

Before '1989' Europe was divided, just as the rest of the world, in two military spheres of influence. In many ways 'West' and 'East' have now joined forces in Europe. In security and defence matters, however, integration is hesitant. There is a gap between the expectations and capabilities of old and new member states in these politically sensitive policy fields which touch the heart of national sovereignty. The development of an EU 'grand strategy' gives a clear aim and coherence to the deployment of its civilian and military powers.

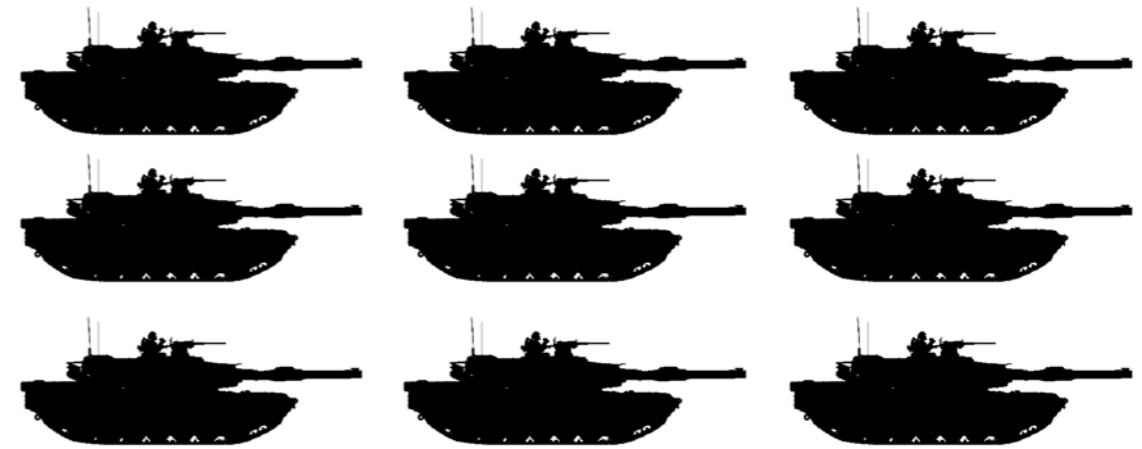
By Kees Homan

Wanted: unambiguous European security coherence!

The European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) celebrated its tenth birthday this year. In spite of the rather sceptic attitude of the United States towards the ESDP in the beginning, a significant change took place during the second Bush administration. The new security situation after 9/11, the need for allies to tackle the new security challenges together, combined with limitations of NATO in the field of civilian capabilities, all worked together to bring this change about. All these factors contributed to the appreciation of the United States that a stronger, more co-ordinated European partner would also be in its own best interest. The new Obama administration

further strengthens this view, as did the return of France into the integrated military NATO structure this year.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy obviously hopes this return will stimulate the European NATO member states to support the French ambitions concerning European defence policies. The French armed forces have always played a significant role in maintaining the French ambition for grandeur and its status as an important power. Sarkozy wants to reinforce this grandeur, which rather diminished during the days of his predecessor Jacques Chirac. As far as his European ambitions



are concerned, Sarkozy considers the European Union not only as a *force multiplier*, but also as a means to emphasize and reinforce the French influence in global matters. However, without the United Kingdom there can be no strong ESDP. And London is not inclined to sacrifice its special relationship with Washington on the altar of the ESDP. Moreover, the British prime minister Gordon Brown is not even close to the Europhilia of his predecessor Tony Blair. Given its increasing Eurosceptical attitude lately the Conservative Party is even less enthusiastic about the ESDP. Germany is neither a warm supporter of French ambitions. This country spends only 1.27% of its GNP on defence. Partly due to its post-war pacifistic tradition, there are more and more doubts in the Bundestag about sending German troops on peace missions abroad, as the refusal of Germany to participate in a mission in Chad led by the French proved. At the same time, the accession of ten new member states from Eastern Europe has changed the political balance in the EU and strengthened the position of the Atlanticists. Although the new member states do support the ESDP, they are anxious not to weaken the NATO. After the Russian-Georgian crisis in August last year, these countries have once again openly emphasized the importance of art 5 of the NATO treaty.

Mid-term review

The question does arise what ten years of ESDP has brought about thus far. The EU engaged in 22

missions on four continents during this period, but most of them were of a small-scale and civilian nature. But until now, the really deployable military power of the EU has been very modest. Let me mention a couple of facts. All together, the 27 EU member states spent more than 200 billion euro on defence in 2008, with almost 2 million active defence forces. Nevertheless, the EU can only deploy 70.000 forces on a permanent basis. The European Council decided in Helsinki in December 1999 to establish a rapid intervention force of 60.000 soldiers, meant to be operational in 2003. This never happened. During the French chair last year, Sarkozy once again made a plea to establish these forces. In military material, the EU has some serious shortcomings as well. The member states have 1700 helicopters at their disposal, but most of them are not available for crisis control operations due to lack of training or maintenance. The EU mission in Chad was held up by a lack of helicopters until finally Russia supplied some.

There is also too much of a diversity in military equipment. Within the EU, there are four different types of tanks, sixteen kinds of armoured vehicles, eleven sorts of frigates and 21 naval shipyards. In the United States, these figures are one, three, one and three respectively. This poses a challenge to the European Defence Agency (EDA), established to coordinate the deployment of defence powers, research, investments and armament. Unfortunately, decision making at

Two generations, two Europe's

My parents were adolescents when the Franco regime fell; they grew up in a time of change. They saw firsthand the transition to full democracy. Shortly after they witnessed the initiation of Spain into the European Community, Spain modernised.

I frequently ask myself, what was it like? How did they live? What interested and motivated them?

What differences does the EU bring them? How did it affect the country? Well, one observation is that new opportunities became available for Spain's economy, both in terms of foreign direct investment and Spain's new ability to compete internationally. There was an increase in public investment in infrastructure and an opening of frontiers. This served to overcome decades of isolation and international irrelevance. It allowed Spain to modernise and people from different cultures to mix more freely. More than just an opening to the outside and modern world, these changes are characterised by democracy and liberty.

The Europe of the 21st Century is the consolidation of the Europe of my parents' generation and modern diversity. My country of Cataluña has always been a nation of outward looking people. During the last few years towns and cities of Cataluña have founded sister cities throughout Europe for better communication and interaction. Educative programs such as Erasmus allow European youth to make the most of what the EU has to offer. It is now possible for students and professors to widen their horizons by interacting with different institutions throughout Europe, allowing for more competitive educations and careers beyond.

My Europe is therefore a haven of culture, of technological development, a centre for the conservation of the environment, a pioneer of women in the workplace,



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the designer of a single currency, a leader in the aviation industry. All of these qualities identify us as European citizens, and we should take as ours the fundamental values that unite us, such as solidarity and respect for diversity.

Spain



this agency is by unanimity only and therefore vulnerable to member states which want national interests to prevail. Although the EU member states, all together, spend some more than half of the American defence budget on defence, European investments are no more than 27% of the American investments. In Research and Development, this is an even more modest 10% of the American spending in this respect. Moreover, the European defence budgets have been cut radically; only five members spend more than 2% of GNP on defence (United Kingdom, France, Poland, Greece and Bulgaria). Some member states spend a disproportionate amount of their budgets on personnel. In countries like Belgium, Greece, Italy and Portugal, this amounts to more than three-quarter of their total defence budget. Needless to say, this happens at the expense of operations and maintenance, but most of all highly necessary investments suffer. The great potential of the EU is that it has 'smart power' at its disposal. This is a combination of both 'soft' and 'hard' power. The EU is the only institution in the world which has all crisis management mechanisms at hand: economical, juridical, humanitarian, financial, civilian and military.

Complementarity

For the future of ESDP the way the relationship with NATO will develop is of the utmost importance. For instance, both NATO and EU are leading a naval anti-piracy operation on the shores of Somalia. Both staffs are located in Northwood, but

'The great potential of the EU is that it has 'smart power' at its disposal. This is a combination of both soft and hard power'

formally they are not allowed to have any contact whatsoever. It is about time the rivalry between NATO and EU ends. The defence and security powers of both organisations are indispensable, and it is unacceptable that these organisations do not assist each other in an optimal way. Clearly, there is an urgent need for an open dialogue between the two and there should be a genuine effort to build up a relationship based on optimal complementarity. What is needed is an overall, coordinated approach to which each institution contributes its most relevant capacities. Indeed, both NATO and EU have a common interest in the establishment of a mutually beneficial partnership. Since NATO is developing a new Strategic Concept at this very moment, the European members of NATO should seize the momentum to decide upon a common position on the future of NATO. There can be no argument about both the EU and NATO becoming stronger by working together rather than acting on their own.

Lisbon Treaty

In principle, the Lisbon Treaty offers important possibilities to enforce the ESDP. Among other measures, the function of the High Representative for Foreign and Security Affairs will be upgraded. With the support of the European Action Service, he will also act as vice president of the Commission and, technically speaking, also as the EU Minister of Foreign Affairs. One of the most important aspects of the treaty in military respect is the 'Protocol concerning permanent structural

cooperation'. This enables closer cooperation in matters of military capabilities. Member states will have to comply to criteria still to be decided before they can join this cooperation. Considerations will probably be their level of investments in military equipment, a harmonization of military needs by a pool of defence capabilities and means, when asked for, possibly task specialization.

To live up to its ambitions to become a global player, the EU must have a 'grand strategy' at its disposal which all member states will support. Countries like the United States, China, Russia and Brasil already have such a 'grand strategy', which covers their strategic interests and goals in a clearly described manner. The EU also needs such a 'grand strategy' to apply a clear focus and coherence to the deployment of its civilian and military powers. Germany, France and the United Kingdom all published their national 'grand strategy' papers last year. However, there are considerable differences in the extent to which these countries consider their national policies as a step forwards to a collective European strategy. Roughly, there are two views on the EU among its member states. In one, the EU is a political project with clearly defined strategic goals that ask for sincere political intentions. In the other, the Union is a commercial, non-political process that needs well-defined arbitration.

The development of the ESDP will always be an incremental process, taking small steps at a time. The success of the ESDP is, and will always depend on the political commitment of the 27 member states. The principle of unanimity remains decisive for all progress. National interests far too often remain a serious obstacle.

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