

The Growing Actors in European Security: How Should America Engage?

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Abstract

Europe today is challenging the Westphalian system with a supra-state shifting policy-making from sovereign capitals to the European Union (EU). The final step of this evolution is the EU's alignment of military capacity, policy, and development under the Common Security and Defense Program (CSDP). The U.S. must determine how to interact with a supra-state organization it is not a member of, but cannot ignore to maximize combined strength. While the U.S. has traditionally managed its European security relationships through NATO or bilaterally with sovereign states, it is time to engage with the EU as a security organization. The U.S. must state unequivocal support for the EU's security aspirations, recognizing the gain in global security, and then establish a military coordination element within the EU Military Staff to synchronize actions with the EU and help build capacity beyond NATO. Additionally, the U.S., NATO, and the EU must define roles for each actor where they possess a competitive advantage to drive requirements-based acquisitions and avoid duplication of capability at a time when U.S. and European resources are constrained.

The Growing Actors in European Security: How Should America Engage?

In 1951 six states of Europe signed a trade pact to align their coal and steel tariffs. Sixty-seven years later, Europe is challenging the Westphalian state with a supra-state political system shifting policy-making from independent, sovereign capitals to the European Union (EU) in Brussels. The final step of this evolution is the EU's alignment of military capacity, policy, and development under the Common Security and Defense Program (CSDP). This supra-state approach challenges the traditional state-to-state environment, the presumption that sovereign states make individual decisions on their military power, and how the U.S. manages its security relationships.

The U.S. shares its closest ties and strongest alliances with its transatlantic partners. Tied to this is the world's strongest security alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). While the U.S. has traditionally addressed European security through NATO, but now must recognize the growing presence of the EU as an important player in this conversation. Beyond the U.S.-EU relationship, a clear structure distinguishing roles, missions, and relationships between all sides of the U.S., EU, NATO triad sets a way forward in planning and execution of security missions as well as the development of necessary capabilities. The U.S. is still the global hegemon, but must align its ends, ways, and means to acknowledge the greater role the EU provides in sharing the collective requirements for a secure world.

The Evolution of European Union Security and U.S. Interests

U.S. interests in Europe are linked across an integrated economic front and its long-established military ties. As President Trump's National Security Strategy identifies, "a strong and free Europe is of vital importance to the United States.... Today, Europe is one of the most prosperous regions in the world and our most significant

trading partner.”¹ Since the announcement of the Marshal Plan in 1945, the United States and Europe have been inextricably tied. Europe and the U.S. are each other’s top trading partners, with manufacturing trade worth \$687 billion and seventy percent of U.S. and EU foreign direct investment going to each other’s companies.² As the U.S. State Department asserts, America gains from “Europe, whole, free, and at peace.”³

In 1999 Samuel Huntingdon identified that, while the U.S. is the only superpower that does not make the world unipolar.⁴ In spite of U.S. defense spending outpacing the next eight states combined, only the U.S. outspent the combined EU member nations in 2016. Even discounting a Brexited U.K., only the U.S. & China outspent the EU.⁵ As the U.S. and European states look to maximize their limited defense budgets, and the EU advances a common security and defense, it is only rational to align the security approaches of the U.S. and EU.⁶ Although the U.S. traditionally accepted the aspirations of EU defense policy, it usually sought to manage its European security relationships through NATO or bilateral state engagement. As the EU encroaches into the state roles of its members, the US must determine how to engage this evolving tension.

In 1992 twelve member states gathered to sign the Treaty on European Union.⁷ The EU founded a political union undergirded by the “four freedoms’ of: movement of goods, services, people and money.”⁸ It also identified intent to:

Implement a common foreign and security policy including the eventual framing of a common defence policy, which might in time lead to a common defence thereby reinforcing the European identity and its independence in order to promote peace, security and progress in Europe and in the world.”⁹

The final step of common defense promotes the EU as a supra-state entity, compliant with Weber’s idea of “a human community that (successfully) claims the

monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory.”¹⁰ European Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker, reinforced this in 2007, declaring: “soft power alone is not powerful enough.... A European Security and Defense Union will help protect our Union, which is exactly what EU citizens expect.”¹¹ What inevitably still exists, however, is the tension reflecting Weber’s monopoly. While the EU seeks a common foreign, security, and defense policy, the individual member states have so far retained decision authority for the engagement of their military forces. The evolution of EU security and defense can be broken into three general periods: the post-Cold War decade culminating with the actions of the St Malo Declaration, the first decade of the twenty-first century as the U.S. managed its post-9/11 security challenges, and the current decade as the U.S. moved beyond its Afghanistan- and Iraq-centered strategies and into a world of reemerging great power competition.

The Post-Cold War Decade

Since 1992 the EU common foreign security and defense policy has made uneven advances. Prior to 1999, European security approaches were divided between those led by France seeking an independent EU defense capability and those led by the U.K. viewing NATO as the answer for European security.¹² However, in late 1998 the British Prime Minister, recognizing the failures of Europe to manage issues in the Balkans without American help, radically changed Britain’s position in discussion with the French President.¹³ This shift resulted in the joint Franco-British St. Malo Declaration stating: “the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises.”¹⁴ Within one year, the EU Summit in Helsinki established the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), creating the EU Military

Committee (EUMC) and a supporting EU Military Staff (EUMS).¹⁵ As Posen describes, Europe established a balance of power approach, able to provide the option of a European answer to security problems around Europe rather than simply follow the U.S. response.¹⁶

While the U.S. stressed its focus on NATO as the European security organization of choice, there was concern expressed about CSDP as a competitive, not complimentary, one.¹⁷ The U.S. viewed E.U. defense growth with a “yes, but,” approval.¹⁸ Shortly after the St Malo Declaration, Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright clearly stated U.S. opinion to the North Atlantic Council as her three Ds: “no discrimination against non-EU European NATO members, no duplication of effort or capabilities, and no decoupling of European security from North American allies.”¹⁹ While Albright’s criteria reaffirmed America’s commitment to the primacy of NATO, it also allowed for U.S. support of an expanded EU role.

The First Twenty-First Century Decade

The first five years of ESDP demonstrate both the advances, and the bureaucratic impasses that have typified the EU’s common security and defense policy-making since it came to life. In 2001, the EU Treaty of Nice established the Political and Security Committee (PSC). Designed to allow for regular decision-making in ESDP, the PSC was made up of ambassadors for each of the EU member states at the EU.²⁰

The next issue for ESDP was a lack of operational headquarters. Despite establishing the potential to generate security operations, the EU held no capable headquarters from which to operate. In 2003, European nations proposed creating a European Operational Headquarters in Tervuren, Belgium.²¹ Such a move was heavily opposed by both the U.S. and U.K., viewing this as clear duplication of capabilities

already possessed by NATO, and thus violating Albright's three Ds.²² NATO and the EU entered into the Berlin Plus Agreement, seeking to assist the EU by providing NATO capabilities to EU missions like information sharing or utilizing one of NATO's force headquarters.²³ Tied into the Berlin Plus Agreement was a linkage of NATO's North Atlantic Committee (NAC) and the PSC to facilitate a clear line of communication and decision-making between the two organizations.²⁴

Following conclusion of the Berlin Plus Agreement, the EU established its first military operation, Concordia. Concordia took over from the NATO-led mission in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and demonstrates a successful transition of mission from one organization to another.²⁵ This operation has since merged with the ongoing EU Operation Althea that took over from the NATO Stabilization Force in Bosnia Herzegovina and still operates under the auspice of the Berlin Plus Agreement, headquartered out of Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, utilizing NATO planning expertise and other Alliance capabilities, and commanded by Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe.²⁶ Since 2004 however, the entry of Cyprus into the EU has resulted in Turkey using its NATO membership to block any effective use of the Berlin Plus Agreement.²⁷ As a result, the positive duplication avoidance the agreement offered has fallen by the wayside with the exception of Operation Althea.

During the same period the EU and NATO were establishing (and then failing to sustain) meaningful coordination between the two organizations, the U.S. was focusing on its post-9/11 Global War on Terror. As a result, the U.S. administration moved from its "yes, but," approach to EU defense and NATO coordination to what Oswald describes as "demonstrative disinterest in NATO, sidelining the alliance in favor of ad

hoc coalitions of the willing... [and using] NATO's new members in Central and Eastern Europe to counter the EU's autonomous ESDP."²⁸ At the same time, the Bush administration's actions in Afghanistan and particularly Iraq caused strained U.S.-European relationships.²⁹ With the U.S. focusing military attention in Iraq and Afghanistan, by 2007 the Secretary General of NATO described relations between the EU and NATO as a "frozen conflict."³⁰

In spite of ongoing discord with the NATO alliance and the U.S., Europe's leaders continued trying to advance ESDP. In 2007 the EU Lisbon Treaty transitioned ESDP to Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) and created the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The treaty targeted a "progressive framing of a common defence policy that might lead to a common defence."³¹ Additionally, the Lisbon Treaty called for operational civilian and military forces of willing member states for use on EU missions.³² Finally, the Treaty started developing Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), an EU linkage to military capabilities and development focused on "pooling, and where appropriate, specializing their defence means and capabilities."³³

In 2008, with the U.S. seeking a thaw in U.S.-European relations, US ambassador to NATO, Victoria Nuland, declared "Europe needs, the United States needs, the democratic world needs—a stronger, more capable Europe and defense capacity."³⁴ The next year, President Obama called for Europe to have "much more robust defense capabilities. That's not something we discourage."³⁵

The Current Decade

Although the U.S. has supported a NATO-centered approach to European security for 70 years, recent U.S. administrations have increasingly advocated for

increased defense spending by NATO allies.³⁶ In 2014 the NATO heads of state and government even agreed to benchmark defense spending at 2 percent of national GDP.³⁷ A potential benefit of CSDP growth is any enhanced EU defense capabilities also give enhanced NATO capabilities for 21 EU nations that are also NATO members.³⁸ Key to this is aligning the spending to create increased capabilities for EU and NATO, not simply duplicated ones.

With the U.K. removed from the immediate future of CSDP, the major champion, France, with limited German support stand ready to accelerate their advocacy of CSDP. As Sven Biscop asserts, “it is now up to the other capitals to accelerate cooperation, and prove that they were not conveniently hiding behind the British objections but are serious about European defence.”³⁹ Though included in the 2007 Lisbon Treaty, it took the combined pressure of President Trump’s questioning of European security commitment and the U.K. vote to exit the EU to unite member states around a common interest and finally push PESCO over the finish line.⁴⁰ In December 2017 the EU Heads of State Meeting formalized PESCO’s creation. While there are questions from newer EU members in Eastern Europe who see their security tied to NATO more than a commitment to an EU military capability,⁴¹ the 2017 PESCO resolutions continue the onward march. Unfortunately, because of the ongoing blocking by Turkey of any Berlin Plus Agreement usage, the EU’s first round of PESCO projects includes a return to independently targeting investment into operational headquarters and capability duplication.⁴²

There are also nascent reports of U.S. resistance to EU security development, with the U.S. Ambassador to NATO, Kay Hutchison, accused of casting doubt over U.S.

support for PESCO at the 2018 Munich Security Conference.⁴³ However, as AMB Hutchison has reiterated since, the U.S. concern is not with increased European defense capabilities, something the U.S. continues to advocate for, but with any perception that PESCO comes with a closed system to enhance European defense only open to European defense industries.⁴⁴

Today, the EU operates CSDP missions throughout Europe and Africa, with 16 ongoing missions, 10 civilian and 6 military.⁴⁵ Military missions range from African continent missions such as those in Mali and the Central African Republic, an area traditionally influenced by the former colonial powers of Britain and France, to maritime missions managing migrants in the Mediterranean and counter-piracy off the Horn of Africa. While the EU leads CSDP missions this does not preclude non-EU members contributing or aligning efforts, as is the case with the U.S. in both the previously cited maritime missions.

Ultimately, as Ghez and Larrabee assert, the U.S. must recognize the value of a “strong European partner that can help address new threats and challenges.”⁴⁶ While the U.S. will likely lead any major action involving Western interests, there are ample opportunities for Europe to lead in areas the U.S. does not find sufficient national interest.⁴⁷ This not only allows Europe to lead in its unique areas of interest, but also spreads the commitment of the western world rather than always relying on U.S. presence and investment. As long as common economics and the NATO alliance exist, there will be vital U.S. interest in European security. Ironically, it was the French Minister of Defense early in 2018 who best described the relationship: “Europe is not a nice to have, it is a must.”⁴⁸

A Way Ahead for U.S.-European Security Relations

While Colin Gray defines the U.S. as the world's reluctant sheriff, not out of choice but necessity, organizations such as the EU offer opportunities for the U.S. to share this security role.⁴⁹ The U.S. must embrace the EU's growth, including its defense vector. There are too many security concerns around the world for the U.S. to do it all, a concept embraced by Richard Holbrooke over twenty years ago when he wrote "the United States should not be the only NATO member that can protect vital common interests outside Europe."⁵⁰ There are several key steps the U.S. must take or lead to establish its new relationship with the EU security framework. First and foremost, the U.S. must unequivocally state its support for CSDP and then find ways to establish a "bilateral" relationship linking EU and U.S. security efforts. Beyond that, deconfliction and synchronization of efforts is essential. This involves not only U.S.-EU but also EU-NATO. In achieving these overarching goals, the U.S., EU, and NATO can establish stability and predictability for themselves as well as an element of understanding to the rest of the world over who they should expect to respond when and to what kind of issue. Such an understanding removes confusion that can lead to miscalculation by other actors.

Unequivocal Endorsement

CSDP backing by the world's superpower removes doubt between the U.S. and EU over U.S. intentions. It also validates CSDP to the rest of the world. A recent example is Sen. Lindsey Graham at the 2018 Munich Security Conference, but must extend beyond this to include endorsement from the President, Vice President, and Secretary of Defense.⁵¹ Endorsement does not equal free reign. Secretary Albright's three Ds still provide ideal guardrails to the lanes CDSP should occupy.

Non-discrimination assurance for non-EU NATO members is critical to operating multiple security agendas from multiple actors within Europe and the North Atlantic alliance. Political pressures generated from discrimination will rapidly grind cooperation to a halt, as shown by Turkey with the Berlin Plus agreements. In contrast, successfully navigating non-discrimination opens the door to bringing Turkey back into the security fold both inside and outside NATO. Finally, it provides a springboard for EU-NATO coordination in the next D, non-duplication.

Non-duplication is essential to U.S., and by extension NATO, support to CSDP. NATO and the EU have consistently stressed alignment, highlighting coordination between the two organizations through such forums as the NAC-PSC meetings. As the U.S. continues to challenge its European partners to raise their financial commitment to defense, spending money on capabilities already in existence with NATO is a waste of resources that detracts from acquisition of necessary capabilities. Non-duplication does run the risk of prioritization, however. While the U.S. views NATO as the primary defense organization of Europe, support for aligned capabilities among organizations will require U.S. leadership both militarily and politically. Such leadership from the U.S. in turn feeds the third D, no decoupling.

There is a perpetual discussion of EU security being independent of the North Atlantic linkages. From the original St Malo statements to French President Macron nineteen years later calling for an EU defense with “autonomous capacity for action.”⁵² In 2018, the German Defense Minister ascribed: “We want to remain transatlantic, but we also want to become more European.”⁵³ What is also typical is persistent recognition of NATO as the lead security organization, described by Robert Hunter as “the standard

and obligatory bow to the Atlantic Alliance.”⁵⁴ Despite a typically French-led desire to grow European strength independent of NATO, and more principally the United States, there is little doubt that a strong Europe is clearly tied to a strong U.S.-European relationship. As such, a growing CSDP capability is a way to strengthen the U.S.-European ties, not fear a separatist Europe.

Establishing a Clear U.S.-EU Military Link

As the U.S. ensures a strong message of support for CSDP, it must also ensure ties with the EU include a clear military-to-military path. Today, the U.S. Mission to the European Union in Brussels represents U.S. diplomatic, informational, and economic elements of national power to the EU. There is, however, no similar link between U.S. and EU military staffs. Any military staff interaction relies on U.S. military members assigned to NATO providing an ad hoc capability to “dual hat” as U.S. liaisons to the EUMS. This confuses their role as a NATO staff with their U.S. military capacity. A relatively small U.S. coordination element within the EUMS removes the “dual-hatting” and provides a clear national linkage between the U.S. and EU. Such an element would, of course, require invitation from the EU. Once established, the cell would offer a direct line of communication for the U.S. and CSDP to deconflict, align, and synchronize their operations such as EUNAVFOR ATALANTA countering piracy off the Horn of Africa or EUNAVFOR Med addressing migration flows in the Mediterranean.

Beyond deconfliction and synchronization, a U.S. element attached to the EUMS provides a capacity building option too, one of the 2015 USEUCOM Theater Strategy priorities.⁵⁵ American military planners can offer experience and assistance to EUMS staff supporting the EUMC. This experience is not only in operational planning, but areas such as logistics and sustainment, medical planning, or intelligence, all areas the

U.S. military has significant experience. Growth in EU capabilities adds to the CSDP capacity and also reduces the potential need for U.S. personnel in future operations.

Ensuring Non-Duplication of Capabilities

As Hunter says, “the most important and most tangible of the three U.S. ‘Ds’ was duplication.”⁵⁶ As discussions continue about burden sharing within NATO, duplication of capabilities by CSDP is as invalid today as it was when Madeleine Albright decried it. While the U.S. continues identifying the need for more spending, it is worth noting, as the German Foreign Minister, Sigmar Gabriel, pointed out in 2017, “currently the EU spends only half of what the U.S. does on defense while achieving only 15 percent efficiency in comparison.”⁵⁷ While defense spending is critical, the capabilities and capacity it builds are even more important. Expanding CSDP capabilities must be done in a manner that does not duplicate existing capabilities beyond the total requirement and thereby waste finite fiscal resources. A key step towards this is the PESCO founding documents confirming alignment to NATO standards and ensuring NATO interoperability.⁵⁸

NATO and the EU established the Berlin Plus Agreement specifically to avoid duplication of capacity by CSDP. Principle on this list was an operational headquarters capability from which to run operations. Unfortunately, as Turkey and Cyprus have divided the two organizations, the agreement’s effectiveness has diminished.⁵⁹ While the U.K. has traditionally countered any EU expenditures towards establishing operational headquarters, the Brexit vote removed Britain’s blocking capability.⁶⁰ Merlingen posits there are multiple options to include combining with NATO capabilities (a la Berlin Plus) or using national capabilities already possessed by multiple countries.⁶¹ As a result of the failure of the NATO-EU coordination, the European

External Action Service instead turned to its own EUMS, expanding the capacity within that organization to include a planning and operational oversight. In June 2017 the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) was established, assuming command over “all military non-executive missions... so that they are planned and carried out in a coordinated and coherent way.”⁶² Adding headquarters capabilities to a military organization in Brussels is surely not the best use of limited defense resources.

If CSDP cannot find a way with NATO to either resurrect the Berlin Plus Agreements or produce a replacement mechanism acceptable to all parties, Merlingen’s option to utilize existing capabilities offered by its members, is a potential solution. The German military already boasts an available headquarters in Ulm, Germany, offering the capability to “exercise worldwide command and control of crisis management operations as tasked by the United Nations, NATO, or the EU, always ready to deploy at short notice.”⁶³

In line with how CSDP manages its headquarters requirements, force planning is an example where alignment with NATO capabilities rather than simply executing parallel or duplicitous efforts succeeds. Quinlan described the options ranging from aligning to a “long-established process of the force planning cycle” at one extreme to running an independent process at the other.⁶⁴ Simply aligning to an existent NATO process served two purposes. It removed the requirement to establish a new process strictly for CSDP, and it ensured that during capabilities allocation, NATO-CSDP duplication was identifiable within a single process. The negatives to such a solution, however, included the much smaller CSDP capability and force allocation process working through a much larger and more laborious NATO force allocation event.⁶⁵

Additionally, any intent to invite CSDP into a NATO process had to pass the established hurdle of non-aligned member states, particularly Turkey. Ultimately, the agreed upon solution has fallen on use of the NATO Defense Planning Process, integrating the smaller CSDP process into the larger, but well established NATO one. A success in the interaction of the two security bodies.

Deconflicting Roles and Responsibilities

The United States still stands alone as a global hegemon. NATO represents the most successful alliance formed in the past century. The EU has grown from a collective group of states seeking economic advantage to the political union of Europe. Each of these roles are intertwined. Equally, however, there is room for them all without confusion over who should do what. As the EU seeks to build and strengthen its military capability, it must deconflict the purpose of CSDP from NATO and, by association, the United States. For the EU to continue to expand its military role under CSDP, it must clearly define what it intends to build, and as importantly, what it does not. A strategy for CSDP is the most important step of this.⁶⁶ Clear definition of the intent behind CSDP might constrain a broader set of possible use, but, as Tim Haesebrouk points out, “a mission statement would make it easier to agree on whether or not to respond to a crisis with a CSDP operation, as well as to assemble the required resources for such an operation.”⁶⁷

Duplicated effort not only wastes valuable, and scarce resources, it creates confusion between the U.S., NATO, and the EU, and also the wider security world as they try to understand who is responsible for what. Nina Graeger lists multiple occasions of simultaneous EU and NATO operations, recognizing that at times these are due to different mandates, but also highlighting duplicitous examples such as

operations to counter piracy off the Horn of Africa.⁶⁸ Hubert Vedrine describes the same duplication in his report to the French President.⁶⁹ Between 2009 and 2016, NATO executed Operation Ocean Shield, The EU executed EUNAVFOR ATALANTA, and the U.S. led Combined Task Force 151, all countering piracy in the same area.⁷⁰ While the operational and tactical execution of the EU and NATO operations found workarounds to organizational impediments stopping effective execution of both operations, Gebhard and Smith have studied this particular case and point out the political impasse and the duplication of headquarters and missions is what forced lower levels to work harder and, at times, in violation of rules, to carry out their missions.⁷¹

As the Vedrine Report states, “the division of projects between the European Union and NATO in strategic matters is now a prominent issue.”⁷² Ultimately, roles for the U.S., NATO, and CSDP bin into three categories: first are the limited cases where U.S. vital interest is unwilling to cede maneuver space for the benefit gained by alliance, coalition, or partnership. Second are those best suited to NATO, based around already demonstrated core capabilities that it should retain: territorial defense of Europe, nuclear deterrence, and out of area major combat operations. Third are operations CSDP stands ready to assume: limited contingency operations within Europe, out of area operations not requiring U.S. leadership or major capabilities, or that do not rise to the level of U.S. interest necessary to gain U.S. involvement, and finally, civilian capability operations.⁷³

Defining roles and responsibility along these lines serves multiple purposes. First, the various organizations can focus their capability development to the missions and roles they are responsible for. While this involves some capability overlap, it should

be managed as capability sharing rather than capability duplication. Defining roles also makes sure organizations do not overlook capability requirements presumed handled elsewhere. Second, as previously mentioned, identification and agreement of roles and responsibilities builds consensus in advance for actually executing such missions. Third, the rest of the world gains a clearer understanding and expectation of who will respond to what, and when. This reduces confusion and misperception both in the actions of other actors and the U.S., NATO, and CSDP and further reduces reactive measures taken from misunderstandings. Finally, clearly defined roles remove European angst over the perceived NATO-first concept, the “right of first refusal.”⁷⁴ Instead of first refusal, a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities already establishes “a who, where, and when criteria.” The roles defined offer the opportunity for CSDP to continue its growth and capacity without forcing an internal argument over the future value of NATO or considering engaging its forces in an area it may not yet be ready for.

While a very small area of concern, there are times the U.S. sees its interests as so vital that ceding maneuver room to form an alliance or partnership is not the desired course. Diverse examples include the management of post-Soviet nuclear weapons in the Ukraine and the U.S. position on climate control when it stepped away from the Kyoto Protocol. Each example demonstrates where the U.S. saw national interest as more important than maintaining multinational organizational prestige from international cooperation.⁷⁵

Territorial defense of Europe should remain a NATO role, not only as a best practice, but because, as the NATO Secretary General pointed out at the 2018 Munich Security Conference, “the reality is the European Union cannot protect Europe by

itself.⁷⁶ NATO, at its heart, is a collective security alliance developed to ensure the sovereign territory of its members. As Brands and Feaver identify, “in formal alliances, the partners practice together in peacetime, develop interoperability, and may even develop common equipment.”⁷⁷ For almost seventy years NATO has developed common doctrine, standards, compatibility of equipment, and training to ensure its ability to defend its alliance territory from any military aggressor. It is the only military organization capable of mounting a defense of Europe.⁷⁸ NATO’s Enhanced Forward Presence is a nascent example of the very role described here. NATO battle groups in Poland and the Baltic states provide hard power deterrence to a resurgent Russia with the presence of multiple NATO ally forces within each battle group ensuring a unified front to any territorial challenge from the east.⁷⁹

Nuclear deterrence is another role that must stay with NATO. Similar to the territorial defense of Europe, the nuclear umbrella provided by the U.S. and supported by the U.K.⁸⁰ deters nuclear attack and promotes nuclear non-proliferation by assuring NATO allies that they do not require their own, independent nuclear capability. The French have continued to ensure the alliance describes itself as a nuclear alliance, building other capabilities such as missile defense but only as a complement to nuclear deterrence rather than an alternative.⁸¹

Given common doctrine, training, and interoperability, NATO should continue to be the organization of choice for out of area major combat operations, while allowing for the inclusion of non-NATO partners as capabilities permit. While NATO trains and organizes as a European collective defense organization, it has successfully employed “out of area” into major combat operations such as Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR in

Libya and Operation RESOLUTE SUPPORT in Afghanistan. As Douglas Stuart points out, the gap between American capability to project power around the globe and the rest of its NATO allies continues to grow.⁸² As such, any discussion of a European or western response to a major combat scenario that does not involve the U.S. is likely impossible anyway. The combination of training and doctrinal interoperability, combined with the American mobility power, makes NATO the prime choice for major combat operations “out of area.”⁸³

In 2008, Daniel Keohane asked “Should the EU be able to carry out large military intervention in another country to enforce peace, by stopping civil war or genocide?”⁸⁴ Vedrine’s 2012 report resolves that asserting: “The words ‘Europe of Defence’ must be used only for the Union’s external military or civil and military initiatives and actions, or for cooperation with the defence industry.”⁸⁵ The roles defined for CSDP specifically address such cases. Beyond that, clearly defining a mission set for CSDP also clarifies the capabilities CSDP must have or acquire.⁸⁶ One bounds the other. They align not only to the current capabilities of the organization, but also to its character. As Kaldo and Salmon assert:

[The] EU mainly envisages operations that contribute to global security. These could be described as law enforcement operations or human security operations, that is to say, operations designed to protect individuals in different parts of the world rather than to defend the territory of particular states.⁸⁷

Such views realize that CSDP roles fall under the category of areas of interest often not significant enough to drive U.S. leadership. While the U.S. needs to share global security, it will not stand by on the sidelines if a major event occurs, both from a perspective of interests but also capabilities.⁸⁸

The EU has long sought to manage response within its own region. Its “active neighbor” policy, seeks to keep the European area balanced without a major conflict, but threatening military intervention if necessary.⁸⁹ Such a role perfectly fits within the boundaries for CSDP. It also ensures that the EU continues to grow its influence within its own area without the perception that European security is dependent at all levels on U.S. support. Examples cited by Posen of such roles include the successful adoption of the security mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina under Operation Althea.⁹⁰ Similarly, Vedrine proposes the EU should take control of the NATO KFOR mission in Kosovo.⁹¹

Beyond the EU’s boundaries, there are many operations below the level of major combat operations that fit CSDP involvement, supporting a German suggestion to favor non-combat operations early in PESCO development funding.⁹² Africa has long been perceived as a European area of responsibility and President Macron continues to promote such a philosophy.⁹³ CSDP already executes operations there, such as those in Mali and the Central African Republic.⁹⁴ Such efforts represent precisely the type of operations that require external influence to promote global security but the U.S. can encourage others to take on rather than committing U.S. resources and leadership.

The U.S. is a clear global hegemon when it comes to military outlay, spending as much as the next eight most militarized states combined.⁹⁵ NATO is first and foremost a collective security alliance, built around military capability to defend Europe and, at a greater length, all alliance members. In contrast, the EU formed as an economic trade bloc, has expanded into social and political realms, and is lastly attempting to build its military forte. As a result of its upbringing, the EU possesses a strong civilian capability in the security realm unmatched by NATO or the U.S.⁹⁶ This provides an area of

engagement for CSDP that explicitly expands global security capacity rather than duplicating it. In Europe's near borders opportunities to join the EU provide a perfect incentive to civilian reforms, as seen in post-independence Croatia.⁹⁷ Farther afield, the same knowledge and trade ties open the door for the European civilian expertise to build western-styled government security sectors. Today CSDP is executing 10 civilian operations such as those in Kosovo and Iraq.⁹⁸

Conclusion

It is alleged when his staff once suggested they should consult with Europe on an issue, Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, responded, "and what, is Europe's phone number?"⁹⁹ Forty years later, Europe might still not have a defense phone number, but it is starting to run the wire. The U.S. must determine how a state interacts with a supra-state organization that it is not a member of, but cannot ignore, aligning its security interests with the policies and capabilities of its closest western allies and partners to maximize a combined strength.

The EU is no longer simply an economic block seeking to maximize its trade capabilities. It is an integrated political organization of states seeking to collectively establish common security and defense policies. While the U.S. has traditionally managed its security relationships with Europe either through NATO or bilaterally with sovereign states, the time has also come for it to engage with the EU as a security organization, even though it does not fit the traditional model the U.S. is accustomed to. Stating unequivocal support for the EU's security aspirations recognizes the gain in global security and reinforces a transatlantic unity of effort. Beyond this public support, establishing a military coordination element within the EUMS removes the bifurcated nature of U.S. personnel assigned to NATO organizations in Belgium also having to

double as U.S. representatives to the EU, and provides the opportunity for the U.S. to synchronize its actions with those of the EU. Finally, the coordination element lets the U.S. provide planning and execution experience, thus growing the capacity of its European partners to operate beyond NATO.

Ultimately, the roles for the U.S., NATO, and the EU span a collective security spectrum that does not fall short of need and where all can provide complimentary efforts. By focusing on areas where each actor possesses a competitive advantage and clearly defining the roles for each actor, requirements for these roles can drive acquisitions in a manner that avoids duplication of capability when defense resources face ongoing constraint in the U.S. and Europe. Clarification of the roles also provides stability and predictability to the rest of the world as it sees who to expect, when, and how.

As Hubert Vedrine states, “it is pointless to ask the simplistic, black-and-white questions of whether we should be for or against NATO or for or against [European] Defence.”¹⁰⁰ Today the U.S. must recognize the capabilities of each security organization and use its influence to help each flourish towards providing a greater global security apparatus.

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⁹⁹ Richard Holbrooke, *To End A War* (New York: Random House, 1998), 242.

¹⁰⁰ Védérine, *Report for the President of the French Republic*, 10.