



TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY TASK FORCE SERIES

## RECONCILING NATIONAL AND TRANSATLANTIC INTERESTS

Creating Political Will to Address the Great Challenges  
of Transatlantic Security Cooperation

Working Session  
April 24-25, 2014, Paris

**G | M | F** The German Marshall Fund  
of the United States  
STRENGTHENING TRANSATLANTIC COOPERATION

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#### **About this Paper Series**

For each session of the GMF Transatlantic Security Task Force, a series of analytical papers produced by the participants, developing different aspects of our reflections, is published. These papers are published individually and as a coherent series of comprehensive works dedicated to one major issue of transatlantic security cooperation. In this way, the GMF Transatlantic Security Task Force opens the debate to the public and feeds future discussions on transatlantic relations.

The authors are solely responsible for the views expressed herein.

#### **Partners**

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#### **About GMF**

The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) strengthens transatlantic cooperation on regional, national, and global challenges and opportunities in the spirit of the Marshall Plan. GMF does this by supporting individuals and institutions working in the transatlantic sphere, by convening leaders and members of the policy and business communities, by contributing research and analysis on transatlantic topics, and by providing exchange opportunities to foster renewed commitment to the transatlantic relationship. In addition, GMF supports a number of initiatives to strengthen democracies. Founded in 1972 as a non-partisan, non-profit organization through a gift from Germany as a permanent memorial to Marshall Plan assistance, GMF maintains a strong presence on both sides of the Atlantic. In addition to its headquarters in Washington, DC, GMF has offices in Berlin, Paris, Brussels, Belgrade, Ankara, Bucharest, and Warsaw. GMF also has smaller representations in Bratislava, Turin, and Stockholm.

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RECONCILING NATIONAL AND TRANSATLANTIC INTERESTS:  
CREATING POLITICAL WILL TO ADDRESS THE GREAT CHALLENGES OF  
TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY COOPERATION

TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY TASK FORCE SERIES

WORKING SESSION

APRIL 24-25, 2014, PARIS

JUNE 2014

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# 1

## ABOUT THE GMF TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY TASK FORCE

### The Aim

Three times a year, the GMF Transatlantic Security Task Force (TSTF) brings together a group of 25 high-level U.S. and European security experts, strategic thinkers, government and private sector representatives, mostly from the defense industry, to explore the security priorities for transatlantic cooperation in the years to come and stimulate and organize much-needed transatlantic security dialogue on looming threats and possibilities of cooperation.

The goal of the TSTF is not to revisit the concepts that define the transatlantic relationship, but for the transatlantic partners to reconsider the nature of their cooperation in the face of evolving and multifaceted global challenges. Each session attempts to highlight the areas where transatlantic cooperation should be improved and strengthened, with regards to specific challenges and taking into consideration the latest issues on the international agenda. Bearing in mind the centrality of the transatlantic partners in solving today's and tomorrow's issues, the TSTF provides a platform for experts and policy practitioners to discuss the ways transatlantic security cooperation policy should be framed in the years to come. The objective of this tri-annual transatlantic discussion is to influence the security policy environment by getting the questions right and creating the relevant analytical and discussion architecture. The convening model lends itself to addressing the interests of policymakers thanks to the private and candid nature of the discussions, the innovative discussion formats that allow for the development of concrete policy recommendations, and the presence of high-level decision-makers and stakeholders in the transatlantic relationship.

### The Context

The format and the objectives of the task force exactly fit an increasing European and

U.S. demand to strengthen transatlantic understanding and cooperation in the security field. Indeed, the political consensus between both sides of the Atlantic can no longer be guaranteed when confronting new international challenges. The economic crisis has more specifically affected the development of concrete policy cooperation, as both sides of the Atlantic wish to redefine their military and diplomatic engagements.

Consequently, this context has created a strong need for high-level discussion among national security and defense strategists on emerging and potential security issues that Europeans and Americans will need to address in the future. These include issues of grand strategy (i.e. the shifting military balance, the future transatlantic burden sharing and of common procurement programs, the future of the use of military force) as well as very specific challenges (i.e. maritime security, energy security, Arctic issues, the rise of new military powers, the future of NATO). Any of these challenges could alter the dynamics of the transatlantic conversation and even the shape of the alliance. That these challenges are not singular snapshots in time but extend and often overlap, converge, and reinforce one another is reason for greater urgency in reinvigorating the transatlantic security dialogue.

### The Method

The agenda of TSTF is shaped by a core group of recognized experts in transatlantic security cooperation and European and U.S. officials, who decide collectively, during the annual executive planning session, the key security issues that should be discussed in the working groups.

The TSTF includes three workshops per year, now held in Paris but potentially also in other European capitals or Washington DC, to probe the agreed upon questions. Five to ten commissioned papers are distributed to

all participants beforehand and serve as the backbone of the discussions. The workshops bring together the members of the core group of the TSTF, along with selected experts on the topics that are discussed during the working group.

GMF's unique network of offices in 12 locations in Europe, the United States, and North Africa has allowed the consolidation of a strong pan-European and transatlantic network of security experts and officials in countries where current and future operational challenges are identified.

Each workshop is organized as follows:

- Day 1: Opening dinner debate featuring a distinguished keynote speaker
- Day 2: Full-day working session, organized around three panels, with a networking lunch break

The dates of the 2014 working groups are:

- **April 24-25:** Reconciling National and Transatlantic Interests: Creating Political Will to Address the Great Challenges of Transatlantic Security Cooperation
- **July 10-11:** Potential Disrupters of Transatlantic Security: Turning Threats into Opportunities for Security Cooperation
- **First half of October:** Transatlantic Strategic Convergences and Divergences: Are We Facing a New Strategic Moment?

### **The Paper Series**

For each session, GMF publishes a series of analytical papers produced by the participants. These papers are published both as single papers and as a compilation dedicated to the featured issue of transatlantic security cooperation for each meeting. The publications and the wide audience they are circulated to ensure that workshop conclusions receive maximum, yet targeted, coverage and influence policy formulation.

### **Project Leader/Contact**

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# 2

## RECONCILING NATIONAL AND TRANSATLANTIC INTERESTS: CREATING POLITICAL WILL TO ADDRESS THE GREAT CHALLENGES OF TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY COOPERATION AGENDA

### Thursday, April 24

#### 7:30-9:30 pm Opening Dinner

**Location:** George C. Marshall Center –  
Hôtel de Talleyrand  
2 rue Saint-Florentin, Paris 75001

**Keynote Speaker:** Artis Pabriks, Member of Parliament, former Minister of Defense (2010-2014) and former Minister of Foreign Affairs (2004-2007) of the Republic of Latvia

**Discussant:** Steven Erlanger, London Bureau Chief, *The New York Times*

### Friday, April 25

#### 9:00-10:45 am Session I – Building European Defense in the Context of U.S. Strategic Restraint

What are the prospects for a more integrated European defense in the years to come, and what are the stumbling blocks that transatlantic partners can work on together? On what aspects are European partners expected to make strategic advances in the years to come? To what extent does the United States continue to be strategically interested in European security? What will be the Central and Eastern European powers' response to the U.S. strategic restraint? What are the implications of the increasing tensions with Russia on European strategic unity? Is the emergence of a strong and independent European defense a priority for transatlantic relations? Can Europeans build their defense without the United States? Can the United States help integrate the U.K. and Germany in European strategic structures? Should France take the lead on strategic and defense issues at the European level? How should U.S.-European strategic cooperation be improved in the future?

#### 11:00 am-12:45 pm Session II – Transatlantic Use of Force: What is the Future for Military Operations at the Transatlantic Level?

To what extent is the use of force still a relevant tool for transatlantic security strategy? What is the use of military force designed to achieve for transatlantic powers? What strategic obligations will trigger the use of force in the future? What will be the terms of a transatlantic military engagement in a conflict? Are transatlantic partners able to set credible red lines to define their use of military force? How could transatlantic powers address the risk of potential border modifications in Europe? Do transatlantic powers still have the capabilities to use force? Is Europe able, and is the United States willing, to use force today? What is the impact of public opinion on the use of force? Is the use of drones and other indirect uses of force (e.g. foreign military assistance, cyberwar) efficient ways to overcome the transatlantic opinion's reluctance toward conventional warfare?

#### 2:00-3:45 Session III – Making Sense of EU-NATO Relations: Working Toward a Same Objective?

What dialogue could be built between the two institutions, and on what basis could it be started? What are the topics that need to be urgently addressed by the two institutions? Do they share common priorities and strategic interests? Can their strategic actions be complementary? What can the EU offer to NATO in terms of strategic capabilities, and vice-versa? What are the strengths and challenges of European Union defense cooperation initiatives, and how are they complimentary to what NATO brings? To what extent can they cooperate in order to strengthen the transatlantic security partnership? Is a clear division of labor between the EU and NATO conceivable, if at all realistic? How will NATO's new role and mission(s) post-2014 define the nature of its relationship with EU institutions? How will the recent developments

in Ukraine affect the definition of NATO's role in European security after 2014? To what extent will NATO carry out transatlantic global interests beyond its immediate sphere of influence? What are the U.S. and Canadian interests in EU-NATO cooperation? Do NATO strategic interests correspond to transatlantic strategic interests? Will NATO remain the focal point of transatlantic discussions on security and defense in the future, and what role can the EU play in developing alternative structures that include non-NATO members?

***4:00-5:00 Recommendations for the Future of Transatlantic Security Cooperation***



# 3

## SESSION I: BUILDING EUROPEAN DEFENSE IN THE CONTEXT OF U.S. STRATEGIC RESTRAINT

**W**hat are the prospects for a more integrated European defense in the years to come, and what are the stumbling blocks that transatlantic partners can work on together? On what aspects are European partners expected to make strategic advances in the years to come? To what extent does the United States continue to be strategically interested in European security? What will be the Central and Eastern European powers' response to the U.S. strategic restraint? What are the implications of the increasing tensions with Russia on European strategic unity? Is the emergence of a strong and independent European defense a priority for transatlantic relations? Can Europeans build their defense without the United States? Can the United States help integrate the U.K. and Germany in European strategic structures? Should France take the lead on strategic and defense issues at the European level? How should U.S.-European strategic cooperation be improved in the future?

### Scene-Setting Papers

"The Summit of Our Ambition? European Defense between Brussels and Wales," Sven Biscop, Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations

"Building on European Defense in the Context of U.S. Strategic Restraint," Christopher Chivvis, RAND Corporation

**Key Insights: European defense coordination represents the main response to the challenges of the current reduction of military budget spending and the increase of European responsibilities in the context of the U.S. strategic restraint.**

### *Articulating European Capabilities, European Autonomy, and European Responsibility*

In the context of U.S. strategic restraint and budget cuts on both sides of the Atlantic, a more integrated European defense could prove

essential to the future of transatlantic security cooperation. The evolution of U.S. involvement in European security has led to a serious reconsideration of the roles and responsibilities of major European powers. Although the continuous debates on burden-sharing and the increase of European military capabilities are not a new trend, they have become all the more heated in the tumultuous context created by multiple crises in the European neighborhood. Economic crisis and defense budget cuts have affected the defense structures of all European powers and deeply weakened European overall strategic capacities. Faced with the realization that no European power can, or wants to, act on its own to address strategic issues in their entirety, further defense cooperation at the European level has become a necessity rather than a choice. Absent increases in defense budgets, defense coordination has become, by default, the only response to the two-fold European challenge of increased strategic responsibilities to be carried out with reduced capabilities.

One of the ways to foster such closeness would be to move forward with setting up an autonomous European command structure, which would play a central role in enabling interoperability of European defense capabilities within set guidelines, and would also create a framework where Europeans could discuss the operationalization of missions and build coalitions at the political-military level. With NATO and the EU, European partners already possess strong institutions to reinforce transatlantic and intra-European dialogue and collaboration on security issues. NATO's and EU's respective command structures should be designed at articulating their work and missions. The potential for a more integrated approach to European defense, with the necessary political back-up to military operations, is however largely under-exploited, and the United States will have an important role to play to help European



powers develop their defense capacities, while at the same time empowering them to take initiatives and providing them with flexibility in situations that will necessitate it.

With this in mind, it is expected on both sides of the Atlantic that any reinforcement of European capacities will naturally lead to new security responsibilities. France and the United Kingdom have shown willingness to take the lead on specific security issues that they perceived as being in their national interests, but do not have either the defense capabilities or the political power to be legitimate substitutes to Washington in creating long-term alliances and coalitions. These responsibilities need to be better shared among all European partners, and the debates on the risk of capability gaps at the transatlantic level may be even more relevant at the intra-European one. The EU will have to play a greater role in the coordination of European foreign policies and defense strategies in order to enable the rapid constitution of coalitions of the willing and overcome the capability limits of each nation-state, a scenario in which member states hold the key, in letting the EU take on a more important policy role. The EU should especially be able to use its range of powers to implement operations in which countries possessing stronger military capabilities are politically and economically supported by those with fewer military assets. Here, the strategic role of Germany will be paramount, as the leading European economic power has yet to take on its full share of the security burden, or even display continued willingness to do so. A more engaged German foreign policy will be necessary to the achievement of new European security objectives.

Finally, the role of NATO in articulating European capabilities, responsibilities, and autonomy should be addressed in the coming months. The 2014 NATO Summit, on top of painting the picture of the future of the Alliance, should also address the interaction between

NATO and a European defense caucus. NATO and European security autonomy are not opposed by definition: the Alliance can provide the command structure and experience to develop European security cooperation and address the issue of capability gaps among European partners. Despite some obvious shortfalls, the 2011 Libya operation can be seen as a potential model for future ad-hoc operations that enable Europeans to assume more strategic and political responsibilities while receiving the military support of NATO and the United States. Even if the outcomes of the operation are publicly perceived as negative, particularly in the United States where the Benghazi “scandal” has polarized political debates, the military success and the operation’s lessons-learned are still beneficial. In parallel, the development of the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) must remain a priority to improve long-term security cooperation and enable the EU to become a credible and reliable security provider in the European neighborhood. There is thus a clearly stated need for Europeans and Americans to work together in laying out the dynamics of this new security relationship, by redefining the lines of what is acceptable for one another, and also by setting clear realistic goals, linked to specific strategic responsibilities.

### ***Rethinking Military Deterrence at the Transatlantic Level***

The Ukrainian crisis and renewed tensions with Russia have brought European security back to the center of transatlantic discussions. However, at this point, the exact implications of the Russian policy in Eastern Europe are still emerging. Historical analogies with the Cold War period do not accurately depict the current strategic reality. Although its aggressive foreign policy has revealed its ability to be a regional spoiler, Russia still is not a global competitor to transatlantic powers, and is unlikely to become so. The recent crisis has however affected the European security

environment and created significant concerns among transatlantic partners, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. Moscow seems more unpredictable, and its revisionist approach could become a real threat to European unity. Many European states are concerned by the fact that the events in Ukraine appear to have triggered only a limited reaction from the United States. The reassurance measures that followed Russia's annexation of Crimea, in combination with what some believe to be insufficient economic sanctions by Europe, can appear troubling given a context of U.S. strategic restraint and rebalancing toward Asia.

The recent troubles in Eastern Europe have therefore highlighted the need for renewed strategic thinking on collective defense, and have brought back the core tasks of transatlantic security cooperation at the center of the debate. More specifically, the crisis questions the transatlantic ability to deter revisionist states from threatening stability in the European neighborhood. Such an issue has become particularly crucial in the case of non-NATO members, who cannot rely on Article 5 guarantees to deter potential aggression. Transatlantic partners need to provide reassurance beyond the borders of the Alliance, and therefore define the role of NATO deterrence mechanisms for establishing stability for non-NATO states in Eastern Europe. The credibility of the deterrence strategy will also stem from the credibility of the transatlantic partners as security providers and their capacity to set red-lines — perhaps beyond the simple realm of Article 5 territory.

The definition of an ambitious deterrence strategy will require active engagement from the EU; European institutions will have to take the lead on economic and diplomatic sanctions

and prevent European divisions from blocking a European coordinated response. The Ukrainian crisis, with its energy and economic dimensions, has enabled Russia to profit from divergent European interests and to hinder European willingness to impose costs on Moscow. The lack of a clear division of labor between European partners, and the unforceful EU response to the crisis, carry certain concerns in a context of strategic rethinking in the United States and Canada. The EU will have to offer more reliability and credibility in order to keep its transatlantic partners involved in European security.

Finally, transatlantic powers should prepare for the aftermath of the Ukrainian crisis and think long and hard about its potential outcomes. Long-term strategic reflections should be kept in mind as the United States and the EU need to define what they want Europe to look like over the long-term. The future of Russia will largely affect the security environment in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, whilst its weakening cannot be considered a positive outcome for regional stability. Looking forward, a weak transatlantic response combined with a symbolic Russian victory could deepen concerns in the European neighborhood, but also among other U.S. and European allies in Asia and in the Middle East and North Africa region, about Europe's power and its ability to maintain the liberal international order that it is based on. Transatlantic powers must therefore be ready to commit to two parallel agendas: the reassertion of their positions — and deeper levels of unity — toward anti-liberal, revisionist actors such as Russia in order to reassure their global partners and reinforce the credibility of their deterrence strategy, while at the same time establishing a common policy that keeps Russia engaged on future discussions about security and stability in Eurasia.

# 4

## SESSION II: TRANSATLANTIC USE OF FORCE: WHAT FUTURE FOR MILITARY OPERATIONS AT THE TRANSATLANTIC LEVEL?

**T**o what extent is the use of force still a relevant tool for transatlantic security strategy? What is the use of military force designed to achieve for transatlantic powers? What strategic obligations will trigger the use of force in the future? What will be the terms of a transatlantic military engagement in a conflict? Are transatlantic partners able to set credible red lines to define their use of military force? How could transatlantic powers address the risk of potential border modifications in Europe? Do transatlantic powers still have the capabilities to use force? Is Europe able and is the United States willing to use force today? What is the impact of public opinion on the use of force? Is the use of drones and other indirect uses of force (e.g. foreign military assistance, cyberwar) efficient ways to overcome the transatlantic opinion's reluctance toward conventional warfare?

### Scene-Setting Papers

"The Murky Future of U.S. Use of Force," Samuel J. Brannen, Center for Strategic and International Studies

"German Defense Policy: Is the Change for Real?," Claudia Major and Christian Mölling, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik

"The Dismal Present and Future of Smart Defence," Stephen Saideman, Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University

**Key Insights: Transatlantic public support for the use of military force is essential to preserve the credibility of transatlantic deterrence and of transatlantic powers as security providers.**

### *Political Willingness for Use of Force in Transatlantic Societies*

The recent events in the European neighborhood, from the Libya intervention in 2011 to the decision not to intervene in Syria to the rising

tensions with Russia, have generated intense reflections on the strategic obligations that may lead transatlantic powers to use force, as well as on their ability to respond militarily to the trespassing of so-called "red lines" — a political instrument by nature. These crises have renewed the spotlight on the essential relationship that links political will to the use of force, and have rendered the issue of public diplomacy particularly acute in the transatlantic democratic societies.

The strategic community, and the political elite as a whole, have been largely unsuccessful in outlining to local populations the strategic imperatives that would lead to the use of force, and also in translating these imperatives into popular support for larger-scale military operations. The refusal of the British Parliament to support a military intervention in Syria is the latest illustration of the "crisis of confidence" that has been growing between governments and their populations since the 2003 Iraq war. The military operations that have received public support, at least in their starting phase (Afghanistan, Mali), have proven that transatlantic societies were willing to accept the use of force when specific goals were clearly identified. In Europe, the use of force has regularly generated serious public debates, starting with the 1999 intervention in Kosovo (specifically in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya), and there is an increasing feeling that the gap between the publics and the strategic community is widening, which has increased tensions between accepted strategic obligations and public support for the use of force, and directly affecting the political willingness to do so. The German case provides an outstanding example, as the political elite remains, more than ever, torn between a public opinion that does not see a role for the military in carrying out German power around the world, and the pressure that transatlantic allies have put on Germany for greater strategic engagement.

In the United States, increasing political polarization of foreign policy issues, as demonstrated by the ongoing discussions around the events in Benghazi, the decline of bipartisanship in Congress, and the effects of the sequestration process, have also affected the political will to use force. As a result, military operations must achieve a quick and decisive effect in order to forestall the opposition of a war-weary population, media, and Congress. This tense political context also explains the strategic choices that transpired through the U.S. defense budget cuts, and the decision to preserve special forces from important cuts; other items, such as readiness, were harder hit. As more long-term conflict will generally face public opposition and eventually the opposition of the political elite, military forces will tend to be designed for short, high-effectiveness, expeditionary operations.

The recent failures at convincing the public of the necessity of the use of force have exacerbated long-term downward trends. Although less directly affected by conflicts, transatlantic populations are more and more exposed to the reality of military force, and a general trend of reluctance toward its use has developed. The divergences between U.S. and European public perception of threats, and maybe even more within the Europeans themselves, has weakened the political will for military action in the years to come. This leads to a responsibility gap in transatlantic societies, when populations theoretically support an intervention to stop a conflict and provide security, but refuse to see their own military forces taking part in the intervention in practice — a case witnessed in Germany in early 2014. This paradox reveals the disconnect in the populations' minds between the political objectives and the military means to achieve them. From this perspective, the U.S. strategy during the 2011 operation in Libya provided an interesting example, with Washington giving military assistance without

taking the political lead of the intervention. The German attitude toward the use of force was also affected by the same operation, as it increased the international pressure on the German government for a greater involvement in strategic affairs. Whether the operation in Libya will provide a model for a mature transatlantic security partnership remains to be decided; it did, however, highlight the key issues of the interaction between political will and use of force in transatlantic democracies.

#### ***The Articulation of National and Transatlantic Strategic Interests and the Need for More Flexibility***

The issue of the use of force at the transatlantic level is also linked to the complex articulation between national and transatlantic strategic interests. The difficulty of reaching a transatlantic agreement over security priorities and the means to defend security priorities has often prevented coalitions from emerging and concrete actions from following through.

In this context, transatlantic collective use of force requires more flexibility in order to reach quick and practical compromises between the different strategic interests and ambitions. However, the true nature of the level of flexibility in the transatlantic security partnership is the subject of heated debates, as it provides leeway to partners that can be used as excuses for non-participation, given the unbinding nature of the rules. Too much flexibility may thus entail inefficiency instead of providing a framework that can adapt to strategic circumstances and facilitate the constitution of coalitions. On the other hand, transatlantic partners have been successful in developing ad hoc military operations in more flexible and pragmatic frameworks. The 2013 French-led operation in Mali showed that a rapid military intervention was possible notwithstanding the limits of the formal and institutional structures to find an

agreement between the transatlantic divergences of interests in the region. Transatlantic use of force therefore necessitates flexible frameworks in which quick coercive reactions can be decided, but also needs long-term and constraining military cooperation in order to strengthen interoperability between armed forces and increase predictability among partners. Besides, if the right balance is yet to be found, flexibility is a condition for action, and therefore contributes to determining the credibility of transatlantic use of force. Military actions and deterrence measures are only credible if the actors have the capabilities to operate and the willingness to do so. The question of transatlantic credibility is particularly significant for non-NATO members that cannot rely on the Article 5 to predict the engagement of U.S. and European troops in the case of a crisis.

The current conflict in Ukraine is an outstanding illustration of this issue. While transatlantic powers intend to be essential actors of security and stability of the region, their reaction raises strong questions about their credibility as security providers for non-NATO powers in the European neighborhood. In addition, although the crisis has forced transatlantic powers to re-engage in a constructive debate on European defense, it may not be entirely positive for the transatlantic relations. The United States is eager to see its European allies share more of the defense burden, but it needs the Europeans to prove themselves as reliable partners when it comes to taking offensive actions. The U.S. main strategic objectives in the coming decade will be located in Asia, and in the long run, a transatlantic coalition will have to develop stronger power-projection capacities outside Europe. The Ukrainian crisis has resulted in a renewed focus on deterrence, which may distract Europe from developing useful expeditionary capabilities. As

a consequence, the gap between what Americans and Europeans expect from transatlantic security cooperation may widen even further, so defining a common transatlantic security interest will not be facilitated by a lackluster European effort for collective defense in the context of the U.S. rebalancing strategy.

Finally, a more flexible approach to the transatlantic use of force needs to precisely define the kind of capabilities that should be used. Transatlantic powers require capabilities enabling them to respond quickly to crises and conflicts without putting strategic assets at risk. Early-warning capacities are therefore key to preparing interventions. Similarly, transatlantic military capabilities are highly efficient in launching and winning conflicts but are less prepared for managing their aftermath: improving crisis management cooperation should be a priority, and the diversity of transatlantic resources offers great potential for a better division of labor and adaptation to the different phases of a conflict. Being more flexible also requires a better understanding of what is meant by use of force. While President Obama is often perceived as reluctant to use force in comparison to his predecessor, his use of special forces and drones has proven his readiness to employ armed forces to achieve his objectives. New asymmetrical threats will require appropriate responses going beyond a narrow and conventional definition. Using transatlantic economic power to threaten and deter can, for instance, provide an efficient alternative to military actions and should be part of a more comprehensive approach. Flexibility when defining the pertinent transatlantic use of force will therefore determine the strategy, budget, and diplomacy of military engagement.

# 5

## SESSION III: MAKING SENSE OF EU-NATO RELATIONS: WORKING TOWARD THE SAME OBJECTIVE?

**W**hat dialogue could be built between the EU and NATO, and on what basis could it be started? What are the topics that need to be urgently addressed by the two institutions? Do they share common priorities and strategic interests? Can their strategic actions be complementary? What can the EU offer NATO in terms of strategic capabilities, and vice-versa? What are the strengths and challenges of European Union defense cooperation initiatives, and how are they complimentary to what NATO brings? To what extent can they cooperate in order to strengthen the transatlantic security partnership? Is a clear division of labor between the EU and NATO conceivable, if at all realistic? How will NATO's new role and mission(s) post-2014 define the nature of its relationship with EU institutions? How will the recent developments in Ukraine affect the definition of NATO's role in European security after 2014? To what extent will NATO carry out transatlantic global interests beyond its immediate sphere of influence? What are the U.S. and Canadian interests in EU-NATO cooperation? Do NATO strategic interests correspond to transatlantic strategic interests? Will NATO remain the focal point of transatlantic discussions on security and defense in the future, and what role can the EU play in developing alternative structures that include non-NATO members?

**Key Insights: Transatlantic partners must promote pragmatic and informal relations between the two frameworks in order to overcome the institutional obstacles to an enhanced EU-NATO cooperation.**

### ***Assessing EU-NATO Division of Labor and Competing Institutional Interests***

EU-NATO cooperation is a matter of great frustration for transatlantic partners. Despite the potential for foreign policy and defense cooperation, the two institutions have mostly developed in parallel and continuously failed

to formally and efficiently work together on common issues. The prospect of cooperation has been affected by a counter-productive understanding of division of labor, in which NATO would focus only on military issues, while the EU would provide political and economic tools. This simplistic vision has made institutional dialogue mostly sterile. In order to build fruitful cooperation, NATO needs to develop its diplomatic and political tools, with the EU in parallel maintaining strong efforts on development of capabilities. Indeed, the complementarity between these two institutions will not stem from increased specialization, but instead from shared interests and strategic visions. EU-NATO competition may jeopardize cooperation if too strict a division of labor prevents the two institutions from communicating and sharing their perceptions of threats.

Institutional cooperation has also faced more specific blockages. The issue of Cyprus continues to be a subject of dispute that has reduced the formal collaboration between NATO and the EU. Yet, Cyprus is also used as an excuse to not engage in a more constructive dialogue. However, it remains at this point very uncertain that EU-NATO cooperation will experience significant improvement once an agreement on the Cyprus issue is reached. Transatlantic partners need to address more structural issues, and the focus on issues such as Cyprus diverts the attention from more significant underlying trends.

One of these more profound factors of division concerns the interaction between EU and NATO interests. The two institutions share most of their member states, and should therefore agree on common priorities. In practice, both NATO and the EU defend common values and aspire to strengthen transatlantic relations. They are important components of the liberal international order that has been built since World War II and agree on most strategic



challenges. Yet, EU-NATO coordination has also exacerbated the difficult articulation of divergent transatlantic national interests that already affects the functioning of each organization. Concrete collaboration is made more complex by the difference of internal rules and laws, and a productive EU-NATO strategic cooperation will need to overcome the hurdles created by specific institutional experiences and strategic culture.

This being said, what should transatlantic partners expect from the 2014 NATO Summit? First of all, NATO will have to discuss its perceptions of Russia as a regional spoiler, and determine if Moscow's policy should be characterized as a threat by the Alliance. In addition to putting Russia under the spotlight, the crisis in Ukraine appears to be specifically favorable to NATO-EU cooperation. The new strategic context may thus lead NATO to redefine its expectations from an enhanced partnership with the EU, and reinforce the will of all member states to design a practical framework for institutional cooperation. Whether the crisis in Ukraine will have positive effects on EU-NATO relations is still unclear, but its implications on the 2014 NATO Summit are reasons to believe in a renewed interest for their potential. The long-term benefits of CSDP-NATO dialogue could therefore be discussed in the debates prior and during the summit. More generally, the summit will have to consolidate the cooperation tools that have already been developed and determine how both NATO and the EU can remain relevant in military terms in the future. Indeed, the most recent transatlantic operations (Mali and the Central African Republic) have been designed by ad-hoc coalition of the willing without the institutional mechanisms provided by the two organizations. The prospect of EU-NATO cooperation thus relies on their ability to adapt and their ability to draw common responses to the new security challenges that transatlantic powers will face in the coming decades.

### ***Cooperation Beyond Institutional Frameworks: The Success of Informal EU-NATO Coordination***

EU-NATO cooperation has particularly suffered from a lack of flexibility. The weight of institutional bureaucracy has led member states to focus on EU-U.S. relations, which are perceived as providing a more complete and more efficient toolbox for comprehensive actions. Institutional relations between NATO and the EU have failed to deliver the expected outcomes whereas more informal approaches have shown more successful results. Moving beyond formal frameworks will help make EU-NATO relations more practical by relying on the willingness of each member state rather than on the institutions themselves. Indeed, institutions need intellectual capital to coordinate the actions of multiple powers, but the core of security cooperation continues to depend on national capabilities and efforts. A more pragmatic attitude toward cooperation must also fully acknowledge that operations outside institutionalized frameworks can serve the transatlantic institutions, and that the defense of NATO and EU interests can be directly achieved by other actors and organizations. This would enable both institutions to design better calibrated ambitions, as EU-NATO cooperation should aim to align objectives and methods but not to merge them.

Informal cooperation cannot, however, provide long-term substitutes to institutional deficiencies. Sharing information does not amount to efficient coordination, whereas cooperation outside institutional frameworks may substantially lower ambitions and affect the actual results. They do not provide strong incentives to define the much-needed political enablers that will support transatlantic cooperation. The informal approach also increases the risk of duplication, and eventually leads to unnecessary programs and costs that are not sustainable in times of economic crisis. Moreover, transatlantic partners



need to improve their use of existing frameworks. Cooperation between institutions already exists, but remains largely under-exploited, and more efforts should be put in the development of these frameworks rather than in attempts to build new ones.

Finally, EU-NATO relations will have to address the issue of the geographical scope of transatlantic security cooperation. Despite the war fatigue stemming from the military interventions of the previous decade and preventing both the United States and European powers from seriously considering new expeditionary operations, the United States cannot however afford for NATO to focus solely on European defense, and will still need reliable

transatlantic allies to act outside of Europe in the future. A comprehensive division of labor between NATO and the EU — and more specifically CSDP — would help address the issue of European power-projection and political willingness to act at the global level. Economic constraints and the fragmentation of European defense and perceptions of threats constitute major issues to the emergence of a united European strategy beyond its borders. Intra-European debates regarding division of labor and burden-sharing will therefore largely determine the future of transatlantic relations and their ability to tackle 21<sup>st</sup> century threats at the global level.

# 6

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY COOPERATION

Think clearly about how the crisis with Russia fits into the broader global picture. The ability to distinguish between long-term strategic issues and short-term problems is crucial for successful cooperation when dealing with common threats from different perspectives. The Ukraine crisis may have attracted the attention of the media and the public opinion, but deeper analysis demands focus on underlying long-term trends. The U.S. “rebalancing toward Asia” strategy and budget restraints constitute the framework in which transatlantic security cooperation will be shaped in the coming decades; therefore, over-estimating the significance of international crises would give a distorted picture of the security environment. The increasing tensions with Russia have real security implications for many transatlantic partners, but their concrete impact on U.S. engagement in European security remains to be seen; historical analogies and the idea of a return to a “Cold War rhetoric” provide little analytical help. Transatlantic cooperation will therefore be strengthened by the articulation of effective responses to urgent troubles and constructive dialogue on deeper strategic trends.

- It would be a mistake for NATO to refocus solely on Russia. From a short-term perspective, the aggressive Russian strategy will undoubtedly have an effect on the approach to the 2014 NATO Summit. The Alliance’s core tasks of collective defense and crisis management will return to the center of debate, and the question of the *raison d’être* of NATO will appear less pertinent at times of instability in Eastern Europe. However, the future of NATO cannot solely be determined by the prospect of new tensions with Russia. The analysis of the lessons learned from Afghanistan and the

development of new partnerships around the world have not been made less important by the events in Ukraine. The question of the geographical scope of NATO operations still remains paramount. In the long term, the United States will want NATO to be able to operate beyond its European borders once again, and NATO members would need to define how they are willing to establish security and stability in non-NATO Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The implications of the economic crisis and the general sentiment of war fatigue have weakened the current political will to engage in ambitious and expeditionary foreign policy, yet the question of the expansion of NATO’s mission cannot be seen only in light of recent events.

- The Ukraine crisis has also provided an opportunity for transatlantic partners to converge on common strategic objectives and demonstrate their ability to design a coordinated response. The European Union has so far been perceived as incapable of deterring Russian aggression, while cooperation with the United States has yet to produce concrete results. The lack of a coordinated response has negatively affected public opinion of transatlantic cooperation. The political elite, especially in Europe, is increasingly perceived as alienated from its public, and faces great difficulties in explaining its policy objectives. The public debate on transatlantic relations tends to focus extensively on the divergences of interests and capabilities; more public diplomacy is necessary to sustain and develop transatlantic security cooperation. This effort should also target non-transatlantic populations: the voices of the European Union and of the United States need to be heard and understood by the Russian population. Similar attempts at more direct dialogue with the public could

be pursued in the Middle-East and Asia. The transatlantic partnership is a coalition of democracies, and the necessary political willingness to develop further security cooperation between European powers, Canada, and the United States depends on the ability to gain wide popular approval.

- Finally, the turmoil in Eastern Europe should convince both the strategic community and the public to reconsider their perception of stability and security in Europe. In less than a decade, the strategic trends seem to have changed dramatically, where the dream of expansion of transatlantic security has been replaced by a general feeling of uncertainty. The events in Syria, the Sahel, and Ukraine have revealed a deeply unstable European neighborhood, combined with an economic crisis that has led to unhelpful military restraint. Transatlantic cooperation is now facing a very different strategic environment, in which both Europeans and Americans will notably have to more realistically analyze the consequences of defense cuts in order to remain credible security providers. The ability to think strategically about containment and deterrence is also particularly important, and should be supported by much-needed expertise on potential revisionist powers. The questions of resources, capabilities, interests, and political will should be addressed by each Western power before engaging in a transatlantic dialogue on security cooperation. The clear definition of individual and common objectives and means will prevent transatlantic partners from unproductively blaming each other for the deficiency of coordination.
- Transatlantic security cooperation needs to be more pragmatic: informal cooperation is successful, whereas the fixation on formal and institutional frameworks has often

been proven less effective. The failure of the EU-NATO collaboration stems in part from a lack of flexibility, whereas cooperative initiatives have been fruitful when they adapt to the strategic environment and enable the construction of ad hoc operations. Institutions should serve the transatlantic dialogue on security and help build “coalitions of the willing.” In parallel to more flexibility on the process, transatlantic partners need to be more ambitious when it comes to the goals of this cooperation: sharing information is not an objective in itself, and cannot serve as a substitute for effective operational coordination. In order to achieve the latter, the United States and European countries must reinvest bureaucratically in transatlantic relations so as to more efficiently translate political will into collective action and to react faster to changing circumstances.

- The development of a more robust transatlantic defense industrial base could help provide solutions to the issues of political will and capabilities. The transatlantic defense industry influences political decisions by providing jobs in societies that are deeply affected by unemployment. The link between the social and economic positive implications of a strong industrial base and the political support for transatlantic defense and military cooperation should not be underestimated. Public opinion and the political elites are particularly sensitive to employment issues, and the economic role of a reinforced industry can have long-lasting effects on governments’ attitudes toward defense and foreign policy issues. Cooperation at the industrial level is also critical to confronting the challenge of capability gap and interoperability, and a more integrated industrial base could

therefore help overcome the hurdles to transatlantic use of force. This will require a better understanding of industrial concerns by transatlantic institutions, and notably by NATO, in order to provide efficient institutional responses.

- The question of the European strategic responsibilities (and hence autonomy) remains central to the transatlantic relations. After the crisis in Ukraine, any U.S. re-engagement in Europe should be followed by higher levels of European engagement. The United States will welcome any European willingness to take more strategic responsibilities and to provide more security assurances to the transatlantic community. European strategic autonomy will necessitate more capabilities as well as strategic thinking in order for European powers to be able to act alone when necessary. Europeans notably need to prepare as of now for the aftermath of the turmoil in Eastern Europe, and define, along with the Americans, what they would consider a positive outcome of the crisis. This will only be made possible through a better comprehension of mutual perceptions of threats. The “Old Europe vs. New Europe” narrative is extremely harmful for the unity

of the European community, and continuous dialogue on internal divisions and divergences of security priorities is necessary. The resolution of intra-European capability and strategic gap is therefore imperative for the development of U.S.-Europe security cooperation.

- The EU needs to do a better job coordinating European foreign policies. European partners need to strengthen the political and strategic relevance of the EU in order to be able to overcome the capability limits of each nation-state. Although France and the U.K. have proven able and willing to take the lead to defend specific security interests, Brussels has the legitimacy to take on more strategic responsibilities and to help constituting rapid and efficient coalitions of the willing at the European level. In parallel to granting the EU enhanced control over the coordination of European foreign policies, efforts should also be pursued in setting up an autonomous European command structure. This framework would provide the tools to improve interoperability of European defense capabilities and would enable Europeans to discuss the operationalization of specific missions.

# 7

## THE SUMMIT OF OUR AMBITION? EUROPEAN DEFENSE BETWEEN BRUSSELS AND WALES

*Sven Biscop*

### Introduction

When they meet at NATO's Wales Summit in Newport on September 4-5, the European heads of state and government should not see this as the first chapter of a new book, but as the next chapter of an existing one called "European defense." The previous chapter was their meeting in Brussels last December for the European Council.

The European Council made important decisions on defense at its December 2013 meeting and will address defense again in June 2015. The deadline for many of the tasks it entrusted to the European Defence Agency (EDA) and the Commission falls at the end of 2014, hence the state of play ought to have advanced considerably by the time of the NATO Summit. For the European heads of state and government, therefore, NATO's Wales Summit is not so much a story in its own right as another episode in the overall story of European defense. It will be a platform to address the implications of their December 2013 decisions for the Alliance as a whole, and an opportunity to go beyond the organizational divide and to assess "the state of defense in Europe." Thus it is just as President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy envisaged it in his speech at the 2013 annual conference of the EDA. And as he said at the previous summit, in Chicago, he should be the EU voice in Newport.

The recent priorities and achievements (or, in certain areas, the lack thereof) of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and NATO demonstrate in fact that only the combination of the CSDP and NATO can constitute a comprehensive European defense. Neither NATO nor the CSDP alone have been able to generate all the structures, functions, and capabilities that a credible European full-spectrum force requires. Now, however, true complementarity is emerging. Increasingly therefore, the CSDP and the European pillar

of the Alliance have to be regarded as a single capacity.

### European Capabilities for Europe's Forces

More than two years after the EU launched Pooling & Sharing and NATO launched its Smart Defence initiative, progress has finally been seen. The European Council was able to welcome multinational programs that should produce additional European capability in key enabling areas: drones, air-to-air refueling, satellite communication, and cybersecurity. In contrast, Smart Defence has resulted in various useful initiatives mostly aimed at improving the efficiency of existing capabilities and training, but not in any major new project.

That ought not to have come as a surprise, for NATO was always centered on common defense planning and never really on common capability development. The NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) predominantly sets targets for the individual nations, which traditionally were met (or at least planned for) through national efforts. Occasionally, common capability projects took off because they (also) filled a U.S. need and therefore the United States was willing to pay for much of the attached research and development bill. Washington could put pressure on the European allies to contribute their share through procurement (the F16 program was a good example) and sometimes even a pooled capability (the C17-equipped Strategic Airlift Capability, for example). Even so, the Europeans usually drag their feet, as the Missile Defense (MD) and Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS) programs show. The continued decline of defense budgets in most European countries has not helped, of course. Today the problem is clearly a European one: the lack of strategic enablers for expeditionary operations. Hence, the United States is not willing to pay for the solution, and nor should it be.

The European Allies have to sit together, set priorities, and act. Unfortunately, such a European caucus is exactly what the United States has always sought to prevent in NATO. No wonder, then, that it has always proved more convenient (easier would be an overstatement) to find the beginning of a solution to a European capability problem in a European context. In 1968 already, 12 European allies created the Eurogroup for that purpose, followed in 1976 by the 13-member Independent European Programme Group (IEPG). After the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, both transferred their functions to the Western European Armaments Group (WEAG) under the aegis of the Western European Union (WEU). Today the CSDP is the only European forum able to address European strategic shortfalls.

But whether NATO or the EU is chosen as the institutional venue is not important, because these are the same European countries anyway. In view of the less than brilliant history of the Eurogroup, IEPG, and WEAG, what counts is that today the actions of the Europeans, not just their words, demonstrate their conviction that only common capability development can solve Europe's shortfalls in the area of enablers.

Through the CSDP, European countries ought to go full-out now for the implementation of the four multinational programs that have been announced (not forgetting that the December 2011 Foreign Affairs Council prioritized eight more areas). That means more countries have to contribute more fully. Capitals should be aware that it is entirely up to them whether Van Rompuy will be able to announce real progress in implementing the December decisions by the time of the Wales Summit. The EDA has a vital supporting role to play, as has the European Commission, which the December 2013 European Council consecrated as a key player in European defense. European countries would do well to make creative use of any contribution

the Commission can bring, for it is a powerhouse without equal in the CSDP or NATO.

NATO, for its part, can quietly shelve Smart Defence, which was only created after the EU launched Pooling and Sharing anyway. This was hopefully the last instance of the beauty contest that led each organization to begrudge the other its moment in the spotlight. The new priority that the Alliance already announced is actually not new at all, but it is exactly right: the Connected Forces Initiative (CFI). Interoperability between European forces and between them and the other Allied forces requires an intense schedule of exercises and maneuvers that only the NATO command structure can provide. When troops are not in operations they train but if the Alliance, for public diplomacy reasons, want to give this a name and a logo — CFI — why not? More questionable perhaps is the future of Allied Command Transformation (ACT). If the Europeans now do as they say, what role remains for ACT that justifies maintaining such a large structure across the Atlantic?

Here the first dimension of the emerging complementarity can be discerned. Common capability development is a European necessity best addressed through the CSDP. Exercises and maneuvers for both Article 5 and non-Article 5 purposes are a NATO-wide necessity best addressed through the Alliance. In Newport, the heads of state and government can welcome the EU initiative on the former and endorse the CFI on the latter.

### **European Defence Planning within the NDPP**

Accepting that European strategic enablers can only be acquired collectively, the European Council stated the need for “increased transparency and information sharing in defense planning, allowing national planners and decision-makers to consider greater convergence of capability needs and timelines.” Furthermore,

European countries should not only contribute to the big European programs on enablers, but are also encouraged to continue pooling and sharing of capabilities within the smaller regional clusters in order to maintain significant deployable capability in all forces. This is likely to lead to many more permanently coordinated, or even integrated, multinational capabilities, such as European Air Transport Command or Admiral Benelux.

The latter example, the integration of the Belgian and Dutch navies, has gone so far that, de facto, these countries can no longer do national naval planning, for any decision has an impact on their cooperation, which neither can afford to end. In reality, they can only plan together. In other words, the Framework Nation Concept proposed by Germany and now under discussion in NATO — in which a group of countries would de facto consider their combined capabilities in certain areas as one force and do common planning — is already happening. It is the logical outcome of ever closer cooperation. And it need not necessarily happen between one larger country with full spectrum forces and smaller countries that plug into those forces. It is equally possible between countries of similar size, as the Belgo-Dutch example proves. It is also, by the way, what Permanent Structured Cooperation as made possible under the Lisbon Treaty would have led to, had it been implemented.

Whatever constellation they choose, one thing is sure: European allies will increasingly meet many of the targets set through the NDPP through cooperation among Europeans, including of course with non-NATO EU member states. Such European cooperation is best coordinated in a European context.

Therefore, the European Council's tasking to the EDA, "to put forward an appropriate policy framework by the end of 2014, in full coherence with existing NATO planning processes," is

doubly important. On one hand, systematic transparency about plans and intentions between individual and clusters of European nations must ensure that no opportunities for cooperation are missed, and that such cooperation addresses all capability shortfalls without creating new redundancies. On the other hand, the collective plans and programs that result from it can be taken into account by the NDPP, introducing a European level (including all EU member states, whether they be NATO allies or partners) between national defense planning and the ambition of the Alliance as a whole. The aim is not, obviously, to create an "EUDPP" parallel to the NDPP. Simply, all countries can systematically share all the data with the EDA that they compile for the NDPP anyway, plus their long-term plans and intentions, both national and in cooperation with other European countries.

While the EDA does not need to deliver on this tasking until the end of 2014, the Wales Summit could already endorse the principle of a "policy framework" elaborated through the CSDP and incorporated into the NDPP. Thus planning as well as complementarity could emerge, with NATO in charge of the Alliance and national levels of the NDPP, and the CSDP of the European level.

### **European Strategy for NATO and the CSDP**

Ideally, the introduction of a European level into the NDPP would result in an iterative process. The objective is not only for NATO to be able to integrate into the NDPP those parts of the targets to be met collectively by Europeans, either through large-scale European programs or through regional clusters, instead of by nations individually. Europeans should also aim to shape the NDPP targets themselves, by identifying the level of ambition of the European pillar of NATO/the CSDP as a security provider.



This has become a necessity because as recent crises demonstrate, with the United States focusing on Asia and the Pacific, military intervention in Europe's broad neighborhood (Libya, Mali), and even beyond (the Central African Republic), is increasingly likely to be initiated, and the core of the force provided, by Europeans. Rather than the Alliance as a whole, more often European allies and partners will act in such non-Article 5 contingencies. Therefore, Europeans have to decide what they want to be capable of without relying on the national assets of the non-European allies. Europeans can initiate military action directly in a NATO or CSDP framework, but national action and ad hoc coalitions, with NATO and/or the CSDP possibly coming in at a later stage, are equally viable. Whichever option is chosen, the political and economic instruments that only the EU can provide will be indispensable to obtaining long-term peace and stability; the military instrument is but a catalyst. Therefore all European military interventions in whichever framework should coordinate as closely as possible with the EU. In many contingencies, such as the crisis in Ukraine, diplomacy rather than the military will be the instrument of choice. In such cases, the continued commitment to Article 5 provides Europeans with the confidence that any threat to their own territory is being deterred, thus creating freedom of action for their diplomatic and economic instruments — but NATO itself is not the channel for those.

Indeed, the level of ambition for Europe as a security provider must be set in function of which foreign policy objectives Europeans decide to pursue collectively through the external action of the EU (both via the European External Action Service and the Commission). The conclusion is obvious: it only makes sense to elaborate and adopt such a strategic framework at the EU level. This does not prejudice whether Europeans will act in a real-life crisis through NATO or the

CSDP — or nationally. The circumstances and the politics of the crisis will determine which action is advisable and who is best placed to undertake it.

Actually, High Representative Catherine Ashton already provided a large part of the strategic vision in her preparatory report for the European Council. Europe needs strategic autonomy (read, the capacity to act without the United States), which starts in its broad neighborhood to the east and the south, including the Sahel and the Horn (to which one could add the Gulf), where it has to be capable of power projection with partners if possible but alone if necessary in order to protect its interests. The soon-to-be-adopted EU Maritime Security Strategy will contribute another part of the answer. The engagement in the Central African Republic could be seen as an indicator of a third tier of responsibility. After taking the lead in securing the neighborhood and contributing to global maritime security, contributing to the collective security system of the UN, especially when the Responsibility to Protect is invoked.

Ashton's statement, which apparently elicited little or no negative comment from the member states, would constitute the clearest political guidance yet on Europe's ambition as a security provider. On such a basis, European needs in the area of enablers could be quantified and an ideal capability mix could be outlined. This would not only frame work on the currently identified priority projects, but could also be used to launch a reflection about where Europeans collectively want to be in 20 to 30 years.

The NATO Summit could welcome an ambitious European statement in the sense of Ashton's report. That would be a strong political signal that Europe will assume responsibility, important to the United States, which could more confidently focus on Asia, and to Europe's neighborhood, which could trust European

commitment to its future not to end where security problems begin. The complementarity is obvious. Foreign policy strategy and a security strategy derived from it ought to be elaborated through the EU; the latter's translation into defense planning is a task for NATO and the CSDP jointly. Finally, through the guarantees enshrined in Article 5, NATO allows the Europeans to assume the responsibilities that they prioritize with confidence.

### **A NATO Command Structure for Europe**

Together with Article 5, the NATO command structure remains the core of the Alliance and therefore the key to its continued relevance. NATO has an excellent service to provide: the command and control of military operations. It will ensure its legitimacy and funding by consolidating and even improving its performance in that field.

In many scenarios when Europeans decide to take military action, they will need a NATO headquarters. Indeed, only the Europeans need NATO to conduct their military operations. Whether anybody will make use of the command structure depends on whether Europeans can forge a strategic consensus on their responsibilities as security providers. If they do not use it, nobody will. Europeans must, however, have the certainty that the command structure is available when they require it. Unfortunately, the latest operation for which a NATO headquarters was activated, the intervention in Libya in 2011, showed that this is not necessarily the case. Only under heavy pressure from the United States did a reluctant Turkey give way and abandon its opposition to a NATO role in the crisis. This is a major concern, coming just as the United States expects the European allies and partners to take the lead in stabilizing their increasingly volatile neighborhood.

Much more than any other partnership or potential membership therefore, Cyprus' recently announced bid to join the Partnership for Peace ought to be high on the agenda of the Wales Summit. In return for a normalization of Cyprus' relations with the Alliance, an arrangement could be concluded between Turkey and the EDA, following those with Norway and Switzerland. This would go a long way to overcoming some of the political blockages that so often prevent the Alliance from tackling the real issues.

### **Conclusion**

The story of European defense is not a cliffhanger, but it is not pulp fiction either. Having set ambitious objectives, Europeans must prove that they can deliver. All the instruments are at hand, in the EDA, the Commission, and the capitals. NATO's Wales Summit will be an opportunity to put into action the implications for the Alliance of the decisions that the European allies and partners and the EU member states took at the European Council last December, and to take stock of progress while looking ahead to the next major deadline: the June 2015 European Council. The plot thickens.

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# 8

## BUILDING EUROPEAN DEFENSE IN THE CONTEXT OF U.S. STRATEGIC RESTRAINT

*Christopher S. Chivvis*

One of the major strategic issues the United States faces is striking the optimal balance between sustaining influence and reducing costs in its global alliances and partnerships. The United States has announced a rebalance to the Asia-Pacific in recognition of that region's economic dynamism, but is also seeking to shift the cost of defending Asian allies onto these dynamic economies themselves. In Europe, the challenge is greater, for it involves remaining engaged while at the same time shifting the burdens of defense increasingly onto European allies, who, unlike partners in Asia, have markedly reduced the portion of their national wealth dedicated to defense spending in the last quarter century. In this context, Russian revanchism only makes the challenge more difficult.

The United States has long sought to reduce its burden within NATO and European security more broadly by asking European allies to play a larger role in providing military and civilian capabilities necessary to meet the challenges of today's international security environment. The burdens the United States has carried stem from the fact of its far greater military capability, yet are in large part the basis of its leadership role within the Alliance. Whenever the United States has sought to reduce its burden it has thus come up against a two-fold dilemma. Because of the capabilities mismatch, the United States must sometimes do less than it otherwise might in order to reduce its burdens and encourage others to do more. Reducing its burdens can also entail ceding its traditional leadership role to other nations within the Alliance — or coalitions thereof — who are willing to take on greater risks and pay higher costs to address a particular challenge.

A decade ago, many policymakers in the United States were still unwilling to cede leadership in exchange for relief on burden sharing. When European allies proposed to establish

an independent headquarters through which the European Union could run autonomous operations under the European Security and Defense Policy, there was an uproar in Washington. The threat that European Allies might gain an ability to act without the U.S. blessing was more than the U.S. policy community could tolerate. European promises that greater independence would result in greater European levels of defense spending were viewed as inadequate compensation for the potential loss of influence over Allied military policy.

In subsequent years, however, as the burdens of Iraq and Afghanistan weighed on Washington, concern about European weakness has overtaken concern about European independence and any loss of U.S. influence and leadership that independence might create. Angst over European autonomy gave way to anguish over the size of the Defense Department's budget and cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. By the time NATO intervened in Libya, therefore, the view that the United States ought to cede leadership to European allies for problems that primarily concerned them, and in exchange expect more out of the allies, was already becoming entrenched.

The U.S. approach to Libya nevertheless came as a surprise to some European leaders. It certainly had its downsides but it ultimately worked. The United States limited its contribution to those "unique" capabilities that only it possessed, forcing the Allies to push their military to the maximum. The consequence, from a U.S. perspective, was not only a lower-cost war, but also a recognition, at least in some European countries, that the United States intended to reduce its contribution to Europe's security, and was, in exchange, ready to allow and even act to support greater European autonomy.

Unfortunately, the U.S. change of heart seems to have coincided with a reversal in Europe. In the

intervening decade, Europe became much less ready — most of all politically — to take on a larger independent role within the institutional context of the European Union. Just as the United States was ready to embrace it, the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) foundered on the rocks. After more than a decade, it was a letdown, especially relative to initial ambitions: the EU's flagship civilian operation in Kosovo had recently run into trouble and had to be rescued by NATO, and Libya was exactly the kind of operation for which CSDP had initially been conceived, but in the end the EU played no role at all. Instead, NATO became the institution within which European — and especially French — authority was augmented in exchange for a lesser U.S. burden.

Ultimately, however, whether Europe finds greater autonomy within NATO or within CSDP is not the critical issue. That European allies should do more for their own defense and gain autonomy thereby is now well entrenched in the United States. Observers in the United States will be looking for evidence, however, that ceding leadership results in greater European capabilities. Whether or not it will remains to be seen. Without enhanced European capabilities, building European defense autonomy is largely pointless. Europe's capabilities do not need to reach or even approach those of the United States to be relevant, but they do need to move ahead from where they have been if Europe is to have the clout in international security discussions to which it aspires and which it rightly deserves, given its economic and political weight in world affairs.

How will the crisis in Ukraine affect this balance? If the Ukraine crisis drives Europe together, it is also likely to drive the United States back into a more engaged role, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. The Cold War will not return, but the United States is already seriously considering deployments of additional forces

of some kind to the region — whether small or large. Indeed, the Ukraine crisis could yet reverse or impede U.S. strategic restraint. Even if it does so, however, the United States should still seek to encourage European independence on certain issues, including with a benevolent attitude toward CSDP. To a certain degree, European autonomy should be self-reinforcing, because the stronger Europe's cohesion in the face of revanchist Russia is, the lesser the need for U.S. leadership within NATO. Whether Europe can sustain cohesion over the time horizon required, absent U.S. leadership, however, is a real question.

There are those who would like the Ukrainian crisis to simplify transatlantic relations. But the reality is that the issues that NATO has wrestled with for the last 20 years — namely terrorism, humanitarian crisis, failed states, piracy, cyber-threats, missile proliferation, and weapons of mass destruction — will not go away simply because Russia has revanchist ambitions in Europe. The reality will be, very unfortunately, more complicated threats that affect members of the alliance differently. In these conditions, advocates of sound U.S.-European security relations should want the most flexibility possible so that those states whose interests are most concerned by particular challenges can take a leadership role in meeting those challenges. Greater flexibility means CSDP and a stronger, more flexible alliance.

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# 9

## THE MURKY FUTURE OF U.S. USE OF FORCE

Samuel J. Brannen

### Introduction

The “Powell Doctrine” articulated by the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the early 1990s remains the sacred touchstone for Americans in discussions of the use of force.<sup>1</sup> And yet, the use of force by the United States regularly diverges from Powell’s most basic precepts of force as a last result, clear objectives, and exit strategies. Indeed, the United States’ decisions to use force have varied widely in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, sticking to no fully predictable set of principles. This variance has been labeled as a “strategy” of selective engagement, and more recently, one of retrenchment. In Afghanistan and against al Qaeda globally — including the May 2, 2011 raid in Abbottabad, Pakistan, that killed Osama bin Laden — the United States has fought wars of necessity. In Iraq and Libya, it fought wars of choice. And in Syria, the United States ultimately decided not to conduct any military

1 In the United States, discussion of the use of military force remains heavily bounded by principles articulated more than two decades ago by then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell, first in the National Military Strategy and later in a *Foreign Affairs* article. The “Powell Doctrine” has become a near-sacred touchstone in Washington, echoing through the presidencies of Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama, with each use of force decision viewed by administration officials and commentators alike through the framework. At its heart, the doctrine emphasizes fully exhausting non-military options before turning to the use of force, ensuring the support of the nation for the use of force, and using “decisive force” from the outset — never making an open-ended or slowly escalating commitment to the use of force (mission creep). Bob Woodward later ascribed to Powell before the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq the addition of the “Pottery Barn Rule: you break it, you buy it,” which calls for stabilization and reconstruction of a country in the event of regime change through military action. This has become an accepted addendum to the Powell Doctrine. The Powell Doctrine is notably silent on the role of coalitions and allies. See Colin Powell, “U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead” *Foreign Affairs* (Winter 1992/1993), <http://www.cfr.org/world/uzsz-forces-challenges-ahead/> and Bob Woodward, *The War Within: A Secret White House History: 2006-2008*. (Simon and Schuster, New York: 2008), 328-329.

action after the regime crossed a declared red-line regarding the use of chemical weapons. Most recently in responding to Russian coercion in Ukraine and its annexation of Crimea, President Barack Obama has explicitly stated that the use of military force is not an option.<sup>2</sup>

In many recent cases, U.S. use of force — or decisions not to use force — has achieved at best ambiguous long-term results, and at worst has made regions less stable (and at significant human and financial cost). Over the past several years, and perhaps because of recognition of the limited returns on its own use of military force, there is genuine desire in Washington for other countries to exhibit greater initiative and leadership on regional security issues. The United States wants to support in some cases rather than lead in all.<sup>3</sup> That basic shift in attitude under the Obama administration — most pronounced over the past year — has begun to disrupt long-standing alliances and partnerships, and raised serious strategic concerns about U.S. commitment and overall place in the international system. Increased aggressions by China and Russia have added confusion and danger to what is shaping up as a transitional moment in modern history. Will the United States remain the indispensable nation?

2 President Obama said, “Of course, Ukraine is not a member of NATO — in part because of its close and complex history with Russia. Nor will Russia be dislodged from Crimea or deterred from further escalation by military force.” President Barack Obama, “Remarks by the President in Address to European Youth” (Brussels, Belgium, March 26, 2014), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/03/26/remarks-president-address-european-youth>.

3 This is quite different than the often-repeated criticism of “leading from behind,” which itself is an unfortunate phrase attributed to an unnamed White House staffer as reported by Ryan Lizza, “The Consequentialist: How the Arab Spring Remade Obama’s Foreign Policy,” *New Yorker*, May 2, 2011, [http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/05/02/110502fa\\_fact\\_lizza](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/05/02/110502fa_fact_lizza).



Despite events of the past year, accurately predicting where, how, when, and why the United States will use force in the next decade will likely be as difficult as it was over the past 13 years. At the outset of the century, George W. Bush had espoused an essentially isolationist U.S. policy, also seeking more leadership from other countries. Even absent another attack on the U.S. homeland, the global scope and complexity of U.S. interests as they play out in regional contexts makes each case unique and dynamic. Thinking ahead to an unpredictable future, it is more useful to consider the constraints and opportunities of the emerging security environment, and what lessons the U.S. public, its politicians, its foreign policy elite, and the U.S. military have taken from this most recent, historic period of frequent and sustained use of military force. And thinking in a future transatlantic context, it is also important to understand what role NATO allies have played in influencing U.S. decision-making with regard to use of force, and how they might affect it going forward.

### **The Current Security Environment**

Long-term U.S. isolationism or retrenchment is unlikely. With the drawdown of major combat forces from Afghanistan by the end of 2014, the United States is not entering an inter-war period. The idea of a lower operational tempo environment is attractive to defense strategists who believe the United States would benefit from a decade or so of deep reflection and debate to formulate grand strategy and to experiment with new military capabilities and concepts of operation. However, the complexity of the current security environment and the United States' commitments and interests within it are unlikely to allow such a period of reset and renewal. The 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) correctly observes that "the United States faces a rapidly changing security environment... [of] new technologies, new centers of power, and a world that is growing more volatile, more

unpredictable, and in some instances more threatening to the United States."<sup>4</sup> And as the QDR affirms, the United States during this time period will remain a global power with global responsibilities.

Similarly, the United States would be weakened and not strengthened by a more isolationist foreign policy. For instance, the argument made by some that huge gains in North American shale gas and tight oil production could allow greater U.S. disengagement from the Middle East is false. The United States remains the primary security guarantor of the international system (particularly the global commons) and the global economy that remains reliant on downstream hydrocarbons supply outside North America. The United States' own prosperity, in turn, depends fully on the health of this international system.

That is not to say that the exercise of U.S. influence will be easy in the decade ahead. Speaking only to the military dimension, the continued high demands on U.S. military capacity and capability generated by this security environment are made more challenging by significant, continued defense budget cuts causing a rapid drawdown in the end strength of the joint force (the combined Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force). These cuts are made more severe by unconstrained internal cost growth in personnel and procurement — what Clark Murdock has called the defense "double whammy."<sup>5</sup> This is a joint force that at the same time faces the need to substantially reset from its decade-long counter-insurgency focus through modernization, training, and education to a force

4 Department of Defense, "Quadrennial Defense Review 2014" (Department of Defense, March 2014), [http://www.defense.gov/pubs/2014\\_Quadrennial\\_Defense\\_Review.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/pubs/2014_Quadrennial_Defense_Review.pdf), III.

5 Clark Murdock, Kelley Saylor, and Ryan Crotty, "The Defense Budget's Double Whammy: Drawing Down While Hollowing Out from Within" (CSIS, October 18, 2012), [https://csis.org/files/publication/121018\\_Murdock\\_DefenseBudget\\_Commentary.pdf](https://csis.org/files/publication/121018_Murdock_DefenseBudget_Commentary.pdf).

capable of fighting a high-end war in at least one anti-access and area-denial theater. Moreover, the all-volunteer men and women of the U.S. military — particularly the Army — are exhibiting fatigue from the past 12 years of sustained combat operations (illustrated, among other ways, in statistically significant divorce, suicide, and sexual assault rates).

Despite these budget pressures, the United States has continued to invest heavily in its special operations forces, which will grow to their largest size in history. Special operations forces represent a unique capability both for their rapid, global reach and for their ability to achieve increasingly targeted applications of force. They are in some ways a personal military for the president, and operate under broad legal authorities. They are among the most effective fighting forces in the history of the world, and the temptation to use them often is great. For these reasons, they can be expected to continue to play an outsize role for the duration of this presidency and thereafter. Through them, the decision to use force comes easily, particularly against a continued, metastasizing global terrorist threat hop-scotching between weak states.

So too, after the necessity of “boots on the ground” for counterinsurgency operations, defense planners have again begun to prefer sea and air power, as well as the use of long-distance standoff and unmanned systems that keep U.S. military personnel out of harm’s way. This again creates more decision space with less risk for the president in the use of force. The sophistication and precision of these systems also potentially reduces previous military requirements for mass on targets to achieve intended political effects.

### American People and Politics

The case for “war weariness” among Americans has been overstated. While the U.S. public has grown more cautious regarding their country’s

ability to unilaterally influence international affairs, including through the use of military force, it does not seek isolation. A 2013 Pew Research poll found “[f]or the first time in surveys dating to 1974, more than half of the public (53%) says the United States plays a less important and powerful role as a world leader than it did a decade ago.”<sup>6</sup> Notably, 72% of those polled favor a shared leadership role for the United States, and of those 70% “think the U.S. should be about as active as other leading nations [i.e., not out front or unilateral].” Further findings indicated that a majority of Americans think the United States tries to do too much alone, and a strong majority (nearly eight in ten interviewed) believed that the United States should take into account the views of major allies in setting its policies. This is evidence of a U.S. public looking for capable partners with which to share global leadership and responsibility.

However, these same Americans have elected one of the most polarized congresses in U.S. history, in which centrist consensus on national security matters has deteriorated. Due to factors including gerrymandering of U.S. congressional districts and the growing role of special interest groups in political campaign finance, elected representatives increasingly are maintained in power by the polar extremes of the electorate, quickly mobilized to action via information technology that matches existing opinions with easy “point and click” online advocacy tools.

Both the far left and far right of U.S. politics broadly agree on the desirability of a less active U.S. foreign policy along with a more limited role for the military. When the decision to authorize the use of military force was passed in September 2013 from the White House to the U.S. congress,

<sup>6</sup> Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, “Public Sees U.S. Power Declining as Support for Global Engagement Slips,” December 3, 2013, <http://www.people-press.org/2013/12/03/section-1-americans-global-role/>



congressional offices were quickly overwhelmed with negative calls from constituents, reflecting this new political environment. Many congressional members and staff took this as evidence of a move to U.S. isolationism or retrenchment, but close watchers of the U.S. presidency observed the lesson learned as one in which more decisive action by the chief executive with less congressional involvement would have to be the model going forward. However, such executive decision carries even greater political risk, in which failure is even less of an option. Americans support the use of force in broad scope, but only when successful. U.S. presidents stake their legacy in competent use of force. It is always a gamble.

### **The Transatlantic Dimension**

U.S. military leaders more so than civilian employees of the Defense Department recognize that the United States almost never fights alone and that it is strongest when joined by allies and partners. It is a priority of U.S. commanders to maintain interoperability built with top-tier NATO partners in Iraq and Afghanistan. On the other hand, cooperation, shared sacrifice, and the short shelf-life of interoperability between allies and partners in the field of combat can be undervalued by civilians in Washington. Coalition partners have been used to reinforce existing preferences by the president to do something (e.g., George W. Bush's constant mention of coalition partners making token contributions in Iraq) or not to do something (e.g., Barack Obama's decision not to take military action against Syria after the British parliament rejected participation by its forces in such a contingency).

More recently, the United States has shown remarkable willingness to respond to foreign requests to join coalitions to use force in ways it likely would not pursue alone. The "Mali model" has been enthusiastically received in Washington

as a potential means to manage long-term instability in regions where the United States has adopted a "light-footprint, low-cost, innovative approach" to managing security. On the other hand, after an initially positive view of NATO-led efforts in Libya, the lingering instability in that country and its destabilizing effect on the region has left a bitter taste. Observers of that conflict lament mission creep: humanitarian intervention to prevent a massacre in Benghazi became regime change without any plan for stabilization and reconstruction. And ultimately, it became a political liability with the death of the U.S. ambassador and other civilian personnel in Benghazi.

As mentioned, appetite is strong in Washington for others to do more, and particularly for Europe to play a role as a security exporter. Europe's continued defense divestment and slow and lackluster response to Ukraine has been seen as a hard check on this desired outcome. Whether allies are capable both in terms of military capacity and strategic vision regarding Russia and other regional challenges is open for question. Significant drawdowns of the most capable militaries (e.g. France and Britain), lack of willingness to use force by others (e.g. Germany and Turkey), and simple lack of capability and investment by many others puts a damper on expectations. The idea of always being able to go do it alone remains sacrosanct for U.S. policymakers. Any planning that assumes reliance on allies is viewed as overly risky.

### **Conclusion**

In his recent memoirs, former secretary of defense Bob Gates observed,

"We must always be prepared and willing to use our military forces when our security, our vital interests, or those of our allies are threatened or attacked. But I believe the use of military force should always be

a last resort and our objectives clearly and realistically defined (as in the Gulf War) ... Our foreign and national security policy has become too militarized, the use of force too easy for presidents.”<sup>7</sup>

Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama have made more decisions in more cases with regard to the use of force and said more about it than any presidents in recent history, both in official documents such as the National Security Strategy and in major policy speeches. Interestingly, the views of both presidents regarding the application of force became more constrained over time. The Obama presidency is far from over, and pressure is building both for him to avoid additional U.S. entanglement and to reassure allies and partners that the United States remains willing to use force. There is no neat Obama doctrine nor was there a Bush doctrine that offered any predictive analysis.

And the United States will not neatly follow a doctrine going forward. Indeed, Powell himself rejected the idea of doctrine for use of force, emphasizing only that careful process should be applied. On the issue of doctrine he wrote,

“There is...no fixed set of rules for the use of military force. To set one up is dangerous. First, it destroys the ambiguity we might want to exist in our enemy’s mind regarding our intentions ... Second, having a fixed set of rules for how you will go to war is like saying you are always going to use the elevator in the event of fire in your apartment building.”<sup>8</sup>

While the United States is not growing isolationist, it is growing wary of its ability to use military force to achieve decisive outcomes. So too it is dealing with the consequences of

decisions not to use force, reverberating across alliances and regions, and testing deterrence and regional stability.

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7 Robert M. Gates, *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York: 2014) 591-592.

8 Powell.

# 10

## GERMAN DEFENSE POLICY: IS THE CHANGE FOR REAL?

*Claudia Major and Christian Mölling*

### Introduction

Many observers saw in the 2014 Munich Security Conference the announcement of a seminal change in German foreign, security, and defense policy. The Munich shift — embodied by the three speeches of the president and the foreign and defense ministers — painted the broad strokes of a deep change in the traditional German foreign defense policy. In a nutshell, the message was that Germany is too big to merely comment on world affairs from the sidelines. A few months after Munich, it is necessary to take stock of the real extent of the change, its underlying mechanisms, and its sustainability in the context of the real-life test that is the situation in Ukraine.

### The Spirit of Munich in Three Speeches

German President Joachim Gauck, along with the Foreign Affairs Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen, clearly outlined visions of German policy that differed considerably from historical precedent. Amidst the claim that new power requires new responsibility, the dignitaries mentioned how Germany's culture of restraint must not become a culture of standing aloof. They also made strong statements about indifference not being an option and the eventual necessity of making use of the military. Germany, in many ways *the* European power and a country deeply connected to the global networks, must also be ready to do more to guarantee the security that others have provided for it for decades. What might sound like stating the obvious for countries such as France and Britain is almost revolutionary for Germany.

The Munich shift is augmented by various existing German initiatives on security and defense policy. First, the 2013 Framework Nation Concept, put forth within NATO, and that offers a model for capability partnerships in Europe. Second, the “Enhance and Enable Initiative” (E2I) puts German engagement in Mali and

elsewhere in Africa under the headline of a new responsibility for local and regional partners. Finally, the new government established the so-called “Rühe Commission” (named after its chairman, former Defense Minister Volker Rühe) to scrutinize the parliamentary approval process for military deployments.

Additionally, the foreign minister has launched a wide foreign policy review, called “Reviews 2014.” It started with an international conference in mid May 2014 and will be followed by a series of conferences to engage with the public across the country. This process is currently planned to run until autumn 2014. However, it is not yet clear how the results, to be presented in late 2014, will feed into policymaking.

### Why and How? The Libya Moment and the Long Shadow of History

The new approach has put a renewed focus on content, but also on institutional competencies. The arguably most urgent reform concerns further reinforcing the Foreign Ministry's influence on foreign policy decision-making, since the Federal Office has suffered from a loss of influence under previous Minister Guido Westerwelle, due in part to the choices that were made, such as in the Libya crisis but also with regards to Africa, Syria, and European Defense as a whole.

While the Munich announcements may have come as a surprise for many in the national and international audience, these messages have been honed for quite a while in various circles in Berlin where administration, politicians, think tanks, and journalists meet. Awareness was growing among these loose networks that Germany's overstressed self-restraint and lack of security policy thinking had not served it well over the last years.

The formation of the new government meant that several people with a deep concern about Germany's role in international politics came

into key positions, and have the agenda to push these highly necessary and long over-due changes in German defense policy. According to one key figure in the revamped Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the effects of abstention in order to not share risks with Germany's partners in the military domain run against German long-term interests in international affairs.

The German abstention in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) vote on Libya in 2011 served as the trigger for the desire to reset German security and defense policy, as it revealed the immediate and long-term political costs associated with adopting such positions. Immediately after realizing the isolated position it had put itself in, the government hurriedly corrected course: the decision not to deploy AWACS capabilities to Afghanistan — based on principled reasons — was reversed. In fact, Berlin was looking to compensate for its non-participation in the NATO operation, as much as showcasing its Alliance credentials after lining up with Russia and China in the UNSC.

Although noticed by few, Germany's attempt to make up for the UNSC vote went as far as offering military support through leading an EU operation in support of UN-OCHA — the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs — in Libya. Suddenly, the country that refused to participate in the Libya operation because it did not want to put German soldiers in harm's way was willing to lead a military EU operation in Libya. Ironically, Berlin could have been the first to deploy soldiers on Libyan soil, but the mission was never implemented.

As a result of these erratic policies, Germany has complicated— sometimes for the long term — many projects that require trust in the country. This applies most notably to cooperative projects like Pooling and Sharing and Smart Defence, but it also risks hampering the credibility of its own initiatives, like the recent Framework Nation

Concept (FNC). The FNC calls for smaller states to organize their limited capabilities together with bigger states like Germany so that both their interdependence and joint power would increase. Yet, currently allies have no good reason to believe that Germany would show up if military action is seriously on the agenda.

The Libya abstention symbolized the low point of Germany's poor track record on defense policy over the last decade. Not only has the country missed numerous opportunities to support its declared policy objectives and its allies in EU and NATO by taking concrete action (notable examples: Chad 2008 or Côte d'Ivoire 2011), but it seems that Germany has, on a more general level, developed a responsibility gap, whereby it denies to acknowledge the context in which it operates, and has thus given up the opportunity and responsibility to be the master of its own fate. This has been underlined, among many other examples, by a 2013 poll where roughly 55 percent of the Germans declared themselves in favor of a UN-backed military action in Syria, yet the same percentage opposed any German participation in such a mission. Finally, while Berlin overstressed its commitment to the EU, NATO, and the UN, its commitment to these organizations shows a discrepancy between ambition and results. Berlin did indeed launch the Ghent Initiative, which provided the basis for pooling and sharing in the EU, but eventually did as little as the others to implement it.

### **The Challenge: Changing Germany's Defense Identity**

German political leadership is aware that the government's room for maneuverability in redefining defense policy (and especially moving beyond ad-hocism) depends on obtaining strong public support. This means that change can only start from home, and has to be introduced carefully. There are three challenges that need to be tackled in order to create these conditions:

- Overcoming the weakness of German defense identity. There is little interest in defense in politics and society at large. While (Western-) Germany has gone through a big societal debate about war and peace at least once per decade, this tradition was surprisingly abandoned after the debate regarding the Kosovo intervention in 1999. After the operation in Afghanistan, a new attitude of silence and indifference has started to prevail: Germans not only prefer not to know what is going on in Afghanistan, but also tend to disregard the soldiers they have sent there.
- The enduring dominance of pacifism. Opponents of a new course can easily evoke well-established images of pacifism and anti-militarism. Any interest in defense is mostly guided by two sorts of pacifism: on one hand, a deeply ingrained and well-founded argument that military means have not been useful in the past and that civilian tools and prevention are more effective, and on the other, pacifism — or what passes as such — buoyed by a “not my business” approach that circumvents the debate about taking responsibility and the many ways to exercise it. The legitimization of such a discourse allows Germany to continue living like a big Switzerland.
- Bridging the gap between politics and the military persisting from the Cold War. Most Germans would not agree that the armed forces are a political instrument — even though the Bundeswehr is under highest political control by the government, the Parliament, and public opinion. These three groups struggle to explain the utility of these forces, and how the appropriate use of military instruments could at times help to create the conditions for the (subsequent) successful application on non-military means, such as diplomatic or development

cooperation tools. Instead, Defense Minister von der Leyen has had to face fierce criticism when she called for reassurance of NATO allies during the crisis in Crimea. Many today still consider the military a peculiar instrument, and certainly not a “good” or “normal” part of the government’s toolbox. This seems to be a relic of Cold War thinking. At that time, the existence of the Bundeswehr was legitimized by the threat from the East. Alternative roles did not exist in the domestic conception of armed forces. Politics serve in this context to control armed forces and to tame them, not to use them. Until today, both the armed forces and the political class have struggled to shift away from this conception of the identity of the German army.

#### **Good Intentions and First Modest Achievements...**

While the challenges above are already momentous, an added layer of difficulty exists due to the fact that there is not necessarily full consent on this new course within the government. While the reactions to the Munich shift in expert circles were rather positive, reaction of public opinion was indeed very critical, suspecting a hidden militarization of German policy and a revival of historic demons. All in all, there is still a long way to go.

Munich was only the first step: there was an announcement but not (yet) a change in substance. Recent actions have shown that the spirit of the past still survives, and that Germany still finds it difficult to share the political and military risks with its political allies, instead often preferring to wait until others have cleared the situation so that Germany can do what it likes to do most: training missions and civilian crisis management. Mali is one of the best examples for this. Berlin refrained from participating in the 2013 combat mission,

and with France shouldering the burden of launching an operation, Germany was able to deploy its trainers for the mission it wanted — contributing to conflict prevention and the implementation of Enhance and Enable Initiative (E2I). A comparable reaction can be observed in the Central African Republic in 2014, where Germany declared its support and underlined European solidarity. Yet, Berlin eventually limited its help to offering strategic transport and medical evacuation aircraft — but only from a secure airport, provided and protected by others.

#### **... Taken over by Current Events: From Munich to Crimea**

It seems that the world was, once again, moving faster than the German government. The Ukraine and Crimea crisis provided a new context in which Germany would eventually be required to live up to its new ambitions, and perhaps quicker than it thought. This has made the government shift from a well-crafted campaign into ad hoc crisis management. While this situation has enhanced the image of German foreign policy in general (Foreign Minister Steinmeier gained a great deal of respect for his dealing with the Ukraine crisis), it has had a negative impact on defense policy. In this situation, the Crimea crisis has immediately resurfaced Cold War perceptions on defense. The German domestic debate immediately responded along these lines. Retired Generals and ex-defense officials have been mourning the fact that conscription and the famous 4000 Leopard tank fleet have disappeared, and called for their revival in the process. Others have put forward the primacy of non-provocative action in order not to inflame Russia, thereby opposing reassurance measures to NATO allies, such as more intense air policing or support for modernization, for example through the delivery of NH-90 helicopters. The crisis has made Germany revert — temporarily? — to well-known Cold War stereotypes, which have had the

added consequence of driving apart the newly established unity of security and defense policy.

#### **Empowering Munich: Using the Two-Year Window of Opportunity to Shape Germany Defense Policy Identity**

The Ukrainian crisis presents both risks and opportunities in the extent to which it could contribute to shape German defense policy identity. The risk is obvious: Germany and its allies could lose the progress that has been made over the last months on security and defense policy. If the German domestic debate continues under the current conditions, new issues that have been put on the agenda, such as engagement in Africa, risk being put on the backburner. The reasons for more engagement will be neutralized.

In fact, Germany and its partners should use the ongoing crisis as an opportunity to show that defense policy is a useful instrument within the overall government toolbox. This would mean highlighting the obvious supportive role it can have. While no military solution to the Ukrainian crisis is realistic, a joint political and diplomatic action of NATO allies is only possible because of a strong military basis, which offers both deterrence and reassurance.

This reassurance is in Germany's own interest: it is only if its allies are reassured that Germany can count on them for the diplomatic solutions Berlin rightly favors. Moreover, if Germany does not contribute appropriately and without hesitation, then its partners will continue to question not only Berlin's general foreign policy, but also where Germany stands in this conflict — a situation very similar to the one in Libya.

Another opportunity presents itself with the work of the Rühle Commission, which has been tasked to scrutinize the appropriateness of parliamentary approval procedures for military deployments. While its mandate is limited to procedures, the commission will inevitably discuss crucial issues



like political control and Germany's international commitment. Moreover, the German Africa-Strategy will offer the opportunity to engage in further debate about Germany's interest and potential role in Africa. Such a debate can almost only be triggered by German politicians and personalities.

Finally, there is a role to be played by Germany's partners, who can help advance the process by keeping pressure on Germany and underlining the importance of change. The simplest and most legitimate way is to ask Germany to implement what it has promised over the last months, for example, by pushing for concrete results on the Framework Nation Concept. Moreover, its engagement in Mali and the Central African Republic offers the opportunity for a reassessment of the E2I and the limited appropriateness of its prevention approach in the middle of an armed conflict.

The window for shifts in public opinion is open, and will remain so for the next two years, before

German politics switch back in preparation for elections that are likely to take place in 2017. Meanwhile, the challenges for Germany remain momentous, with European partners and the United States following closely.

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# 11

## THE DISMAL PRESENT AND FUTURE OF SMART DEFENCE

*Stephen Saideman*

Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have long argued about how to provide for the common defense. In response to the 2008 financial crisis and the resulting austerity measures, countries sought to cut their spending on defense programs. NATO's response was the *Smart Defence* program, where members try to better coordinate their procurement programs in order to save money on the program's three key efforts: prioritization, specialization, and cooperation. While one could write much about cooperative efforts that may or may not save money via economies of scale — with the F-35 being the most visible failure — the focus here is on specialization. This refers to a designed division of labor where countries coordinate regarding which kinds of military capabilities each will develop so that there is less duplication across the Alliance.

In principle, this effort makes a great deal of sense. Indeed, this is not the first effort to develop such a division of labor. However, as in the past, the effort to rationalize procurement across the Alliance via specialization has run into several strong and enduring political dynamics: ordinary bureaucratic politics, the new-ish industrial policies of defense procurement, and the hard-earned lessons of distrust from NATO's recent campaigns in Afghanistan and over Libya.

Focusing on these three sets of political processes here will make it clear that Smart Defence is doomed to fail.

First, any decision to cut some capabilities and keep others means that there will be winners and losers in the armed forces of each member. Those likely to lose may put up a fight to protect their branch of the armed forces. This is what we have long expected bureaucracies to do — protect their budgets, their portfolios, and their autonomy. Perhaps the United States is the most visible case of various elements of the armed

services successfully fighting to keep buying troubled defense systems, but other members of NATO have seen and will see the various sub-units of their militaries fighting to prevent their respective systems from being cut. One way to resist specialization via budget cuts is to logroll — meaning to have each branch of the military support each other in their campaigns to keep what they have and invest in similar equipment in the future. The Canadian Armed Forces have been most skilled at this over time, presenting a united front.

Second, defense procurement decisions are often made not with the national interest in mind but with domestic politics as key driver. That is, many legislators and other politicians will fight defense procurement cuts if they affect politically powerful companies and/or the jobs of their constituents. Again, cutting some programs would mean losers, and among the losers would be those who expected to be employed by defense contractors. Likewise, again, this is not new, but there has been a growing perspective to see defense policy as “industrial policy.” To be clear, this means directing defense contracts to domestic producers where the avowed “jobs created” become critical for justifying the procurement of the weapons system. Canada, for instance, is now committed to buying ships built in Canada for the “re-capitalization” of its Navy, despite the reality that these ships will cost more than those built elsewhere, including those made by NATO allies. As a result, governments will be reluctant to cut programs or even cooperatively build them if it means sacrificing potential jobs at home.

Third, as NATO members and partners learned during the Afghanistan and Libyan missions, not all allies show up or participate with the same level of effort during a NATO mission. The premise of Smart Defence is that countries will not need to have all capabilities as long as another ally can provide it, but we have learned

again that “force generation is begging.”<sup>1</sup> NATO’s spreadsheet of the units and assets needed for each mission, the Combined Joint Statement of Requirements, is always only partially filled. In 2001-02, NATO was still trying to fill holes in the Stabilization Force in Bosnia.<sup>2</sup> In Afghanistan, some countries brought few helicopters (Germany, Italy to name the obvious ones), and others brought none at all at first (Canada).

The more obvious challenge posed to Smart Defence by the Afghanistan mission is that countries followed different rules of engagement. This is also not new as there were caveats placed on various contingents restricting what they could and could not do in Bosnia and Kosovo, but just more obvious and consequential in Afghanistan. With some countries willing to engage in offensive operations and others not, cooperation on the battlefield was complicated. When countries asked for help, it was often not forthcoming. When the Norwegians were nearly overrun in Faryab in the spring of 2006, they asked for help, only to have German commander decline, with the British eventually managing to send relief in time.<sup>3</sup> When the Canadians engaged in serious combat in Kandahar later that year, only a few NATO members provided assistance. NATO members and partners learned quickly that their allies were of varying reliability. Indeed, NATO commanders in Kabul in 2004 had developed a ranking of flexibility and reliability of the various contingents.

The Libya mission also made clear that specialization does not work that well when allies are not so reliable. The opening shots of any war

these days involve efforts to take down the other side’s air defenses. NATO had already specialized in the specific capability of missiles designed to attack radar stations, as only the United States, Germany, and Italy possessed such systems. Germany did not participate at all in the mission, and Italy dithered. This meant that the United States had to pull its weight, despite its avowed desire to lead from behind.

Both recent conflicts remind us that relying on allies is a risky proposition. Making procurement decisions today requires an assessment of which allies will provide key assets not just next year, but 10, 20, or 40 years later, as many weapons systems endure for decades (the United States is still flying planes built in the late 1950s — the B-52s — and the Canadians still rely on helicopters that are much older than their pilots.).

Together, these dynamics suggest that NATO’s Smart Defence initiative is going to fall short. Indeed, it already has, as countries are making mostly unilateral decisions about what parts of their militaries they are cutting, which capabilities they are investing in, and what their militaries can do next year and well into the future. Still, the basic idea of Smart Defence is correct — that specialization by design is better than specialization by default. The best recommendation I can make is for countries to assess which allies are more likely to behave similar to themselves in future conflicts (our book suggests that coalition governments are likely to behave similarly),<sup>4</sup> and partner with them if they can overcome the pressures of bureaucratic politics and defense policy as industrial policy.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1</sup> Said by an officer at NATO headquarters in Mons, Belgium, cited in David P. Auerswald and Stephen M. Saideman, *NATO in Afghanistan: Fighting Together, Fighting Alone* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> I witnessed this myself during a fellowship in the U.S. Joint Staff’s Directorate of Strategic Planning and Policy, on the Bosnia desk.

<sup>3</sup> Auerswald and Saideman, 2014.

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