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The United States and the European Security and Defense Identity in the New NATO

Les États-Unis et l'Identité européenne de sécurité et de défense dans la nouvelle OTAN

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Les États-Unis et l'Identité européenne de sécurité et de défense dans la nouvelle OTAN

Les Américains ont toujours éprouvé des sentiments ambivalents à l'égard de l'Identité européenne de sécurité et de défense (IESD), et ceci continue malgré les réformes dont l'Alliance a récemment été l'objet. Dans l'absolu, les responsables et les analystes aux États-Unis ont manifesté leur soutien résolu à l'édification et au renforcement d'un pilier européen : depuis 1995, ils affirment leur immense satisfaction à la perpective de voir cette identité se former à l'intérieur plutôt qu'à l'extérieur de l'OTAN. Dans la pratique, toutefois, les États-Unis n'ont jamais été véritablement enthousiastes. La plupart de leurs analystes doutent que l'Europe se dote d'une capacité militaire digne de ce nom, et rares sont les responsables américains qui sont disposés à accepter les compromis qui pourraient se révéler nécessaires pour assurer un plus grand équilibre au sein de l'Alliance. Le Congrès des États-Unis éprouve des sentiments non seulement ambivalents, mais aussi contradictoires : bon nombre de législateurs exigent que les Européens en fassent plus et assument des responsabilités accrues (par exemple en Bosnie), mais beaucoup (parfois les mêmes) s'élèvent avec force contre toute tentative européenne de mettre en œuvre des politiques autres que celles voulues par les États-Unis.

Il en résulte que l'IESD suscite de profonds malentendus des deux côtés de l'Atlantique. Alors que les Européens, et plus particulièrement les Français, voient dans l'IESD une possibilité réelle d'amélio-

rer la capacité de l'Europe à exercer une influence sur l'OTAN, et au besoin à agir sans elle, les Américains lui accordent une importance moindre. Ils ne voient pas d'inconvénient à ce que l'Europe s'emploie à renforcer sa capacité et son organisation militaires, ils ne s'opposent pas à ce que l'Alliance soit dotée d'une capacité *théorique* pour des opérations européennes autonomes. Toutefois, nombreux sont les Américains qui doutent qu'une capacité militaire effective soit créée – compte tenu de la baisse des budgets de défense européens – et qui pensent que l'hypothèse d'une action de l'Europe au sein de l'OTAN ne sera sans doute jamais réalisée. En effet, il semble que les Américains interprètent littéralement les objectifs de l'IESD : il s'agit de créer une « identité » (et non une « capacité »), destinée à donner aux Européens moins les moyens d'agir qu'un sentiment d'unité et de responsabilité.

Les Européens sont souvent contrariés par ce qu'ils considèrent comme de la condescendance – et même de l'arrogance – et ils attendent que les États-Unis prennent plus au sérieux, voire étoffent, le rôle de l'Europe au sein de l'OTAN. Ils n'apprécient guère, et ils n'ont pas tort, qu'on leur demande de payer plus et d'en faire davantage, sans leur accorder en contrepartie la possibilité d'exercer une influence accrue sur la prise de décisions au sein de l'Alliance. Mais c'est aux Européens, et non aux Américains, qu'il appartiendra de concrétiser l'IESD et d'assurer à l'Europe un rôle accru dans l'OTAN. À tort ou à raison, Washington considère que l'élargissement est aujourd'hui, et pour plusieurs années, la priorité majeure de l'OTAN, l'IESD venant loin derrière. Les Américains se réjouiraient – comme ils l'ont toujours fait – d'une augmentation des dépenses européennes en matière de défense et d'une contribution accrue des Européens aux objectifs communs, mais il est peu probable qu'ils acceptent de partager les responsabilités dans une Alliance où les États-Unis semblent avoir plus de poids et d'influence que jamais.

Si les États-Unis hésitent à se montrer plus généreux à l'égard de l'IESD, c'est en partie parce qu'ils se sentent en position de force au sein de l'Alliance. Depuis la fin de la guerre froide, et contre toute

attente, ils jouent un rôle accru dans l'OTAN. Alors que l'Europe n'a plus autant besoin, dans l'absolu, de la protection américaine, son besoin relatif – tel qu'il est perçu par de nombreux Européens – en est pourtant plus grand. Depuis 1989, l'incapacité de l'Europe à créer une alternative à une OTAN dirigée par les États-Unis n'a fait qu'intensifier le sentiment de puissance des Américains.

Si l'IESD n'a pas vraiment pris son essor c'est aussi parce que l'Europe continue à dépendre des États-Unis pour certains types d'opérations militaires. Bien que les membres de l'Union de l'Europe occidentale disposent, ensemble, de forces armées nombreuses, ils n'ont généralement pas la capacité de mener des opérations lointaines et d'envergure, et seuls deux membres de l'UEO (le Royaume-Uni et la France) sont en mesure de déployer et de maintenir des troupes substantielles à l'étranger. Pour les crises qui exigent un déploiement considérable de forces de combat par-delà les frontières européennes, l'Europe reste tributaire des États-Unis en ce qui concerne le renseignement, les ponts aériens et les évacuations par mer, et même les effectifs armés. Il en sera ainsi tant que l'Europe ne comptera pas davantage d'armées de métier. Alors que les États-Unis consacrent chaque année 266 milliards de dollars à la défense, les membres de l'UEO ne dépensent que 173 milliards, et les perspectives d'une augmentation de leurs dépenses militaires sont minces.

L'échec du rapprochement franco-américain, amorcé au début des années 90, est l'une des plus formidables déceptions des tenants d'une IESD intégrée à l'OTAN. En se rapprochant de l'OTAN, la France avait nourri bien des espoirs : après plus de 30 ans de débats, un accord entre les deux adversaires de longue date au sein de l'Alliance avait paru apte à favoriser la formation d'une IESD qui aurait satisfait les deux pays – les États-Unis, parce que l'OTAN serait reconnue comme la principale organisation de sécurité en Europe ; la France, parce que la contribution de l'Europe (et de la France) à la sécurité européenne serait amplifiée et reconnue. Or, s'il y avait désaccord entre les deux côtés de l'Atlantique au sujet de l'interprétation de

l'IESD, c'est entre la France et les États-Unis qu'il était le plus considérable. Quand la vraie nature des deux positions s'est précisée, il est apparu clairement qu'il serait impossible de parvenir à un accord au sujet de l'IESD.

L'échec du rapprochement franco-américain peut vraisemblablement être attribué à une interprétation erronée, de part et d'autre, des positions de Paris et de Washington sur l'IESD. Lorsque les Américains ont souscrit au principe d'une « européanisation » de l'OTAN, dont la France proclamait qu'elle était le prix de sa réintégration, ils y ont imposé des limites bien définies. Pour Washington, il s'agissait au mieux d'accorder aux Européens un plus grand nombre de commandements dans la nouvelle structure militaire ; d'accepter le concept des Groupes de forces interarmées multinationales (GFIM) et la possibilité (théorique) de missions européennes conduites avec des moyens de l'OTAN ; et d'admettre, à contrecœur, un accroissement du rôle du SACEUR-adjoint. Cela *ne* voulait *pas* dire que les États-Unis renonceraient à imposer leur point de vue sur les questions capitales pour l'Alliance, ni qu'ils abandonnerait leurs positions-clefs en son sein. En effet, alors que la fin de la guerre froide avait laissé penser que, les enjeux étant moindres, Washington s'attacherait moins à faire prévaloir ses points de vue, c'est le contraire qui s'est produit – et ce, pour la même raison.

La Bosnie a été et reste le principal test concret pour l'IESD. Il est aujourd'hui largement admis qu'une force militaire extérieure doit y être maintenue, y compris après le départ de la Force de stabilisation de l'OTAN, prévu pour juin 1998. Le vrai débat porte sur les missions et les rôles de cette future force. Certes, les arguments en faveur d'une force de suivi européenne sont raisonnables, mais ceux en faveur du maintien d'une présence américaine sur le terrain le sont plus encore. Une force européenne dirigée par l'UEO ne fonctionnerait que si les Européens acceptaient et étaient capables d'assumer cette tâche *et* si les Américains étaient véritablement disposés à laisser l'Europe en assumer la direction. Ces conditions n'étant pas réunies, la meilleure

solution – pour le moment du moins – est que les États-Unis maintiennent leur présence sur le terrain.

Le maintien d'une présence américaine en Bosnie est nécessaire pour plusieurs raisons. Premièrement, même s'ils retiraient l'ensemble de leurs forces, les États-Unis auraient du mal à se tenir à l'écart des politiques et des décisions relatives à l'avenir de la Bosnie. Deuxièmement, si les États-Unis se tenaient à l'écart, rien ne permet d'affirmer que les Européens auraient la volonté, l'unité et la capacité de contenir les parties ou d'éviter de nouvelles flambées de violence. Troisièmement, si les Européens ne s'entendent pas pour mettre en œuvre des forces entièrement européennes, les conséquences d'un retrait de Washington seraient désastreuses pour l'OTAN et pour les relations transatlantiques. Il serait à tout le moins choquant que les États-Unis se posent en chef de file de l'Alliance et exigent son élargissement, tout en annonçant que les guerres en Europe du Sud-Est sont le « problème de l'Europe » et ne relèvent pas de leur responsabilité.

En théorie, la majorité des Américains savent qu'ils ont intérêt à encourager l'unité et la responsabilité européennes. Rares sont ceux qui prônent l'unilatéralisme, et la plupart, dans et hors du gouvernement, proclameraient qu'ils sont des dirigeants lucides, conscients de la nécessité d'attribuer un rôle accru à l'Europe. Les Américains savent bien qu'il y a des avantages à ce que l'Europe soit plus unie et plus apte à s'occuper de sa propre sécurité.

Partager le pouvoir est cependant plus facile en théorie que dans la pratique. Les États-Unis considèrent qu'ils occupent une position de force au sein de l'OTAN et les pays – ou les individus – qui détiennent le pouvoir y renoncent rarement sans rien obtenir en échange. Les États de l'Union qui critiquent le dur marchandage de Washington au sein de l'OTAN feraient bien d'examiner leurs propres pratiques au sein de l'UE, où chacun s'attache, chaque fois qu'il le peut, à faire prévaloir son point de vue. Le fait est simplement que

les États-Unis jouissent d'un pouvoir relatif au sein de l'OTAN plus important que celui de n'importe quel État européen au sein de l'UE.

Même si les Européens attendent des Américains qu'ils prennent l'initiative dans le développement d'une IESD, et même s'ils critiquent les États-Unis pour leur incapacité à créer cette identité européenne, la responsabilité en incombe en fin de compte à l'Europe elle-même. Les États-Unis veulent une Europe qui puisse contribuer davantage aux objectifs communs, mais on ne peut pas attendre d'eux qu'ils acceptent de renoncer seulement au pouvoir qu'ils détiennent. Les États-Unis considéreront toujours l'IESD comme un mécanisme à travers lequel une Europe plus unie pourra contribuer davantage à une Alliance clairement dirigée par sa principale puissance, les États-Unis. Confrontée à cette réalité, l'Europe peut choisir. Elle peut – sur le modèle de ce que l'UE a fait dans le domaine économique – édifier sa propre capacité militaire, établir une politique étrangère contraignante et institutionnalisée, et assumer la responsabilité de l'opération en Bosnie de manière unifiée et volontariste ; ou alors, elle accepte le leadership des États-Unis, qui ne sont pas aussi disposés à partager le pouvoir que le voudraient la plupart des Européens. Les contraintes structurelles qui sont décrites dans cet essai – et l'expérience des années 90 – laissent penser que c'est cette dernière solution qui prévaudra.

Introduction

Americans have always been ambivalent towards European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI), and they remain so even after the Alliance's most recent reforms. In theory, officials and analysts in the United States have tended to express wholehearted support for the creation and strengthening of a European pillar, and since 1995, they have professed great satisfaction at the prospect of this identity being built within, as opposed to independent from, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In practice, however, most Americans have never been so enthusiastic. Most US analysts are skeptical about Europe's prospects for genuinely building up a serious military capability, and US officials are rarely willing to make the types of compromises that might be necessary to make the Alliance more balanced. The US Congress is not only ambivalent, but often contradictory: many legislators demand that Europeans do more and take more responsibility (for example in Bosnia), but many (sometimes the same ones) also strongly resist any European attempts to implement policies other than those desired by the United States.

As a result of these American attitudes, there is significant misunderstanding about ESDI on the two sides of the Atlantic. Whereas Europeans – and especially the French – have tended to interpret the ESDI as a genuine opportunity to enhance Europe's capacity to influence NATO and, if necessary, to act without it, Americans tend to take it less seriously. Europe's attempts to strengthen its military capability and organization are all well and good, and Americans do not object to the creation of a *theoretical* capacity within the Alliance for autonomous European operations. But many Americans

are also often doubtful that an effective military capability will actually be created given falling European defense budgets, and they are skeptical that Europe's theoretical capacity for action within NATO will ever be used. Indeed, Americans seem to interpret the purpose of ESDI literally – it is about the creation of an "identity" (not a "capability"), meant more to give the Europeans a feeling of unity and responsibility than the actual ability to act.

Europeans often resent what they see as a condescending American attitude – even American arrogance – and demand that the United States take more seriously, and give more substance to, Europe's role within NATO. They justifiably dislike being asked to pay more and do more without gaining commensurate influence on NATO's decisionmaking. But if the ESDI is to be given substance in the coming years and if Europe's role in the Alliance is to grow, the burden for accomplishing this will fall to the Europeans, not the United States. Rightly or wrongly, the overwhelming NATO priority for Washington now and for the next several years is enlargement, and ESDI, among American priorities, takes a clear back seat. Americans would welcome – as they always have – more European defense spending and a greater European contribution to common goals, but they are unlikely to be forthcoming about sharing responsibility in an Alliance where the United States appears to have more power and leverage than ever.

Although Europeans often (rightly) complain about the lack of US support for (and sometimes even the resistance to) ESDI, the main responsibility for its current weakness lies with Europe itself. If Europeans could muster the unity and military power that a true ESDI would imply, the responsibility and influence within the Alliance would follow whether the Americans liked it or not. As it happens, however, few Europeans seem to believe that a true ESDI is worth the effort, the European Union (EU) has proven unable to agree on the institutional adjustments that common positions would

require, and most Europeans seem willing to live with the status quo of an Alliance dominated by the United States. Although there would be some advantages to a more effective ESDI within the Alliance, the most likely prospects are that Europe's hopes for greater roles and responsibilities within NATO remain unfulfilled.

American Unilateralism After the Cold War

To understand how and why the American attitude towards ESDI has developed, it is necessary first to note that – perversely, perhaps – the American role in NATO has grown since the end of the Cold War, not diminished. Whereas many had expected the disappearance of a Soviet threat to result in the decline of American influence and to permit a rise in Europe's role, the opposite has in fact taken place. Far from declining as a European power or as the leader of NATO, the United States somehow seems as dominant – or indeed as domineering – within the Alliance as ever.

Recent American unilateralism in the Alliance – or at least assertive leadership – has manifested itself in a number of ways. On NATO enlargement, for example, the United States was not only instrumental in adopting the policy in the first place, but it got its way, sometimes in the face of strong allied opposition, on the timing, nature, number of new members invited to join, and relationship with Russia. In Bosnia, once NATO got deeply involved, the United States not only provided the lead negotiator, Richard Holbrooke, but it took command of the NATO operation, provided the largest contingent of forces, dictated the terms of the peace treaty with little toleration for European positions, created a "train and equip" program for the Bosniak-Croat forces against unanimous European opposition, and – symbolically if not substantively significant – held the peace negotiations in the American heartland of Dayton, Ohio. On NATO command structure reform, the United States agreed to certain measures of "Europeanization", but it refused to concede control of the Alliance's southern command, even though France,

with German and other support, made this a precondition of its re-integration, and Washington insisted on keeping what were arguably three of the Alliance's four most important command positions (SACEUR[1], SACLANT[2], and CINCSOUTH[3]) for itself. And even in the appointment of NATO's most recent secretary general, once a congenial example of Alliance compromise and joint-decisionmaking, the United States in 1995 was willing and able to impose a choice (Javier Solana) different from that already made by most of its main European allies (Ruud Lubbers). How did this happen, and why should the United States – whose role and presence in European security only came about because of the Soviet threat – be more dominant than ever within the Alliance when that original threat no longer exists?

Perhaps the main reason for the United States' rising rather than falling role is that whereas Europe's absolute need for an American role in European security is obviously less than it was during the Cold War, its relative need is greater. Indeed, defending Western Europe against a Soviet threat was so clearly and directly a threat to America's own national interests that it went almost without saying that the United States had to be involved in European defense. The United States needed Europe almost as much as Europe needed the United States, and Washington was obliged to recognize European perspectives and often to defer to them in the interests of creating and maintaining an Alliance. Today, while Europe's need for US protection is obviously less than it was during the Cold War, it has not diminished as much as America's perceived need for Europe as an ally.

The result of this changing relationship is that the United States feels that it is in a position of strength vis-à-vis its allies. European securi-

1. Supreme Allied Commander in Europe.

2. Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic.

3. Commander-in-Chief Allied Forces Southern Europe.

ty is still of course an important American interest, but given the lack of a threat, changing American trade and demographic patterns, and the decline in the perceived importance of foreign policy in the United States, European security is less important than it used to be, and American engagement more optional[4]. The American perception, reinforced by strong elements in Congress and public opinion that no longer think European security should be an American responsibility, is that Europeans are the *demandeurs* in this alliance, and that if they want an American role, they will have to accept American terms. Accurate or not, this American perception leads to a tendency toward unilateralism within NATO, and to an implied American threat – never credible during the Cold War – that if Europeans do not play by US rules, the United States will not play at all. Arguably, as it has led the transformation of NATO in the post-Cold War era, the United States has been less willing to accommodate European perspectives into its leadership style, not more[5].

This American feeling of relative strength within the Alliance has only been reinforced by Europe's perceived inability to create any

4. I have discussed these structural changes in the transatlantic relationship in Philip H. Gordon, "Recasting the Atlantic Alliance", *Survival* 38, no. 1, Spring 1996, pp. 32-57.

5. The tendency toward unilateralism and growing primacy of domestic politics, of course, applies not only to US policy within NATO, but to post-Cold War US foreign policy in general. The most recent example was Congress' November 1997 refusal, because of a domestic political dispute (over abortion and family planning), to carry out an agreement to repay US debts to the United Nations and to issue further credit to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), even while the President was seeking to muster a consensus at the UN Security Council over policy toward Iraq and a Southeast Asian currency crisis threatened the world economy. See Eric Pianin and Thomas W. Lippman, "Republicans Withhold Funds for UN and IMF", *International Herald Tribune*, November 14, 1997; and the discussion in David S. Broder, "Clinton's Sway Abroad Is Undermined at Home", *International Herald Tribune*, November 19, 1997.

credible alternative to a US-led NATO to deal with the security crises of the post-Cold War world. Hopes expressed in 1989-1990 that the European Community could eventually replace NATO as the main provider of security in Europe have proven misplaced, and the EU's goal of creating a common foreign and security policy, as declared at the Maastricht summit of December 1991, has proven elusive. Most observers on both sides of the Atlantic agree that the marginal institutional adjustments made to Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) at the EU's June 1997 Amsterdam summit will not have a significant effect on the EU's foreign and security policy credibility.

Finally, the most important factor leading the United States to feel indispensable within NATO was the Western experience in former Yugoslavia. In the Balkans, Europeans sought unsuccessfully for more than four years to cope with a conflict on their own soil before yielding to an American-led diplomatic and military intervention that, temporarily at least, brought the conflict to an end. Far from having proved to be "*the hour of Europe, not the hour of the United States*", as an EU official hopefully proclaimed at the outset of the war, the conflict in the Balkans proved[6]. Whether the view that only the United States could bring the Bosnian war to an end was "fair" or not (and it certainly needs to be qualified, given America's own failure to stop the war from 1991-95 and Bosnia's still uncertain future) is not really the point. What matters where ESDI is concerned is that the sight of Europeans giving way to an American negotiator and US-dominated military force under NATO auspices certainly created the widely shared impression that the United States was the indispensable power within NATO and that Europe could not act without it. As then Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke put

6. The EU official was Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jacques Poos, cited in Joel Haveman, "EC Urges End to Yugoslav Violence, Threatens Aid Cut", *Los Angeles Times*, June 29, 1991, p. A11.

it not long after the Dayton Agreement: "*Unless the United States is prepared to put its political and military muscle behind the quest for solutions to European instability, nothing really gets done*"[7]. The "lesson" of Bosnia for most Americans is that Europe is militarily dependent on American unity and power[8].

The United States' attitude in NATO is thus one of very high self-confidence. Americans generally do support greater European unity and welcome Europe's efforts to contribute more to NATO, but they see little reason to accommodate European perspectives that they do not share, and little cause for ceding institutional power in an Alliance that they currently dominate. If Europeans want to create an effective ESDI within NATO, they will have to begin by making progress toward their own unity, developing the military power they

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7. Richard Holbrooke cited in William Drozdiak, "Europe's Dallying Amid Crises Scares Its Critics", *International Herald Tribune*, February 8, 1996. Holbrooke's view seems to be shared by US Secretary of Defense William Cohen, who has argued that Bosnia "*was principally a European problem to be solved. The Europeans did not move. It pointed out that the Europeans do not act in the absence of American leadership*". Cited in Barbara Starr, "Cohen Establishing His Doctrine as Clinton and Congress Look On", *Jane's Defence Weekley*, February 5, 1997, p. 19. Also see the even more pointed – and again representative – view of journalist Stephen Rosenfeld, who writes that Bosnia's "*disintegration was Europe's to address, but the (partial) solution finally reached came out of American power and diplomacy. Why Europeans would want to maintain anything but a discreet silence on the matter is a mystery*". See Stephen S. Rosenfeld, "US Arrogance? What About European Freeloading?", *International Herald Tribune*, November 8-9, 1997.

8. Though it irritates them when Americans make the point, most Europeans in fact tend to agree. See, for example, Carl Bildt's assessment that "*The distinctly unimpressive performance of the European Union's CFSP has reinforced the idea throughout the European region that America is, and will remain, the only force that counts. American strength lies less in an ability to devise strategies and set out policies than in a superior ability to orchestrate action and support for whatever policy happens to be theirs at any given moment. This gives the impression – perhaps rightly so – that only the United States can act and firmly deliver effective*

bring to the bargaining table, and ultimately making credible a European alternative to NATO if the Americans prove unwilling to compromise within it. As the next section shows, however, none of these tasks will be easy.

results". See Carl Bildt, "The Global Lessons of Bosnia", in *What Global Role for the EU?*, Brussels: The Philip Morris Institute for Public Policy Research, September 1997, p. 23. For a similar view from the region, see Greek analyst Thanos Veremis' assessment that "*the foreign policy protagonists of the European Union failed to muster a common policy throughout the protracted crisis in Bosnia. The United States, on the other hand, projected its comprehensive solution with single-minded determination. There is little doubt in the Balkans today as to which Western power will act as a catalyst of future developments*". See Veremis, "Southeastern Europe After Dayton", in Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr. and Dimitris Keridis, *Security in Southeastern Europe and the US-Greek Relationship*, McLean, VA: Brassey's, 1997, p. 21. Leading members of Germany's ruling Christian Democratic Party (CDU) have also concluded that "*Bosnia has made clear that effective conflict resolution in Europe is possible at the present time only with the active involvement of the United States*", to take just one more of many examples. The CDU report is cited in Craig R. Whitney, "NATO Puzzle: Can It Still Be Effective?", *International Herald Tribune*, July 7, 1997.

The Structural Obstacles to ESDI

The creation of an ESDI within NATO was first formally adopted by the Alliance at its landmark Brussels summit of January 1994, when NATO agreed on the set of reforms – the Partnership for Peace (PfP), Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTF), and the non-proliferation/counter-proliferation program – that would mark its agenda for the rest of the decade. The goal of an ESDI, of course, long predated the 1990s, and in some ways goes all the way back to the aborted European Defense Community (EDC) of 1950-1954 and the French Fouchet Plans of 1960-1962. Indeed, the difference in nature between these two possible types of European organizations – the EDC would have been militarily integrated and within NATO, and the Fouchet Plans intergovernmental and separate from NATO – was one of the reasons an ESDI never came about, since Europeans were never able to agree on one or the other model. During the Cold War, not enough Europeans could be convinced by "Gaullist" arguments that Europeans needed the potential capacity to act without the United States, Gaullists could not be convinced that the ESDI should be embedded in NATO, and Americans, in any case, were unwilling to accept separate – or even separable – European forces that they feared might divide the Alliance. As a result, agreement on a NATO ESDI could only be reached in the 1990s, when France had come to accept that it could not be built separate from NATO, and the United States no longer felt threatened by potentially separable European capabilities.

This convergence in perspectives made possible the adoption of an ESDI that would be built on two pillars: on one hand, the strengthening of the Western European Union (WEU), Europe's only exclusive defense and security organization, and, on the other hand, a re-organization of NATO that would permit the creation, when agreed, of all-European forces and missions. Some progress has been made on both counts.

The WEU has been significantly strengthened since 1992, when WEU leaders took steps at their Petersberg summit to make the organization into the defense component of the European Union, as had been agreed at Maastricht at the end of the previous year[1]. Since then, the organization has become more capable in a number of ways, most notably with the setting up of a Defense Planning Cell of some forty officers, the creation of a 24-hour capable Situation Center for monitoring crises, and the development of a satellite interpretation center in Torrejon, Spain, where it is already training staff and receiving data from the Helios I satellite[2]. The WEU can now also call on several new multinational European forces such as the Eurocorps, the

1. The Petersberg Declaration listed possible operations (now commonly referred to as “Petersberg tasks”) that would include humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping, and combat tasks in crisis management. See *the Petersberg Declaration of the WEU Council of Ministers*, Bonn, June 19, 1992; and the discussion in Assembly of Western European Union, Sir Russell Johnson, rapporteur, *Western European Union: Information Report*, Brussels: March 14, 1995, pp. 33-36.

2. In addition to these measures, the WEU has moved its headquarters from London to Brussels (to facilitate contact with NATO); developed a catalogue of military units answerable to the WEU; arranged for the regular meeting of armed forces chiefs of staff and other military officers; developed a political-military decision-making process; initiated a comprehensive military exercise policy; set up its own Institute for Security Studies in Paris. On the WEU's operational development, see Brigadier Graham Messervy-Whiting, “WEU Operational Development”, *Joint Forces Quarterly*, no. 15, Spring 1997, pp. 70-74; and Philip H. Gordon, “Does the WEU Have a Role?”, *Washington Quarterly* 21, no. 1, Winter 1996-97, pp. 125-40.

European Force (EUROFOR), and the European Maritime Force (EUROMARFOR)[3]. Clearly, the WEU is more significant, and operationally capable, than it has ever been in its nearly fifty years of existence.

NATO has also taken steps to enhance Europe's role within the Alliance and develop its potential capacity for operations without the participation of the United States. This "Europeanization" of the Alliance includes a major restructuring of NATO command structures that will see Europeans take on a greater percentage of command posts within the Alliance; the enhancement of the position of Deputy SACEUR, who will now be tasked with preparing for, and eventually commanding, European-only missions; far-reaching cooperation agreements between the WEU and NATO; and most importantly, the creation of CJTF headquarters, which will make possible European operations using NATO assets and command structures but without the necessary participation of US forces. When the CJTF concept was formally agreed at NATO's June 1996 summit in Berlin, Europeans and Americans alike proclaimed it a major step towards the creation of an ESDI, one that, in the words of the then French Foreign Minister Hervé de Charette, would allow Europe "*to be able to express its personality for the first time in Alliance history*"[4].

This combination of developments – the strengthening of the WEU and the Europeanization of NATO – constitute the basis for the ESDI. In theory, they allow Europe to express a more distinct voice within NATO, and provide the basis for Europeans to better defend their in-

3. See Charles L. Barry, "Creating a European Security and Defense Identity", *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Spring 1997, p. 63.

4. See de Charette cited in Rick Atkinson, "NATO Gives Members Response Flexibility", *Washington Post*, June 4, 1997. For a range of similar American and European comments, also see "NATO Acquires a European Identity", *The Economist*, June 8, 1996, pp. 43-44; and Bruce Clark, "US Agrees to Give Europe More Say in NATO Operations", *Financial Times*, June 4, 1996.

terests militarily, even without the United States. In practice, however, the significance of these steps has been limited, and barring significant changes in Europe's cohesion, means, or will to act, they are likely to remain so. In fact, for the reasons suggested above, in some ways NATO has not been "Europeanized", but "Americanized", and the Alliance is more than ever dominated by the United States. The weakness of the current ESDI, and Europe's relative dependence on the United States, is the product of several structural factors that will be very difficult for proponents of ESDI to overcome.

At the most basic level, the ESDI is incomplete because European countries, most of which have for the past forty years been exclusively focussed on territorial defense, do not currently have the capacity for autonomous military action that would give them more of a voice within an Alliance whose main missions now are outside its borders. Although WEU members as a group have large armed forces (nearly 1.8 million troops, not including reserves), they generally lack the capacity for anything but relatively small and nearby operations, and only two WEU members (the United Kingdom and France) can effectively mount and sustain significant deployments abroad[5]. For crises that require projecting large numbers of combat forces beyond European borders and sustaining them there, Europe remains dependent on the United States for military intelligence, air and sea-lift, and even numbers of troops, at least until more European forces are professionalized.

Despite all the talk of the WEU and NATO's "Europeanization", moreover, Europeans are unlikely to be willing to acquire such capabilities in the foreseeable future. For understandable reasons, given Europe's economic challenges, the budgetary requirements of monetary union, and the low priority given by many Europeans to military af-

5. For a good discussion of European NATO members' logistical limitations, see Michael O'Hanlon, "Transforming NATO: The Role of European Forces", *Survival* 39, no. 3, Autumn 1997, pp. 5-15.

fairs, EU governments have been cutting defense budgets substantially and are likely to cut them further in the coming years. Thus whereas the United States spends $266 billion – 3.6% of its GDP – on defense annually, the members of the WEU spend only $173 billion – 2.3% of their GDP[6]. And not only is WEU-member aggregate spending just 65% of US spending, but Europe's fragmented defense industries and large conscript armies mean that it is not spending even that amount as efficiently as it might, leaving less funding available for future-oriented functions like research and development. US government-funded defense R&D spending in 1996 was about three times that of all NATO's European members combined[7].

It is true, of course, that some European countries are reorganizing their armed forces to be better able to project forces and participate in peacekeeping and peace enforcement missions abroad. France has announced the professionalization of its armed forces and plans to build up an intervention force of up to 60,000 troops, and the Federal Republic of Germany is for the first time creating crisis reaction forces that could be used on combat missions abroad[8]. These are both useful developments and will strengthen Europe's capacity for action. But while the defense reforms in both countries are important and relevant contributions to a potential ESDI, both countries are also planning major cuts in defense spending, and serious questions remain

6. See International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), *The Military Balance: 1997-98*, p. 293; and Rick Atkinson and Bradley Graham, “As Europe Seeks Wider NATO Role, Its Armies Shrink”, *Washington Post*, July 29, 1996, p. A1.

7. The US figure for 1996 was $35 billion; for NATO Europe it was $12 billion. The gap is expected to grow slightly for 1997, with US spending rising by almost $1 billion and NATO Europe falling by the same amount. See IISS, *The Military Balance 1997-98*, p. 34.

8. On French defense reforms see Jacques Isnard, “Le budget militaire sera réduit de 100 milliards de francs en cinq ans”, *Le Monde*, February 24, 1996, pp. 6-9; and Stanley R. Sloan, “French Defense Policy: Gaullism Meets the Post-Cold War”, *Arms Control Today*, April 1997, pp. 3-8.

about their commitments to critical projects like the Future Large Aircraft (for military transport), and Helios II and Horus optical and radar satellites (for military intelligence)[9]. Given that it would most likely cost at least $30 billion for Europe to create the military capability to conduct medium-scale "out-of-area" missions without the United States (including intelligence satellites, floating communications headquarters, mobile logistics, and transport craft), European states are unlikely to make the investments necessary to do so[10].

A second reason why the potential for the ESDI is limited is the enduring European inability to agree on just what form it should take. Europe is no longer as divided on this issue as it was during the 1960s or even the 1980s, when intra-European clashes between "Gaullists" and "Atlanticists" plagued efforts to create an ESDI. The French agreement of 1994-1995 to build the ESDI within NATO rather than outside it, and the more pro-European orientation of the British Labour government elected in May 1997 have narrowed the differences among Europeans on this issue.

While the differences have narrowed, however, they have by no means disappeared. At Maastricht, despite the sense of urgency crea-

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9. On the cuts, see "Le général Philippe Mercier craint une réduction de l'outil de défense", *Le Monde*, November 16-17, 1997; Charles Trueheart, "France to Curtail Military", *Washington Post*, August 20, 1997; Jacques Isnard, *op. cit.*; and Giovanni de Briganti, "Germans May Drop Helios", *Defense News*, June 24-30, 1996, pp. 1-76.

10. For estimates of what it would cost to equip a European intervention force of some 50,000 troops for force-projection, see M.B. Berman and G.M. Carter, *The Independent European Force: Costs of Independence*, Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1993. Defense analyst Michael O'Hanlon calculates that it would cost around $50 billion for NATO's European members to develop about one-half the strategic lift capability of the United States. See O'Hanlon, "Transforming NATO", pp. 10-11. Analyst Gordon Wilson of the WEU's Institute for Security Studies, in a response to O'Hanlon's call for Europe to develop such capabilities, has written that "*calling on Europe to spend more on defense* (...) *is avoiding reality*". See Gordon Wilson, "Europe's Role in NATO", *Survival* 39, no. 4, Winter 1997-98, p. 199.

ted by the outbreak of war in Yugoslavia three months before, EU leaders were unable to agree on the extent to which defense and security policy should be an EU task (or whether they should remain exclusively in NATO's hands). In a split reminiscent of the divisions between, on the one hand, French Gaullists and, on the other hand, British and Dutch Atlanticists in the early 1960s, EU leaders agreed on a compromise that stated that the WEU would be both "*the European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance*" and "*the defense arm of the EU*". The most telling evidence of this intra-European failure to agree on how to build their ESDI was found in the Maastricht Treaty's article J.4, which stated awkwardly that Europe's CFSP would include "*the eventual defining of a common defense policy which might in time lead to a common defense*"[11]. At the EU's June 1997 Amsterdam summit, a main goal of which was to improve the functioning of Europe's "common foreign and security policy", a number of EU member-states – France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Luxembourg and Greece – put forth a proposal calling for a specific timetable for the gradual merger of the EU and the WEU[12]. As at Maastricht six years before, however, this proposal was blocked by Britain (with the support of the Nordic countries). London remains determined to keep defense affairs out of the EU and to preserve the leading defense role for NATO. All that could be agreed upon at Amsterdam was an unspecified commitment to "enhance cooperation" between the two organizations, that EU members that are not members of the WEU could participate in some WEU activities, and that an EU-WEU merger could take place, "*should the European Council so decide*"[13]. The

11. See the discussion in Nicole Gnesotto, "European Defense: Why Not the Twelve?", *Chaillot Papers* no 1, Western European Union Institute for Security Studies, Paris: March 1991.

12. See the proposal outlined by French Foreign Minister Hervé de Charette and his Italian counterpart Lamberto Dini in "Innover pour progresser", *Le Monde*, March 25, 1997.

13. See Intergovernmental Conference, Amsterdam European Council, *An Effective and Coherent External Policy*, European Union website.

Amsterdam summit also set up a foreign policy planning and analysis unit at the EU Council of Ministers; appointed a “High Representative” for foreign policy (who will initially be the Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers); and agreed on the principle of “constructive abstention”, which will allow member-states to abstain from certain foreign policy actions without having to block them altogether.

This set of steps will marginally enhance European unity on security and defense issues, but they will not overcome the major differences among Europeans that remain. Some EU states remain far more prepared to contemplate military force than others; some strongly believe defense and security policy should be a function of the EU while others equally strongly oppose this; some believe Europe needs the capacity for military action outside of NATO and without American agreement while others believe Europe can and should act only when in conjunction with the United States. So long as these differences remain, and unless and until Europe is able to create an institutionalized, binding foreign and security policy with common European goals, the European role within the Alliance will not fulfil its potential. The fact remains that while on some issues (such as the question of secondary boycotts on Iran or some trade matters) there are such things as “European” and “American” views, on many security questions this distinction does not hold up, and some European positions are closer to those of the United States than to those of other Europeans. If Europeans had been able to arrive at truly “European” positions in the debates with the United States over NATO enlargement, the Balkan wars, and internal reform, the outcomes of these debates would not have been as close to the initial US bargaining position as almost all of them have been. A prerequisite for a European security “identity” is that Europeans identify more strongly with each other and each other's goals.

A third reason for skepticism about the fulfilment of ESDI, and for believing that the United States will remain the Alliance's dominant actor, is that even the highly touted new arrangements for ESDI

within NATO are more limited than they at first appear. To be sure, with CJTF, NATO has the capacity and authority to organize all-European missions using NATO assets and structures. In theory, if a military mission arises that the United States supports but does not want to participate in, it can agree to a WEU-led CJTF, which the Deputy SACEUR or some other European CJTF commander would lead. In practice, however, such arrangements seem highly unlikely ever to be used, and the significance of CJTF needs to be qualified in several ways.

It is important to remember, for instance, that the "NATO assets" referred to in all references to WEU-led CJTFs, are very limited in scope. NATO has an air defense system; some command, control and communications assets (which are mostly fixed and therefore of little use for outside interventions); oil pipelines (equally irrelevant for force-projection); a system of bunkers and shelters; and about eighteen Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS). What NATO does not have, however, are independent forces, the means of force projection (such as airlift, sealift, and airborne refuelling capabilities), and satellite intelligence systems – only the United States has these in significant amounts. Thus while the agreement that the WEU can borrow NATO assets is a useful step, one should not forget that, for most operations beyond Europe's borders, Europeans would have to rely not on NATO's assets, but American national ones.

Moreover, and more important, the prerequisites for a European-only mission taking place within NATO are that, first, the United States (and all other NATO members) agree to authorize it, and second, the Europeans (WEU or some other subset) agree to undertake it. There is cause for skepticism on both counts. To be sure, one can imagine certain situations in which the United States would agree to lend its support to European missions – where missions are small with little risk of escalation and where Washington supports Europe's goals. But for plenty of other missions US support would likely be in doubt. If

a mission is large and has US support, it is hard to imagine Washington agreeing to let it be led by the WEU; far more likely is an insistence by the Americans that it be a NATO mission, governed by the North Atlantic Council, and led by the United States. If, on the other hand, an operation is potentially large or could escalate, and the United States does not support it, the United States, particularly under Congressional pressure, might be reluctant to allow Europeans to use NATO assets, let alone US national ones[14].

Even if one can imagine US willingness to authorize and support a WEU-led CJTF, the more significant constraints might actually be on the "demand side", that is, from the Europeans themselves. As suggested earlier, after relying on the US and NATO security guarantees for more than forty years, they have developed a "culture of dependence" that will not disappear soon. As the crises in Rwanda in spring 1994 and in Albania in early 1997 showed, for example, even relatively small military missions are unlikely to receive the widespread European backing that would allow Europeans to turn to the

14. At the time of the CJTF deal in June 1996, US officials were quick to point out – mostly privately but to an extent publicly as well – that while they were pleased with the agreement they doubted whether European-led CJTF would ever really be used. As one senior Administration official put it at the time, "*It's very difficult for us to look around the landscape and see any situations where the United States would not want to be involved* (...). *In the real world, when real threats develop, the United States will be there*". Cited in Rick Atkinson, "NATO Gives Members Response Flexibility". The senior Defense Department official responsible for briefing the press at the time of the agreement also stressed repeatedly that "*the ultimate commander (SACEUR) is American and it's staying that way*", and he had trouble explaining the possible advantages for the United States of a European-led CJTF: "*In appropriate circumstances, Europe could lead and if there was a situation which for whatever reason, as I said, it's hard to anticipate with any precision what it might be. Europe could go forward and the US could provide support. That would have to be done with the consent of the* [North Atlantic Council]". See "Readout of NATO Conference in Berlin", *News Briefing*, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Public Affairs, June 11, 1996.

WEU (or a Europe-only CJTF); differences in interests among European countries still seem too great.

An even more illustrative case is that of former Yugoslavia. Ever since NATO first deployed ground forces there in the late fall of 1995, the European attitude toward the operation has been "in together, out together", and Europeans have been adamant that they have no intention of staying in Bosnia if US forces leave[15]. There are, of course, good reasons for such an attitude: Europeans remember the bad experience of 1991-1995 when European troops were present and American ones were not; the United States is unlikely to defer politically to Europe even if it pulls out its troops; and only American forces have the credibility on the ground to deter renewed conflict among the warring parties[16]. Still, it is legitimate to ask this: if Europeans are unwilling to undertake a Europe-only (or WEU-led) mission in Bosnia, where European interests are directly engaged, the US commitment is uncertain, and the stakes are very high, will there ever be a significant case where Europe will agree to take the lead? EU, WEU and NATO officials can talk endlessly about ESDI, adjust their institutional arrangements, and hammer out agreements on concepts like CJTF, but (as NATO's own recent evolution shows) facts on the ground are far more powerful drivers on institutional develop-

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15. See, for one of many examples, French President Jacques Chirac's insistence that "*If the United States leaves, we all leave*", cited in Drozdiak, "NATO Puzzle". Also see the discussion in Ivo H. Daalder, "Bosnia After SFOR: Options for Continued US Engagement", *Survival* 39, no. 4, Winter 1997-98, pp. 5-18. When in May 1996, EU Commissioner Hans van den Broek suggested that perhaps European troops could remain in Bosnia even if the US were to leave, he was quickly contradicted by French Foreign Minister Hervé de Charette, and no senior European official has publicly contemplated a European-only role since. See *Agence France Presse*, "EU Commissioner Slammed for Bosnia Comments", May 7, 1996.

16. For a good articulation of the case for "*in together, out together*", see Pauline Neville-Jones, "Washington Has a Responsibility Too", *Survival* 39, no. 4, Winter 1997-98, pp. 22-24.

ment than any initiatives, concepts or declarations. If Europeans were to agree on what needed to be done in Bosnia, seize the initiative, propose a Europe-only mission, and carry it out in a determined, unified and coherent manner, an ESDI would exist in fact, whether the Americans liked it or not. The fact that they have been unwilling, or unable to do so in this important test case has to lead to the conclusion that a true ESDI is still far away. If a major war in Europe, combined with perceived American unreliability, was not enough to motivate Europeans to adopt a common defense and security policy, it is difficult to see what will.

The (Aborted) French-American Rapprochement

One of the greatest disappointments for proponents of an ESDI within NATO was the collapse of a French-American rapprochement that began in the early 1990s. The French rapprochement with NATO was so promising because agreement between these two long-time antagonists within NATO for a time seemed likely, after more than thirty years of debate, to permit the creation of an ESDI within NATO that would have satisfied both countries – the United States because NATO would be recognized as the primary European security organization, and France because Europe's (and France's) contribution to European security would be enhanced and acknowledged. If there was a disagreement in the interpretation of ESDI on the two sides of the Atlantic, however, this gap was greatest between France and the United States. When the true nature of the two positions became clear, it also became clear that agreement on the substance of the ESDI was not going to be reached.

When France first started coming closer to NATO under Defense Minister Pierre Joxe during 1992-1993, and especially after the December 1995 announcement by Foreign Minister Hervé de Charette that France would re-join NATO's Military Committee after a boycott of nearly thirty years, American officials and analysts tried to interpret the French motivation. Had France now "seen the light" and accepted that US-led NATO was the most important security organization in Europe, or was France just pursuing old goals by new means, using a "Trojan Horse" strategy to change NATO from within

rather than provide an alternative to it from without? Though elements of both explanations probably played a role, there can be little doubt that the French desire to come closer to NATO was genuine. France's new interest in NATO was motivated by a wide range of factors including:

• German unification (which disrupted the balance among Europe's leading powers and suggested France might no longer be the continent's military leader);

• the lessons of the Gulf War (which showed the value of NATO interoperability even for out-of-area operations and confirmed the effectiveness of American military power);

• the lessons of Bosnia (which again demonstrated NATO's effectiveness as a means both for organizing military deployments and credibly threatening force);

• and finally the realization that, even if an ESDI outside of NATO might still be desirable from a French point of view, the rest of the Europeans were as unlikely as ever to support it, and France clearly did not have the resources to do so alone[1].

All of this led France to seek accommodation with NATO and the United States, and the French government apparently believed it could re-integrate with NATO without sacrificing the level of European autonomy and visibility Paris believed necessary and appropriate.

Why, then, did the rapprochement fail? If France was genuinely interested in coming closer to NATO, and the Americans were interested in having them do so, why did the new relationship not work out? The best explanation seems to be a mutual misunderstanding between Paris and Washington of each other's positions on ESDI. When the Americans agreed in principle to the "Europeanization" of

1. See Robert Grant, "France's New Relationship with NATO", *Survival* 38, no. 1, Spring 1996, pp. 58-80.

NATO, that France claimed, was the price of its reintegration, they saw clear limits to what this meant in practice. For Washington, it meant at most giving Europeans larger numbers of commands in the new military structure; accepting CJTF and the (theoretical) possibility of all-European missions with NATO assets; and, reluctantly, agreeing to the enhancement of the role of the Deputy SACEUR. What it did *not* mean was that Washington would no longer insist on getting its way on the most important questions of Alliance decision-making, or that it would give up key positions of influence within the Alliance. Indeed, as noted earlier, the politics of the post-Cold War Alliance suggested that, rather than being less demanding about getting its way within NATO because the stakes were lower, Washington was going to be more demanding than ever – for the same reason.

Paris, on the other hand, expected more. Having announced that France would re-join the integrated Alliance bodies only if the United States genuinely agreed to give the Europeans a greater role, President Jacques Chirac felt obliged to "deliver" that greater role, lest he be accused of getting nothing in return for France's reintegration. This, indeed, was already happening by mid-1996, with the Socialists, then out of power, condemning Chirac's new "Atlanticism", and former President Mitterrand adviser Hubert Védrine (now Foreign Minister) claiming that the government had unnecessarily "*played all its cards at once*"[2]. To achieve what he felt would be a sufficient level of Europeanization, Chirac focussed on two issues: the enlargement of NATO to include two southern European countries, Romania and Slovenia, in addition to the three (Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary) favored by the Americans; and greater representation for Europeans in NATO's new command structure, including in particular

2. See Daniel Vernet, "France-OTAN : une bonne idée en panne", *Le Monde*, June 29-30, 1997. Also see the critiques of former Socialist defense minister Paul Quilès, "Défense européenne et OTAN : la dérive", *Le Monde*, June 11, 1996; and Philippe Delmas, "Quatre questions sur un gambit", *Le Monde*, June 11, 1996.

the command of NATO's southern flank (AFSOUTH[3]). When the Americans refused to concede on either point, France felt unable to continue its rapprochement with NATO and the United States, and in October 1997, Paris announced that it would not be re-joining NATO's integrated command structure after all[4].

The AFSOUTH dispute demonstrated the gap in thinking about ESDI that exists between France and the United States. The American assumption was that France, having finally acknowledged the importance of NATO and the need for US leadership, now understood that this was a US-led alliance and would complete its reintegration so long as symbolic tribute were paid to Europe's role; France was asking for more "visibility" for Europeans, and the Americans felt that the measures taken at the June 1996 Berlin summit easily met this demand. What the Americans apparently did not understand was that, in addition to a higher profile within the Alliance, France also wanted more actual authority, which the Americans found much more difficult to accept. When in summer 1996, France began to propose that Europe take over command positions with real authority – first SACEUR, and, when that was rejected out of hand, CINCSOUTH – the Americans categorically refused. They claimed that US leadership of NATO's southern region was a vital national interest, and that American public and Congressional support for European security could only be guaranteed if the Americans were in command. The search for a compromise over AFSOUTH, which lasted well into 1997, showed a genuine desire by both sides to seek a solution, but ultimately the two conceptions of the Alliance, and Europe's proper role in it, proved too far apart[5].

3. Allied Forces Southern Europe.

4. See Craig R. Whitney, "Paris Tells NATO It Stays Out For Now", *International Herald Tribune*, October 2, 1997.

5. In mid-May 1997, French and US negotiators were close to a compromise that would have split the commands in two (one European and one American), but US

Washington's unwillingness to pay a material price to resolve the AFSOUTH dispute and complete France's reintegration revealed more than a particular American view about a particular military command; it demonstrated the lack of trust that prevails between Washington and Paris even after the period of rapprochement of the mid-1990s. Though most Americans recognized that France's desire to come closer to NATO was genuine, many still suspected the French of trying to use NATO for their own purposes, along the Trojan Horse model suggested earlier. These suspicions only grew when French conditions for reintegration seemed to escalate each time previous conditions seemed to be fulfilled, and France's insistence on Europe taking over AFSOUTH gave many Americans – even those previously prepared to believe France's new Atlanticism was genuine – doubts about whether it was genuine. After more than thirty years of disagreement about Europe's proper role in the Alliance, many in Washington needed to experience more than a few years of relative cooperation before they were willing to believe that the French now shared their vision of the Alliance[6]. If France could not accept that the United States, given its military power in the Mediterranean, leadership in Bosnia and role in managing the Greece-Turkey crisis, was the most appropriate country to hold the

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insistence that the European be "slightly" subordinate to the American, and French insistence that the US agree on moving to a single European command in six years prevented agreement from being reached. See Daniel Vernet, "La France reste un pied dedans et un pied dehors en attendant un meilleur partage des responsabilités", *Le Monde*, July 10, 1997.

6. In some ways, this was similar to de Gaulle's attitude about the United Kingdom joining the Common Market during the 1960s, when the General insisted that Britain demonstrate its true commitment to the French vision of Europe before France would let it join; since Britain could not do so, France vetoed its entry. A memorable cartoon from *The Times* shows de Gaulle sitting at a bar with UK Prime Minister Harold Wilson depicted as a stripper who has taken off all his clothes but his underwear. Wilson says "*All of it?*" and de Gaulle responds "*Yes, all of it*". This is not altogether different from the US attitude toward France within NATO.

Alliance's southern command, maybe France did not share Washington's conception of US leadership of the Alliance after all. If that was the case, Americans reasoned, better to have no agreement at all.

The failure to agree on AFSOUTH – together with French resentment over other cases of what Paris sees as US unilateralism – means that France's new relationship with the United States and NATO will now remain incomplete, which is unfortunate. Though the importance of France's formal integration into NATO commands should not be exaggerated, as France can still operate effectively with the rest of the Alliance, it is nonetheless a setback both to France and the Alliance. France would have benefited from a more familiar and more trusting relationship with NATO's military structures, and NATO's unity and credibility would have benefited from the full participation of France, one of its members most willing and able to act militarily. Some French officials and analysts claim to expect that the new NATO command structure that will be agreed without them will only be a temporary one, but that seems unlikely. Given how long it took to reach the latest reform agreements and how difficult they were to reach, whatever gets decided at NATO's December 1997 and June 1998 ministerials will likely be in place for some time, as the Alliance places attention on other matters, like enlargement, Bosnia, and the renovation of its Strategic Concept. In the new command structure, even NATO's newly admitted-5 members will be more integrated than France[7]. Unless other European members of NATO come to share France's vision of ESDI within NATO, France is unlikely to achieve its goals.

7. Some embittered US officials thus now suggest that Poland will be a "*more important ally*" than France. The point is overstated but it does give a sense of the level of disappointment at the failure to reach an agreement.

The Bosnia Test Case

As noted earlier, the greatest test case for the ESDI has been, and continues to be, Bosnia. To be sure, Bosnia is a particularly hard test, and Europeans are right to point out that a failure of ESDI in Bosnia is not necessarily a failure of the concept altogether; perhaps there will be other crises in or around Europe in which Europe will be better able to demonstrate its unity or power. Still, the Bosnia test is relevant. It is, after all, the greatest security policy challenge to Europe at present and for the foreseeable future; it is one of the main reasons Europeans have said they *need* an ESDI; and it is an area in which the United States is calling on Europe to play its newly enhanced role within the Alliance. If Europeans continue to insist – even if for good reason – that Bosnia is not an appropriate place to try out NATO's new mechanisms for all-European peace-keeping forces, the limits to ESDI will have become clear[1].

It is now widely accepted that some form of outside military force must remain in Bosnia even after the scheduled June 1998 departure of NATO's Stabilization Force (SFOR). Though the NATO presence has kept the peace among Bosnia's combatants and the military aspects of the Dayton agreement have been implemented, Bosnia is still a deeply divided country, few refugees have returned to their homes, and no one can be certain that, if NATO forces were to leave,

1. As Ivo Daalder has put it, "*if a Bosnia that has been at peace for four years as a result of a US-led military presence proves too much for Europe to take on, ESDI will be exposed as a myth rather than a nascent reality*". See Ivo H. Daalder, "Bosnia After SFOR: Options for Continued US Engagement", *Survival* 39, no. 4, Winter 1997-98, p. 16.

war would not resume. Indeed, with "*Republika Srpska*" divided, and Bosniak forces having rearmed and retrained, and anxious to retake lost land, without a NATO presence, war would be very likely to resume.

The question for the summer of 1998, then, is no longer whether there should continue to be an outside military presence in Bosnia, but what kind it should be, and whose troops it should consist of. Most Americans now firmly believe that it is time for Europe to take over. The United States played the leading role initially when the Implementation Force (IFOR) deployed in 1995 and required a large combat presence, and Americans agreed to stay on for another 18 months after their first withdrawal deadline was reached in December 1996. But with the fighting now having been halted for two years, future military requirements reduced, and ESDI technically in place, the view of many Americans is that it is time for Europe to take the lead in Bosnia. If there is really an ESDI worthy of the name, and Europeans genuinely want more responsibility, should this not apply to a war in Europe, especially given that the United States has global responsibilities – in Asia and in the Middle East – where the Europeans play only a minor military role[2]?

The case for an all-European post-SFOR force is reasonable. A mutually agreed handover from the US to a European force – perhaps

2. The strongest voices for a European takeover in the United States come from Congress, but the feeling is widespread. On the strong Congressional opposition to the continued presence of US ground forces in Bosnia, see "Will Congress Force America out of Bosnia?", *The Economist*, October 25, 1997, p. 25. Also see John Hillen, "After SFOR: Planning for a European-Led Force", *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Spring 1997, pp. 75-79. Hillen is himself for a European takeover, but also quotes Defense Secretary Cohen's statement at his confirmation hearings that the United States should send a "*strong message to our European friends* [that] *we are not going to be there* (…) *that it's time for them to assume responsibility* [in Bosnia] (…) *and that we are not going to make an unlimited commitment to that region*". See p. 76.

delayed for one more year in order for peace further to take root and for Europeans to prepare their force – would help satisfy Congress about transatlantic burden-sharing and would give the WEU a chance to prove its credibility as a force for peace in Europe[3]. The prerequisite for an all-European SFOR follow-on force, however, is that Europeans be ready, willing and able to take on the task, and that the United States be genuinely willing to let Europe take the lead. Since these prerequisites have not been met, the best option – for now at least – is for the United States to stay involved on the ground.

A continued US ground presence in Bosnia is necessary for several reasons. First, as noted earlier, even if it withdrew all its forces from Bosnia, the United States would have a hard time staying out of its politics and the decisions about Bosnia's future. The perception that the United States is the main outside player in the Balkans is one widely held not only in the United States and in Europe, but just as importantly in the region itself. Unless or until Europe demonstrates a truly common and credible foreign and security policy, the local parties will look to the United States to arbitrate disputes, and the United States is unlikely – whatever its previous understandings with Europe – to remain silent on the sidelines. If the United States is going to be the key political player, then, it is appropriate, and perhaps even necessary, that it be present on the ground as well. Europeans are right to be concerned about repeating the experience of 1991-1995, when a European (but not US) ground presence was one of the main reasons for the different tactics supported by the two sides.

Second, if the United States stays out, there is no way to be certain that Europeans would have the necessary will, unity and power to contain or deter renewed fighting. Credibility, of course, is something to be earned, and the only way to earn it is to have the opportunity

3. For a proposal for a US "handover" to an all-European force after an agreed period of time, see Daalder, "Bosnia After SFOR", pp. 16-17.

to do so. Perhaps if given the chance, Europe would rise to the occasion, and a CFSP would emerge from the obligation to have one in Bosnia. After five years of vicious war in Bosnia, however, this is a chance that may be too risky to take. If the lack of a US presence failed to deter renewed war, and Europeans were divided on how to respond to a new conflict, the United States might again be obliged – or choose without being asked – to take a leading role.

Third, if Europeans do not agree to go along with US ideas for all-European forces, the consequences of Washington pulling out anyway would be disastrous for NATO and transatlantic relations. It would be perverse, to say the least, for the United States to declare itself the leader of the Alliance and to press for its expansion, while at the same time announcing, in effect, that major wars in Southeastern Europe are "Europe's problem" and not the responsibility of the United States. A failure to remain engaged in Bosnia would undermine the United States' claim to be a "European power" and raise questions about what NATO was for. Indeed, as noted earlier, it was American leadership and intervention in Bosnia that created the impression that the United States was NATO's indispensable power and gave Washington the right to insist on imposing its views on its Allies where there were differences among them.

To be sure, Americans who insist on pulling ground troops out of Bosnia claim that the United States would remain militarily engaged in the region in a support role. The United States could provide intelligence, lift and logistics, and if conflict did break out again, US combat forces deployed "over the horizon" could return. Even here, though, there are problems. If the United States is sincere when it says it would re-commit ground forces if necessary, why not leave them in theater, where they would have a greater deterrent effect? As Pauline Neville-Jones has pointed out, "*it is far from clear that a European force, even with the US off-stage in Hungary, would command the necessary respect from the former combatants. They would*

be tempted to test its resolve, posing some very awkward choices for NATO"[4]. If the United States is not sincere that it would be willing to go back in, then the problem is even worse, and NATO would be back to the situation of 1991-1995, when the United States was involved, but not on the ground.

Under these circumstances, the best option might be to give up searching for a means to get US forces out of Bosnia, and accept that staying is the cost of both peace and leadership within the Alliance. A US presence of several thousand troops as part of an SFOR follow-on force would be a concrete demonstration of the US commitment to European security, would probably have more deterrent value than all-European forces, and would strengthen the US claim to leadership of the Alliance. If Congress would agree, appointing a European to command the new force – so long as Europeans provided the bulk of the ground forces – would be a useful demonstration of Alliance solidarity and mutual trust. If Congress refused to put US troops under a European NATO commander, US participation in a US-led force would still be better than no US participation at all. Finally, if, despite all the reasons given here that the United States should stay, Washington withdraws in the face of European pleas that it stay, the Europeans should come up with their own follow-on force rather than stick to their pledge to leave if the Americans do. Despite its drawbacks, an all-European engagement in Bosnia would be far better than no outside engagement at all.

4. See Neville-Jones, "Washington Has a Responsibility Too", p. 24.

ESDI
After NATO Enlargement

How will NATO enlargement – initially to Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, but potentially to a number of other countries after that – affect the prospects for ESDI? A reasonable argument could be made that enlargement, after all, if all goes as planned, will bring another 350,000 European troops into the Alliance, give European states three more votes at the North Atlantic Council, and add several billion dollars per year to Europe's share of NATO members' defense spending. To the extent that European states' interests can be expected to be more similar to each other than with the United States, Europe will thus have greater weight within NATO when it comes to bargaining and trade-offs with the United States. Moreover, since NATO enlargement is proceeding ahead of EU enlargement, it might reasonably be expected that European leverage – notably that over France and Germany, which tend to have the most weight within the EU – will be relatively strong over the candidate members to the Union. If proponents of an enhanced ESDI want to influence the new NATO members and win their support, they may well have much leverage to do so.

Despite this line of thinking, it would be wrong to expect the new NATO members to be too enthusiastic about developing a strong ESDI anytime soon, and certainly wrong to expect them to distance themselves very far from US positions in NATO. The three countries likely to accede to NATO in 1999 (plus most of the other applicants whose candidacies are still pending) are strongly Atlanticist, recognize the indispensable role the United States played in getting them

into the Alliance, and also understand that for the foreseeable future the United States is the best-placed NATO member to help them ensure their defense, about which they still have concerns. This is not to say that three countries – or any of the other candidates – are fully content with all aspects of US policy or with the way the enlargement process has gone. Poland, in particular, resents the way in which NATO (led by the United States) negotiated the Founding Act on relations with Russia without consulting Warsaw; accepted restrictions on nuclear weapons and foreign troops on Polish soil; and looks to new members to provide cheap ground troops for peace enforcement missions. But there is a long distance between resentment of some American policies (a feeling not unknown to even the most Atlanticist members of the Alliance) and a willingness to risk alienating Washington on questions related to ESDI. The preference of most Europeans for a NATO leader from the outside rather than from within will likely be reinforced, not weakened, by successive rounds of enlargement. The more members that join the Alliance, the less cohesive will be the idea of a European identity within it.

Conclusion: America's European Dilemmas

In theory, most Americans realize they have an interest in fostering European unity and responsibility. Few Americans admit to the unilateral attitudes described here, and most, both within government and without, would proclaim themselves to be enlightened leaders who see the value of an enhanced European role[1]. Americans understand that there are advantages to a Europe that is more united and better able to look after its own security.

Sharing power in practice, however, is harder than in theory. For all the reasons given above, the United States feels it is in a position of strength within NATO, and countries – or individuals – that have power rarely give it up without getting something in return. Sharing power when one holds most of the cards may be an admirable trait, but it is not one found often in the history of international relations. Indeed, EU states critical of Washington's hard bargaining within NATO might study the national bargaining practices within the European Union itself, where they would find states equally insistent on getting their way whenever they can[2]. It just so happens that the

1. For a recent US call for a more genuine US partnership with Europe, written by a number of former senior policymakers from both the Democrats and Republicans, see David C. Gompert and F. Stephen Larrabee (eds.), *America and Europe: a Partnership for a New Era*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

2. To take just one of countless examples, consider France's recent nomination of central banker Jean-Claude Trichet to head the new European Central Bank, even

United States has greater relative power within NATO than any single state within the EU.

As many Europeans (and this paper) have pointed out, it is true that the United States has dominated NATO's reform process, and that Washington has insisted on getting its way on almost all important aspects of that process. It seems fair to ask those critical of this development, however, on which specific NATO issues should the United States have made concessions in the name of influence-sharing? Should the Clinton administration have agreed to extend membership to Romania and Slovenia, even if it felt they did not meet all the criteria, that this might pose problems with Congress, that too many members in one round might be hard to assimilate, and that having a more likely second round was good for the process as a whole? Should Washington have agreed to let a European take over AFSOUTH, even though most Americans felt it was essential that the country with the most military power in the region keep its most important operational command, that a skeptical Congress might be reluctant to put US forces under a European commander, and a number of European countries – in particular in the Southern region itself – agreed that the command should remain American? In Bosnia, should the United States have shied away from pushing through an agreement that many would agree would not have been reached without American bullying? To ask these questions is by no means to say that the American position on NATO issues will always be

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though most EU members had already agreed on the Dutchman Wim Duisenberg. This does not seem very different from Washington's putting forth Javier Solana as NATO secretary general after most Europeans had agreed on Ruud Lubbers, a move that was widely condemned by France as an example of US unilateralism. See Wolfgang Münchau, "Cracks in the consensus", *Financial Times*, November 24, 1997. More generally, on how national interests are traded off among big powers within the EU, see Andrew Moravcsik, "Negotiating the Single European Act: National Interests and Conventional Statecraft in the European Community", *International Organization* 45, no. 1, 1991, pp. 651-688.

"right" – surely it will not be. The point, though, is that unless they are faced with a compelling case that some particular NATO reform is in their interest, or that there is a great cost to not insisting on getting their way, Americans are unlikely to make compromises for compromise's sake. If Europeans were truly united on any of these issues, or if they could put forth a credible case that they needed the United States less than the United States needed them, they would more often get their way. Since this does not seem to be the case, American domination of Alliance decision-making, for better or worse, is likely to endure.

Some Europeans complain that it is not so much the substance of American positions that bothers them, but the style: the United States should lead, but should be more considerate in how it puts forth its view. Europeans were offended, for example, by the way in which the United States ended discussion of both the Romania/Slovenia and the AFSOUTH questions – simply by asserting, in the latter case to journalists on an airplane – that the case was closed[3]. Here, too, though, it is hard to see how the United States could have taken these hard decisions in any other way. On both issues, it was the Europeans who made public their views before the issue could be negotiated within the Alliance, and the United States that had, later, to announce the limits of what it felt it could accept. There is a fine line between leadership and unilateralism, and sometimes it is impossible to have one without the other. When the United States puts forth a strong

3. After months of discussion, US Defense Secretary William Cohen announced to journalists on June 12, 1997 that "*the discussion is over. The CINCSOUTH command is American*". See "Les États-Unis entendent mettre fin aux discussions avec les Européens sur le commandement Sud de l'OTAN", *Le Monde*, June 13, 1997. On the US decision to limit new NATO members to three – described by one French official as a case of "*the boss* [having] *spoken*" – see Pierre Bocev, "Clinton clôt le débat", *Le Figaro*, June 13, 1997. For a more general French critique of the US habit of "*defining NATO policy all by itself*", see Pascal Boniface, "Un triomphe américain en trompe-l'œil", *Le Monde*, July 10, 1997.

view on NATO questions and arbitrates among European differences, it is accused of unilateralism; when it fails to have a strong view – as in the Balkans before 1995 – it is accused of failing to lead.

However much Europeans might expect Americans to take the lead in creating an ESDI, and however much they might blame the United States for failing to bring one about, ultimately the responsibility falls to Europe itself. The United States wants a Europe that can contribute more to common goals, but it can hardly be expected to give away lightly the power that it currently has. The US view of ESDI will thus always be one in which a more united Europe contributes more to an Alliance that is still clearly led by its main power, the United States. Faced with this reality, Europe has a choice. It can either – on the model of what the European Union has done in the economic sphere – build up its military capability, create a binding, institutionalized foreign policy, and take charge of the Bosnia operation in a unified, assertive manner; or it can accept the leadership of a United States that may not be as generous in sharing power as most Europeans might like. The structural constraints described in this paper – and the experience of the 1990s so far – suggest that the latter course is the more likely one.

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Biography/Author

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Acronyms and Conventions

AFSOUTH: Allied Forces Southern Europe
AWACS: Airborne Warning and Control System
CFSP: Common Foreign and Security Policy
CINCSOUTH: Commander-in-Chief Allied Forces Southern Europe
CJTF: Combined Joint Task Forces
EDC: European Defense Community
ESDI: European Security and Defense Identity
EU: European Union
EUROFOR: European Force
EUROMARFOR: European Maritime Force
GDP: Gross Domestic Product
IFOR: Implementation Force
IMF: International Monetary Fund
NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PfP: Partnership for Peace
R&D: Research and Development
SACEUR: Supreme Allied Commander in Europe
SACLANT: Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic
SFOR: Stabilization Force
UN: United Nations
WEU: Western European Union