic Concept’ at the Rome Summit of 1991. This concept depicted three main areas of future activity of the Atlantic Alliance: a broader approach to security, restructuring of its military capabilities for crisis management tasks and the permission for European allies to take more responsibility in terms of their own security.<sup>20</sup> Secondly, at its 1994 Brussels Summit<sup>21</sup>, NATO launched a new project called ‘ESDI’ which involved both NATO and the WEU, and marked the creation of the military instrument underpinning this project – The Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTF). The concepts of ESDI and CJTF’s were further elaborated at the Berlin ministerial meeting in 1996<sup>22</sup>. According to the Brussels and Berlin arrangements, ESDI within NATO is based on the idea of ‘separable but not separate capabilities’ from the Alliance.<sup>23</sup> In other words, NATO’s assets and capabilities would be made available to the WEU – the agent of ESDI – in operations that do not involve the US, on a case by case basis.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, the conduct of a WEU operation that drew upon the resources of the Alliance – CJTF’s- was made strictly conditional on the approval of the North Atlantic Council.<sup>25</sup> This conditionality clause confirmed NATO’s primacy for crisis management beyond Europe. To sum up; according to White, these arrangements, rather than strengthening a European-based defence identity, had the effect of ‘further binding WEU and ESDI into the NATO framework and underlined the dependence of WEU upon NATO for military capabilities’.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Helene Sjursen, *op.cit.*, p.101.

<sup>20</sup> *The NATO Handbook* (Office of Information and Press, Brussels 1998-1999) pp.65-68.

<sup>21</sup> NATO Council, Declaration of Heads of State and Government, Brussels, 10-11 January 1994.

<sup>22</sup> Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, Berlin, 3 June 1996.

<sup>23</sup> Peter Schmidt, ‘ESDI: Separable but not Separate’, *NATO Review*, Vol.48, No.1 (Summer 2000), p.12.

<sup>24</sup> Lluís Maria de Puig, ‘The European Security and Defence Identity within NATO’, *NATO Review*, Vol.46, No.2 (Summer 1998), p.6.

<sup>25</sup> Paul Cornish, “European Security: The End of Architecture And The New NATO,” *International Affairs*, Vol.72 No. 4 (October 1996) pp.761-762.

<sup>26</sup> Brian White, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

The dominance of NATO on defence issues had cast a shadow over the EU's efforts towards the achievement of a common defence policy. The Treaty of Amsterdam marked no significant progress in the defence realm, except for some modest improvements. In Article 17 of the Amsterdam Treaty, the word 'progressive' replaced the word 'eventual' in relation to the framing of a common defence policy, which cannot be considered as a substantial stride. The most important innovation of the new Treaty was the inclusion of Petersberg tasks within the scope of the CFSP. In order to carry out these tasks, the EU would avail itself of the WEU. In other words, the WEU will provide the Union with access to an operational capability, notably for the Petersberg tasks. However, these tasks are obviously more closely related to a security rather than a defence role for the EU. Moreover, Article 17 reinforced the institutional primacy of NATO in the defence field by stipulating that 'any decisions on defence must respect the obligations of member states, which see their common defence realised in NATO'. Therefore; the Amsterdam Treaty enhanced NATO's predominance in the defence realm and 'mapped out an appropriate security rather than defence role for the EU'.<sup>27</sup>

Consequently, in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, the EU had the opportunity to develop its own defence policy, but 'missed that opportunity by the mid-90s because of the re-emergence of NATO in a way that was unforeseen five years earlier'<sup>28</sup>, and mostly because of London's reluctance to develop a common defence identity which might upset Washington, thereby driving the US into isolationism and NATO towards collapse.

#### Towards the CESDP: from St. Malo to Copenhagen

By the end of 1998, even before the Amsterdam Treaty was ratified, the possibility of developing a common defence policy reappeared on the European agenda. Besides the idealistic intentions of pushing the pace of integration and equipping the Union with the relevant military means to back up its economic and diplomatic might; more realistic motivations, such as the removal of the UK veto on security and defence issues, US support for an autonomous European defence policy and the evidence on the ground in Kosovo, 'let the genie out of the bottle' and paved the way for far-reaching projects such as the 'Common European Security and Defence Policy'. The period starting in December 1998 with the Franco-British Summit in St. Malo - usually referred to as the St. Malo process - witnessed the most significant challenge to the EU's vision of itself as a civilian power. Successive

---

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p.149.

<sup>28</sup> Helene Sjurssen, op.cit., p.95.

European Councils - namely Cologne, Helsinki, Feira, Nice, Laeken, and Copenhagen - registered and are still registering progress towards a European defence policy.<sup>29</sup>

***The Pörschach Summit : pointing the way forward***

Tony Blair's speech on defence in October 1998, at the informal European Council meeting in Pörschach, in Austria, has been widely perceived as marking a sea change in the British stance on the development of a common defence policy. Characterising the current situation in the CFSP as 'unacceptable' and marked by 'weakness and confusion', (as highlighted by the experiences in Bosnia and Kosovo), Blair indicated that he would have no objections to the development of an EU defence policy if it were 'militarily credible, politically intergovernmental and NATO compatible'.<sup>30</sup> In other words, Blair did not hesitate to reiterate the primacy of NATO in any future common defence efforts. The approach to European defence issues outlined in Blair's speech provided the basis for Anglo-French discussions at St. Malo. This explains why the CESDP is usually referred as the 'Blair initiative'.

***The St. Malo Declaration: The 'genie out of the bottle'***

The bilateral meeting between France and Britain in the northern French port of St. Malo on 3-4 December 1998 was the departure point for the European defence adventure. Both Blair and Chirac advocated an autonomous political and military capability for the EU, by stating that the 'Union must have capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to use them and a readiness to do so in order to respond to international crises'. However, it was underlined that the EU 'can take decisions and approve military action where the Alliance as a whole is not engaged'. Moreover, the Anglo-French agreement stated that the European defence identity would contribute to the 'vitality of a modernised Atlantic Alliance, which is the foundation of the collective defence of its members'.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> Anthony Forster and William Wallace, "Common Foreign and Security Policy : From Shadow to Substance," Helen Wallace and William Wallace (eds.), *Policy Making in the European Union*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000) p.487.

<sup>30</sup> Alessandro Minuto Rizzo, 'Towards a European Defence Policy', *The International Spectator*, Vol.36, No. 3 (July-September 2001), p.47.

<sup>31</sup> The means of enabling the EU to take decisions and approve military action were also identified at St. Malo. '...the Union must be given appropriate structures and a capacity for analysis of situations, sources of intelligence and a capability for relevant strategic planning, without unnecessary duplication, taking account of the existing assets of the WEU and the evolution of its relations with the EU.' Joint

In other words, Chirac and Blair agreed that the main defence responsibility in Europe should remain with NATO, with the Europeans co-operating in military actions that do not involve the US. Despite these limitations, St. Malo was the first step towards the achievement of a common defence policy for the EU. A more exaggerated argument will suggest that ‘the historians writing on the birth of a truly united Europe in 2020 will define the St. Malo Declaration as the final stage of European integration’.<sup>32</sup>

### *The Cologne Summit: Formal launching of the ESDP*

With the 1999 Cologne Summit<sup>33</sup>, which borrowed much of the language of the St. Malo agreement, the Europeans committed themselves to a common defence policy for the first time, with the declaration of a capability for autonomous military action and the launching of the ‘ESDP’ project. In Cologne, a detailed framework for the progressive development of a common defence policy was established. The member states prepared the ‘political ground to arrange decision-making mechanisms for crisis management and to secure political control and strategic direction of future EU-led military operations’.<sup>34</sup> On the whole, the agreements of the Cologne Summit mark a milestone in the development of a common defence policy - a process that would have been unthinkable a few years ago.

In December 1999, at the Helsinki European Council, the EU leaders started to use the acronym ‘CESDP’ instead of ‘ESDP’ in order to define the defence project of the EU. Apart from this linguistic change, the EU decided to ‘add military muscle to its financial and economic clout by setting up permanent political and military institutions and by committing to the Headline Goal’<sup>35</sup>. In the context of the Headline Goal<sup>36</sup>, EU leaders agreed that ‘cooperating voluntarily in EU-led operations, member states must be able by 2003, to deploy, within 60 days and to sustain for at least one year, military forces up to 50.000-60.000 persons capable of the full range of

---

Declaration on European Defence, UK-French Summit, St. Malo, 3-4 December 1998, paragraph 2. Mark Oakes, *European Defence: From Pörtlach to Helsinki* (House of Commons Library Research Paper 00/20, London, 2000) pp. 42-43.

<sup>32</sup> Margarita Mathiopoulos and István Gyarmati, ‘St. Malo and Beyond: Toward European Defence’, *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (Autumn 1999), p.76.

<sup>33</sup> ‘Cologne European Council’, *Bulletin of the European Communities*, No. 6/1999, Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1999.

<sup>34</sup> Peter Van Ham, ‘Europe’s Common Defence Policy: Implications for the Transatlantic Relationship’, *Security Dialogue*, Vol.31, No.2 (June 2000), p.218.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 219.

<sup>36</sup> The forces that were mentioned under the concept of the Headline Goal quickly gained the popular name of ‘Rapid Reaction Force’.

Petersberg tasks'.<sup>37</sup> However, the member states did not hesitate to declare that 'this process did not imply the creation of a European Army'.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, the member states announced their willingness to set up the political and military bodies whose tasks would be 'ensuring the necessary political guidance and strategic direction for military operations'.<sup>39</sup> In the words of Howorth, 'at Helsinki twin pillars of the CESDP were formed: the inauguration of a new, permanent set of institutions and the forging of a substantial Headline Goal of military forces'.<sup>40</sup>

### *After Helsinki: Creation of a 'paper tiger'*

After the Helsinki Summit, each European Council meeting registered more progress towards the realisation of the CESDP project. At the Feira Summit of June 1999<sup>41</sup>, important decisions were taken - as regards the CESDP. Firstly, 'civilian aspects of crisis management were strengthened through pledges to make up to 5000 police officers available for deployment to crisis regions'. Secondly, the necessary arrangements were made for the involvement of non-EU European members of NATO – Turkey, Norway, Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland - in EU-led operations. Thirdly, the principles on the basis of which consultation and cooperation with NATO should be developed were identified.<sup>42</sup> At the Nice European Council<sup>43</sup> of December 2000, the inclusion of the non-EU European allies of NATO in EU operations as well as the problem of guaranteed access to NATO assets and capabilities by the EU were analysed in depth, alongside the issues of the improvement of the EU's operational capabilities, the elaboration of the CESDP's institutional framework and the planning phase of military

---

<sup>37</sup> 'Helsinki European Council', *Bulletin of the European Communities*, No. 12/1999, Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2000, paragraph 28.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Political and Security Committee, European Military Committee and European Military Staff were the new institutions that were launched at the Helsinki Summit. These innovations were put in place in the six months between October 1999 and March 2000. Mark Oakes, *European Defence: From Pörschach to Helsinki*, pp. 33-35.

<sup>40</sup> Jolyon Howorth, op.cit., p.4.

<sup>41</sup> Feira European Council, *Bulletin of the European Communities*, No. 6/2000, Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2000.

<sup>42</sup> Mark Oakes, *European Security and Defence Policy: A Progress Report*, House of Commons Library Research Paper 00/84, London, 2000, pp. 11-12.

<sup>43</sup> 'Nice European Council', *Bulletin of the European Communities*, No. 12/2000, Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2001.

operations.<sup>44</sup> To sum up; with the establishment of new military and political bodies and the development of a headline goal, the CESDP project is well on track and showing signs of progress; albeit on paper.

### *The War on Terrorism: Sidelining the CESDP*

The EU reacted to the terrorist attacks on the US on 11 September in a differentiated way and with specific measures, leaving the option of the CESDP in the margins. Apart from stating its solidarity with and willingness to support the US<sup>45</sup>, the EU stepped up its action against terrorism through a coordinated and inter-disciplinary approach embracing all union policies ranging from police and judicial cooperation to economic and financial instruments.<sup>46</sup> While the EU was considering concrete measures for combating international terrorism, some critical eyes turned to the CESDP, asking where it was situated in the crisis.<sup>47</sup> The only operational role designed for the CESDP which had so far acted as a paper tiger, was related to the US request for indirect military assistance in terms of backfilling allied assets in NATO's area of responsibility which were required directly to support operations against terrorism. In other words, as agreed by the North Atlantic Council on October 4, the Rapid Reaction Force, acting as the military agent of CESDP, would replace the NATO deployments in Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia, allowing the NATO forces to be completely engaged in the war

---

<sup>44</sup> Robert E. Hunter, *European Security and Defence Policy: NATO's Companion or Competitor?* (Rand National Defence Research Institute, Washington, 2002), pp.109-114.

<sup>45</sup> On 14 September 2001, the EU adopted a joint declaration about the terrorist attacks in which its leaders demonstrated strong signs of transatlantic solidarity. For the full text of the declaration see, 'Joint Declaration by the Heads of State and Government of the European Union, the President of the European Parliament, the President of the European Commission and the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy,' [www.eurunion.org/partner/EUUSTerror/JtEUDeclaration.htm](http://www.eurunion.org/partner/EUUSTerror/JtEUDeclaration.htm), 14 September 2001.

<sup>46</sup> 'The Plan of Action' adopted by the Extraordinary European Council held in Brussels on 21 September approved this multi-disciplinary approach, and has set in train a series of concrete measures in those areas where the EU must and can make an effective contribution in the fight against terrorism, such as diplomatic efforts, police and judicial cooperation, air transport security, humanitarian aid, economic and financial policies. For the text of the Plan of Action see, Conclusions and the Plan of Action of the Extraordinary European Council Meeting on 21 September 2001, Brussels, <http://ue.eu.int/en/Info/eurocouncil/index.htm>

<sup>47</sup> Monica Boer and Jörg Monar, "Keynote Article: 11 September and the Challenge of Global Terrorism to the EU as a Security Actor," *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol.40, Annual Review (2002), p.15.

against terrorism.<sup>48</sup> This so-called backfilling function must be regarded as far from negative, in the sense that it necessitated the existence of operational forces. As a consequence of this necessity, the European leaders paved the way for the Rapid Reaction Force to assume backfilling responsibilities in the Balkans, by announcing at the Laeken Summit of December 2001 that the European defence force was now operational - without making any clarifications about what this actually meant. Moreover, the declaration of operability, without having solved the issue of the use by the EU of NATO's military assets, would be no more than a political intention that the EU wanted to move ahead with its defence, as the EU force would not have the teeth to launch military operations without logistical backing from the Atlantic Alliance.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Robert E. Hunter, *op.cit.*, pp.165-166.

<sup>49</sup> According to the Conclusions of the NATO Washington Summit of 1999, the EU's request for recourse to NATO assets and capabilities for EU-led operations would be decided on a case-by-case basis and through consensus, thereby giving the non-EU NATO allies the right to impede this kind of cooperation. Moreover, the decision of the EU leaders at the Nice European Council of 2000 to have automatic access to NATO assets in order to prevent unnecessary duplication of NATO's military capabilities, was to be followed by an EU-NATO agreement, to which Turkey raised its objections as a non-EU European ally of NATO by referring to its right of veto. Therefore, Turkey's opposition to the automatic access to NATO assets and capabilities in EU operations conducted under the aegis of CESDP from the decision-making mechanism of which Turkey was excluded had been the largest obstacle to the operability of CESDP. In order to withdraw its veto, Turkey pressed for assurances that the EU force –RRF– would not intervene in any crisis in Turkey's immediate neighbourhood. The EU convinced Turkey on 2 December 2001, after two years of negotiations, to accept the agreement defining the modalities of EU-NATO institutional cooperation, on condition that the disputes between NATO allies – such as the ones between Greece and Turkey– and the international conflicts involving the UN –such as Cyprus– would remain outside the scope of RRF missions. Besides, according to that arrangement, Turkey would have been included in the decision-making procedures of CESDP on an equal footing with all other member states when RRF engaged in operations in Turkey's immediate periphery. The Greek government opposed that agreement on grounds that it gave Ankara an intrusive right of decision on EU operations, thereby affecting Greek national interests. Up until the Copenhagen Council of December 2002, either Greece or Turkey had blocked progress over the NATO-EU agreement on the modalities of the use of NATO's military assets by the EU. It was with the Copenhagen European Council - which confirmed that the EU would take over the military operation in the Republic of Macedonia in order to perform peace-keeping functions through the Rapid Reaction Force- that an agreement was reached. In a concession to Ankara, the EU leaders agreed that Cyprus - which is due to join the EU in 2004 - would not take part in any EU military operation that uses NATO assets. In order to alleviate Greek fears that Turkey would have rights in the decision-making mechanism for 'all' RRF operations, the EU

Moreover, it would be unfair to blame the CESDP for being situated on the sidelines in the war against terrorism, as this was an operation taking place under the aegis of NATO<sup>50</sup>, thus leaving no room for autonomous military action to be taken by the EU. In other words, as the current CESDP framework is limited to undertaking tasks in which the Atlantic Alliance is not engaged, the absence of CESDP from the war that took place in Afghanistan is excusable.

As Hunter argues, the lack of a direct role for CESDP in the war against terrorism might culminate in the growing importance of the Rapid Reaction Force in such a way that 'US preoccupation with Middle-East based international terrorism could lead to a significant reduction in US interest in the practical aspects of European security or in other regions nearby, such as North Africa'.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, by showing that the EU lacked the capacity to confront terrorist challenges, mostly in the context of intelligence gathering, one may argue that September 11 has contributed to giving the EU an intelligence arm, complementing its defence capabilities, to tackle international terrorism.<sup>52</sup> Prompted by this motivation, the EU leaders at the Seville Summit decided to strengthen arrangements for sharing intelligence and developing the production of early warning reports, drawing on the widest range of sources.<sup>53</sup>

By contrast, the European response to war against terrorism has clearly demonstrated that the integration process is at risk as a direct consequence of the evident disunity in the form of ad-hoc coalitions and

---

leaders decided to allow non-EU European allies, such as Turkey, to raise their concerns if an EU operation is conducted in their geographic proximity or if it risks affecting their national security interests. For details see; Şebnem Udum, "Turkey and the Emerging European Security Framework", *Turkish Studies*, Vol.3, No. 2 (Autumn 2002), pp. 69-103 ; Meltem Müftüler Baç, "Turkey's Role in the EU's Security and Foreign Policies", *Security Dialogue*, vol. 31, No. 4 (December 2000), pp. 489-502 ; Sharon Spiteri, 'EU Strikes Deal with NATO on Security and Defence', [www.euobserver.com](http://www.euobserver.com), 14.12.2002 ; Ian Black, 'Turkey Relents Pave Way For EU Force,' *The Guardian*, 16.12.2002 ; Mihaela Gherghisan, 'NATO and EU Sign Historic Partnership Agreement', [www.euobserver.com](http://www.euobserver.com), 17.12. 2002.

<sup>50</sup> On September 12, for the first time in NATO's history, the North Atlantic Council agreed that this attack which was directed from abroad against the US should be regarded as an action covered by the collective defence clause of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. According to Article 5, allies may assist the party or the parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force.

<sup>51</sup> Robert E. Hunter, op.cit., p. 172.

<sup>52</sup> Giles Tremlet and Ian Black 'EU Plan to Pool Anti-Terrorism Intelligence,' *The Guardian*, 2 March 2002.

<sup>53</sup> Presidency Conclusions of the Seville European Council, 21-22 June 2002, Annex V, <http://ue.eu.int/en/Info/eurocouncil/index.htm>.

activities outside the institutional framework, such as mini-summits<sup>54</sup> and secret dinner meetings<sup>55</sup>. These uncontrolled ad-hoc coalitions showed that the EU is moving towards the notion of a 'Europe with a variable geometry' in which some members would prefer to be involved in a crisis and others not; thus portraying the EU in an 'embarrassing picture of disunity'.<sup>56</sup>

### War in Iraq: the CESDP Amidst Divisions

Confronted with the Iraqi crisis, the vision of a divided EU has become more apparent in the sense that Europeans could not come up with a single and unified voice. On the one side 'new Europe' - Britain, Italy, Spain, several smaller European Union countries and most of the eastern Europeans - opted for following the US leadership whereas 'old Europe' - France and Germany, supported by several smaller EU members - opposed the Americans. By declaring that the UK would align its action with the US in any military confrontation to depose Saddam Hussein, Tony Blair consistently maintained that the Iraqi threat must be tackled vigorously and in cooperation with the Bush Administration.<sup>57</sup> Warning that the military action would be a 'remedy worse than the illness', France and Germany expressed strong reluctance to take part in such a war.<sup>58</sup>

The possibility that the split between the two Europes could become even wider was raised with the mini-summit in Brussels, where on 29 April 2003 the leaders of France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg got together to discuss the prospects of a European defence union.<sup>59</sup> By re-launching the idea of enhanced cooperation within a small group of countries, which can work together and advance more efficiently, these four countries had declared that the member states which so desired could together improve military capabilities, harmonise their views on defence issues, and create a joint

---

<sup>54</sup> The British, French and Germans held a mini-summit on 19 October 2001 in Belgium, to discuss the prospects of coordinating their policies on how to provide military support to the US.

<sup>55</sup> Tony Blair invited Jacques Chirac and Gerard Schröder a secret dinner meeting in London on 4 November to discuss the progress of the war in Afghanistan. At the last minute the prime ministers of Italy, Belgium, Spain and Netherlands were also invited.

<sup>56</sup> Monica den Boer and Jörg Monar, op.cit., p. 18.

<sup>57</sup> Martin Ortega, *Iraq: A European Point of View*, Occasional Paper No.40, (EU Institute of Security Studies, Paris, 2002), p. 8.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> For the comments on the mini-summit see Charles Grant and Ulrike Guerot, 'A Military Plan to Cut Europe in Two,' *Financial Times*, 17.04.2003.

armaments agency as well as an ‘embryo joint European staff’.<sup>60</sup> This mini-military alliance model seemed unlikely to work since there was the possibility that the UK, Italy, Spain and the other proponents of US action against Iraq would organise their own structures as a reaction to the above-mentioned initiative, thereby leaving the EU divided into two rival centres of power.<sup>62</sup>

Some Europeans blamed the US for the sharp lines of division that emerged between the Europeans; such voices were heard at a seminar on the web of relationships between the CFSP, transatlantic relations and the Iraqi crisis, held in Paris in April 2003, at which the Bush Administration was accused of dividing Europe. Some participants in this seminar contended that this ‘divide and rule stance’ marked ‘a substantial break’ with the last 50 years of strong US support for European unification.<sup>63</sup> The new European architecture of division creates a poor image of the EU as an actor in international relations and has wider implications for the future of CESDP, which has been in charge of two police missions – one in Bosnia-Herzegovina and one in Macedonia – since 2003, after completing two military operations – Operation Concordia in Macedonia and Operation Artemis in Congo – in 2003. However, despite the above-mentioned divergences and limitations surrounding the scope and operational capabilities of the Rapid Reaction Force, CESDP can well be described as the project of the century for the Europeans; accordingly, the underlying dynamics behind its initiation will now be analysed.

### **Internal Dynamics Behind the Launch of the CESDP**

‘Dormant for nearly fifty years, the inconclusive debate on European defence has taken a sudden leap forward since 1998’<sup>66</sup>, and at the Cologne Summit, member states announced the beginning of a defence adventure at

---

<sup>60</sup> Honor Mahony, Four Founding EU Members to Tackle Defence Union, [www.euobserver.com](http://www.euobserver.com), 28.4.2003.

<sup>62</sup> See Tony Blair’s observations in Sharon Spiteri, ‘Mini Defence Summit Leaves the EU Divided’, [www.euobserver.com](http://www.euobserver.com), 28.4.2003.

<sup>63</sup> The note of the Institute for Security Studies of the EU on the seminar ‘CFSP Confronting Iraq’, Paris, 3 March 2003, [www.iss-eu.org/activ/content/rep03-1e.pdf](http://www.iss-eu.org/activ/content/rep03-1e.pdf).

<sup>66</sup> François Heisbourg, ‘European Defence Takes a Leap Forward’, *NATO Review*, Vol.48, No. 1 (Spring-Summer 2000), p.8.

the EU level. Alongside the external dynamics - such as the Kosovo conflict and US effect - the efforts to give the EU a defence identity have stemmed from many internal factors the analysis of which forms the substance of the next section of this discussion.

EU-Wide Motivations

### *The Logic of Integration*

At first sight, the leap from EPC to CFSP and finally to CESDP can be regarded as logical steps in the process of European integration, as the member states might have had the intention of pushing the pace of this integrationist trend. Some commentators argue that logic of integration can explain the ‘ups and downs’ in the EU’s attempts to create a security and defence policy. For instance, according to Sjurzen, ‘the important point that the move from EPC to the CFSP’ and eventually to CESDP, ‘which expanded the EU’s scope in foreign policy to include security and defence issues’, was in part the result of a broader process of European integration.<sup>67</sup> The reluctance of member states to fully integrate in the defence realm, the location of the CESDP under the EU’s second pillar, which symbolizes intergovernmental cooperation, and the Council’s institutional primacy in dealing with CESDP issues reveal that the logic of integration cannot explain the desire to define a defence role for the EU.

### *Credibility in International Relations*

It is a widespread perception that the possession of military capabilities is the main requirement for having credibility and effectiveness in international relations. Most commentators have argued that only if a Community develops a military capability, can it be successful in the conduct of its foreign affairs. For example, Peterson and Bomberg believe in the necessity of injecting a defence dimension into the EU’s structures by emphasizing the fact that the EU ‘continued to lack one of the essential prerequisites of a great power status: a military capability that could be deployed in the pursuit of political goals’.<sup>69</sup> Having recognised the significance of an EU defence policy for the Union’s credibility in the international system, member states decided collectively, at the Cologne

---

<sup>67</sup> Helene Sjurzen, op. cit., p. 96.

<sup>69</sup> John Peterson and E. Bomberg, *Decision-making in the European Union* (Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1999) p. 240.

Summit of 1999, to back up their economic and diplomatic potential with military capabilities.

However, this argument of credibility is not sufficient to explain the leap towards a common defence policy. At one end of the spectrum, 'rather than seeing the military force as a panacea'<sup>70</sup>, and even without possessing any genuine military capability, the EU, as a *sui generis* institution, can influence other actors in the international arena and may still be credible in conducting its foreign affairs by using its economic and diplomatic instruments. At the other end of the spectrum, setting aside these idealistic intentions, there are more realistic considerations in understanding why the member states decided to equip the Union with an autonomous military capacity.

### Domestic Interests

In addition to their common, Europe-wide considerations, some member states have also propped up the CESDP project in the pursuit of their individual domestic intentions, bearing in mind that the EU's military capabilities can be used 'in and outside-of Europe situations' where they have vital interests. For instance, the 'EU's prospective military force could take action in francophone Africa which would reduce the burden on Paris acting alone.'<sup>71</sup> By the same token, according to Elizabeth Pond, Spain is also in favor of a defence policy, as the European crisis force can be used in the conflicts in its area.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, geo-political considerations - such as being very close to a zone of instability, in this case, the Balkans and the need to take collective action to achieve stability - played a predominant role in the case of Germany, Italy and Greece. On the one hand; bearing in mind that not all of the EU countries had these individual considerations - especially in the case of neutral and non-aligned states - it was obvious that Europe-wide realistic intentions had primacy over domestic interests when the member states decided to launch the CESDP project. On the other, it was Britain which took the lead in giving a defence role to the EU by both pursuing domestic interests and taking account of the Europe-wide intentions.

### *The British Effect*

---

<sup>70</sup> Karen Smith, 'The Instruments of European Foreign Policy', Jan Zielonka (ed.) *Paradoxes of European Foreign Policy* (Kluwer Law International, London, 1998) p.80.

<sup>71</sup> Robert E. Hunter, *op.cit.*, p. 138.

<sup>72</sup> Elizabeth Pond, 'Kosovo: Catalyst for Europe', *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No.4 (Autumn 1999), p.65.

Since the inception of the Communities, the biggest stumbling block to the realisation of the idea of injecting a defence dimension into the EU's economic and political might has been the sceptical attitude of the British. This permanent feature of British foreign policy was formulated in Whitehall in 1947, and was still valid until 1998. However, in late 1998, at the St. Malo bilateral summit, Tony Blair discarded this usual British stance towards European defence. This '*volte-face* in Britain's European policy'<sup>73</sup>, along with the removal of the 50 year-old veto on European defence, is widely perceived as constituting the major impetus in paving the way for an unprecedented EU project : the CESDP. Before analyzing the motivations of this British u-turn and its effects on the launch of the CESDP project, it would be appropriate to assess the traditional approach of Britain towards a European defence policy and the major reasons for this scepticism.

Since the early 1950s, all British governments - no matter whether Conservative or Labour - 'remained sceptical and generally hostile towards the idea of a defence role for the EU'. For Whitehall, NATO, 'the most successful alliance in history', was not only the 'cornerstone of European defence', but was also the main vehicle for strengthening the politically and militarily vital links with the US.<sup>74</sup> In other words, supporting the predominance of NATO in European defence and remaining committed to the Atlanticist stance and to US involvement in Europe, were the traditional policies pursued by Britain in international military affairs.<sup>75</sup> The concerns about jeopardizing the alliance and pushing Washington into isolationism, the 'confidence in American power', and by contrast the 'lack of confidence in European partners', paved the way for British governments to block the emergence of a defence identity for the EU.<sup>76</sup>

As the Cold War ended, there appeared to be an opportunity for the EU to develop its own defence policy, but this opportunity was missed, mostly because of Britain's desire to keep NATO on stage. During negotiations for the Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties, Britain rejected the proposal 'the infant CFSP to take a serious defence remit via the EU itself'.

---

<sup>73</sup> Anne Deighton, 'The Military Security Pool: Towards a New Security Regime for Europe?' *The International Spectator*, Vol.35, No.4 (October-December 2000), p.42.

<sup>74</sup> Colin McInnes, 'Labour's Strategic Defence Review', *International Affairs*, Vol.74, No.4 (October 1998), p. 827.

<sup>75</sup> However, there were some exceptions in implementation: during the Suez crisis of 1956, the UK acted in defiance of US policy, and between 1971 and 1973, President Pompidou and Prime Minister Edward Heath talked about how to combine French and British military and nuclear capabilities in order to maximize European autonomy from the US. Jolyon Howorth, 'Britain, NATO and CESDP: Fixed Strategy, Changing Tactics', *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol.5, No. 3 (Summer 2000), p.378.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> However, while opposing a European defence identity within the EU, Britain promoted the development of a European military capability within NATO, and therefore took the lead in the formation of ESDI. The traditional approach to a European defence identity which had to be realised within NATO was sustained by Tony Blair and his Labour government during their first year in power.<sup>78</sup> Although New Labour had adopted a new, positive and constructive tone in its policy towards the EU by expressing their desire to ‘end the isolationism of the last twenty years’ and make a fresh start in Europe,<sup>79</sup> the same revolutionary rhetoric was not valid in terms of giving the EU a defence identity. ‘The Strategic Defence Review’, launched by the then new Defence Secretary, George [now Lord] Robertson, reiterated NATO’s centrality in British defence policy, emphasized once again the importance of ‘retaining US political and military engagement in Europe’, and considered ‘no sense of a move towards European defence structures’.<sup>80</sup> In other words, New Labour’s policy towards European defence represented continuity with the past until 1998. This argument can best be proved by Tony Blair’s speech in June 1997 to the House of Commons on his return from the Amsterdam negotiations, in which he stated that ‘getting Europe’s voice heard more clearly in the world will not be achieved ... by developing an unrealistic common defence policy. Instead, we argued... that NATO is the foundation of our and other allies’ common defence’.<sup>81</sup> However, by late 1998, only one year after vetoing a Franco-German proposal at the Amsterdam negotiations, which aimed at bringing defence into the orbit of the EU, Blair ‘underwent a conversion’<sup>82</sup> by supporting a defence role for the EU.

From the summer of 1998 onwards, the New Labour government began to signal a sea change in the British traditional approach towards European defence. In the summer of 1998, Blair indicated that ‘in the field of defence as elsewhere, there’s no contradiction between being a good European and being a good Atlanticist’.<sup>83</sup> In other words, New Labour saw no need to make a distinct choice between being the closest ally of the Americans and at the same time being European. Most commentators argue

---

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 380.

<sup>78</sup> New Labour was elected to government on 1 May 1997.

<sup>79</sup> Kirsty Hughes and Edward Smith, ‘New Labour-New Europe?’, *International Affairs*, Vol.74, No.1 (January 1998), p.93.

<sup>80</sup> Colin McInnes, op. cit., p. 834.

<sup>81</sup> Quoted from John Roper, ‘Two Cheers for Mr. Blair? The European Political Realities of European Defence Cooperation’, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol.38, Annual Review (September 2000), p.9.

<sup>82</sup> Philip H. Gordon, ‘Their Own Army? Making European Defence Work’, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.79, No. 4 (July- August 2000), p.13.

<sup>83</sup> Quoted from John Roper, op. cit., p. 9.

that the shift in Blair's policy stemmed from the desire to prove Britain's European vocation. On the one hand, giving support to defence cooperation presented an unprecedented opportunity for Britain to compensate its policy of non-involvement in monetary integration and prove its European credentials. On the other hand, by stating that 'it would be a tragic mistake if Britain opted out of the debate and left the field to others'<sup>84</sup>, Tony Blair was demonstrating his will for Euro-leadership. Regardless of their importance, these intentions do not completely explain why Blair, in October 1998, and not as soon as he came to power in May 1997, announced that he no longer had objections to the formulation of a European defence policy.

The timing of Britain's u-turn is closely related to the conflict in Kosovo, where the Europeans realised how dependent they were on the US for any military operation in the continent, how inadequate their military capabilities were when compared to the US, and how reluctant their American ally was in dealing with crises in the EU's backyard. On the evidence of Kosovo, the British government was convinced that the US 'would not underwrite European security in the same way as during the Cold War'<sup>85</sup>, and that the only way to keep the US - and therefore NATO - engaged in Europe was to give the EU a genuine capacity in the defence field. In other words, the formulation of a European defence policy would apparently sweep away concerns about burden-sharing in the US Congress, and would therefore serve to maintain the US commitment to continental security and defence. In Howorth's words, the main motivation for the UK was to 'maintain and perpetuate the Atlantic Alliance, while keeping the US in business, and the solution to this problem is the creation of a European instrument: CESDP'<sup>86</sup>.

**As a result of these factors, Britain, accompanied by France, began to move from 'laggard to leader in promoting European defence integration'.<sup>87</sup> According to Roper, 'Tony Blair deserves cheers for his energetic opening of this dossier' of adding a defence dimension to European integration by a British Prime Minister since the UK's accession in 1973'.<sup>88</sup> This British shift from veto to green light, towards a genuine defence identity within the EU, is generally regarded as the major impetus behind the launch of the CESDP project. However, it must be kept in mind that Britain would never have abandoned its traditional hostility towards equipping the union with a defence capacity**

---

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Jolyon Howorth, 'Britain, France and the European Defence Initiative', *Survival*, Vol.42, No.2 (Summer 2000), p.34.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p.34 and 36.

<sup>87</sup> Anthony Foster and William Wallace, op.cit. p. 486.

<sup>88</sup> John Roper, op.cit. p.23.

**if the US had not strongly supported such an action and if there had not been conflicts - such as those in the Balkans - in its own backyard.**

### **The External Momentum Pushing the CESDP Project Forwards**

#### ***Crisis in the EU's Own Backyard - the Implications of the Kosovo Conflict.***

The most important motive for the change in policy towards defence cooperation was the war in Kosovo, or in the words of Mathiopoulos and Gyarmati 'what did not happen in Kosovo'.<sup>89</sup> The conflict in the Serbian province of Kosovo between guerrilla fighters of the Kosovo Liberation Army and the government forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia began in February 1998.<sup>90</sup> On 24 March 1999, after Milosevic refused to comply with the Rambouillet accords<sup>91</sup>, NATO initiated a campaign of air strikes, codenamed 'Operation Allied Force', against the Former Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY).<sup>92</sup> In June 1999, the NATO Secretary General announced the suspension of air operations in FRY after '78 days of strikes and nearly 36, 000 sorties'. This decision came after the withdrawal of the Yugoslav forces from Kosovo in accordance with a peace deal of 3 June 1999.<sup>93</sup> According to Pond, this crisis on the EU's doorstep was a 'catalyst for a more autonomous defence capacity' for the Union. During Operation Allied Force,

---

<sup>89</sup> Margarita Mathiopoulos and István Gyarmati, op. cit., p. 68.

<sup>90</sup> For the background of the conflict see; Tim Judah, 'Kosovo's Road to War', *Survival*, Vol.41, No.2 (Summer 1999), pp.5-18.

<sup>91</sup> On 6 February the proximity talks co-chaired by the British and French Foreign Ministers with the aim of resolving the Kosovo conflict started in Rambouillet, France. They culminated in the conclusion of a three-year interim agreement that would provide democratic self-government, peace, and security for everyone living in Kosovo, known as the Rambouillet Accords. According to the agreement, signed on 23 February 1999, Kosovo would have a President, an Assembly, its own courts, strong local government, and national community institutions with the authority needed to protect each community's identity. Security would be guaranteed by international troops deployed on the ground throughout Kosovo, and routine law enforcement would be provided by the local police and the representatives of all national communities. It was stipulated in the agreement that three years after entry into force of the Accords, an international meeting would be convened to determine a mechanism for a final settlement for Kosovo, on the basis of the will of the people, opinions of relevant authorities, each party's efforts regarding the implementation of the Accords, and the Helsinki Final Act. For the full text see:[http://www.kosovo.mod.uk/rambouillet\\_text.htm](http://www.kosovo.mod.uk/rambouillet_text.htm)

<sup>92</sup> Tim Youngs, Mark Oakes and Paul Bowers, *Kosovo: NATO and Military Action*, House of Commons Library Research Paper 99/34, London, 1999, p. 20.

<sup>93</sup> Tim Youngs and Paul Bowers, *Kosovo: KFOR and Reconstruction*, House of Commons Library Research Paper 99/66, London, 1999, p. 8.

the Europeans realised the superiority of the US and the impotence of Europe in terms of decision-making and military capabilities.

American hegemony in terms of decision-making during the conflict was an undeniable fact. As van Ham puts it, 'from the onset, Washington determined the tone and the substance of the international community's response, whereas its European allies played a low-profile role'.<sup>94</sup> Firstly; 'the military strategy of using airpower almost exclusively was dictated by Washington'.<sup>95</sup> Secondly, as the debate on whether to use ground troops during the operation heightened, President Clinton, by refusing to accept an Anglo-French proposal tabled at NATO's Washington Summit, brought an end to these discussions because of the anxiety about American public reaction to the US casualties that an invasion could involve.<sup>96</sup> US concerns about casualties culminated not only in the reluctance to prepare for a ground campaign, but also affected the conduct of the air campaign. For instance 'allied pilots were instructed to fly over 15, 000 feet'. Moreover, Clinton did not permit the involvement of Apache attack helicopters for a long time 'because of the concerns that they might be hit by small-arms fire or shoulder-launched missiles'.<sup>97</sup> To sum up, too many critical decisions were taken in Washington, which led to the 'marginalization and even humiliation'<sup>98</sup> of the European allies.

Apart from its leadership in decision-making, the Kosovo conflict also revealed the preponderance of the US in terms of military capabilities. Sixty-one percent of all sorties and 80 percent of aircraft were provided by the US during Operation Allied Force.<sup>99</sup> The first area in which the US had superiority over the Europeans was the possession of all weather precision munitions. Secondly, in terms of air-to-air refuelling, more than 90 percent of all sorties were refuelled by US aircraft; the US supplied 150 refuelling tankers, while UK and France together could only manage 24.<sup>100</sup> Thirdly, the US, with its vast satellite resources, provided nearly all of the intelligence capabilities for identifying targets; the European contributions amounted to '3 E-3 Sentry and one Nimrod aircraft provided by the UK and 6 reconnaissance

---

<sup>94</sup> Peter van Ham, op.cit., p. 217.

<sup>95</sup> Philip H. Gordon, op. cit., p.14.

<sup>96</sup> Malcolm Chalmers, 'Kosovo: The Crisis and Beyond' *Saferworld Report*, London, 1999, p. 9.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid

<sup>98</sup> Philip H. Gordon, op. cit. p.14.

<sup>99</sup> David S. Yost, 'The NATO Capabilities Gap and the European Union', *Survival*, Vol.42, No. 4 (Winter 2000-01), p.104.

<sup>100</sup> Tim Youngs, Mark Oakes and Paul Bowers, *Kosovo: Operation Allied Force*, House of Commons Library Research Paper 99/34, London, 1999, p. 69-70.

Tornadoes provided by Germany'.<sup>101</sup> Fourthly; in terms of airborne command and control, the allies relied on a USAF EC-130, which is designed for 'airspace traffic control and battle management'.<sup>102</sup> As Yost states, while the US had 'modern communication structures, such as transmission of schedules, maps and images via the SIPRNET, a significant proportion of allied forces lacked even encrypted voice communications'.<sup>103</sup> Fifthly, in terms of electronic warfare, NATO European allies were dependent on US EA-6B Prowlers – a jamming capability which neutralizes the enemies' target-acquisition radars.<sup>104</sup> The overall incapability of the EU to provide effective military support, can be best described by Lord Robertson's comments: 'On paper, Europe has two million men and women under arms - more than the US. But despite those two million soldiers, it was a struggle to come up with 40.000 troops to deploy as peacekeepers in the Balkans.'<sup>105</sup>

As a result, it became obvious in Kosovo that there could be 'no substitute for US leadership' in terms of both decision-making and military capabilities.<sup>106</sup> A German diplomat even accepted the deficiencies of European military might by stating that 'Kosovo was two or three sizes too big for us'.<sup>107</sup> During Operation Allied Force, Kosovo revealed the extent of European dependency on US assets, capabilities and leadership in the conduct of military action even in the EU's own backyard. In the words of Chalmers, the Europeans realised that 'US participation in peace enforcement operations in Europe will continue to be an important symbol of the unity of the international community'.<sup>108</sup>

However, the reluctance of the US to deal with the Kosovo crisis, which stemmed from its concerns about casualties in a conflict where its national interests were scarcely at stake, demonstrated 'how close the Americans were this time to staying out'.<sup>109</sup> Therefore, the concerns about American disengagement from possible future European crises led the

---

<sup>101</sup> Alistair J.K. Shepherd, 'Top-Down or Bottom-Up: Is Security and Defence Policy in the EU a Question of Political Will or Military Capability?', *European Security*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Summer 2000), p.21.

<sup>102</sup> David S. Yost, op.cit., p.104.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p.105.

<sup>104</sup> 'Lessons From Kosovo: Military Operational Capabilities', in *The Military Balance 1999-2000* (The International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 1999) p. 289.

<sup>105</sup> Lord Robertson, 'Rebalancing NATO for a Strong Future', Remarks at the Defence Week Conference, Brussels, 31 January 2000. For the whole text of the speech see [www.nato.int](http://www.nato.int)

<sup>106</sup> Elizabeth Pond, op.cit., p. 81.

<sup>107</sup> 'Quoted from' ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Malcolm Chalmers, op.cit., p. 9

<sup>109</sup> Philip H. Gordon, op.cit., p.14.

member states to forge a defence role for the EU which culminated in the formulation of the CESDP. European thinking was governed by two primary considerations. First, an autonomous defence capability would give the Europeans an added insurance policy, if the US or NATO decided not to become involved in a crisis. Tony Blair's speech in March 1999 proves this argument: 'We Europeans should not expect the US to have to play a part in every disorder in our own backyard.'<sup>110</sup> Secondly, the Europeans increased capabilities in the defence realm would 'neutralise' the advocates of burden-sharing in the US Congress<sup>111</sup>, because they would be convinced that the American burden in future European conflicts would be lessened by the CESDP. This would mean that the US could continue to commit itself to Europe's strategic and political future. This argument of burden-sharing is also the main answer to the question of why US supports a common defence policy at the EU level.

### Preponderance of US Support for CESDP

EU member states, especially Britain, would have never embarked upon a project for creating an autonomous European military capacity, including the relevant forces and decision-making mechanisms, if the US had been opposed to such an initiative. In other words, active US support for a EU defence role was not itself the motivation for the launch of the CESDP, but knowing that the US had no objections, paved the way. The speech by the US Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott can be regarded as evidence for American support for a defence policy at the EU level: '.... there should be no confusion about America's position on the need for a stronger Europe. We're not against it, we're not ambivalent, we're not anxious, we're for it. We want to see a Europe that can act effectively through the Alliance or, if NATO is not engaged, on its own.'<sup>112</sup> However, Talbott's speech made it clear that US support was surrounded by hesitations and concerns. As Sloan has argued, US support is based upon a 'yes, but' policy, backing the CESDP project while 'warning of its potential negative consequences'.<sup>113</sup>

The first factor that prompted the US to back the CESDP can be best summarized by William Cohen who observed that 'together with NATO, CESDP will give members of the Alliance and the EU an opportunity to plan

---

<sup>110</sup> Quoted from Peter Van Ham, op.cit., p. 218.

<sup>111</sup> David S. Yost, op.cit., p.111.

<sup>112</sup> Speech by US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott to the North Atlantic Council, Brussels, 15 December 1999. For the full text of the speech see [www.nato.int](http://www.nato.int).

<sup>113</sup> Stanley R. Sloan, *The United States and European Defence*, Chaillot Paper no. 39 (EU Institute of Security Studies, Paris, 2000) p.3.

and work together to create a more modern defence structure.’<sup>114</sup> Secondly, in the words of Sloan, CESDP ‘would diminish European resentment of US dominance in the Alliance’ by making the Europeans more self-reliant. He argues that ‘as the Europeans bring more resources to the NATO table, they will gain influence and leadership in the NATO decision-making processes’. Moreover, according to Sloan, what the US had in mind while giving support to CESDP was to ‘remove the final barriers to French reintegration into NATO’s command structure’. Washington felt that in response to its support for CESDP, France would fully commit itself to the Atlantic Alliance.<sup>115</sup>

These idealistic intentions aside, Washington’s foremost consideration was that the EU’s efforts in the defence realm would relieve the US of security burdens. Throughout NATO’s history, the US has spent a higher percentage of its GNP on defence than the European Allies. Having reduced spending for the defence of Europe, since the end of the Cold War, the US administration sees the CESDP as an incentive for the Europeans to take on a bigger share of the continental defence burden by increasing their military spending. This would allow the US to make even further cuts in its budget for Europe. Moreover, through CESDP, the EU would assume global security responsibilities and play a more active role beyond Europe. In missions where the US has significant interests, active European involvement would result in sharing the costs at all levels; in crises where the Americans have no particular interests, such as Maghreb and Africa, European efforts would be strongly supported by the US. Finally, the US feels that the ‘vitality’ of the transatlantic alliance may well be renewed by supporting the CESDP. Once the Europeans have better capabilities for force projection and sustainability, inter-operability with the NATO forces will be established, with European military capabilities contributing to the effectiveness and success of NATO operations.<sup>116</sup>

As a consequence of these factors, the US approach towards a role for the EU in the defence realm has been, despite some reservations, generally positive. US concerns about a defence policy to be formulated at the EU level were first made public by Madeleine Albright, at the semi-annual NATO Foreign Ministers meeting in Brussels on 8 December 1998, in response to the St. Malo Declaration. She signalled the beginning of the ‘3 D’ approach – no duplication, no decoupling and no discrimination – by stating that ‘any initiative must avoid pre-empting Alliance decision-making by de-linking ESDI from NATO, avoid duplicating existing efforts and avoid discriminating against non-EU members’.<sup>117</sup> By emphasizing the issue of duplication, Washington was warning the Europeans not to build military structures in

---

<sup>114</sup> Quoted in Robert E. Hunter, *op.cit.*, p. 105.

<sup>115</sup> Stanley R. Sloan, *op.cit.*, p.28.

<sup>116</sup> Robert E. Hunter, *op.cit.*, pp.140-141.

<sup>117</sup> Quoted from Robert E. Hunter, *op.cit.*, pp. 33-34.

addition to their national or NATO forces. Behind US concern about de-linking was also a fear that the St. Malo initiative would lead to a decoupling of the security of the two sides of the Atlantic. In other words, the structures and processes within CESDP would end in competition with NATO and eventually lead to a weakening of NATO.<sup>118</sup> US real intentions in terms of decoupling can be found in William Cohen's remarks that 'the CESDP should be under the umbrella of NATO itself, separable but not separate'.<sup>119</sup> By the same token, what the US genuinely had in mind was to underline NATO's primacy. Moreover; by concentrating on the possibility of discrimination, the US was trying to preserve the right of every NATO member - notably Turkey - to participate in decision-making regarding the use of NATO assets.

However, the American authorities were well aware of the fact that the negative implications of the CESDP for the transatlantic relationship were outweighed by the benefits. After making this cost-benefit analysis, Washington started to support the trend towards a more pronounced and forceful defence capability at the EU level, which would pave the way to the fulfilment of the European ideal of a common defence policy.

### Conclusion

After the 1950s, with the failure of the EDC project, defence within a purely European context became a taboo subject for almost five decades. In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, the EU's opportunity to write a military role for itself was overshadowed by the institutional preponderance of a NATO under US leadership. Neither the Treaty of Maastricht, nor the Treaty of Amsterdam marked a substantial shift from the EU's civilian power role, despite the fact that both treaties contained provisions for establishing a common defence policy. By 1998, thanks to the St.Malo meeting - regarded as the first step in the evolution of the CESDP - the missed opportunities of the 1990s and even the 1950s reappeared on the European agenda. In 2004, after setting up the necessary military forces and institutional structures, the EU is even discussing the prospects of including a mutual defence clause - such as Article 5 of the Washington Treaty - into its so-called Constitutional Treaty.<sup>120</sup>

This article has shown that it was the lessons drawn from the Kosovo conflict which led the EU member states to launch the CESDP project. Moreover, as this study has again shown, the effects of Operation Allied Force in Kosovo were so decisive that Britain, which had traditionally

---

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., pp.142-143.

<sup>119</sup> William S. Cohen, Remarks to WEU's Transatlantic Forum, Washington D.C., 28 June 2000.

<sup>120</sup> Title 5, Article III-214 of the Constitutional Treaty. For the whole text see The European Convention, *Draft Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe Submitted to the European Council Meeting in Thessaloniki, 20 June 2003*, Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2003.

resisted the idea of giving the EU a defence role, underwent a process of conversion and went on to take the lead in the formulation and implementation of the CESDP. However, member states would never have launched such an ambitious project if there had been signs of opposition from the US. To sum up, with US backing and the lessons of Kosovo still fresh in their minds, the member states, with Britain in the driving seat, finally embarked upon their historic journey towards a genuine 'Common European Security and Defence Policy'.

Since January 2000, the EU has been engaged in establishing new military and political institutions that will provide political guidance and strategic direction for military operations, along with the development of military capabilities, headline goals and the necessary structures for closer cooperation with the Atlantic Alliance. These developments suggest that the CESDP is well on track. The progress within the framework of the CESDP can be best explained in van Ham's words: 'in the event of a serious crisis, Europe finally has a relevant phone number: just dial 00-32-2-285 500 00 and you will talk to the EU's situation and crisis centre'.<sup>121</sup>

Despite the apparent progress in giving the CESDP substance to back up the rhetoric, this initiative could still collapse, like the EDC, the Fouchet Plan and the Genscher-Colombo Plan before it; alternatively, it could remain in a dormant state because of conceptual, institutional and operational limitations. At the conceptual level, the current CESDP framework is limited to undertaking the Petersberg tasks, which means that it does not take on the responsibilities for collective self-defence. However, as collective territorial defence is no longer the central question that it was during the Cold War, the lack of Article 5 guarantees within the scope of the CESDP is not a significant problem. At the institutional level; the CESDP operates through intergovernmental lines which creates problems of efficiency in an area where quick and effective decision-making procedures are vital. In this context, the EU should re-examine the relevant decision-making mechanisms. Finally; at the operational level, the EU still faces significant shortfalls in terms of military capabilities - including the lack of an effective command and control system, heavy air and sea lift, search and rescue capabilities as well as an adequate intelligence service - for the performance of the Petersberg tasks. Therefore, the recourse to the NATO assets, mainly to US assets, is indispensable for the EU even for the most modest military missions.<sup>122</sup> The creation of an effective force projection capability, combined with a satellite intelligence system ending the traditional dependence on US military might, requires national military restructuring programmes, increases in defence

---

<sup>121</sup> Peter van Ham, *op. cit.*, p.227.

<sup>122</sup> Çınar Özen, 'Consequences of the European Security and Defence Policy for the European non-EU NATO Members', *Ankara Review of European Studies*, Vol.1, No.1 (Fall 2001) p. 149.

expenditures and the consolidation of defence industries. Unless and until these conceptual, institutional and operational problems are solved, the CESDP will remain largely a paper exercise: the signs are promising that it can be moved out of this stage, but its development and consolidation will certainly be jeopardized if the EU 's 'picture of disunity' in foreign policy and defence issues remains the picture of the future.