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The United States, NATO and the European Union

A New Trans-Atlantic Relationship?

Workshop Conclusions

- European—U.S. relations are evolving toward a more balanced partnership because Europe is growing increasingly stronger, more integrated, and more independent. The United States, while no less committed to Europe, is now taking a broader approach to its global responsibilities.
- The United States wants the concept of a "European Security and Defense Identity" (ESDI) implemented in such a way that it neither duplicates NATO nor threatens to dismantle or replace the alliance.
- U.S. military presence in Europe remains crucial. Europeans want unambiguous indications of U.S. commitment and firm political leadership, but Europeans will have to accept a continuing U.S. commitment that is not measured solely by the level of U.S. forces in Europe.
- ESDI and the future U.S. role in Europe's security will have to be forged into a new trans-Atlantic relationship. NATO relations with the Western European Union (WEU) will come to the fore of U.S.-European relations, beginning with the Fall 1994 ministerial meetings.
- Key to the new relationship will be NATO's Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) initiative, which would give NATO and WEU a deployable military capability. The French are delaying CJTF concept development.

Background

Extending European Integration to the Security Arena

The 1991 Treaty on European Union (Maastricht) extends European integration beyond the economic arena, to political, social and security integration. Yet there are mixed views on the true pace and eventual depth of integration.

The treaty created two new "pillars" of European integration—Cooperation on Justice and Home Affairs, and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Together, with the old European Community, these mechanisms comprise the new European Union (EU).

Another product of the Maastricht Summit was the decision to develop the WEU as both the defense component of the EU and as a means of strengthening the European pillar of NATO. European Union leaders have charged the WEU with developing a Common Defense Policy (CDP).

The EU's CFSP and the WEU's CDP will most directly influence security relations between

About the Workshop

The Institute for National Strategic Studies and the Research Institute for International Affairs of the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik met during the summer of 1994 to examine the nature and direction of trans-Atlantic relations in the post-Cold War era. The Workshop focused on the future of the trans-Atlantic relationship as well as NATO's new Partnership for Peace (PFP) program. This **STRATEGIC FORUM** addresses the future of the trans-Atlantic relationship. For a discussion of PFP see **STRATEGIC FORUM** # 1-94.

Europe and the United States, both inside NATO and bilaterally. CFSP is intended to address all matters related to EU security. The development of a CDP could ultimately lead to a common European defense capability.

Workshop participants noted that the security character of Europe will be affected not only by the deepening of cooperation and integration in Western Europe, but also by the widening of membership in the EU and WEU. By 1995 the EU may gain as many as four new members, and as many as four of the sixteen EU members would be from traditionally neutral nations. The admission of Finland would give the EU a long, open border with Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The WEU has expanded so that virtually every other Council meeting will seat not only the nine members, but representatives from fifteen other states.

The "European Security and Defense Identity" (ESDI) Concept

ESDI is an intentionally vague concept reflecting the intent of NATO's European members to develop a collective identity in security and defense matters. ESDI is intended to not only reflect the importance of NATO but to also provide a separate identity complementary to national defense policies. The growing European desire for ESDI is evidenced by the WEU's re-awakening in 1987, the decisions at Maastricht in 1991, and the inauguration of the EuroCorps in 1992. ESDI has built up steam in recent years, despite Europe's problems on monetary integration and the early EC reactions to Bosnia.

In addition to its impact on the U.S. role in Europe, ESDI will deeply impact EU cohesion. Common security and defense policies will require a more effective EU. Workshop participants felt that the next test of Europe's commitment to ESDI would come with the EU inter-governmental conference in 1996, which is to encompass a full review of EU security and defense policies.

At the January 1994 NATO Summit, the United States and others accepted Europe's goal of establishing ESDI both within NATO and separable from NATO. This represented a reversal from earlier U.S. demarches because the United States had now acquiesed in Europe's desire to bear more responsibility for response to regional crisis.

European participants agreed that ESDI must not be oversold. It is being forged at a time when defense budgets and forces are being significantly cut. Europe's military capabilities outside of NATO will be very limited for a long time.

The challenge is that ESDI and U.S. involvement in Europe's security now have to be forged into a new, more balanced relationship. As a result, NATO-WEU relations will likely come to the fore of U.S.-European relations and be a major topic of the fall 1994 ministerial meetings.

The Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) Initiative

NATO Summit leaders called for development of a concept for one or more CJTFs that can be used presumably for out-of-area operations by NATO, or, under certain circumstances, by the WEU. These could involve Western and non-NATO forces of states who have joined NATO's Partnership for Peace Program. NATO's offer to provide a CJTF headquarters and the requisite NATO and U.S. resources to the WEU for agreed operations provides the means by which ESDI can become a reality in the near term, if only on a limited and semi-independent basis.

A CJTF is anticipated to mean a multiservice, multinational task force capable of rapid deployment to conduct limited-duration peace operations beyond NATO's borders, under the control of either NATO or the WEU. Under CJTF, the WEU could have access to U.S. capabilities that are critical to the success of out-of-area operations.

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While the CJTF concept remains on the drawing board, comments by workshop participants reinforced the conclusion that both West and East European support is generally strong. France, however, is expected to delay on CJTF issues while President Mitterrand is in power and hope is dimming in NATO for agreement before mid-1995. Although the French recognize the need for U.S. involvement in European security, U.S.-French convergence on issues such as CJTF will continue to work better in practice than in theory.

The WEU did not join in developing NATO's initial CJTF concepts due to French concerns that CJTF might force them too close to NATO's

integrated military structure. Nevertheless, WEU and NATO have finally begun to collaborate.

Early indications are that the WEU plans on a CJTF smaller than NATO's, employed in low intensity scenarios such as humanitarian assistance and traditional peacekeeping. The CJTF concept will benefit from rigorous doctrinal development. CJTF has the potential to emerge as the best way to handle crises and to avoid lapsing into repeated "ad hoc-ery" as crises arise.

The U.S. Commitment to Europe

Europeans in recent years appear to have less confidence in the credibility of the U.S. commitment to Europe's security. This may have been exacerbated by a series of successively lowered U.S. force levels in Europe, which have often been accompanied by rancorous debate in Washington and have been revised even further downward before reductions were completed.

A U.S. force of approximately 100,000 will provide an Army corps headquarters, portions of the corps' support troops and 2 two-brigade divisions of ground troops; 2.3 wing equivalents of air power; naval support forces ashore; and an adequate array of bases and logistical assets for reconstitution of a larger force should it be required.

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Many participants expressed a desire for greater U.S. political leadership toward directing NATO to prevent crises, believing the United States has a responsibility to do so. NATO would benefit from innovative policies as well as practical techniques, such as computer links and more integrated analytical capabilities.

The circumstances in which the United States will act militarily in a European crisis pose a continuing question, as does the issue of when the Europeans will act militarily. Except for the case of an attack on a member state of NATO, both the United States and the Europeans are likely to follow strategies of selective engagement, where the criteria for action are not determined in advance and full consensus is less certain.

Europeans were dismayed that some members of Congress have re-opened the debate on burdensharing while Washington is making major reductions in Europe. The recent Frank-Shays Amendment, which did not survive in the House-Senate Conference Committee, would have required that the U.S. military presence in Europe be reduced proportionally if the Europeans do not pay most of the stationing cost.

European participants pointed out, strongly at times, that there are major differences between Europe and the Japan model on which the Amendment was based. Among the differences noted were the European's majority contribution to NATO infrastructure funds, the larger forces maintained by major European states, and the active roles they played in operations beyond NATO such as in the Gulf War and the former Yugoslavia.

Several U.S. analysts foresaw a reasonable likelihood that only a small, symbolic U.S. military presence will remain in Europe by the end of the decade. Yet U.S. forces in Europe are shifting from a focus on deterrence to being heavily engaged in support of operations outside of the NATO area. U.S. political polls indicate the country remains torn between the burdens of world leadership and the promise of isolationism.

Some Europeans seem to be shifting their focus from the numbers of U.S. troops to some other indication (preferably in the form of hard evidence) of a commitment to Europe's security. Europeans in West Europe view U.S. military presence as crucial. Central and East Europeans see U.S. presence as vital, and more important than their joining NATO.

Institutional Relationships and Policy Directions

In discussing regional roles and relationships of the UN, CSCE, NATO and WEU, some participants envisaged a framework for dealing with crises that involved UN negotiations, CSCE fact finding, and NATO to carry out UN/CSCE requests for peace operations. When direct U.S. involvement was not appropriate, the WEU, using a CJTF, might carry out peace operations.

Discussants also addressed the idea of establishing a steering group comprised of larger states to take the lead in developing approaches and solutions to important security issues. Many believed a steering group would be essential for timely, effective development of policy direction.

Policy Recommendations

Discussions in the workshop suggest the following policy recommendations:

- U.S. and European allies should articulate a vision of European security that clarifies the complementary roles and relationships of multinational institutions.
- The United States should work with the EU and WEU to harmonize ESDI as a complement to NATO. At some point, a U.S. liaison officer might be provided to the WEU planning staff to help plan for U.S. assets in support of CJTF's operating under the WEU.
- The U.S. and NATO allies should encourage the rapid development of CJTF as NATO's mainstay military option for crisis response. Regular CJTF exercises would provide an adequate multinational cadre of commanders and staffs familiar with and experienced in NATO operations and procedures.
- The Administration should rebuild public support for the U.S. commitment to collective defense with Europe, including the nuclear guarantee, by making the case to Congress and the American people that the commitment in Europe is in our own national interest.
- As European security institutions grow more complex, the pros and cons of establishing a steering group of larger states to develop policy proposals for and coordinate the activities of these institutions should be examined.

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