The First Casualty in the War against Terror -The Decline of NATO and Europe's Reluctant Coming of Age

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In 2002, hardly a speech went by, without the NATO officials stressing that the transatlantic bond is as important as ever. This is arguably true; a timelier question is whether the same can be said for NATO. Current literature is by no means short on detailed assessments of the ESDP.[2] This article takes a broad approach. It explores five policy crunch points that point towards a revised burden and power sharing in European security: 1) Britain's ambiguous role in the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP); 2) the Aegean dispute blocking of the formal bond between NATO and the EU; 3) the implications of a change in US policy towards Europe; 4) NATO's improbable move into soft security, and finally; 5) NATO's invocation of article 5 in the wake of the 11 September attacks.

From Prince to Frog –the reversed Metamorphosis of NATO

The rationale underpinning NATO was somewhat simplified, captured in the Alliance's first Secretary-General, Lord Ismay's motto, stating the need to *keep the Soviets out, the Americans in, and the Germans down*. The drawbacks of dependence on the US during the Cold War was by far outweighed for the Europeans by the security guarantee embedded in American commitment to article 5 of the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty[3]. When the threat to Western European territory was reduced, the strategic rationale of the tight and unequal Euro-American security co-operation was weakened. The period of rapid system transition, 1989-1991, confronted NATO, arguably, the most successful Alliance in world history, with a lingering question as to future relevance.

During the 1990s, three interconnected shortcomings became known as 'NATO's self-preservation challenge'. –Firstly, despite half a century of debate, NATO had proved incapable of generating an equal transatlantic burden sharing in the Cold War defence. This trend was exasperated by a steadily growing transatlantic gap in military capabilities. Secondly, much the same situation was reflected in the case of power sharing within NATO where the US has grown accustomed to holding a position of "supremus inter pares" akin to the one held by the USSR in the Warsaw Treaty Organisation. Finally, the collapse of the USSR left

NATO without a shared enemy to justify the two above-mentioned, lacking (agreed tasks) to underpin the future of the Alliance.

The inadequacies of the Cold War Alliance in a post-Cold War setting came into full view during the 1999 Kosovo air campaign. Despite NATO enjoying an overwhelming superiority over its adversary, the campaign that was expected to last a few days, turned into a drawn out 78-day affair where the Former Yugoslavia only conceded, after the Alliance reluctantly had had prepared 100 000 troops for a land invasion. The campaign was to prove costly. While the Americans picked up most of the $14 billion dollar tab, a less debated price was, the strains the war put on the transatlantic security partnership and its sole institutional link - NATO.

In the years that followed, *Dolchstoßlegenden* arose in the US. Many chose to put the bitter taste of the victory in the Balkans down to the dangers of 'war by committee' where all NATO states were allowed a say on how to run the campaign. Lily livered European politicians had held the US back, shying away from applying the ruthlessness that wins wars. In Europe, many blamed American Jingoism for bringing the Alliance into war (by what many saw as ham-handed diplomacy during the negotiations at Rambouillet and Dayton) and for professing such an aversion to casualties that a land invasion was publicly ruled out, bringing undue comfort to the enemy. In hindsight, it appears that the first story overestimates the influence of the member governments on the campaign tactics and the second fails to fully take the rampant nationalism and determination of the Former Yugoslavia and its leader, President Milosevic into consideration. [4]

The underwhelming success in Kosovo also served to highlight the limited progress of a European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) within NATO. It had been launched in 1996 with the aim of facilitating smaller NATO based coalitions of the willing, on the initiative of the US, which had signalled that it in the future, it would prefer to rely on ad hoc coalitions rather than collective action.[5] The ESDI was also intended to strengthen the European pillar of NATO and bridge the growing gap between US and European military capabilities. It found the Europeans largely unwilling to increase or co-ordinate military budgets amidst the calm following the end of the Cold War. This was no doubt reinforced by the fact that greater burden sharing was not linked to a corresponding vision of greater power sharing within the Alliance. The ESDI was to be overtaken by a near-identical initiative with a more ambiguous transatlantic link, the ESDP.

Margaret or Mary-Ann? -Progress of the ESDP

Perhaps, the most important driving force behind the development of the ESDP was Europe's inability to intervene in the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, despite the political will to do so. The ESDP rapidly gained momentum after the first steps were taken in Saint Malo in 1998, where France and Great Britain called for the EU to develop a 'capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military force'.[6] The force was envisioned to deal with humanitarian and rescue operations, peacekeeping and crisis

management -up to and including peacemaking, as defined in the 1992, WEU Petersberg tasks.[7]

The lesson learnt by the Europeans in Kosovo was indicated by the speed in which the, till then largely theoretical, EU military dimension was taking shape in the time following the campaign.[8] In a matter of months, what had first seemed mere visions was becoming a physical fighting force. In order to carry out the upgrading of military capabilities necessary to conduct Petersburg operations, the EU agreed on a 'Headline Goal' at the 1999 Helsinki Summit. The aim was to create a Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) of 60,000 troops, 400 aircraft and 100 ships, deployable within 60 days and sustainable for at least one year by 2003.[9] To fulfil this goal, the EU members staged a Capabilities Pledging Conference in November 2000, where most of the Europeans chipped in their best and most mobile military capabilities. At the Nice Summit the same month, the EU states agreed on an integrated institutional framework for undertaking military operations. The commitment conference was followed up one year later in a capability improvement conference, where efforts and shortcomings were assessed. Here, EU member states claimed to have met 104 out of the 144 target areas identified. The final document of the conference acknowledged the additional national contributions made in order to have the force operational, as soon as possible, while underlining persistent shortcomings and connected risks.[10] Eleven working groups were set up to address the shortfalls identified at the conference and a European Capability Action Plan was initiated to speed up preparations to have the RRF fully operational by mid-2003. However, it was becoming increasingly clear that the Headline Goal would not be met by this date. Important capability shortfalls were set to persist in a number of vital areas, such as attack helicopters, early warning systems, strategic air and sea lift, surveillance, and suppression of enemy defence.[11]

In time-honoured EU fashion rather than drawing attention to the expected shortfalls, the RRF was declared 'operational' ahead of schedule, at the European Council in Laeken in December 2001. A heady Belgian presidency stated that troops from the member states, at the time being deployed in Afghanistan, could be seen as EU troops.[12] Instant rebukes from the participating countries left little doubt that the Belgians were fronting a minority view. This incident left many bewildered as to what exactly is meant by 'operational'. At the Laeken summit, the European Council acknowledged that the ESDP would only be able to undertake missions at the lowest end of the Petersburg scale. In real terms, this means humanitarian operations, disaster relief, search and rescue, non-combatant evacuation operations, military aid/support to civilian authorities, and enforcement of sanctions, or as one scornful commentator remarked, 'to get cats out of trees'.[13] This also serves to highlight the ambiguities as to exactly what kind of missions the force is to handle. The Petersberg tasks are a loosely connected and largely open-ended bundle of missions without a triggering mechanism. The voluntary approach to crisis management greatly increases the chances of success, despite the shortfalls in capabilities since it, hopefully, will keep the force from getting sent in over its head.

Some of the initial progress of the ESDP is, undoubtedly, owed to the EU integration technique of using ambiguity to avoid controversy. By defining practical objectives first and leaving questions of principle and implementation to a later stage, the EU has an excellent track record on collective endeavours.[14] There is considerable ambiguity as to what exactly the ESDP is about. Great Britain has, inconsistently, argued that it is a strengthening of NATO's defence arm in Europe. France, on the other hand, does not want the ESDP to be closely tied to NATO and would like to see the raison d'être of the EU force expanded, while Sweden and Germany want the ESDP to focus on the lower end of the Petersberg tasks.[15] What all seem to agree on is that they would prefer for the ESDP to be developed in status quo of continued US commitment to European security. The President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, made an attempt at cutting this linguistic Gordian knot by stating 'If you don't want to call it a European army, don't call it a European army. You can call it "Margaret", you can call it "Mary-Ann", you can [call it whatever you want]'.[16] The ambiguity about what exactly is at hand – a European army or a mere co-ordination of crisis management capabilities - is in other words set to persist.

The importance of being ambiguous -the role of Great Britain

The importance of Britain is, probably, the single most significant factor in the development of an all-European security initiative. Britain is the linchpin of the ESDP – a successful Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) without Europe's leading military power is as probable as a common currency without the weight of the German economy behind it. Before Britain took the lead in Saint Malo, European military co-operation, outside of NATO, amounted to little more than a Franco-German parade corps. Britain's reasons for jump-starting EU's military dimension at Saint Malo have been the topic of some research. The most common interpretation coincides with what has been understood to be the principal driving force of the initiative in other EU states, namely, a realisation of the need to redress the glaring gap between European political ambition and military muscle. American impatience towards their militarily weak but self-conscious allies may also have added impetus to the initiative. A third, less researched explanatory factor is that the ongoing French military reforms and increases in military budgets may have nudged the UK to take the lead while they were still seen as indispensable.

The notion of a 'special relationship' between Britain and the US remains a tradition, not easily abandoned in British foreign policy. Being invited to the innermost circle of the remaining Superpower is a goal that is best served by pledging diplomatic and military support. However, the prestige of its Foreign and Security services is one of Britain's strongest bargaining chips also in a EU context where the UK has displayed a greater inclination to lead over the past decade. Besides the previously mentioned advantages of having an ESDP, keeping the success of the initiative kept the US weary of European *aleingang,* spurring them to keep attached to European security and by traditional

preference, strengthening Britain's hand in Europe and the world. The ESDP can also be seen as a British policy tool to show the US that their closest Ally has a 'Plan B' in the case of US *aleingang*. This would explain snubbing, such as the signing of the strong worded Saint Malo treaty without informing the US ahead and forcing the ESDP process into a trot following the Kosovo conflict.[17] If this indeed was Mr Blair's plan, it succeeded. Britain was placed alone in the inner circle when the US planned its response to the 11 September attacks. The war against terror appeared to reinvigorate the special relationship with clarity, structure, shared vocabulary, and agenda.

The new administration endorsed the ESDP after Mr Blair had made it clear that the ESDP would be limited to humanitarian missions where NATO as a whole chose not to be involved i.e. 'separable, but not separate' from NATO.[18] The Blairite compromise was sufficient to remove the ESDP from the transatlantic agenda in the months leading up to 11 September. However, it remains doubtful that the EU countries, after spending much effort and money to create a European force, would hand the NATO (meaning the US) an implicit veto over its activities by handing Washington a first pick option without a time constraint.

The ambiguous position of the UK had not gone unnoticed within the EU institutions. In April 2002, the leader of Commission, Romano Prodi, went out of his way to ridicule the notion of a 'special relationship'.[19] However, the other European powers seem to have accepted the British duality manifested in the vehemently pro-US stance of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the holistic pro-EU approach of the British Foreign Office. This tension sparked off a public row in 2002 between the two agencies on whether the EU was ready to take over operation 'Amber Fox'.[20] The row on whether the ESDP is ready for this mission was as much a clash of two often-incompatible strategic agendas as a result of differences in political and military assessments. Whether Britain in the future will be able to combine these considerations into continued ambiguity, remains to be seen.

Two Questions of Assured Access

Apart from the force being ready only for the very lowest end of the Petersberg tasks, the move to declare the RRF operational was also surprising since it took place without reaching a formal agreement over access to US military hardware or shared NATO capabilities. There appears to be a widespread expectation among EU governments that ESDP military missions in the foreseeable future will rely on US assets by some sort of 'neo-lend & lease' arrangement with the US.[21] However, the assets, which the EU is most likely to need, are the ones that the US forces can spare the least. The high rate of operations over the past ten years has strained US procurement cycles, raising US concerns that old systems may be worn out before new are in place. While purchasing the new equipment is seen as the preferable solution for the EU, cheaper alternatives also exist. One of them is to buy or lease military equipment, such as heavy transport aircraft from non-NATO sources like Russia or the Ukraine.[22]

The bridging of the gap between the capabilities the EU disposes over and the ones that were needed to handle the full range of Petersberg tasks were never intended to be addressed, solely, through the Headline Goal. The ESDP was endorsed by NATO at the 1999 Washington Summit in the understanding that the EU would 'avoid unnecessary duplication.' Special reference was made to NATO planning capabilities, specifically, operational planning at NATO's military headquarters (SHAPE) and the NATO force planning process. With approximately 100 officers, the EU Military Staff is small and will need to rely on an organisation like SHAPE (with its approximately 2,500 trained staff officers) to draw its expertise from. The EU position is that it requires legally binding automatic access to these capabilities (i.e. if they want to use them, they can). The difficulties in achieving this stems not only from the previously mentioned differing agendas of EU member states, but also from the fact that there is only a partial overlap in the makeup of NATO and the EU. Some states, most notably, Turkey, voiced concern about the, for the EU, favourable deal and demanded full political and military consultations on Europe-led missions. The EU steadfastly rebuffed this idea arguing that Turkey should only be involved in shaping operations where Turkish forces participate. Before the Laeken summit, Turkey softened its position after receiving guarantees that the RRF would not be used in Aegean disputes. Greece who refused to accept being placed at the centre of an ESDP no-go zone blocked this agreement at the last minute.[23] At the Seville Summit in June 2002, attempts were made at solving this and other questions facing the ESDP regarding financing and the relationship to the US, with negligible success.

The decision to launch the RRF without having reached a deal with NATO indicates on one hand that the EU is determined to develop the RRF regardless of the sentiments of non-members. It could also be taken as a token that assured access to NATO assets today is seen as less crucial than it was during the initial phase of the ESDP when it was at the forefront of the ESDP agenda. The evolving relationship between the two organisations may well depend on whether assured access is obtained, as advocated by Britain, which would facilitate a 'separable but not separate' scenario. A temporary solution, as advocated by Greece, will postpone the decision. Continued deadlock may, as suggested by General Schuhwirth from the EU Military Staff, lead to a situation where duplication indeed is 'necessary'.[24] If the dispute were not resolved, the EU would also need to embark on an expensive duplication of SHAPE. In this section of the NATO-EU conundrum, Greece can, in its project of depriving Turkey of its foothold in European security, prove to do irreparable damage to NATO by refusing it to be vital to the ESDP, while giving the latter a difficult start by hampering the first actual deployment of EU forces.

The United States and Europe – until Perceptions do us Part

The US, not really needing military allies and instead being led by other motivations, has shaped US approach to European security over the past decade. President Bush senior, although generally

positive to the EU, never liked the idea of a military dimension to the Union. This ambivalence was also clearly visible in the Clinton administration's -*yes, but* approach to the ESDP.[25] Concerns over the effects of the ESDP on NATO were captured in Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright's finger-wagging 'three D's' directed at European leaders - No duplication of NATO assets, no discrimination against Non-EU NATO members, and no decoupling of the US from European security. When taking office, it seemed as if the gut instinct of the Bush administration was to continue their predecessors' fretting over the potential damage the ESDP could do to NATO.[26] However, in February 2002, Mr Blair's 'NATO picks first' bargain was sufficient to remove the ESDP issue from the transatlantic agenda. The shift was indicated by the US not forcing the ill prepared Europeans to take over its Balkan operations, which had been all but promised in the presidential election campaign. In a speech in Warsaw in June 2001, President Bush spoke of a future for NATO in the realm of soft security as a vehicle for advancement of shared values.[27] Such thought coming from the leader of an administration studded with unrelenting unilateralists should raise a few eyebrows. By using the Alliance to fill a gap that does not need to be filled in the European security structure, it would seem that the Bush administration signalled that in its eyes, NATO's military importance is diminished.

The Europeans and the US have dealt differently with the post-Cold War security challenges. The crisis management focus of the Petersberg tasks represents a consensus on the legitimate use of military force in Europe. There is a clear difference of tone when National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice sums up a corresponding postulate in the Bush administration's attitude to the armed forces: '*The President must remember that the military is a special instrument. It is lethal, and it's meant to be. It is not a civilian peace force. It is not a political referee. And it is most certainly not designed to build civilian society. Military force is best used to [fight wars].*'[28] Although taken from different contexts, the two texts provide an insight into two radically different approaches to security. The US has attempted to console a new range of security challenges, such as terrorism with a Cold War-style military approach to security. The pre-emptive strike doctrine indicates that US security, as defined by the Bush administration, will be given preference over international law and norms.[29] European governments did not perceive the same magnitude of the new threats as the US, preferring instead to primarily see their armed force as a crisis management tool. In actual policy, the difference was summed up in a recent seminar on Europe and the war against terror, as 'While the US is waging a war against terror, Europe is not.'[30] In return, the global efforts against terrorism have pushed European issues, such as conflict prevention and crisis management, down the list of US priorities.

The rationale behind the change in US policy towards Europe remains open to interpretation. Perhaps, the least likely one is that the US believes in future NATO dominance in European security by Britain holding its European partners to the 'NATO picks first' compromise. Another option is that the US has been reassured and does not see the need to containing EU military aspirations in its own region that will ultimately increase European ability to work in coalitions with US forces. A third

alternative is that the Bush administration has drawn the conclusion from its 'evangelical neo-realist' approach to foreign policy, that it will step back from arrangements that are serving European security interest better than its own. All of these factors may have played a role in explaining why the US put aside qualms about the EU military dimension. US disengagement from the Balkans and further lessening of its military presence in Europe is the so far strongest indicator that the US snubbing of NATO may in the future be accompanied by a vote of confidence for the ESDP.

11 September and the Last Stand of the Cold War Alliance

These signals had not been lost on the NATO leadership, now desperate to stop the organisation from being expelled into the murky irrelevance of soft security. The 11 September terrorist attacks triggered an outpouring of public sympathy and government solidarity with the US in Europe. But the idea to invoke article 5 after the 11 September terrorist attacks came, not from any of the member states, but the institution itself. As one decision-maker put it *–if only no one had thought of the option! – Because when it was suggested, we had no choice but to bandwagon*.[31] In this context, it is fair to view the invocation of article 5 in light of NATO's self-preservation challenge.

NATO had attempted to adapt to the post-Cold War security climate by recognising terrorism as a risk both in its 1991 and 1999 Strategic Concepts.[32] But it was far from self-evident that a terrorist attack should be sufficient to trigger the collective defence article. The deliberately vaguely worded article had never before been invoked, leaving its contents open to interpretation. It was not agreed that the new threat assessments would prove the basis for article 5 action. These proceedings commenced at the NATO HQ in Brussels on September 12. The incident also served to define article 5. Not as an iron clad 'one for all and all for one'-style guarantee as it was often portrayed during the Cold War, but instead as a political statement of sympathy. Most Allies are unable to contribute to out of area operations in any essential way. The invocation is to be seen as a showing of genuine support from shocked friends, but militarily it was an empty handed gesture that the US chose to ignore. The US chose instead to assemble a hand picked coalition of those who could, for the ensuing campaign in Afghanistan. NATO states did make relevant important contributions to this campaign. But, primarily, not in their capacity as NATO members.

The modern security agenda has been expanded to a broader range of threats to both states and individuals. Organised crime can, for example, be seen as a greater concern to Hungarian security than the Al Qaeda - for Norway the leaking graveyard of nuclear powered ships on the Kola Peninsula presents an infinitely more "clear and present danger" than Islamic jihad. The proliferation of threats has left NATO unable to address the Alliance's 19 different security realities. Most European governments either did not perceive the same magnitude of the new threats facing the US or could not imagine themselves engaging in the type of wars that the US is preparing for.[33] After the ESDI attempt at preparing coalitions of the willing within the

Alliance, NATO was left with a toolbox consisting of one very big stick, article 5-styled collective action. Today this compares unfavourably with the range of economic and diplomatic measures the EU disposes over. The rationale of a defensive alliance could still be applied in the Gulf War; it had much less salience in the crisis management operations in the Balkans. But, it is totally unfit for the 'war against terror', defined and led by the US.

Considering the lack of success for NATO in solving any of the three elements that make up the self-preservation challenge – the need for revised power and burden sharing as well as a unifying cause - the enlargement process looked much like building an annexe to a house that is on fire. The urgency of the situation was reflected in a joint letter, in June 2002, from Spanish and British leaders calling for a radical shake up in the Alliance, aiming to give it a role in the war against terror.[34] What may keep NATO from bouncing back after accusations of irrelevance, as it has done in the past, is that today the US and the EU represents two different approaches to security.

Europe's Reluctant Coming of Age

The American-led war against terror has made the task of building a European defence capability while maintaining the status quo, increasingly complicated.[35] The war in Afghanistan strained EU unity by imposing a divide between the EU countries that were invited to participate in the US-lead operations and those who were not. This went against the Maastricht Treaty blueprint of the CFSP in which all 15 EU members are supposed to move in step.[36] Ideas put forward by Geoff Hoon, amongst other British Minister of Defence, to add anti-terror missions to that of the Petersberg tasks were quietly discarded after a declaration at the Seville summit vowed for the ESDP to contribute in combating terrorism while avoiding to name concrete measures.[37] A similar fate befell suggestions by EU foreign policy chief, High Representative, Solana to increase European defence expenditure in a period when the electorates were likely to favour such policies. The course followed by most EU members has been to generally support the US while questioning its strategy and tactics. At the same time, new US strategic priorities led to increased European security obligations, especially in the Balkans.

In the initial phase of the ESDP, the strong political case for an EU military dimension ensured enthusiasm among Europe's political elites. For a while the enthusiasm even took such proportions that Europe's conservatives were talking darkly of a European army and warned against the dangers of rivalling the US. However, the limited scope of what has been achieved has put such notions to shame, and especially, after 11 September, political elites have grown increasingly vague in their support for the initiative. In Germany, the 2002 election largely served to remove foreign policy from the agenda.[38] In countries like Denmark, the Netherlands and Austria, the rise of far-right populism appears to have had a similar effect. Italian security policy in 2002, which appears to be driven by being recognised by the US as a major European power, is seen more likely to be actually leading to such

a position than efforts through the ESDP. In Spain, the spirit of the US war against terror has offered a welcome opportunity to crack down the Basque separatists and engage in gunboat diplomacy versus Morocco. In France, the initial cold shoulder towards taking the war against terror to Iraq appears to have given way to a realisation that Britain's 'all the way' attitude has yielded greater results in influencing US policy.[39]

It is largely due to the tireless work of Mr Solana that the EU in 2003 is likely to undertake actual deployment of soldiers in the field. Solana made it clear at an informal meeting of defence ministers in Zaragoza, Spain in March 2002 that he wishes for the EU to take on a military role as soon as possible. In early February 2002, after a period of muffled internal disputes over what was to happen if another Balkan war was to break out, the EU members agreed to put its security dimension to the test by taking over the German-lead NATO operation 'Amber Fox' in Macedonia. The 800 men, strong contingency, is to provide security for civilian monitors in the former Yugoslav republic. The EU had also for some time been planning to take over the United Nations police mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The ESDP going out of fashion may also have positive effects. By clearing decision-making space of camera-seeking political visionaries, the current capability might be put to limited use and be allowed to quietly expand through trial and error. However, structural inadequacies are set to interrupt an endogenous, self-reinforcing dynamism. The High Representative is elected by member governments, but lacks the power to initiate policy, and is further hampered by a very limited budget (annual Euro 30 mill) as well as an unclear division of competence with the commissioner for external affairs. The weakness of the position that had been underlined by European efforts in the war against terror, was not been directed through Mr Solana, who has repeatedly underlined his remoteness from actual decision-making by adopting a habit of making his views known through newspaper interviews. Commission President Prodi's previously mentioned bad-mouthing of the 'special relationship' is another example of a growing frustration within the EU at not being allowed to occupy the decision-making space that has been abandoned by the US, for the ESDP to fill the vacuum in European security left by the decline of NATO. However, the capability expectations gap is narrowing and will by all indicators continue to do so. Due to the above mentioned policy flash-points, the EU states may soon find that in order to fill the role they have been handed by the US, they will need to duplicate NATO's planning capabilities. Another, more logical, albeit less likely option, is for the EU to take over SHAPE as it did with the West European Union structures.[40]

Concluding remarks

In 1990, Kenneth Waltz predicted that NATO is disappearing and the real question is, how long it will remain a significant institution.[41] The answer to the question might well be 11 September 2001. In that case, the Alliance went down "not with a bang, but with a whimper" by evoking its collective defence article

at a time it was uncalled for, after being weakened by the war in Kosovo and the sluggish progress of the ESDI. This does not imply that the transatlantic relationship itself is in jeopardy. The European Allies and the US will doubtless continue to face threats to their common values and interest that will necessitate concerted action. In addition, the old Alliance will probably linger on the stage for some time, being the sole transatlantic institutional link. Meanwhile, the EU is still coy about taking on the full burden of Europe's security obligations.

The European Union's pervasiveness has been known to obscure its achievements and momentum. How fast NATO will slide into irrelevance may depend largely on whether the Greeks will deny NATO to be vital to the EU by continuing to block an agreement between the two and whether the ESDP will gain assured access to NATO (and US) assets or will choose to duplicate these assets. However, it is the ambiguous position of Britain, which, more than anything, has contributed to leaving the ESDP in its present state of uncertainty. In some respects, the future of the initiative may well be decided by whether Britain is able to continue its current balancing act or is forced to choose between its European and transatlantic agendas. It remains to be seen whether the decline of NATO in the face of new security challenges will be matched by a corresponding rise of the ESDP. If this is to happen, the EU is less likely to be ushered by inner momentum than by external events.

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[34] 'London and Madrid press for radical Nato shake-up', *Financial Times*, 4 June, 2002
[35] Ibid. Gnesotto (2002)
[36] Article 13 of the EU treaty (Treaty of Amsterdam).
[37] Spanish Presidency Conclusions, 21-22 June, 2002, Excerpts from the Council Conclusions, ESDP, Annex V
[38] Interview MFA Official Chancellor's office, Das Kanzleramt, Berlin, 20 July, 2002
[39] See for example, 'Europe's divided self', *Financial Times*, 10 July, 2002 and 'Bush seeks allies at UN to back Iraq strike' *Financial Times*, 6 September, 2002
[40] 'Europeanisation of SHAPE is *inter alia'*, suggested by Julian Lindley-French in the talk given in March 2002, 'European Defence The Capabilities Development Process post-September 11' available at www.assembly-weu.org
[41] Quoted when given evidence for the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 1990