Paper prepared for the ECPR Conference
Section 17 Europe and Global Security
Marburg, 18-21 September 2003

The European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) – a Strategic Culture in the Making?

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The process towards a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), at least in its initial phase, has moved with 'almost breathtaking rapidity'[1]. Although the political initiative so evident between 1998 and 2001 has lost some of its momentum, the ESDP was declared partially operational at the 2002 Laeken Council. The act has been described as a premature political showcase.[2] Many problems persist, and the EU is not yet perhaps a military power to be relied upon, at least not when subject to transatlantic comparisons, which are often made. This has led to conclusions that the EU is militarily weak, driven by capabilities and devoid of strategic objectives.[3] This paper questions these assumptions, suggesting that contemporary analyses, preoccupied with transatlantic comparisons of military capabilities, often fail to account for the wider strategic thinking reflected in the EU's focus on conflict prevention and crisis management. According to Schneckener, the EU has from the mid-1990s, and especially after 1999, largely followed a global trend among international organisations of reforming its structures and building capacities for such measures.[4] Despite the common understanding that developments of the ESDP must be viewed in light of changes in NATO and the transatlantic relationship, the less frequently explored legacy of institutions such as the UN and CSCE/OSCE needs, therefore, also to be taken into account when explaining the evolution and current state of the ESDP initiative.

[1] As commented by Cornish and Edwards (2001) 'Beyond the EU / NATO dichotomy: the beginning of a European strategic culture', *International Affairs,* 77/3, p. 587
[2] ICG (2002) 'EU Crisis Response Capabilities: An update', *ICG Issues Briefing Paper,* 29 April 2002, p. 8.
[3] E.g. Lindley-French has argued that the ESDP is '"product-led" and not "market-led"'. See his (2002)'Happy Birthday Petersberg Tasks', Speech, Paris, 19 July
[4] Schneckener, U. (2002) 'Theory and Practice of European Crisis Management: Test Case Macedonia', *European Yearbook of Minority Issues,* Vol.1 2001/02, pp. 132-133. The ICG claims that the extension of the EU's activities to this field should, in fact, be seen as a fairly recent manifestation of a decades-long evolution. ICG (2001) 'EU Crisis Response Capability' *ICG Issues Report No 2,* 26 June 2001, p. 6

There exists no single source of information, or anything resembling a common strategic doctrine, which one can consult to get a clear overview of *when*, *where* and *how* the EU intends to use force.[5] Yet the EU is clearly not devoid of ideas or expectations with regard to the use of military means, or, perhaps more importantly, how to avoid using them when more peaceful means may be applicable. The question is how one can assess the growing security and defence role for the EU within a framework that accounts for the ways in which both military and civilian capabilities are being used for political purpose, even when the strategic rationale behind the choice is not readily observable or fully developed. This is where the concept of *strategic culture* may be helpful. This paper will not argue that a strategic culture can be observed in the EU at this point, nor is its primary aim to problematise strategic culture as such. It will, however, suggest that there are within the ESDP initiative important elements of a strategic culture that may shed light on past and current developments of the EU as a security and defence actor. This paper initially presents a framework based on the concept of strategic culture, before moving on to assess the emergence of such along three dimensions: the *political*, the *capability*, and the *institutional* dimension.

The Conceptual Framework

Traditionally the concept of strategic culture has been deemed an appropriate starting point for the exploration of security and defence policies of *states*. Changing the focus to a non-state unit, however, draws the attention to the somewhat ill-defined nature of the EU as an international actor. As part of the second pillar of the EU, the ESDP is predominantly an intergovernmental project, but the growing institutional apparatus under the auspices of the Council, and the associate role of the Commission, show that actors on different levels are heavily involved in the process. The EU, in some respects, is not so very different from a state, though the level of complexity added by introducing the views of 15 member states to the equation may cast doubt about the coherent actorness of the EU. The actor-problem is sought resolved under the political dimension below. Secondly, introducing a *cultural* dimension to the study of security and defence politics requires a definition of culture that, on the one hand, is material enough to make it observable, while on the other is both dynamic

[5] A prelude to what will culminate in an 'EU security strategy' at the GAERC in December 2003, was presented to the Thessaloniki Council, 19-20 June 2003. Solana, J. (2003) 'A Secure Europe in a Better World'. See further comments under concluding remarks.

and non-deterministic. The state may be seen as providing appropriate conditions for culture(s) to grow, but it should not be viewed as a precondition for such. Finally, there is a need for an understanding of *strategy* which is compatible with the current strategic environment, in which force most often is applied in a limited way and in concert with non-military measures. Strategy is irrevocably about 'the use and threat of use of organised force for political purpose'[6], but disregarding the civilian dimension will present a misleading picture of contemporary strategy. The constituent elements of the conceptual framework are treated separately after briefly revisiting what has been done on strategic culture so far.

The understanding of strategic culture as it currently stands

The term strategic culture can be traced back to a research report by J. Snyder from 1977. In the report, strategic culture is defined as 'the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behaviour that members of a national strategic community share with each other with regard to [nuclear] strategy'.[7] He suggests that a range of variables such as historic experience, political culture, and geography act as constraints on strategic choice. In a seminal article, Johnston refers to Snyder as representing the first generation of strategic culture scholars.[8] Claiming to be devising a scientifically rigorous approach to strategic culture, Johnston criticises the first generation on two grounds: that they fail to produce a narrow definition of strategic culture which excludes any attempt at effectively isolating culture as a variable; and secondly, that including behaviour in the definition suggests a deterministic relation between culture and behaviour and fails to identify a causal connection.[9]

A second generation of literature emerged in the mid-80s, offering a qualitatively different perspective on strategic cultures. Rather than focusing on cultural constraints, these scholars were concerned with how culture is used as a discursive tool to legitimise strategic doctrines. They observed a difference between what decision makers say and what they do, or between declaratory and real doctrine and suggested that political elites are able to rise above

[6] Gray, C. (1999) *Modern Strategy*, New York: Oxford University Press, p.1
[7] Snyder, J. (1977) *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Options.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, R-2154-AF, p. 4
[8] Johnston, A. I. (1995) 'Thinking about Strategic Culture', *International Security,* 19/4.
[9] Ibid pp. 37-38

the constraints of culture.[10] The division between declaratory and real doctrine helps avoid some of the pitfalls of the first generation by acknowledging the importance of interest formation, while maintaining that some ideas and rhetorical statements remain just that and fail to have any influence on strategic decision making. Beyond denouncing the link between strategic culture and behaviour, however, the relationship between the two is left largely unexplored.

The third generation of scholars, of which Johnston sees himself as a representative, offers an attempt at a rigorous scientific approach to strategic culture. Behaviour is detached from culture in order to be able to isolate strategic culture as the independent variable and the former as the dependent variable. Johnston's own conceptualisation identifies strategic culture as a 'limited, ranked set of strategic preference that is consistent across the objects of analysis and persistent across time', claiming that this concept makes strategic culture falsifiable in a positivist scientific sense.[11] If rankings are not consistent, then a strategic culture cannot be said to exist at that certain time, and vice versa. The attempt at decoupling culture and behaviour, and claiming the scientific high ground, however, has not gone by without criticism. Gray argues that behaviour itself is a constituent part of culture which cannot, therefore, be studied separately.[12] Johnston's claim to have solved the methodological shortcomings of the first two generations falls, therefore, on the failure to acknowledge the constitutive nature of culture if one accepts Gray's statement that 'all strategic behaviour is cultural behaviour'.[13] Culture is, in fact, referred to by most scholars as a hard to define, catch-all word with persistently fuzzy edges, which makes its reduction by Johnston to 'a limited, ranked set of [strategic] preference' somewhat misleading. Cultures are not entities that can be readily identified as catalysts for behaviour, but should rather be seen as preconditions under which preference and behaviour occur. A falsification, to use Johnston's term, or more precisely a failure to observe one culture manifested as behaviour, can necessarily only mean that the observed behaviour is the manifestation of another competing culture.

[10] Klein maintains, as Snyder does, that historic experience is an important factor in shaping strategic culture, but that the effects on behaviour are rooted instead in the interests of hegemonistic groups. Klein, B. (1988) 'Hegemony and Strategic Culture', *Review of International Studies,* 14/2, p. 139

[11] Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 48

[12] Gray, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-133

[13] Ibid

Culture as a product of ideas, expectations and patterns of behaviour

The concept of culture that will be employed here is firmly anchored in a constitutive understanding of the term, and incorporates both a behavioural factor and a more elusive factor which includes common and stated expressions of ideas, expectations, values and attitudes. For the sake of simplicity, the former is referred to as *patterns of behaviour* and the latter as *ideas and expectations*. Culture is understood to materialise in the dynamic interplay between the two, meaning that they both affect and rely on each other. Both factors are reflected in most definitions of culture but often appear in the form of more or less open-ended lists of how culture may be expressed, without explaining how they relate.[14] When focusing on the interplay between them, however, one has two more or less material yardsticks along which a culture can be observed, thus avoiding Johnston's critique of the first generation for operating with too wide and unwieldy definitions. By defining culture as a product of both what is said and done, one also avoids Klein's warning that policy makers have a tendency to say A and do B. If patterns of behaviour do not reflect the stated ideas and expectations, one must assume that the latter do not penetrate the former to a degree that justifies a positive observation of culture. Hence, either the behaviour must reflect other ideas and expectations, or a change must have occurred in one of the factors.[15] The concept can be illustrated as follows:

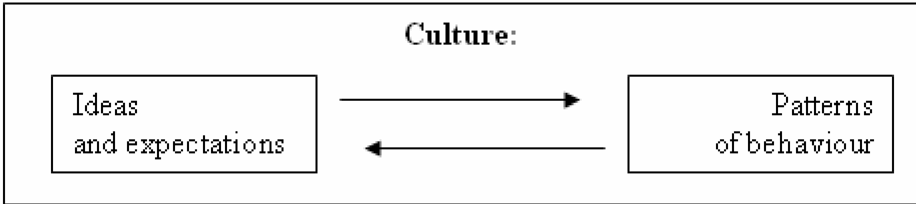

Figure 1.1: Culture as product of the interplay between ideas, expectations, and patterns of behaviour

Strategy as the link between means and ends, expressed as priorities

Changing the focus to the other constituent element of the conceptual framework, a reference to Clausewitz' enduring definition of strategy seems almost compulsory for anyone

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[14] See for example Snyder's definition above.

[15] As dynamic entities cultures may be fully or partly overlapping. A European strategic culture may be seen, therefore, to incorporate elements of military culture, a wider security culture, a bureaucratic culture, etc. See figure 4.2.

writing on the subject. He defined strategy as 'the employment of battle to gain the end of war.'[16] The definition carries much appeal due to its simplicity, combined with the clear reference to military force and instrumentality between ends and means. It also incorporates the option of *not* engaging in battle if it counters the end of winning the war. According to Liddell-Hart, Clausewitz is consistently misinterpreted as encouraging the subordination of politics to the object of war, while his definition of strategy ought to be interpreted as 'the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfil the ends of *policy*'.[17] War understood as the actual fighting is not the end but the means, thus falling under the realm of *tactics* and subordinated to strategy.[18] Nonetheless, Clausewitz' definition gives no attention to the role of force in peacetime. Given the relative absence of war in the contemporary strategic environment, at least in Europe, a definition of strategy needs to incorporate the use of force in *crises* that fall short of the traditional understanding of war.[19] In fact, war and peace are not that qualitatively different, and a more fluent understanding of how they relate may highlight the wider band of strategic options available. Conflict preventive measures may be applied to avoid having to commit heavy military forces at a later stage, and military measures may be used in a post-conflict environment to prevent a crisis from reoccurring.[20]

When widening the horizon for strategy, however, one risks the danger of ending up with a too elusive definition of the concept. Conflict preventive measures may include almost anything from trade to promotion of liberal democracy, and such measures are often regarded as part of security and defence policies of states. Indeed, with the wider understanding of security, advocated by many scholars in contemporary security studies, it is tempting to let the notion of strategy evolve towards including any means to gain the end of security. But a wider application of the concept tends to obscure the instrumental link between ends and means.[21] To avoid this – though the inclusion of civilian means will irrevocably make it harder to observe this link – strategy is here restricted to the realm of civilian and military *crisis*

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[16] Clausevitz, C. ([1832] 1968) *On War.* Harmondsworth: Penguin, p. 241
[17] Liddell-Hart, B. (1967) *Strategy. The Indirect Approach.* London: Faber, p. 335. Emphasis added.
[18] Ibid
[19] *War* is understood as 'direct, somatic violence between state actors', but it can also occur as direct violence between actors in social systems. Evans, G. and J. Newnham (1998) *The Penguin Dictionary of International Relations,* London: Penguin Books, p 565. *Crisis* is by the ICG defined as a pre- or post-conflict situation, including a period of escalation preceding a war. ICG, 'EU Crisis Response Capability', p. 2
[20] A wider understanding is reflected in the notion of *grand strategy*, of which Liddell-Hart is one of the main advocates. See Liddell-Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 336. It should be noted that he identifies grand strategy as a separate concept at the hierarchic level above strategy
[21] Central to most definitions of strategy. See e.g. Gray's useful overview of alternative definitions. *Op. cit.,* pp. 17-20

management operations, leaving out conflict prevention.[22] A rule of thumb may be that in order to qualify as a strategic act, civilian means for crisis management would have to be seen as a substitute for or an addition to legitimate use of force. The latter will at least have to be a relevant option in the relations between two or more states or groups of states.

A second aspect of strategy, reinforced by the broader range of potential situations in which military and non-military measures can be applied, is the need for *prioritising*. Johnston talks about a 'limited, ranked set of strategic preference'.[23] Expressions of priorities with regard to the application of both civilian and military means for crisis management will be treated, therefore, as an integral part of strategy, seen to be constrained in a functional and a geographical context. The former refers to the challenge faced by the decision maker and the range of responses open to him, while the latter refers to how strategic choice may differ according to the geographical proximity of a crisis. In a changing strategic environment, prospects of, say, low-intensity crisis management operations present the decision maker with vastly different options than when faced with an invading army or a nuclear attack. As capabilities are enhanced or made inferior, attitudes towards where and how one chooses to engage will change accordingly. To sum up, strategy is defined as the dynamic process linking *ends*, identified as crisis management, and *means*, civilian and military, applied against the background of a hierarchy of *priorities*, constrained in a geographical and functional context. The strategic link is seen to require effective institutions and decision making procedures. Strategy can be illustrated as follows:

[22] This paper adopts Schneckener's definition of *conflict prevention* as long-term or structural prevention of conflict, including all measures and policies aimed at eliminating deep-rooted sources of conflict, typically in a pre-escalation and post-escalation phase. *Crisis management* refers to short term or operational prevention, or to responses to pre-conflict situations to avoid use of violence and hinder any escalation of a conflict. Schneckener, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-133. Naturally the categories overlap to some extent.
[23] Cited above.

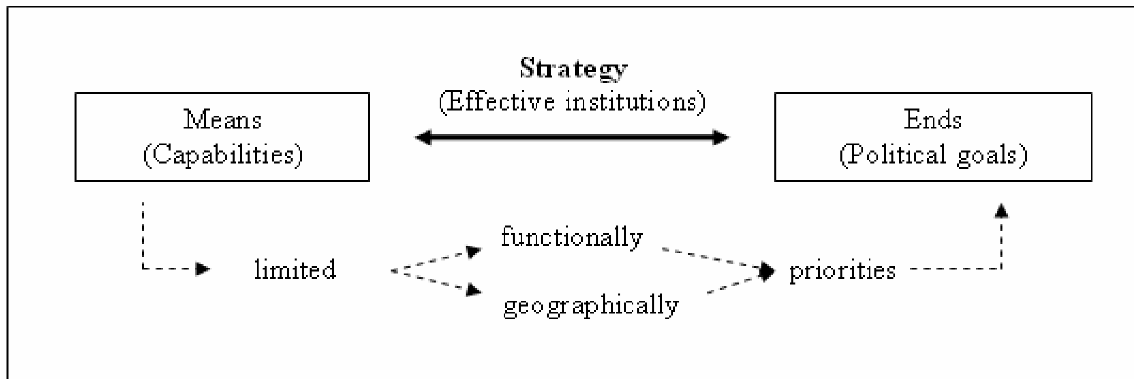

Figure 1.2: Strategy as the link between means and ends. The choice of means is limited functionally and geographically, necessitating priorities reflected in political goals.

A European Strategic Culture

When merging the understandings of culture and strategy which have been outlined so far, one ends up with a concept of a European strategic culture that can be defined as the ideas, expectations and patterns of behaviour that are shared across the actors involved in the processes surrounding European security and defence politics. A strategic culture is traced along three dimensions, corresponding to the three elements of strategy outlined in figure 1.2, and in the following referred to as the *political* dimension; the *capability* dimension; and the *institutional* dimension. By identifying and separating the elements of a strategic culture it makes it possible to assess where a certain European culture penetrates the strategic thinking of the actors involved, and where a lack of a shared culture may obstruct the developments towards a common strategy.[24] The three-layered division is devised for conceptual and practical reasons. A certain overlap between the dimensions, as is particularly the case between the political and the capability dimensions, is, therefore to be expected. The conceptual framework can be summed up in the following figure:

[24] Strategy in an EU context may refer to both 'common strategies', which is an instrument for concerted action under the CFSP (TEU art. 23), and strategy as referred to here. It is the latter meaning which will be employed in the paper if not indicated otherwise.

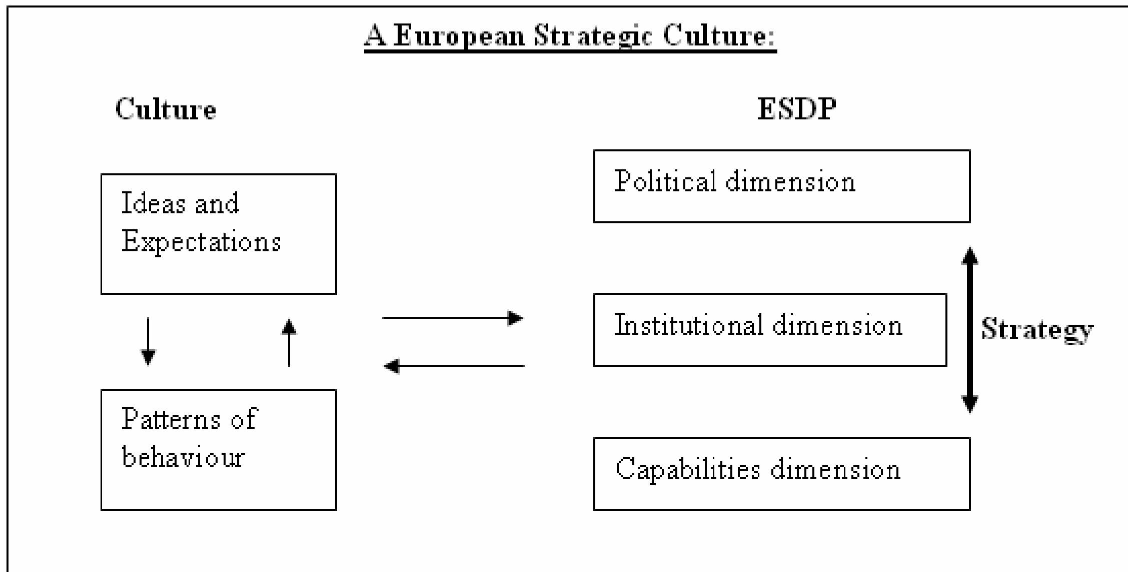

Figure 1.3: The conceptual model of a European strategic culture

The Political Dimension

The CFSP and the ESDP both share the 'S' for *security*. The ESDP is often exclusively referred to as representing the security dimension of the EU. The Maastricht treaty states that one of the objectives of the CFSP shall be 'to strengthen the security of the Union in all ways.'[25] It further states that 'the common foreign and security policy shall include all questions related to the security of the Union, including the eventual framing of a common defence policy, which might in time lead to a common defence.'[26] The provisions for what was to develop into the ESDP indicate that defence is only partially the answer to these questions. The phrase 'in all ways' also suggests a contemporary and wide understanding of security which has to be appreciated to grasp the nature of the EU as a security and defence policy actor and to identify the Union's security interests – i.e. the political objectives lying at the core of the ESDP.

Readily adopting a wider understanding of the security, however, is not without problems. An initial question addresses the qualitative division between security threats and

[25] TEU art. 11. 1
[26] TEU art. 17

social or political issues.[27] One way of dealing with this problem would be to distinguish between internal and external security, leaving out the former. At first glance, this division seems appropriate, given the focus of the study. The ESDP as part of the CFSP is by definition externally oriented, and in the context of strategy one is effectively limited to a particular kind of security. Note the latter formulation, however. Security as a subjective term leaves little room – or indeed, it would make no sense – for the analyst merely to state that threats can only be external.[28] Bigo argues that internal and external security have merged in the 1990s, especially with regard to the Europeanization of issues like organised and trans-national crime, terrorism and illegal immigration.[29] The division between external and internal security is also problematic given the ill-defined nature of the EU as an actor. The external security of a member state may represent an internal security problem for the Union. The threat remains a security problem also when it is Europeanized, and cannot, therefore, lose that status merely because the matter is securitised on another level. The reference to strategy may again provide an appropriate limiting device, however, as it rather draws attention to the means by which security is pursued. Strategy is about the threat of or legitimate use of force, or the use of civilian means, in a situation where force is deemed a relevant option. Strategic culture addresses, therefore, the *aspects* of security that are relevant to the externally oriented concept of strategy, but this dividing line cannot be drawn very sharply.[30]

A second issue that needs to be addressed is by whom the political choices or decisions with regard to security are made, or how one chooses to operationalise the EU as a foreign and security policy actor.[31] An associated question is how the EU security interest may be identified. Ortega argues that the EU interest can hardly be regarded as a sum total of the

[27] Walt, representing the realist school, warns against the widening of the security agenda called for by the Critical Security Studies (CSS)-school, represented by e.g. Krause and Williams (eds.)(1997) *Critical Security Studies,* London: UCL Press, and Campbell (1993) *Writing Security,* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. He expresses fears of it endangering the intellectual coherence of security. See e.g. his (1991) 'The Renaissance of Security Studies', *International Studies Quarterly*. A more cautious widening of the agenda is presented by the Copenhagen school, which sees security as a result of discursive action referred to as the *speech act*. See e.g. Buzan et al. (1998) *Security: A New Framework for Analysis,* London: Lynne Rienner, p. 26.

[28] Security does not rest on objective criteria, but must be seen as a subjective term. Any suggestions to the contrary are bound to fall on empirical merit. Defence and security politics are not devised by analysts, but by politicians and other practitioners. Whether a political challenge constitutes a threat to security must be treated, therefore, as predominantly a matter of political choice.

[29] Bigo, D. (1996) *Polices en réseaux: l' expéreience eruopéenne,* Paris: Presses de Sciences Po

[30] I.e. we are dealing *predominantly* with security issues falling under the auspices of the second pillar and the Council, but the associate role of the Commission in the CFSP, and the blurred lines of responsibility for security matters in the EU tend to obscure such institutional and topical divides.

[31] Hill derives from Sjöstedt that an international actor needs to be *delimited*, *autonomous* and possessing certain *structural prerequisites*. Hill, C. (1993) 'The Capability-Expectations Gap', *Journal of Common Market Studies,* 31/3, p. 309. Rather than taking up this discussion, I conclude that the EU acts in its own capacity, i.e. in Macedonia and Bosnia, and ought, therefore, to be perceived as an international actor.

member states' interests. Nor can it be expected to match the character of a 'national interest' given the inevitable contradictions and differences between the member states. It should be seen rather as common interests 'lying midway between member states' national interests and global interests'.[32] Another way to appreciate the EU as a security policy actor is to look at it as a complex political unit incorporating a range of sub-actors, or securitising actors, each expressing what they identify as threats. These sub-actors may be typically identified as the Commission, the Council, sub-units within these, and the member states. This notion is different from other concepts, such as Buzan's model of Regional Security Complexes[33], in that the security concerns of the member states cannot simply be seen to be coinciding in a regional complex. Security concerns can be imposed by the overarching institutions, making these securitising actors in their own right, with a potential for changing the way member states perceive security, as well as offering different solutions to security problems than of what the member states individually or in a regular alliance are capable.

The EU interest can be seen, therefore, as the product of what the sub-actors identify to be in the security interests of the Union, as opposed to the member states or any other units. One can expect these views to diverge in a context where the EU challenges the well-rooted idea of the state as the traditional security provider. As the EU consolidates its own position as provider of security, and the awareness of the opportunities embedded in the EU with regard to targeting trans-national and regional security problems takes root, one can expect that ideas and expectations will change among the sub-actors as well. With regard to the Balkans, for example, the security dimension has been viewed through a wider EU lens, representing a cluster of security problems that are trans-national or regional in character rather than presenting problems for the individual state in particular.

Hence, the union can be seen as a securitising actor and a security provider, but it can also be identified as a security referent object. Its character as such should, however, be regarded as aggregative or pre-conditional, meaning that threats against the Union must be seen as indirect threats against its constituent entities, being either states or individuals. As far as the integration process has succeeded in creating peace, anything threatening this process may be regarded as detrimental to European security. Rieker and Ulriksen argue that the ability of the Union to battle issues like organised crime and illegal immigration may not only

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[32] Ortega, M. (2001) *Military Intervention and the European Union*. Chaillot Paper 45, Paris: ISS, p. 103

[33] Presented in Buzan et al. (1990) *The European Security Order Recast,* London: Pinter. Associated attempts at conceptual models of the EU include Deutsch's notion of a 'pluralistic security community' in his (1957) *Political Community in the North Atlantic Area,* Princeton, and Adler and Barnett's 'tightly coupled security community' in their (eds.)(1998) *Security Communities,* Cambridge: CUP.

be an important problem but an existential one as well, as nationalism and right wing populism are prone to prosper if the EU fails in these tasks, causing instability within member states or the EU at large.[34] The wars following the break up of the former Yugoslavia dealt heavy blows to the expectations of the EU as a security policy actor. If the EU should fail again its failure will have serious adverse effects on expectations of the EU as a peace project. Because the EU has chosen to be proactive and extend the perimeters of the security dimension, it can be said that although it has quite logically forwarded the idea of security through interaction and interdependence, it has also increased the potential for failure.

It is hard to draw a definitive line around threats that are securitised by the Union and are to be dealt with as such. As far as the EU may be perceived to embody elements of strategic thinking, one would also expect some manifestation of political goals, or a desired output on which the means or the capabilities are centred. The failure to observe a policy centred on political output has led people like Lindley-French to criticise the ESDP for being '"product led" and not "market led"'[35], or implicitly, that the EU has sought to increase military capabilities without knowing the reason that it should do so. Such thinking signifies that the products, or the means, have been misinterpreted as the primary political goals, thus arguably presenting a misleading picture of the ESDP as a political project lacking purpose or direction. In order to correct this misunderstanding it is important to lay aside a traditional output oriented approach to policy making and replace it with a process oriented approach.[36]

The politics of an EU strategic culture – policy as process

The Petersberg tasks, reproduced in TEU art. 17.2, provide a framework for the Union's use of force. They state the range of operations in which the Union shall be able to engage, and as such, they give some directions as to where, when and how military force is a relevant option as a policy tool for the EU. The observation that they are political tools, however, is germane to the appreciation of the Petersberg tasks as something short of political goals in their own right. They need a further purpose, a classification of a situation in terms that warrant their application. Hence, the Petersberg tasks fall between two stools. They represent both capabilities *and* political goals, for it would also be impossible not to appreciate them as

[34] Rieker, P. and S. Ulriksen (2003) 'EU - en sikkerhetspolitisk aktør?' in Rieker, and Ulriksen (eds.) *En annerledes supermakt?,* Oslo, NUPI, p. 19
[35] Lindley-French, *op. cit.*
[36] Østergaard claims that the EU cannot be anything but a process, never a finished product. Østergaard, U. in Burgess and Tunander (eds.)(2000) *European Security Identities,* Oslo: PRIO Report, 2, p. 23

guidelines for capabilities planning. They should be treated, therefore, as *aggregate political goals* rather than expressions of political objectives in their own right.[37]

Furthermore, the political ambitions of the EU are restricted functionally and geographically by the capabilities to which it has access, but political goals must be expected to evolve as the catalogue of civilian and military capabilities are enhanced. As such, the ESDP is capabilities driven, but it would be wrong to equate this observation with a notion of political goals having fallen prey to material developments. In a paper produced by the Clingendael Institute it is argued that 'without a conceptual mechanism to sort out the contingencies that may or may not require the application of appropriate military and non-military crisis management tools by the European Union, the Union will be carried along by events and incidents'.[38] But crisis management is by definition reactive. As a high ranking official in the Council Secretariat put it:

> The core of crisis management is that we will try to solve a crisis by applying means in the civilian range of crisis management tools, and if that does not work we want to be able to make use of military force. (…) One cannot know up front how they [capabilities] are going to be used in each particular case. It would be impossible to plan the same way as e.g. the United States. This would undermine the whole thinking behind crisis management.[39]

Crisis management needs to be seen as the less favoured and responsive part of a holistic approach that also incorporates more proactive elements of foreign policy identified as conflict prevention. A useful way of describing the EU strategic approach may be, therefore, to adopt a notion of a 'doctrine of non-escalation', representing an *overall political goal* guiding the way the CFSP/ESDP is pursued.

The main point with regard to the notion of policy formation understood as process, however, is that the political dimension and the capability dimension affect each other reciprocally and may, therefore, neither be viewed separately nor be seen as one leading the other. A discussion paper by the Centre of Defence Studies (CDS) at King's College, London, suggests that:

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[37] Alternatively *tasks* may be presented as an independent category.

[38] Van Staden, A. et al. (2000) *Towards a European Strategic Concept,* the Hague: the Clingendael Institute, p. 6

[39] Interview with official in the Council Secretariat, May 2003. Most of the information gained in interviews was on an unattributable basis. Names of primary sources are not revealed, therefore, in future references.

> (…) the relationship between the HHG and the Petersberg tasks is best conceived as circular: the force levels planned are derived from a sense of the Petersberg tasks, and the tasks the EU is prepared to undertake will be limited to those that can be achieved with the force capabilities in existence.[40]

As shall be seen, this circular understanding may be modified to incorporate the combination of civilian and military means for crisis management, leading up to figure 2.1 below, which illustrates the processes linking capabilities, overall political goals and aggregate political goals. The following section explores the latter category first, however, attempting to cast light on *what* kind of operations the EU wishes to conduct (the functional context), and *where* and *when* force will be used (the geographical context).[41]

A functional approach to the Petersberg tasks

The fact that the Petersberg tasks are described in terms of function and are not distinguished by level of military force required in relation to specific tasks has complicated the analysis of what is implied by operations at the 'high' and 'low' end of the scale.[42] Some operations at the low end, identified as 'humanitarian and rescue tasks', may require more sophisticated military resources, more manpower, and a longer term commitment than 'peacemaking' at the top of the scale. It does not immediately make sense, therefore, to say that the EU is able, or should be able, to perform operations at the lower end before moving on to the higher end. With regard to what kind of operations that are covered by the treaty, however, there are two ways of interpreting the text. The narrow interpretation reflects the original meaning of the text as it was intended in 1992.[43] But there is a general consensus that the Petersberg tasks should be subject to a broader interpretation, incorporating all sorts of operations, including the most demanding, but with the clear exception of collective defence.[44] The question remains whether the wide interpretation of the Petersberg tasks represents the extent of the EU's military ambitions or merely a first step towards a stronger or more traditional military role. The legalistic aspects are fairly clear, as reflected in the

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[40] CDS (2001) *Achieving the Helsinki Headline* Goals, Discussion paper, King's College London, November 2001

[41] The functional and geographical division is also employed in Van Staden et al., *op. cit.*

[42] CDS, *op. cit.,* p. 8

[43] 'Humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks, and tasks of combat forces, including peacemaking'. WEU Council, Bonn, 19 June 1992, 'Petersberg Declaration'

[44] Van Staden, et al., *op. cit.,* p. 21. The Convention has presented a draft for a new art. 17, extending the list of Petersberg tasks. Given the wide interpretation, however, the more elaborate formulation does not change the military scope of action for the EU. For a comment on the draft articles relevant to the ESDP, see C. Gourlay (2003) 'The Convention: Conclusion without closure', *European Security Review*, 17/03.

phrase '(…)including the progressive framing of a common defence policy, which might lead to a common defence, should the European Council so decide'.[45] This has not yet happened, and given the wording of the draft article for a European constitution, recently released by the Convention, defence will not become a prominent part of the Union's policy for some time still. The draft article so far only suggests a 'solidarity clause', in which a member state might be assisted if it came under a terrorist or a non-state attack.[46]

With regard to the catalogue of operations that *are* included in the Petersberg tasks, the scope of this paper, regretfully, does not allow for an assessment of the requirements for all the potential operations on which the EU may embark. It should be kept in mind, however, that the EU has declared its intentions to be able to perform the *full range* of Petersberg missions.[47] A practical way of defining the upper end of the Petersberg tasks is to regard them as being concerned with intra-, but not inter-state conflict, or 'security', but not 'war'.[48] It is argued that such a definition is easier to swallow for neutral members of the Union, but in practice it sets no limits to the amount of force that may be applied in a given situation.[49] A more traditional way of conceptualising the Petersberg tasks is to categorise them according to type of mission. Ortega suggests that a clearer wording of the Petersberg tasks would identify four types: *evacuation, humanitarian, peacekeeping* and *crisis management*, the latter including the use of combat forces.[50] The point to be noted is that beyond collective defence the EU's use of military force is hardly constrained by its functional-legal context. Still, the Petersberg tasks give a more or less clear indication of the catalogue of operations that the EU wants to able to perform, thereby providing the direction in which capabilities should be moving but not providing the full picture as to *how* and *what* military force will be used, as these are reliant on what is available on the capability side.

A geographical approach to the Petersberg tasks

The characteristics of a contingency in which the Union would want to intervene are also prone to differ according to geographical proximity to the EU area. Providing a useful

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[45] TEU art. 17 (amended by the treaty of Nice)
[46] Art. 42. of the Draft Treaty text. One way is viewing the proposed article as similar to NATO's art. V, forcing members of a new military alliance to help one another in the case of an attack. See *The Business*, 13 April 2003, 'Britain attacks plan for European Defence Union'. Another way of viewing it is regarding the defence clause as little more than a codification of a plight that is already implicit in relations between European states.
[47] European Council, Helsinki, 10-11 December 1999
[48] CDS, *op. cit.*, p. 9
[49] Ibid
[50] Ortega, *op. cit.*, p. 111

starting point, the Clingendael Institute offers a model of three concentric circles around the EU territory, 'defining the geographical space for the different categories of military tasks and corresponding military operations to be carried out under particular circumstances'.[51] The first circle refers to the immediate surroundings of the EU territory, identified as roughly covering 'the arch stretching from the Baltic states over the Balkans to Europe's South Eastern (Turkey) and Southern flanks (Mediterranean and Northern Africa)'.[52] In practice, the importance of the regions to EU security is reflected in a range of initiatives. The first ESDP missions were launched in 2003 in Bosnia and Macedonia, making the Western Balkans the only region in which the ESDP is currently active on the ground.[53] Furthermore, the Western Balkans and the greater Mediterranean region have been subject to long-term conflict preventive measures by the Commission.[54] It should be noted that no formal security guarantees have been given, or are likely to be given, to any countries in the first circle. This is probably due to the limited scope of the ESDP as a crisis management initiative, the current inability to fulfil such a guarantee, and the loss of manoeuvrability it would imply. However, it is to be expected that the Union is more likely to engage, and engage more heavily, in the close-up regions than it would be when moving further out from the geographical core.

The second circle is harder to delineate, but may incorporate the rest of the African continent and the wider Middle Eastern region.[55] The Middle East has been identified as a priority area, while the EU has had a range of opportunities to get involved on the ground in Africa. The failure to adopt joint actions on interventions in the Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone, and the French and the British respectively having to go in alone, has cast some doubt on the willingness of the Europeans to extend the operational parameters of the ESDP beyond the first circle. These doubts must be seen, however, to have been confuted by the surprising adoption of a joint action on a military operation in Congo, which is, indeed, a much bolder endeavour than the relatively modest operation in Macedonia.[56] Whether the Congo operation signifies a shift towards a heavier involvement in the region remains to be seen. It is important to note, however, that the Commission, as in the Balkans, has been heavily involved in the Great Lakes region for some time already. The operation can be viewed, therefore, as a natural follow up to this general involvement, which in turn may be seen as a sign towards a

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[51] Van Staden et al., *op. cit.*, p. 28
[52] Ibid p. 29
[53] At the time of writing a military operation in Congo has been decided upon, but not implemented. European Council Press Office, Brussels, 5 June 2003, 'Adoption by the Council of the Joint Action on the European Union military operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)', 9957/03 (Presse 156)
[54] The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) was established in 1995.
[55] Van Staden et al., *op. Cit.*, p. 30
[56] 1800 soldiers will be deployed, a formidable number compared to the 400 in Macedonia.

higher likelihood of EU military operations in some identified priority areas outside its immediate parameters when capabilities permit.

The third circle incorporates the rest of the world in which the EU may engage in humanitarian and rescue operations or assist other states in doing so.[57] The observations made with regard to the second circle may have an even stronger application here: as one gets further from the core it is less likely that member states will commit heavy military resources if they do not have special national interests in the area, and if they do it is more likely that they will act alone. It is probably safe to say, therefore, that the level of pragmatism with regard to ESDP operations increases considerably the further one moves away from EU territory.

Having identified the functional and geographical context in which the military crisis management role of the Union is played out, the next question is whether the same can be done on the civilian side. In legalistic terms, civilian aspects of crisis management are counted as an integrated part of a broad interpretation of the Petersberg tasks, but in practice the latter is almost exclusively seen to be referring to military operations. For reasons of clarity, therefore, civilian tasks have in the circular model below been disaggregated from the military tasks in appreciation that *the four priority areas of civilian crisis management* identified at the Feira Council[58] rather than the formulation in TEU art.17, guide developments on the civilian side. The four areas, identified as *police*, *rule of law*, *civilian administration* and *civil protection*, do not list tasks the Union wants to be able to perform. Instead they identify the areas in which the EU should work towards enhancing capabilities, and may, as such, be perceived as specifications of the civilian HHG rather than functional guidelines. On the other hand, a catalogue of tasks may be seen to be reflected in the four headlines, which, in fact, are no less precise than the wide interpretation of the Petersberg tasks. The concrete targets identified by the Feira Council and the extent to which they have been fulfilled are covered under the capability dimension. The important point here is how the identification of the four priority areas may help illustrate the circular process introduced above and illustrated as follows:

[57] Van Staden et al., *op. cit.*, p. 32
[58] European Council, Santa Maria da Feira, 19-20 June 2000

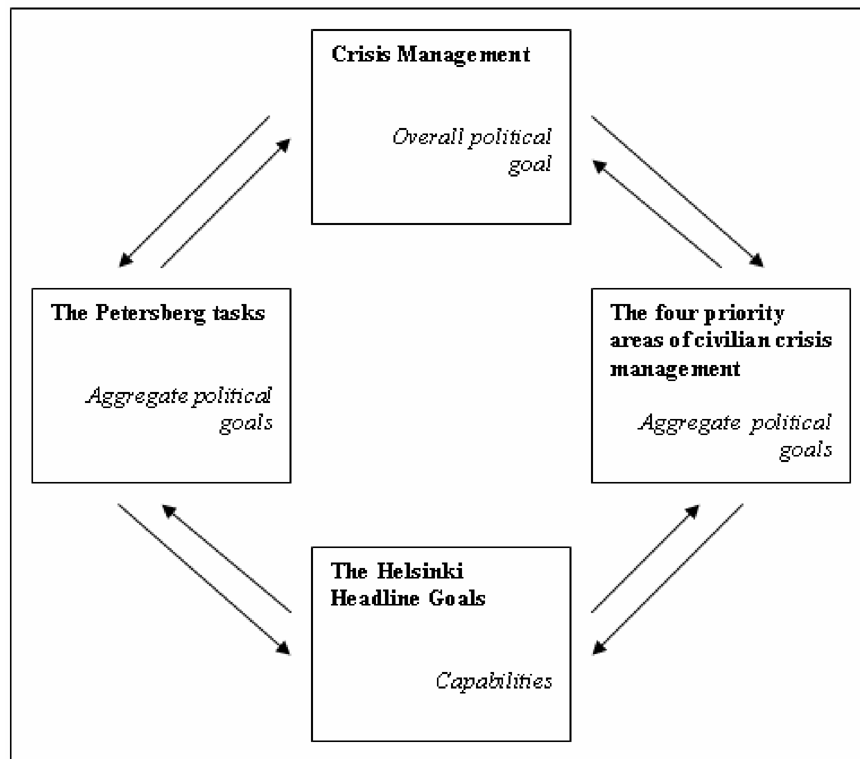

Figure 2.1: Capabilities planned are derived from a sense of the Petersberg tasks and the four civilian priority areas, and the crisis management tasks the EU is prepared to undertake and how they will be conducted will be limited to those that can be achieved with the capabilities in existence.

The Capability Dimension

In a seminal article from 1993, Hill argued that 'the Community's capabilities have been talked up, to the point where a significant *capability-expectations* gap exists'.[59] Ten years later, the situation has turned somewhat. Despite the EU's self-projected aspirations as an international actor, the Union's military capabilities are almost being *talked down*. Civilian capabilities are often relegated to footnotes simply confirming the EU's status as a civilian power, whereas the crucial military clout is continuously seen to be lacking. It is paradoxical that the developments in civilian aspects of the Union, which have been seen as an EU trademark all along, have received only marginal attention compared to the calls for restructuring of armed forces, increased military spending and transatlantic burden-sharing. Arguably this bias is due to the fact that shortcomings on the military side have been so profound, and because a European military capability is a matter of more controversy than a

[59] Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 306

civilian capability. The bias is carried forward in this paper mainly because of the reasons above, but important developments on the civilian side need also to be addressed.

Europe is not weak militarily. In terms of capabilities and military spending, the European states collectively represent the second largest military power in the world. The problem is that the Union's resources are dispersed across 15 member states, with more members to come, all with their own respective leaderships, doctrines, structures and cultures. Moreover, the question is not simply one of quantity, but also one of the relevance and quality of European armed forces. As pointed out by Missiroli, burden-sharing is not just about comparing budgets, nor are crisis management tools covered exclusively by the budgetary markers tallied up when military spending levels are compared.[60] In the EU's case, military capabilities must be viewed in combination with other foreign policy instruments. Simple as the point may be, enhancing EU capabilities is not about creating an EU force, with EU soldiers waiting in barracks outside Brussels. The capability question is about the ability to operate together, operate fast, and with the relevant military hardware to conduct the operations envisioned by the Petersberg tasks. The same problems are also present on the civilian side though the demands and goals are lower, hence also the potential shortfalls. Interoperability, equal standards, availability of personnel, and rapid reaction are but some of the capability challenges addressed by the Helsinki Headline Goals (HHG). The following deals with the military side first.

Enhancing military capabilities

The 1999 Helsinki summit addressed specific resources the EU should be able to call upon by the target date of 2003, in order to be able to embark on operations falling under the auspices of the Petersberg tasks. These resources included the creation of a Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) of up to 60,000 troops, with appropriate naval and air support, to be deployed within 60 days and sustainable in theatre for up to 12 months.[61] One may question why the size of the force was capped at 60,000, or conversely, whether the number is sufficient to cover the operations the EU has declared its readiness to perform. The Laeken Council only declared the ESDP operational for *some* Petersberg tasks, indicating that more demanding

[60] Missiroli, A. (2001) 'Defence Spending in Europe', the Conference on ESDP, the Cicero Foundation, 13-15 December

[61] European Council, Helsinki, 10-11 December 1999. Important events leading up to the meeting include the NATO summit in Washington in April 1999, where the members agreed to rectify a series of daunting capability shortfalls under the Defence Capabilities Initiative (DCI).

operations will have to wait. Furthermore, 60,000 troops is, at first glance, a relatively moderate goal, and if several crises should occur at the same time the EU would have to choose among them, a choice which, it should be remembered, it has the privilege to make. No guarantees have been made, save the probability that the EU, alone or with the help of NATO, will respond to a contingency within the first concentric circle identified above.

A more interesting question refers to whether the EU, by declaring the RRF operational is, in fact, promising more than it can fulfil. One might question what major steps towards closing the capability gap that have been made during the short period since the goals were set out. At the 2000 Capabilities Commitments Conference (CCC), the EU members identified a substantial range of forces available to meet the HHG. The numbers offered included 100,000 troops, 400 combat aircraft and 100 ships, but as Schake remarks, the assets pledged already existed and nearly all were committed to UN or NATO forces.[62] This does not, however, impede the progress made towards enabling Europe militarily for the Petersberg tasks. Piecing together a mosaic of capabilities is, in fact, what the HHG is mostly about. It should also be noted that neither the HHG nor the DCI should be regarded as point zero for a military restructuring of Europe. Nearly all the EU members have in the course of the last decade moved away from conscription towards smaller professional armies more suited to rapid and long-term deployment in theatre[63], while developments have been made towards lighter, smaller and more manoeuvrable units. In terms of actual performance on the ground, there is little doubt, therefore, that the Europeans are likely to be able to do the job. Instead the problems lie with severe shortcomings in the area of what is often referred to as 'C4ISR' (command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance).[64]

Enhancing civilian capabilities

While important capabilities on the military side are still lacking, progress on the civilian side has been more encouraging. This was also to be expected, since the civilian HHG include a far lower number of personnel, although people with more specialised skills, such as judges and penitentiary staff, are required. Furthermore, the goals do not include expensive support elements or crucial capabilities to ensure the safety of the people involved. As on the

[62] Schake, K. (2002) *Constructive Duplication*, CER, January 2002
[63] Germany being a notable exception.
[64] For a brief breakdown of shortcomings, see K. Naumann (2000) 'Europe's Military Ambitions', *CER*, June/July Bulletin 00.

military side, fulfilling the HHG has been a matter of pledging capabilities that already exist. The goals include, amongst others and under the four respective priority areas identified at Feira, 5000 police officers, 1000 of which to be deployable within 30 days; 200 judges, prosecutors and penitentiary staff, 60 of which deployable in 30 days; a pool of experts for civil administration with concrete targets to be identified by the CIVCOM; and 2-3 assessment or coordination teams to be dispatched within 3-7 hours for civil protection, as well as intervention teams of up to 2000 persons to be deployed at short notice. Targets in the first two categories have been met and exceeded by the target dates, while progress in the latter two categories is under way.[65]

The problems are not so much associated with the number of people as with speed of deployment, common standards, financing etc. Furthermore, the institutional division between the Commission and the Council in the area of civilian crisis management has also created some tension over which body is responsible for which resource pools, with the corresponding allegations of asset duplication. With regard to speed and flexibility, perhaps the most important innovation on the civilian side is the establishment of a Rapid Reaction Mechanism (RRM). Operating on a separate budget line, the RRM is designed to avoid, in the words of Commissioner Patten, the Union being 'bogged down by bureaucratic constraints and deliver Community instruments without unnecessary delays.'[66]

Shortfalls in capabilities and how to deal with them

Despite the lack of tangible progress in the area of C4ISR, it is too early to say whether or not the DCI or the HHG has been a failure. Military production and procurement cycles often span periods of up to ten years. Hence, important capabilities may not be in place before 2008-10, even if decisions were made immediately.[67] Yet it is clear that if crucial capability gaps are to be filled something will have to be done on military spending, i.e. spending more or spending better, or preferably a combination of the two. Missiroli identifies four clusters of problems regarding military spending in Europe: lack of tangible strategic threats to the EU homeland; inevitable duplication of assets; sociological constraints deriving from Europe's demography of ageing societies and established welfare states; and financial and budgetary constraints imposed by the Growth and Stability Pact (GSP), combined with economic

[65] See ICG, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32, or European Commission, External Relations, 'Civilian Crisis Management'
[66] Commissioner Patten cited in the European Commission, 26 February 2001, 'Council adopts Rapid Reaction Mechanism. Commission now in position to move fast in civilian crisis management', IP/01/255.
[67] CDS, *op. cit.*, p. 5

recession.[68] Europe is, therefore, generally left with the option of spending better. A recognition of this has also led to changing patterns in European military thinking towards more pragmatic solutions, while some of the old taboos, such as the ban against duplication of assets, have gradually been abandoned. Changing ideas and patterns of behaviour with regard to solving European capability shortfalls may be seen as signs of a growing strategic culture within the ESDP.

Given the recognition that defence spending is not likely to increase significantly for the reasons presented above, the major objectives for the Union with regard to getting higher value for money would be three-fold: reducing unnecessary duplication of assets among the member states; coordinating efforts towards acquisition of common assets; and increasing interoperability between European forces. Challenges and opportunities can be illustrated as follows:

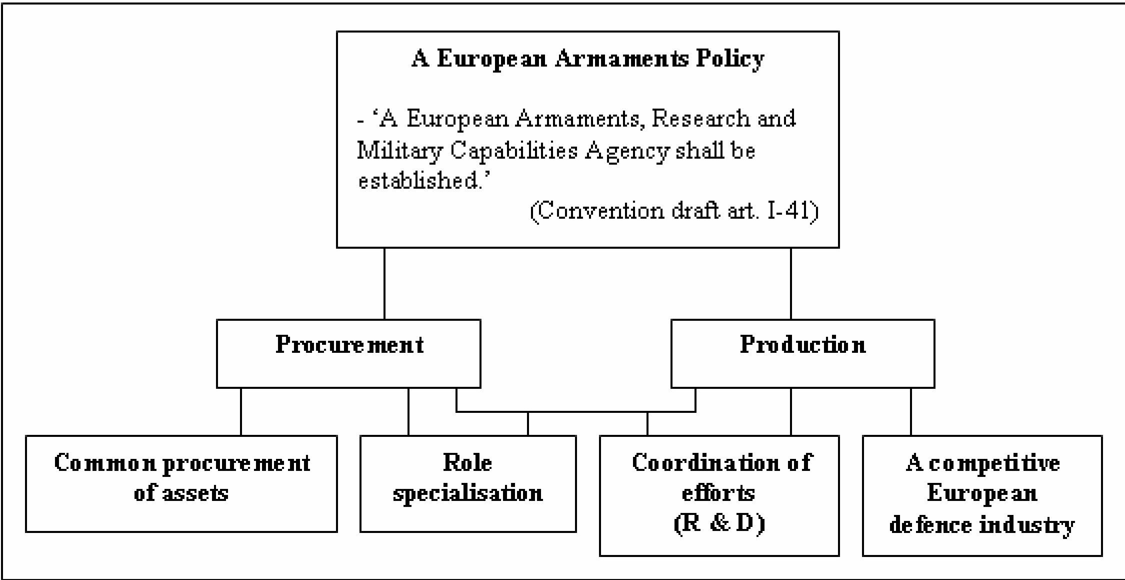

Figure 3.1: The European armaments conundrum

In addition to the draft article in the Convention, reproduced in the figure, the Commission has recently released a communiqué on industrial and market aspects of European defence. It addresses issues on the production side, such as creating a viable, sustainable and competitive defence market and thereby answering the call from European defence firms that domestic markets become more coherent to remain internationally

[68] Missiroli, *op. cit.*

competitive.[69] However, none of the member states have yet foregone the position that it is in their interests to retain a certain defence industrial base, and there have been few signs that any state is willing to let the market determine the size and orientation of this.[70]

On the procurement side, pooling of resources may include common procurement or some role specialisation. With regard to the former, Naumann suggests that the EU should organise common procurement of assets along the line of NATO's AWACS fleet, such as aircraft for transport and air-to-air refuelling, through a common EU fund.[71] It is unlikely, however, that such a fund would receive much patronage, given the current state of the budgets. The other option, which seems more likely, is concerted procurement with state ownership of assets that may be used in both national and EU operations.[72]

With regard to operational planning, command and control, there has been much ado about the access to NATO operational and planning structures. Disagreements over the so-called Berlin Plus agreement held up the Macedonia operation for over a year.[73] Now that the agreement has been reached, however, what do the arrangements solve? Schake argues that Berlin Plus did or could not solve the fundamental problem of assured access, suggesting that the EU should create its own command structures, amongst other capabilities, as part of a process she refers to as 'constructive duplication'.[74] Lindley-French, on the other hand, goes as far as suggesting that the United States does no longer need NATO militarily; i.e. the Americans are not likely to submit to the multilateral strictures of a coalition again. SHAPE should, therefore, be progressively 'Europeanised'.[75] Yet a third solution may be a decentralised structure based on a lead nation principle, where one state assumes the responsibility for an operation and provides the military framework for its conduct.[76] This option is being used in the Congo operation for which France acts as framework nation. The advantage of such a solution is the avoidance of many of the problems of interoperability and cooperation between equal partners in a multinational structure. But it also means that the

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[69] European Commission (2003) *European Defence – Industrial and Market Issues*, COM (2003) 113 final, Brussels. For comments on the communiqué, see J. Mawdsley (2003), 'Communiqué on defence equipment: Creating a European Armaments Policy?', *European Security Review*, 17/03.

[70]The Eurofighter-project has shown some cross-border coordination of efforts, but the process has been long, expensive and underpinned by political and industrial tensions.

[71] Naumann, *op. cit.*

[72] This has been the case with the A400M heavy transport aircraft. It should be noted that e.g. Luxembourg has bought one aircraft, which may be seen as a sign of a smaller country contributing its share to a common pool of assets, as one aircraft is of meager national importance.

[73] Berlin Plus is based on the decision of the NATO summits in Berlin in 1996 and Washington in 1999. Its four elements (§10 of the 1999 Washington Summit Declaration) were agreed upon at the NAC meeting of 13 December 2002. See 'EU-NATO Declaration on the ESDP', 16 December 2002.

[74] Schake, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-33

[75] Lindley-French, *The Capabilities Development Process post-September 11*.

[76] Ulriksen, *op. cit.*, p. 139

British, the French or the Germans, which are the only states capable of leading operations, will have to assume a heavy responsibility for EU operations.

A possible solution would be for the smaller nations to take on responsibility for other and more specialised tasks in an operation. Belgium is one of the states that seem to have abandoned the idea of a total national defence and moved towards tailor-making forces to cater specifically for international operations.[77] Hence, one may be observing trends towards smaller states developing niche-capabilities that can be plugged into the command and control structures of the larger nations.[78] There are, however, some problems implicit in this approach. First, while the lead nations will secure their ability to wage war and perform military operations alone, and will thus preserve, militarily speaking, a high level of sovereignty, the smaller states will at best receive a share in a common EU sovereignty.[79] On the other hand, by developing important niche-capabilities they will also make themselves invaluable in crisis management operations which may be reliant on capabilities, such as mine clearance, surveillance of coastal areas, toxic waste clean-up, etc. A heavy role specialisation would also avoid the usual pledging of numerous field hospitals in place of more needed resources, and in doing so would give the smaller states a more important role in operations while also enhancing capabilities. A second problem arises, however, with assured access to niche-capabilities. Role specialisation also implies assurance that a state will join an operation if their particular capabilities are needed. This may not be a practical problem, but it raises issues of national control over own military resources. Thirdly, abandoning a total defence would require assurances that other states would come to the smaller states' rescue if attacked or threatened. Again, this is probably not a practical problem given that most EU members are also NATO members, but if the trends towards role specialisation continue, one might expect demands for a stronger solidarity clause to be formulated.

Role specialisation would also require effective institutions and coordinated efforts, which are even more important with regard to the need for coordination of civilian and military aspects of crisis management. Some scholars treat institutions as part of capabilities[80], but the institutional dimension is arguably something more than simply a resource to be called upon. Institutions provide the framework in which political goals are

[77] Ibid p. 157
[78] Examples include the Czechs, likely to enter the Union shortly, who have developed highly advanced anti-chemical warfare capabilities, Dutch special forces, and Norwegian mine clearing capabilities, available through third country participation in ESDP operations.
[79] Ibid p. 160
[80] Schake e.g. treats the HR as part of an EU strategic planning capability. *Op. cit.*, p. 35

formulated, situations are classified, responses are conditioned, strategies are formulated, and cultures are brought forward.

The Institutional Dimension

The process oriented approach to policy making under the CFSP/ESDP highlights the inevitable political role of the EU institutions in shaping its security and defence policy, since the overall objective of de-escalating potential crisis situations through a continuous process of conflict prevention and crisis management cannot be pursued by a fixed identification of ends and means. It is, therefore, largely up to the central EU institutions to link a growing range of external foreign policy tools with international events having security implications for the EU, while, in the process, producing solutions that can be swiftly agreed upon by the member states and effectively implemented. This requires procedures for coordination, not only between civilian and military aspects of crisis management under the auspices of the Council, but also between the Commission and the Council, given a considerable overlap of tasks on the civilian side of crisis management. The question is whether the institutional apparatus established by the TEU and the Treaty of Amsterdam fulfils these requirements. The EU institutional framework for crisis management can be outlined as follows:[81]

[81] For an account of the institutional developments after Maastricht, see S. Nuttall, (2000) *European Foreign Policy*, Oxford: OUP, pp. 176-193. A breakdown of the roles and functions of the institutions established since Amsterdam is presented in ICG, 'EU Crisis Response Capability', pp. 11-32.

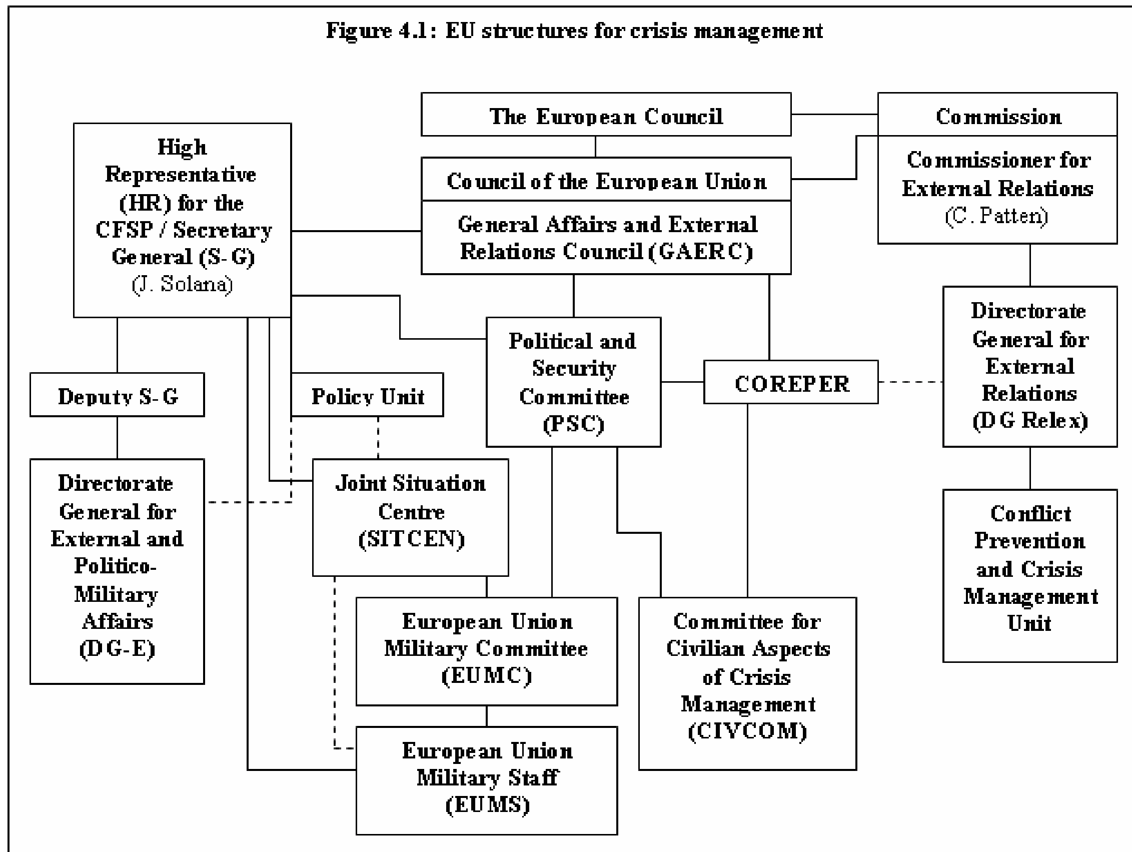

Figure 4.1: EU structures for crisis management

There are roughly three axes along which coordination is crucial for an effective crisis management policy. There is the civil-military coordination under the Council; the civil-civil coordination between the Commission and the Council; and the coordination of member states' views in order to achieve the political basis for further action. Nuttall points to how the need for consistency and coherence in EU foreign policy has been a consistent source of debate since the evolution of the EPC, arguing that the institutional developments after Maastricht have, with only marginal success, alleviated shortcomings in these areas.[82] It should be kept in mind, however, that the Union's crisis management structure is still young. The figure above illustrates mainly formal institutional links, but as is often the case these are supplemented by informal procedures, whether partly institutionalised or appearing in a more ad hoc manner.

[82] Nuttall, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-31 and 181-193

Coordination of civilian and military aspects of crisis management

Formally, civilian and military aspects are coordinated at the political level in the PSC, which provides an overall strategic assessment in a crisis situation. It receives advice from and instructs the EUMC and the CIVCOM, and may be seen to provide a minimal level of coordination as it merges the organisational outputs of the two branches. It is a striking feature of the institutional framework, however, that there is no clear hierarchy of military and civilian sub-units that correspond to each other and interact at different levels. There is no civilian equivalent to the EUMS, as the CIVCOM is formally attached to COREPER. Within the Secretariat tasks are divided on a functional and geographical basis between the Policy Unit, SITCEN and the DG-E, while the EUMS remains somewhat on the side of the structures, reporting to Dr Solana and the EUMC, but seeming not to engage in the 'collective' processes for which the loosely defined and horizontal institutional framework on the civilian side allows.[83] A more or less formal point of contact between the military and the civilian side is found in SITCEN, which provides an important forum for joint assessments. The fact that the latter, the Policy Unit, and the EUMS report directly to the HR also indicates the important coordinating role of Dr Solana. The question is whether these structures are adequate for practical planning on a lower level as well as for facilitating the common resolve that effective crisis management requires. With regard to informal coordination between the military and civilian sides, the new Korthenberg building, which houses all units involved in crisis management in the Council, should provide the physical facilities for more interaction, but information obtained in interviews with Council officials is ambiguous. Generally, people think the coordination at the working level has improved, but that it could still be better.

A particular problem is represented by the different structures for strategic planning and operational planning. On the civilian side, both are conducted within the Council structures, but on the military side, strategic planning, as mentioned, is conducted by the EUMS, while operational planning is left to NATO-SHAPE or national headquarters. A Council Secretariat official pointed out that the Council procedures do work, referring to how fast the EUPM and operation 'Concordia' in Macedonia were planned and implemented once a political decision had been reached, while attributing these two minor successes to the flexible nature of the

[83] Information obtained in interviews suggests that the military personnel to a much lesser degree than the civilian personnel engage in interaction with other units. This is partly due to the different strategic and operational planning structures discussed below, which reflects some divergence in the scope of their respective activities. Another reason may be the shorter rotation periods for the military personnel, making it harder to build strong personal working relationships with people outside their unit.

ESDP institutions.[84] It should be noted, however, that the EU, so far, has not engaged in any operation which has required the use of both civilian and military crisis management capabilities. Hence, the first real test case for civil-military cooperation will be the eventual take-over of NATO's military operation in Bosnia (SFOR) in 2004.[85]

Coordination of civilian tasks between the Council and the Commission

Strategic and operational planning is even more complicated with regard to civil-civil coordination between the pillars. As mentioned, the dividing line between conflict prevention and crisis management is not very sharp, and some crisis management tools are found within the realm of the first pillar. The coordination problem is particularly evident in the area of command and control. Civilian capabilities under the second pillar fall under common political and strategic control under the PSC in crisis situations, while first pillar instruments are left in the hands of the Commission. These rights are based in the treaties and are not likely to be surrendered to intergovernmental control. Herein also lies much of the tension between the Commission and the Council; many of the civilian instruments which have been adopted by the Council are seen by officials in the Commission to be duplicating first pillar instruments.[86]

Despite the overlap in tasks and need for coordination, there is a striking lack of formalised procedures between the Commission and the Council. The TEU provides for a merger of views at the political top level, but at the working level the only formal point of contact is the odd Commission representative at the committee level institutions of the Council. The arrangement between the offices of Solana and Patten has worked reasonably well due to the good interpersonal relationship between the two individuals concerned, but as pointed out in the latest ICG report, a long term solution is needed to ensure greater coherence between the Union's conflict preventive instruments, such as trade, aid and diplomacy, and its crisis management instruments.[87] Information obtained in interviews again points to a higher level of interaction between Commission and Council units than has been the case in the past, but greater transparency is needed to avoid duplication of efforts and to increase the awareness of how the different initiatives fit with the larger picture.

[84] Interview with official in the Council Secretariat, May 2003
[85] The 'green light' for preparations was given at the Copenhagen Council, 12-13 December 2002.
[86] This is evident e.g. with regard to civil protection, an area claimed to be covered by the first pillar. Interview with Commission official, May 2003. These questions seem to often pop up in the context of funding, as budgetary issues remain a prerogative for the Commission.
[87] ICG, *EU Crisis Response Capabilities: An Update,* p. 14

Decision making in the ESDP – achieving that consensus

The third axis identified refers to how political decisions are prepared, made and implemented within the second pillar. Decisions are, as a main rule, made by unanimity[88], but the Amsterdam Treaty introduced a set of new procedures, reminiscent of those of the first pillar, to increase efficiency and ensure compliance with political decisions. There are two ways of ensuring such compliance. The first option is by QMV after a *common strategy* has been agreed upon.[89] QMV facilitates, in theory, efficiency and commonality of views, but common strategies as a policy tool have, in fact, been used rarely – only on three occasions so far – and 'tend to be too broadly defined, lacking clear priorities and vague because they are written for public consumption'.[90] On the other hand, it is remarkable how quickly consensus has been reached in areas where common strategies have not been adopted, in which the EU's policy has been consistent and, indeed, had a proper impact, as in the Western Balkans. As such, the consensus mechanism has proved its sustainability in that it allows the EU to pursue strategies without having strict enforcement structures, which resonate badly with the member states.

Much of the work in the institutions under the Council is also targeted at harmonising the views of the member states before a formal vote is taken. The Presidency and especially the PSC have a special role in this regard, meeting at the ambassadorial level. Much of the groundwork, however, is laid down in the Secretariat. Perhaps the most important innovation with regard to facilitating political agreement was the establishment of the Policy Unit, the hub of a network that has deep roots in the member states, according to an official.[91] The Unit's Policy Option Papers (POPs) represent a merger of the member states views on a particular issue and thus providing a baseline for a decision. Hence, a set of institutional stages can be identified in the preparatory process before an actual decision is made, a process which on the one hand facilitates consensus, while on the other has raised some concern with regard to the efficiency and speed needed for early warning and preventive action.[92]

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[88] TEU art. 23.1

[89] TEU art. 23.2. The scope of QMV is restricted by the fact that no vote may be taken if opposed by a member state for reasons of 'fundamental national policy', or if a decision has 'military or defence implications'. The Council can, following these provisions, adopt 'common positions', setting out the Union's policy on particular geographical or topical issues vis-á-vis third countries, and 'joint actions' when operational action is needed.

[90] Critique by Solana reproduced in ICG, 'EU Crisis Response Capability', p. 34. See also 'Intervention by J. Solana', Open Debate on Conflict Prevention, 22 January 2001

[91] Interview with official in the Council Secretariat, May 2003.

[92] See e.g. A. Costy and S. Gilbert (1998) *Conflict Prevention and the EU*, International Alert, September 1998.

An institutionally based strategic culture?

As discussed above, the institutional framework brings together a range of people with different experiences and organisational allegiances, and it is significant that these people are able to bridge the institutional divides that hamper the effective conduct of crisis management. As a Council Secretariat official commented: ‘Culture may either be too high an ambition or too elusive a concept to be applied to the EU’. Yet there are signs that a range of sub-cultures are slowly converging and finding their role within a larger strategic context inside the institutional framework. A European strategic culture can be conceptualised as follows:

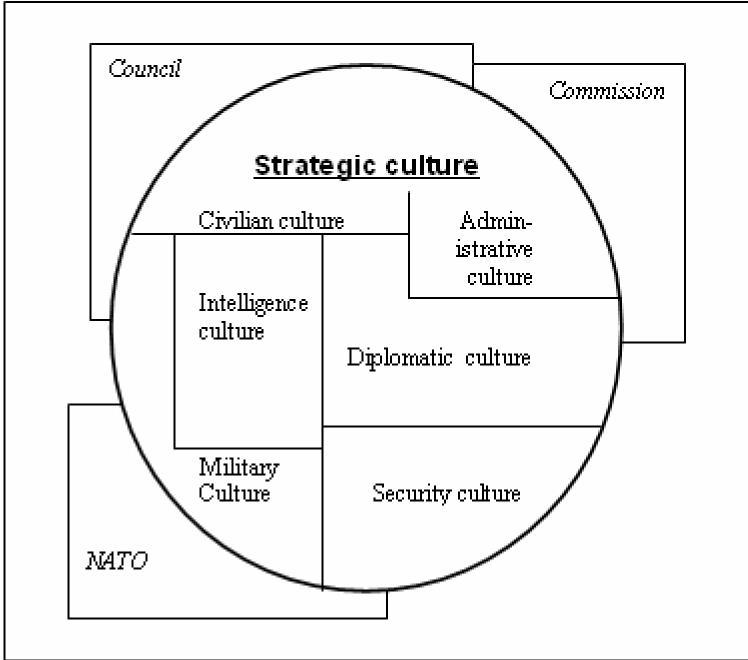

Figure 4.2: An institutionally based strategic culture. Different sub-cultures overlap and co-exist as hierarchic or parallel entities, while constantly changing in the dynamic interplay between ideas, expectations and patterns of behaviour.

A first sign is the emergence of a *security culture* within the Council structures. The incorporation of all elements involved in crisis management in the Korthenberg building has provided the physical and attitudinal preconditions for increasing security measures among the personnel involved. Such measures include access control, secure lines, data protection etc., which are all important with regard to establishing attitudes and mutual trust between Brussels and the member state capitals. It is crucial that classified and politically sensitive information can run freely in order to be able efficiently and truthfully to produce the

assessments on which the strategic decisions rest, and to coordinate member states' views in order to gain the important consensuses at the political level. In short, there has been a major shift with regard to the signals the Council structures project to the outside world, while an in-house culture, manifested as changing identities and patterns of behaviour, may also be seen to be emerging inside the walls of 150 Avenue de Korthenberg.

Secondly, there are signs of a particular *intelligence culture* emerging within the joint SITCEN, a culture which is strictly tied in with the broader approach to security evident in the crisis management paradigm. The bringing together of a range of competencies, civilian and military, in one unit represents a unique project, providing a framework for independent assessments that cater for the needs of both the military and civilian branches of the crisis management apparatus, i.e. providing relevant information in relation to early warning and targeting of organised crime, political tension and other sources of conflict. These assessments are based mainly on intelligence from the member states, the flow of which is reliant on secure lines of communication and trust that information is kept confidential, again facilitated by the development of a security culture.[93] Also supporting the emergence of an intelligence culture is the growing access to own sources of information, such as the WEU satellite centre at Torrejón in Spain, which allows the Europeans to replicate and validate the basis for US assessments on which the EU has been reliant so far.

When military personnel started moving about the Justus Lipsus building two years ago this also marked the introduction of a *military culture* to the EU. According to a senior Council official, the sight of uniformed people created some immediate concerns among the civilians, but now military uniforms are part of the EU landscape.[94] The question, however, remains that of assessing the way the officers in the EUMS/EUMC influence crisis management thinking in the Council. The representatives in the EUMC also sit on the NATO military committee, while many of the EUMS personnel have extensive experience from the alliance. There are still signs that a certain EU military culture is developing at the strategic level, though quite naturally, on the operational level, years of NATO exercises and indoctrination have left an enduring imprint on the minds of most European soldiers. The latter is also desired for the continuous interoperability with NATO. A senior official in EUMS identified a mild but general rupture with NATO on the strategic level: 'In the EU military thinking is embedded in a broad concept of answers; the military dimension has

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[93] Grant draws particular attention to the importance of this 'culture of security' to intelligence sharing between EU member states in his (2000) *Intimate Relations*, CER, April 2000

[94] Interview with official in the Council Secretariat, May 2003

moved from being "the" element to "one" element in strategic planning; we have moved from war to crisis'.[95]

Within the Convention, the establishment of an EU diplomatic service has been discussed, though the final draft falls short of any major innovations in this area. Still, elements of a *diplomatic culture* are evident in both the Council and the Commission. First, it lies within the area of responsibility of the HR to engage in political dialogue with third parties. Secondly, the Policy Unit also regularly sends officials to potential conflict areas, while EU Special Representatives, such as Paddy Ashdown in Bosnia Herzegovina, provide the Union with permanent representation in areas where the Union has foreign or security policy interests. Thirdly, the External Service Delegations under the Commission have received an increasingly important role in the CFSP, providing regular political analysis and contributing to the policy making process.[96] All these developments point towards an increased diplomatic presence for the EU, but the fragmentation of responsibilities along institutional divides is a clear drawback for the Union, which, in time, may force a merger of its diplomatic resources into one service.

There are also signs of a shift in the *administrative culture* within the Secretariat. From being a neutral instrument of the Council, the different units have, in various degrees, assumed the responsibility of assuring continuity and coherence within the crisis management structures. A certain awareness of a common purpose is evident in statements made by Secretariat officials, while the notion of a common administrative culture is also supported by the increase in interpersonal relations, joint papers, and general cooperation on the working level between the Commission and the Council.

Finally, the notion that military instruments are merely adding to the civilian instruments presided over by the Union is even shared by the military, as reflected in the statement above. Hence, a *civilian power culture* must be seen as a fundamental and integral part of a European strategic culture.[97]

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[95] Interview with official in the EUMS, May 2003

[96] The Commission homepage, 'The Role of the Delegations'

[97] A considerable amount of literature discusses the notion of the EU as a civilian power. Duchêne first applied the term to the EU in his (1972)'Europe in World Peace', while the idea was criticised by Bull in his (1983) 'Civilian Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?'. More recent works include Whitman (1998) 'From Civilian Power to Superpower', Smith (2000) 'The end of Civilian Power EU', and Stavridis (2001)'Militarising the EU: the Concept of Civilian Power EU Revisited'.

Concluding remarks

Shortly after Solana accepted the request to present an EU strategy in the field of foreign and security policy, a senior official in the Policy Unit jokingly asked me in the course of my research to get back to him with the conclusions of the analysis, for he certainly did not know what to write in that 'cursed strategy paper'. Not envying the man his task, the aim of this paper has not been to present a European strategic doctrine or even to argue for its existence. Nor can a strategic culture be seen as the desired end state of the ESDP-initiative. The aim of this paper has been to present a conceptual framework that incorporates how both military and civilian instruments are used for political purpose, and to use this framework to assess the Union's security and defence approach as it is expressed through the ESDP. This paper has shown that important elements of a shared and distinctive approach to security and defence are reflected within all the three dimensions that constitute a European strategic culture.

Primarily an intergovernmental project, the ESDP is ultimately subject to the interests of the member states mediated through the Council, but other sub-actors within the Council and the Commission need to be taken into consideration in the political process. The growing awareness that some interests, predominantly those of a regional character, are better catered for on the Union level is interpreted as signifying a growing strategic culture centred on the EU, but without prejudice to national strategic cultures. It was also suggested that what are often identified as the primary political objectives of the ESDP, namely the readiness to perform the Petersberg tasks, must be placed in a middle category, referred to as aggregate political goals. Mirrored by, though not separate from, a set of civilian aggregate goals, these form part of a circular process linking overall political goals and capabilities. The understanding of the ESDP as a process rather than an output-oriented project is germane to grasping the nature of a European strategic culture, while also revoking the notion of the ESDP as an initiative devoid of purpose or direction.

While the pledging of capabilities can, in some sense, be seen as a sign of growing support for the idea of the EU as a security and defence actor, these developments do not represent major changes in member states' policies. A change of attitude is observed, however, in response to the fading prospects of any major increase in the European defence budgets. Trends have been moving towards smarter and more cooperative solutions, such as role specialisation through procurement and production. At the same time, old taboos, such as the resistance towards duplicating NATO capabilities have been abandoned, signifying a growing awareness and expectations that American and European security interests, or the

way such interests are pursued, are not completely overlapping. This illuminates the uniqueness of and need for an independent European military capacity.

As the institutional breakdown shows, there is a lack of formal coordination and consultation procedures, but this has to some degree been alleviated by informal patterns of interaction. Among other trends, this points to a gradual formation of an in-house culture, or an institutionally based strategic culture into which a set of sub-cultures are amalgamated. Without disregarding the importance of the member states, the central institutions are seen as a main vehicle and facilitator for a distinctive European security and defence approach.

Judging from the prelude to Solana's strategy paper, the final result is set to reflect a wide understanding of strategy, in some ways reminiscent of that underpinning this study. Written for public consumption and subject to the scrutiny of the member state governments, however, the Solana paper is likely to be as roundly formulated as any strategic doctrine, while its true nature will only be defined by future events. In no way attempting to predict the conclusions of the Solana paper, a set of tentative traits of the ESDP, as it currently stands, may be suggested. These should not be seen as necessarily permanent characteristics, but as a set of points standing out from the conceptual framework applied in this analysis.

The ESDP can be seen to reflect a 'doctrine of non-escalation', bridging the Union's traditional status as a civilian power and the new foreign policy instruments acquired through the ESDP. The idea of non-escalation is helpful as a baseline for a European strategy in that it does not fundamentally alter the perceptions of the EU as an international actor. Military power is merely adding to the range of instruments already at the hands of the EU and must be seen as the unwanted, reactive part of a holistic approach in which most economic resources still go into proactive conflict preventive measures.

Keeping the idea of non-escalation in mind may also leads to fresh conclusions regarding the EU's military activities on the ground. The political dimension mentioned how the military operations in Macedonia and Congo can be seen as natural follow-ups to the long-term involvement by the Union in the Western Balkans and the Great Lakes Region. It is too early to go beyond hinting towards a higher likelihood of EU military operations in certain priority areas subject to long-term conflict preventive involvement by the EU. However, some answers may surface when the *nationally* led interventions in Sierra Leone or the Ivory Coast, and the EU-led operation Artemis in Congo, are compared. These cases present themselves as areas worthy of future consideration. A closer look at Macedonia, the EUPM, and the eventual take-over of SFOR in Bosnia would shed light on the EU's involvement in this region, although firmer conclusions can already be drawn with regard to the EU's security

interests here. A range of initiatives in the Balkans reinforces the notion of the ESDP as predominantly a regional project. No security guarantees have been given, but one can with considerable certainty anticipate a military reaction from the EU, with or without American help, if a situation should escalate.

The current operations signify that the ESDP has taken the step from being ‘just a good idea’ to an operational force to which certain expectations are attached. Findings along the three dimensions of a European strategic culture confirm that *ideas* and *expectations* are increasingly centred on a crisis management role for the ESDP, while the idea of a common defence – or a more traditional role for military force – falls outside the orbit of a European strategic culture at this stage. Trends in the armaments policies of the member states, the ability to reach agreement on three operations in the first year since the ESDP was declared operational, and the growth of an in-house strategic culture in Brussels also show that *patterns of behaviour* are increasingly focused on this central crisis management role.

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