CONNECTIONS
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Spreading Cooperative Security: Creating a Euro-Atlantic Council?

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It would be ironic and sad if Europe, in the pursuit of unity and a more secure place in the world, were to forsake the very security that has allowed it to come together after many centuries of conflict. Today's drive toward a European defense capability, "independent" of the United States, stems from a perception of powerlessness on the part of some Europeans in the wake of the fast-moving events of the post-Cold War era. This sense of impotence was brought to a head by the embarrassing political and military performance of Europe in the events surrounding the 1999 military campaign in Kosovo.

Cutting the Apron Strings

Years of American dominance of the security affairs of Europe during the second half of the 20th century have created a sense of dependence on American military power and goodwill. This trans-Atlantic "patronage" is perceived by some, and by the French above all, as an affront to their national dignity and to their history as major players in Europe and in the wider world. The revival of the role of the largely moribund Western European Union (WEU) in the late 1980s, primarily at the instigation of France, was an attempt to mobilize European members of NATO to provide a counterweight to what the French perceived as U.S. hegemony within the Atlantic Alliance. France had long bridled under what it regarded as U.S. arrogance and high- handedness. Its abrupt withdrawal from the integrated military structure of NATO in 1966 was a clear demonstration of this resentment. This dramatic decision was also an example of national policy based primarily on emotion rather than reason[2]. The growing momentum toward a European defense capability and decision-making in defense matters independent of the United States and NATO is another manifestation of the triumph of feelings over logic in the conduct of international relations. For there is little sound strategic reason why Europe, so long supported militarily, politically, and economically by its benevolent trans-Atlantic friend and ally, should seek to distance itself from a relationship that has proved so successful over decades of real and direct danger.

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[2] There were several other reasons why France decided to leave the NATO military structure, most notably a fear that the U.S. strategic deterrent might be weakened by the advent of the doctrine of "flexible response" initiated under the Kennedy administration.

The clear imperative for American protection largely evaporated with the end of the Cold War and the disappearance of the Soviet Union. In a world of less clearly defined threats and power relationships, the time has apparently come for the children to break free of the embrace of a well-meaning but at times insensitive guardian. To allay fears that this turn of events might harm NATO, European Atlanticists in particular proclaim that a stronger Europe means a stronger NATO. This argument is theoretically valid, but it only holds true if the European desire for "independence" does not lead to the creation of a competing strategic decision-making center utilizing the same limited military resources currently available to the Alliance.

St. Malo, Helsinki, Nice, and All That

How much independence Europe should demand in pursuit of its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and its European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) has sparked a heated debate on both sides of the Atlantic. Traditionally the French have stood at the maximalist end of the independence spectrum while the British, as the supreme Atlanticists, have defended the minimalist end. The Germans, the emerging but still uncertain leaders of a new constellation of European states, have shifted uneasily along this spectrum, appearing first at one end, then in the middle, and then miraculously at the other.

Things have now changed. Since the advent of the Labor government in 1996, the position of Britain, once consistent and predictable, has become more uncertain. Long the most active supporter of a strong trans- Atlantic relationship, Britain, under Prime Minister Tony Blair, has been busy trying to get back "into the heart" of Europe. It has attempted to do so by playing one of its few strong European cards–defense. The declaration signed by Tony Blair and President Jacques Chirac, at St. Malo, in December 1998, represented a radical shift in British policy toward European defense. For the first time, Britain became an advocate of a European military force designed to operate under European political guidance, independent of the United States and NATO. Blair's reversal of traditional British policy seems to have been formulated by a small group of advisors and confidants, with little or no consultation with the Foreign Office or the Ministry of Defense. In retrospect, this attempt to capture a place in the leadership of Europe looks like the action of a chess player who has not fully considered the consequences of his next move.

Once Britain, arguably one of the most potent players on the European defense scene, had catapulted itself into the fray, the game was on in earnest. St. Malo laid the foundation for developments that were accelerated by the events in Kosovo and the shock of European inability to deal politically and militarily with a relatively minor crisis on its doorstep. The decisions at Helsinki, Cologne, and Nice to press ahead with the formation of a European Union Political and Security Committee, a Military Committee, an EU Military Staff and a "Headline Goal" rapid reaction force followed at surprising speed. The so-called Petersberg Tasks, which will serve as the basis for European defense planning, were originally formulated as guidelines for WEU

operations. Though often portrayed as modest, they in fact represent an open-ended list, extending, at least theoretically, to the highest level of military operations short of general war[3]. The concern of some Europeans that the Americans might decide to opt out of a crisis in Europe, as two U.S. administrations in fact did during the early stages of the war in Bosnia, could indeed be a legitimate reason for developing a European crisis response capability.

However, the major question remains to be answered. Can and will the Europeans produce a military force capable of successfully implementing the decisions of their newly created bureaucratic structures? Despite some modest progress toward remedying the shortfalls identified by NATO's Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI), the large majority of European governments, including the Germans, have so far shown little enthusiasm for devoting the increased resources essential to remedy defense shortfalls in strategic mobility and sustainability, command, control and communications, amongst others. Without the expenditure of considerable amounts of new money, the Headline Goal forces will certainly not be able to engage in anything but the most modest of the Petersberg missions without substantial U.S. and NATO assistance. In the words of recently retired British Chief of the Defense Staff, General Sir Charles Guthrie, "Europe's weakness to provide for its own security interests is more damaging to the transatlantic relationship than a strong Europe with the greater influence in decision-making that would go with a greater military contribution to the alliance. The capability gap is wide between us, indeed increasingly wider. My belief is we need to narrow it."[4]

European Defense and NATO

This brings us back to the central issue of the trans-Atlantic relationship and NATO. The current debate over how independent of NATO and the U.S. the new European defense capability should be illustrates fundamentally different visions within Europe itself over the ultimate shape and form of the European idea. Should and can Europe speak with one voice on the key issues of foreign and defense policy? Should traditional national interests and perceptions give way to a "homogenized" European view, perhaps within the framework of a federated European state?

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[3] The Petersberg Declaration, of 19 June 1992, signed by WEU foreign and defense ministers, states that "…military units of WEU member States, acting under the authority of WEU, could be employed for:
   • humanitarian and rescue tasks;
   • peacekeeping tasks;
   • *tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking*." (emphasis added)

[4] "Forces chief fires NATO broadside over Euro-army," Daily Telegraph, 9 February 2001.

Until these basic questions are answered, and it appears unlikely that they will be any time soon, the long-term relationship between the U.S., NATO and the EU in defense and security matters will not be fully resolved.

The security arrangements of the European region and of its neighbors to the east and the south, however, cannot be held up by a long and acrimonious argument over the future shape of the European idea. Whatever the outcome of the European debate, it is clear that a significantly revised relationship between an increasingly assertive European Union and a powerful but concerned United States is required. As NATO's Secretary General, Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, has pointed out, "The new security environment offers us a unique luxury–the opportunity to set the security agenda ourselves."[5]

Euro-Atlantic Cooperative Security

A detached observer of the constellation of states forming NATO, the European Union, and their candidate countries would find it difficult to detect any fundamental issues of disagreement over basic political, human rights, economic and security issues. All these states share, or at least claim to share, the same basic values. As Samuel Huntington has observed, "Since democracy… is the political form of Western civilization, the emerging universal state of Western civilization is not an empire but rather a compound of federation, confederation and international regimes and organizations."[6]

The Cooperative Security model provides a solid basis for a new trans-Atlantic security framework encompassing both NATO and the EU.[7] The model in Figure 1 is based on four concentric rings of security: Individual Security–agreement on the fundamental importance of the human rights of every member of society; Collective Security–the protection of states within the cooperative security framework from threats or aggression by states and non-state actors within the system, including cross-border terrorism and crime, illegal migration, pollution, etc; Collective Defense–defense of the states within the system from outside aggression; and *Promoting Stability* in the areas adjacent to the cooperative security space.[8]

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[5] NATO Secretary General's Mountbatten Lecture, University of Edinburgh, 15 February 2001.

[6] Huntington, Samuel, The Clash of Civilizations and Remaking the World Order, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996, 33.

[7] Cohen, Richard, "Cooperative Security: Framework for a Better Future?" World Defense Systems 2000, Royal United Services Institution, 70-74.

[8] Cohen, Richard, "Cooperative Security: Broadening International Stability," Marshall Center Paper No. 3, Spring 2001.

Figure 1

NATO is the only organization that operates in each of these 4 rings of security.[9]

Although it is formally only a Collective Defense organization, the Alliance and its members provide de facto Individual Security to their citizens, Collective Security to each other, and have been very active in Promoting Stability outside the NATO area with a large number of cooperative programs and initiatives and crisis management operations, such as SFOR and KFOR.

The EU, if it does fulfill its promise of developing an effective military capability, will join NATO as an effective Cooperative Security organization. It already gives Individual Security to its citizens. It provides Collective Security in that it is inconceivable that any member would contemplate military action against a fellow member. The question of the EU's role in Collective Defense is more complicated. However, even the so-called "neutral" nations of the Union now enjoy a *de facto* security guarantee from other EU members and from NATO. Finally, a European rapid reaction force could soon be available to add a military dimension to the EU's political and economic tools for Promoting Stability in Europe and further afield.

A Trans-Atlantic Cooperative Security Union

There are a number of ways in which a trans-Atlantic Cooperative Security union might be operationalized, but a successful Cooperative Security institution would need to fulfill three important conditions:

   a. It must be formed from a community of like-minded states committed to common values, first and foremost the upholding of human rights.[10]
   b. It must possess the institutional, political, economic, and military capabilities to successfully implement its policies and its decisions.
   c. It must remain open to cooperation with other states and institutions that may wish to work with, or eventually to become part of, the cooperative security system.

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[9]   The other major security organizations, the UN and the OSCE, have not functioned effectively in any of the 4 rings of the Cooperative Security model, including the upholding of Individual and Collective Security, which are written into their charters. By definition, they are not Collective Defense organizations nor do they Promote Stability outside the territories of their member states.

[10] A common baseline might be the Treaty establishing the European Community, as amended by the Treaty of Amsterdam, which specifically empowers the Community to take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (Article 13); it also contains a provision on measures concerning asylum, refugees and immigration (Article 63).

The Euro-Atlantic community is not divided by ideas and values but by institutions. Non-EU European members of NATO, like Turkey, Norway, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic feel, to varying degrees, disenfranchised in the continuing debate within the EU over European defense. Likewise, the U.S. and Canada do not wish to be excluded from the deliberations over the formation of a European defense force that may draw on NATO assets, to which the Americans, in particular, contribute heavily. Equally important, the candidate countries of both NATO and the EU as well as other the states of central, eastern, and southern Europe, including Russia, must see at least the prospect of collaboration with any defense community which will affect their own security and stability.

A way must therefore be found of bringing together the two regional Cooperative Security institutions, NATO and the EU, into a new trans-Atlantic security institution, which at the same time remains open to new members and to close cooperation with states outside its space. However, achieving such a partnership will not be easy. It will require compromises on both sides. As the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, has observed, "The partnership between Europe and America, I am sure, will also in the future prove its worth in our ability to come to compromises and common solutions should our opinions differ."[11] The Americans would finally cede to their European partners an equal say in formulating strategy in the Euro-Atlantic area so that Europeans would feel that they are real and equal partners. This could be achieved inside an agreed-upon decision-making framework (discussed below). The Europeans would acknowledge a permanent U.S. role in Europe and agree to provide the extra resources to truly complement the American military contribution. Washington should agree to regular consultations with the Europeans on a wide range of worldwide security matters where European interests may also be at stake. In return, the Europeans should remain open to using their enhanced military capabilities in support of U.S.-sponsored initiatives in other areas of the world.

Finally, the Americans should abandon their "force protection first and foremost" or "clean hands" approach to the employment of ground troops, in particular in crisis management operations. They must be willing to accept that U.S. armed forces, even in low-level operations, can only remain credible to their opponents and retain the trust of their friends and allies, if they are prepared to fight it out and to take casualties alongside their European partners.

A Euro-Atlantic Council

As we have seen, the Euro-Atlantic region contains the world's only actual and forecast Cooperative Security institutions. The formation of a new trans-Atlantic Cooperative Security organization would incorporate NATO and the defense and security functions of the EU. This organization–it can be called the "Euro-Atlantic Council"–would incorporate all the nations of both institutions, including the EU's so-

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[11]   Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, Munich Conference on Security, 3 February 2001.

called "neutral" members. Such a body would greatly simplify and streamline the current complex and increasingly redundant arrangements by which the eleven NATO members of the EU are forced to deal with security matters inside both institutions in a proliferating and bewildering number of councils and committees. The formation of a new trans-Atlantic defense and security organization would require a new treaty replacing NATO's North Atlantic Treaty. It would also require significant changes to the EU's Treaty of Rome, among other agreements. This would not be an easy task. However, that should not prevent an early start in working out its modalities.

The Euro-Atlantic Council would be charged, among other tasks, with the following functions:

  a. Managing the trans-Atlantic agenda in its widest sense, including consultations over issues like missile defense, trade disputes and other disagreements and potential conflicts between its members.

  b. Coordinating action to counter threats to internal stability such as cross- border terrorism, organized crime, illegal migration, pollution, etc.

  c. Monitoring human rights within its borders and taking action to remedy violations within the member states.

  d. Developing common broad strategies in key areas of security in the Euro-Atlantic region and globally including issues such as the Middle East peace process, Russia, China, Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, etc.

  e. Coordinating policies to prevent and to deal with crises in territories outside its boundaries which may affect its own security.

  f. Directing the activities of a single, shared, integrated military structure, based on the current NATO command structure, for crisis management operations and for the defense of its territory from outside threats and aggression.

  g. Developing close and active cooperation with its neighbors.

Conclusions

As the debate over European defense continues to cast a shadow over relations between European states and the United States, a new, more balanced trans-Atlantic compact is urgently needed to preserve the security of our part of the globe. A way must be found to harness the growing European enthusiasm for its own security decision-making and defense capability in a way that will strengthen the West and not weaken it.

A revitalized, more balanced trans-Atlantic relationship, based on a new, unified Cooperative Security institution, is needed if NATO and the EU, the world's only cooperative security institutions, are not to lose their political and defense effectiveness. A prerequisite for this new relationship is that Europe must create not only the structures but also the substance of the military capability it promised itself in Cologne, Helsinki, and Nice. If the Europeans can develop an effective defense capability to complement that of the United States, the way will open for the creation of a simpler, more rational Euro-Atlantic security institution.

A "Euro-Atlantic Council," including all the current and future members of NATO and the EU, would have a very broad security agenda based on the overarching concept of Cooperative Security. It could act in practical and coordinated ways to strengthen shared values. It could also become a powerful tool for maintaining, developing and spreading democracy, security, and prosperity in the Euro-Atlantic region and beyond.

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