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Defense Cooperation in Western Europe: The Post-Maastricht Era and Beyond

Timothy J. Birch
DEFENSE COOPERATION IN WESTERN EUROPE:
THE POST-MAASTRICHT ERA AND BEYOND

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Introduction: Maastricht and Defense

The Maastricht Treaty, negotiated in 1991 and signed in the first quarter of 1992, placed defense on the list of future competences for the European Union (EU). Two competing visions of the so-called European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) characterized the political debate at that time. One group of states, most forcefully represented by the United Kingdom, advocated a quasi-autonomous European defense capability firmly wedded to NATO, with the Western European Union (WEU) serving as the European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance. The second perspective, advanced by France with strong German support, anticipated a need for independent European defense capabilities, again attached to WEU, the latter earmarked for eventual incorporation into the institutional machinery of the EU.

The resulting document was a somewhat watered-down compromise which, in its most substantive points, owed more to British input than French or German. Admittedly, the Maastricht Treaty’s references to defense broke new ground (previous treaties generally avoided the subject), and there is no doubt that by signing the document Britain made an important symbolic concession to France and Germany. However, the treaty commitments were vague, no definite timetable for a merger between the WEU and EU was outlined, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s (NATO) primacy was acknowledged, and the European Council, along with the national veto, was accorded the role of gatekeeper to the EU’s overall evolution. It was obvious that ESDI, or at least an ESDI that was capable of duplicating most of the functions performed by NATO, was not in the cards for the foreseeable future.
Four years later one may reasonably ask if ESDI’s prospects are any better. Equally reasonably, one may conclude that the answer to that question is no. As far as is known by this writer, no formal definition of EU security and defense interests has been articulated, aside from the now somewhat dated Hague Platform of 1987 and various general statements emanating from WEU ministerials. Given this, it is difficult to specify ESDI’s nature in advance, although two distinct models can be delineated. Europeans must choose either a supranational or an intergovernmental political format for ESDI. They must also determine an acceptable level of operational independence, either by eliminating current dependencies on NATO and the U.S., or by fine-tuning the relationship between NATO and ESDI such that NATO’s military assets are permanently double-hatted (that is, equally available to the Atlantic Alliance and the Europeans’ military arm). On both counts, however, proponents of a regional approach to defense are likely to be disappointed.

A full-blown “Unionist” model remains a thing of fantasy. As matters stand, it is inconceivable that national governments would form supranational agencies to manage a common European defense effort. ESDI’s development to date has been politically determined on an intergovernmental basis, and at present Britain, among other states, has refused WEU-EU association by opposing any attempt to make WEU answerable to the European Council. Institutional rivalries also help to account for inertia on this matter. Worries concerning WEU’s relationship to NATO have often been expressed on both sides of the Atlantic, while internal disagreement over Europe’s defense needs continues to have a negative impact. Traditionally, the key disputes have taken place between the United Kingdom and France. Currently, France and Britain are attempting to develop a common understanding on several defense problems, but in effect this only means that France has moved closer to British views (on NATO’s primacy, on the merits of all-volunteer armies, and on the need for improved rapid response capabilities), in some measure at the expense of the Franco-German relationship, as discussed below. French President Jacques Chirac has even accelerated France’s
rapprochement with NATO, acknowledging both the need for American involvement in European security and the very limited possibilities for ESDI at a time when monetary union is at the top of the EU's agenda.\(^3\)

ESDI's evolution has also been structurally inhibited by the fiscal crises which are plaguing most of the EU's member states and the tremendous costs involved in acquiring independent operational capacities.\(^4\) European governments cannot offer a compelling rationale for increased defense expenditures at the present time, but even if they could, political willingness to substantially increase the share of GDP devoted to defense cannot be assumed. Inflation rates for military production far outpace the rest of the economy, and given the emphasis on technological advancement, this problem will endure. European governments have sought refuge in collaborative development and production, and they have also made some attempts to ensure that national forces can work in a complementary and mutually reinforcing manner under multinational command. However, these sorts of activities are not exclusively European, and therefore cannot be viewed as automatically creating the groundwork for an independent ESDI (though they may eventually make contributions to this end). Many of the most important collaborative defense-industrial activities involve the United States with one or more European partners (for example, the MLRS battlefield rocket system which enjoys the status of a major NATO programme), and American technical leads in a variety of areas suggest that the Europeans will not wish, nor be able to, change the situation. Not surprisingly given America's overwhelming conventional superiority, especially with respect to interventionary forces, most of the integrated force planning that has taken place since 1990 has occurred under NATO. Further, the allies have generally agreed on various non-proliferation and counter-proliferation measures for weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, and it seems unlikely that an easy justification, either political or budgetary, could be found for an ESDI with a nuclear component other than that provided by Britain and France.
Recognizing the political and economic benefits which accrue from international defense and security collaboration, some American elites within the foreign policy and academic establishments are promoting cooperative security as a guide to coordinating western policies in the years ahead. If this broad concept is properly implemented (at least within NATO), it will permanently alter the basic character of ESDI. Cooperative security necessitates national military role specialization, political risk sharing, and operational burden sharing. Under these constraints, ESDI is likely to be designed as an integral part of a larger defensive and security system which will include the U.S.. If ESDI is so configured, there will be no pressing need to duplicate NATO, unless the alliance itself proves untenable or falls victim to a serious deterioration in trans-Atlantic relations. In the near future, ESDI is likely to remain materially impoverished, separate from the EU, and dependent on an intergovernmental political process which permits dissenting states to thwart the aspirations of any majority coalition. The following pages attempt to provide a justification for these claims, while also bringing the reader up to date on the state of play in the issue-area of European defense and defense cooperation.

**Defense and Security**

While often, and incorrectly, treated as one and the same thing, defense and security are conceptually distinct, as noted by Barry Buzan. Security is, to use a well known phrase, an "essentially contested" concept, and is laden with inherent contradictions (for example, the so-called security dilemma where one state's defense expenditures stimulate like actions on the part of another state, creating greater insecurity for both sides). Defense, conceptually speaking, is related to national security in much the same way as insurance is related to personal economic security. States accept the costs of defense as individuals shoulder the burden of home insurance. The probability of calamity may be low, but it is best to
prepare for such an eventuality. Three areas interlock to create the defense issue-area: production of equipment and provision of armed forces, force posture, and use of armed forces. Working from this definition, one may proceed to outline the basic characteristics of the European defense effort, highlight current problems and areas of progress, and make predictions as to future outcomes.


If Europe is to effectively provide for its own defense, it will most certainly need a defense-industrial establishment which is largely self-sufficient and able to develop the sorts of technologies which will keep Europe in the forefront of the military technology race. The alternative, dependence upon the USA as a supplier of major and sub-systems, is not a preferable option for two reasons. First, the defense-industrial sector is a major source of employment, and through exports provides a means of political influence abroad. Secondly, states which opt for imports over domestic production become vulnerable to disruptions in supply (for example, of spare parts) and therefore in turn become politically vulnerable to the whims of the supplier state. Thus, although European governments have sought to retain access to the American equipment market and are often keen collaborators in NATO-wide technology development projects, most have attempted to protect their defense-industrial sectors from domination by American concerns (partially by allowing the development of national champions in high-technology areas like aerospace, partially by a series of formal and informal rules which favor domestic suppliers over foreign ones, and partially by aggressive promotion of exports, sometimes involving direct government-to-government financing).

Yet these measures have at best been only moderately successful. For roughly thirty years European governments have been worried that their relatively small defense-
industrial sectors could be swamped by unrestrained American competition: such worries prompted the formation of Eurogroup and the Independent European Programme Group (the first now disbanded, the second absorbed within WEU). Traditionally, Europe has been plagued by duplication of research and development (R&D) efforts, undue fragmentation of industry in a context where national procurement has not been able to provide economies of scale, and an inability to match American innovation in the area of Emerging Technologies. Today, the WEU has an armaments secretariat, while Britain, France and Germany are members of the so-called European Armaments Agency, a body which seeks to increase efficiency in procurement and to foster pan-European defense collaboration. Additionally, European firms, in order to offset development costs, create economies of scale, improve project management skills, share risks, and indeed stay alive in some fields, have been willing to form joint ventures and tag-team on bids. These activities have been promoted by national governments, with the Franco-German relationship being the key stone of any future pan-European defense-industrial system.

Multilateralism has had some notable results. The Tornado fighter aircraft has ultimately become a commercial success, as well as a service standard for the armed forces of Italy, Britain, and Germany, the countries which developed it. The follow-on system, the very costly European Fighter Aircraft (EFA), is now airborne, and has recovered from its near-death experience of 1992 when Germany threatened to abandon the project for cheaper alternatives. Yet despite these success stories, collaborative ventures of this type are often very expensive and politically vulnerable. European states are notorious for putting national interests ahead of "European" interests when it comes to defense procurement. The rule seems to be to give preference to national suppliers where possible, and in the case of Britain, to place a premium on cost, rather than grand political designs, when taking procurement decisions (for example, the extremely unpopular British decision to purchase American Apache attack helicopters in preference to the Franco-German
Additional pressures stemming from attempts to meet European Monetary Union (EMU) convergence criteria are also negatively impacting European defense-industrial collaboration since defense spending is discretionary and therefore a target for finance ministries. The German defense budget has again been lowered (the 1997 budget sets military expenditures at DM46.6bn, down from a little over DM47bn for 1996) and several European collaborative projects appear to be in jeopardy. The German government was particularly displeased with the cuts made in the French budget earlier this year, some of which fell disproportionately on Franco-German collaborative projects such as the Tiger attack helicopter, and Bonn is at the time of writing extremely anxious to receive some type of French commitment to the NH-90 helicopter among other programs.

Following hot on the heels of President Chirac’s decision to end conscription, the French cuts were clearly designed to favor domestic manufacturers such as Dassault, producer of the Rafale fighter which is among EFA’s primary competitors in world export markets. Although neither Paris nor Bonn wish to be blamed for the collapse of any one of several important projects, casualties are likely, and it appears that development on the Future Large Aircraft (FLA) is to be slowed down. For those who seek European operational independence this is catastrophic news: air lift, along with satellite capabilities, was identified by WEU leaders as an area where Europe needed to make progress if ESDI was to be anything more than a slogan.

For countries like Britain and France, which depend heavily on exports to prop up domestic industry, intra-European competition is another sore point, weakening Europe’s overall position relative to that of the U.S. which has dominated arms export markets since the end of the Cold War. The case of main battle tanks is especially illustrative of Europe’s problems. Europe currently builds three types of tank, the Challenger (U.K.), the Le Clerc (France) and the Leopard II (Germany). Each of these vehicles is marketed for export, both within and without Europe. While the Leopard series has been an export success within Europe, the British and French have generally competed for sales in the Third World, especially in the lucrative Middle Eastern market. Unfortunately, both Challenger II and Le Clerc are
expensive when compared to the American M1A1/2, a consequence of the fact that the European designs have been ordered by their host governments in very small numbers despite heavy R&D outlays. Judged from a strategic European perspective, this internal competition is deleterious: Europe should design and build one type of tank, and should by doing so obtain lower unit costs. Judged from a national perspective, however, the loss of relative autonomy in this sector is unacceptable as are the job losses which would attend rationalization of the European military vehicles market. The tension between national and European interests is the principal contradiction within ESDI. If Europe is to have a defense identity, this perforce must come at the expense of short-term national interests. So long as fragmentation and national egoism remain the rule, however, Europe’s strategic placement is likely to be compromised.

In short, what is needed is a thorough rationalization of the European defense industrial sector. States must be prepared to reinforce their comparative advantages within the framework of an integrated multinational system of production, but the transition costs could well be prohibitively high. Under current circumstances, for example, it is difficult to conceive of a British government abandoning armored vehicle production (or a German government terminating aircraft production) in the interests of European unity, even though such a move could well make sense from a pan-European perspective.

**Conventional Force Posture: WEU, NATO and Crisis Management**

In addition to the need for rationalization of defense production and procurement, ESDI requires a specific concept for the employment of conventional armed forces, as well as properly provisioned units to implement it. Neither of these requirements has to date been met. While the end of the Cold War forced a general rethinking of the role and structure of western conventional forces, only NATO, spurred on by the Americans, has taken practical steps to shape forces to the
demands of a more multipolar world. WEU, by contrast, has done little beyond registering doctrinal agreement with the senior alliance and working on ways to "borrow" NATO assets for European military operations.

In July of 1990, NATO ministers attending the London conference established a Strategy Review Group (SRG) which was tasked with redefining alliance doctrines and operational concepts. France participated in the work of the SRG from February of 1991. By May of that year, the North Atlantic Council had agreed to a new force posture for the alliance which was designed to allow NATO to perform various crisis management roles in theaters as far afield as the Middle East, the Mediterranean littoral, and Eastern Europe. While the ability to reconstitute large ground forces was maintained (through Main Defense and Augmentation Forces), NATO's highest readiness commands, the Rapid Reaction units, have taken on the appearance of interventionary forces, rather than assets which are designed for effective territorial defense against the now-defunct USSR. In developing these forces, NATO leaders were cognizant of the need to maintain the alliance's political cohesion: thus, the eight divisions theoretically available to the Rapid Reaction Corps are drawn from several national orders of battle, most of which are European. Moreover, the unit types differ. Some divisions are heavy mechanized formations, others are lighter and more easily deployable in poor terrain. Multinationalism has therefor been combined with flexibility in unit composition to create forces which conceivably can meet the requirements of most plausible crisis management scenarios. Finally, the Rapid Reaction forces are highly mobile, and different force packages can be assigned a wealth of combat air support, air lift, and other NATO/US assets (such as airborne warning and control aircraft) within a concept which accentuates the importance of military role specialization. The resulting force posture permits NATO to perform two of the core functions identified at the Rome Summit in November 1991: promotion of a stable security environment in Europe, and preparation for Article Four, or out-of-area, missions subject to the unanimous approval of NATO member states.
It is important to note that national force reductions were in part guided by the change in alliance doctrines. Although American force levels were drastically reduced, the residual forces left in Europe were designed to participate in alliance task forces (for example, USAF air capabilities take the form of "composite" wings which mix air lift, tanker, and combat assets in self-contained air groups which seem designed to provide comprehensive air support for the ground force components of alliance task forces). Similarly, the United Kingdom reduced her overall contribution to NATO force pools, but structured her remaining two army divisions for participation in the Rapid Reaction Corps. France under Chirac has also begun the process of restructuring her armed forces, placing emphasis upon an all-volunteer military which is less cumbersome than the previous conscript-based force and which is more suited to cooperation with allies in crisis management tasks.

Leaders of the Atlantic Alliance also welcomed the development of the European Security and defense Identity at the Rome Summit of November 1991, and they looked forward to closer working relationships between the WEU and NATO. Operating in the shadow of its more powerful sister, the WEU has also been primarily concerned with problems pertaining to force projection and in this sense there is little doctrinal divergence between the two alliances. The Petersberg declaration of 1992 anticipated that WEU forces would perform limited contingency operations such as peacekeeping and humanitarian relief at the request of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). WEU leaders also identified specific shortfalls in capabilities for these tasks. The Vianden ministerial (June 1991) produced an agreement to establish a satellite data interpretation center at Torrejon, Spain, and subsequent ministerials identified the need for an operational satellite capability. A WEU Rapid Reaction Force has also been discussed since 1991 when the WEU Assembly commissioned a feasibility study on this subject. Any WEU operation, however, would most likely draw on assets from
NATO force pools. In November of 1993, the WEU formally requested the use of NATO resources in the areas of command and control, intelligence gathering, and headquarters units, and as matters have developed it seems likely that WEU access to these resources would only be permitted under the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) concept first articulated in January of 1994 and discussed further below. Additionally, many conceivable WEU operations would require access to American air lifting assets since these types of resources are in short supply in European inventories. WEU may also have to draw on NATO's combat ground forces for all but the smallest military operations. In November 1993, WEU ministers, meeting at Luxemburg, identified the following Forces Answerable to WEU (FAWEU): the Eurocorps, the Multinational Division (Central), and the U.K./Netherlands Amphibious Force. Of these units, the Anglo-Dutch force is at a high level of combat readiness. The Eurocorps, by contrast, suffers from a number of shortcomings. While identified as the nucleus of a future European army, the Eurocorps has difficulties pertaining to deployability (the shortage of lifting assets mentioned above) and command and control (a consequence of the fact that the constituent units--French, German, and Spanish among others--speak different languages). Moreover, WEU has little in the way of infrastructure to support overseas military adventures, and in this fundamental sense is dependent upon the wealth of resources built up jointly by NATO members over the years.

The immediate future for ESDI does not look rosy. As noted above, there are several structural deficiencies with the WEU, and these cast doubt on the alliance's ability to perform even the Petersberg tasks, much less go beyond them, an objective recently articulated by the French. At root, the problem is financial. The contemporary rash of defense budget cuts across Europe augurs ill for key projects such as the FLA and Helios satellite, and Europe, collectively, does not have the political will and economic resources to compensate for the trans-Atlantic defense technology gap (for example, in the areas of electronic warfare and battlefield management systems), a situation which implies continued operational dependence
upon America. Thus, second order concerns (that is, technical and financial) are affecting the evolution and level of independence of ESDI and with it the nature and institutional identity of the entire European project. Nowhere is this more apparent than with respect to the development of the CJTF concept.

Originally conceived of as a means to improve NATO’s ability to manage crisis responses, the CJTF idea has become something of a political football, since the terms under which Europe can make use of these NATO resources has been hotly disputed. The CJTF concept has been defined as “a multinational, multiservice, task-tailored force consisting of NATO and possibly non-NATO forces capable of rapid deployment to conduct limited duration operations beyond Alliance borders, under the control of either NATO’s integrated military structure or the Western European Union”. The key bone of contention concerns the precise terms of WEU’s political control over a CJTF operation. As originally advanced by the Americans, any CJTF would be subject to political oversight by NATO ministerial bodies, which of course meant that the USA would have political influence over the course of any “European” operation. France, which has traditionally asserted that NATO needs to become a more flexible instrument and one less dominated by the United States, regarded this limitation as unreasonable and pushed the Americans towards a looser arrangement which would permit exclusively European oversight. Meeting in Berlin in June of 1996, France secured from the United States an agreement in principle that the Europeans should enjoy “political control and strategic direction” of WEU missions, but the Americans were insistent that the use of NATO forces in such operations would require approval from all 16 NATO members and that NATO has the right to keep under review the disposition of its assets for the duration of WEU-led deployments. Headquarters and command structures for WEU operations were also identified. However, while French leaders were enthusiastic about the results of the Berlin conference, Britain’s Foreign Minister, Malcolm Rifkind, took a more sanguine view, asserting that WEU operations would be occasional and confined to low-level tasks such as search and rescue,
humanitarian relief, and low-intensity peacekeeping. More importantly, the American position preserves the national veto, greatly limiting Western Europe's freedom of choice. Coupled with the limited capabilities of WEU, it seems reasonable to conclude that France has in effect only secured agreement for small-scale, case-by-case WEU-led CJTF missions, not a foundation for future operational independence for ESDI.25

Finally, one may ask how serious the French are about European independence in defense matters when France herself is increasing her level of integration with NATO. Since former President Charles de Gaulle pulled French forces out of NATO's integrated command in the 1960s, successive French governments have progressively drawn the French military ever closer to their erstwhile NATO partners. French pragmatism has been particularly noticeable over the last three years. In January of 1993, France and Germany spelled out the conditions under which the Eurocorps could serve NATO, while the French-promoted rivalry between NATO and WEU in the Adriatic effectively came to an end in June of that year when the two naval patrols were combined.26 France participated through 1994 in NATO's Senior Defense Group on Proliferation (DGP) and over the course of 1993-94 established new military missions with NATO's three Major Subordinate Commands (MSCs) responsible to the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR), while in September of 1995 the first NATO exercise to be held on French soil since 1965 took place.27 In December 1995, France rejoined NATO's Military Committee, which she had left in 1966, and France also participates, on an informal basis, in the work of the Defense Planning Committee (DPC).28 Additionally, French troops have been placed under NATO command in Bosnia, as part of the Implementation Force (IFOR) for the Dayton Accord. Coupled with President Chirac's radical reforms in the French force posture, it seems clear that France has accepted that a truly independent ESDI is not likely, and that the best solution to the problem of Europe's need for a political-military capability lies in cooperation with NATO, no small irony given France's traditionally suspicious and tense
relationship with America and the alliance. Yet, irony notwithstanding, there has been an element of consistency in the French position since WEU was reactivated in the early 1980s. President Chirac made it clear that his purpose in seeking rapprochement with NATO was to promote the development of a European defense capability, albeit one that is dependent upon the Atlantic Alliance as opposed to separate from it, a goal held by previous French leaders. Given the political and economic problems noted previously, there were few other alternatives.

The Use of Armed Forces since 1945: Past Trends, Future Prospects

Since 1945, European powers have been involved in a variety of military operations, some stemming from post-colonial obligations (for example, frequent British and French peacekeeping operations in Africa and the Far East), others taking the form of attempts to hold on to former colonies (for example, Portuguese operations in Africa), some incurred under obligation to the United Nations (for example, the Korean and Bosnian cases), still others representing militant defense of national interests (for example, the 1990-91 Gulf War). In general, the power-projection capabilities of European powers have lessened over the years, partially as a consequence of financial pressures, but also because the decline of European colonialism removed the rationale for large-scale interventionary forces. Coupled with the fact that, at least into the 1960s, American leaders frowned on European neo-colonial adventures (for example, Suez in 1956), the result of these developments has been rising European dependence on the United States. The Falklands war of 1982 could not have been successfully prosecuted by the British without substantial American assistance, while France and Belgium have often found that their military power can only be projected into Central Africa with the cooperation of USAF military transports. The Gulf War of 1990-91 revealed the extent to which Europe has come to depend on the United States for effective overt military intervention abroad. Europe, more dependent on Middle Eastern oil than America, contributed forces which, while substantial, were nonetheless a mere
fraction of the resources placed in theater by the Bush administration. The inability of the United Kingdom and France to effect a ceasefire in Bosnia, and the success registered by the USA when it took the lead in addressing this problem, further underlines the extent of European dependence on North American military power.

As discussed in the preceding section, NATO/WEU forces are configured for out-of-area, or Article Four, operations. As noted above, European powers generally lack some of the key resources which permit effective and successful military interventions. Therefore it seems reasonable to conclude that for any but the most small-scale deployments, Europe will be obliged to cooperate with America. National leaders on both sides of the Atlantic seem to be aware of this. Chirac's apparent belief that an effective ESDI can be built by borrowing allied assets reflects a realization that the alternative (national, and perhaps eventual EU self-sufficiency) is practically out of the question, and enormous political benefit can be realized through cooperation with the U.S., as, for example, in Bosnia. American Defense Secretary William Perry has perhaps gone further than most in calling for an explicit division of labor for out-of-area operations. In Perry's view, multinational military interventions will be most effective where role-specialization is highly developed. The U.S., in Perry's estimation, can provide specific technologies for the reconnaissance strike role (Stealth aircraft, Precision Guided Munitions, Command, Control, Communications, Intelligence and Satellite capabilities, and appropriate levels of air and sea lift in addition to combat air support), while other powers (France, Russia, Germany and India are listed by Perry) could provide the lion's share of ground troops, with traditional maritime powers (Britain, Italy and Japan) furnishing major naval forces for any allied expeditionary force. Clearly, heightened levels of western military-to-military cooperation are envisaged by Perry, a logical consequence of the fact that current economic realities preclude single-state hegemonic global management, just as they inhibit national and regional self-sufficiency for the Europeans.
The 1996 Intergovernmental Conferences: Can Progress Be Made?

1996 was supposed to be a year of momentous decisions, for the European Union generally and for ESDI in particular. On the table is the question of a merger between WEU and the EU, with the European Council serving as taskmaster for the Union's military arm. However, the IGCs got off to a less than auspicious start as Britain, acting in protest over the EU's worldwide ban on U.K. beef exports, brought all early work to a halt. Currently, Britain holds the Presidency of the WEU and has signalled its opposition to an EU/WEU merger. Unless qualified majority voting is extended to the area of defense and security, there is little chance that pro-Union states will be able to effect a change in the British position.

The U.K. government's attitude towards WEU, and defense policy more generally, has been remarkably consistent over the years. In essence, the policy of the Thatcher regime has been continued by the current Conservative government, and its key features can briefly be listed: the primacy of NATO over any other alternative; WEU independence from EU political authority; a preference for pragmatic bilateralism rather than commitment to fulfilling a grand blueprint for the European security and defense identity; and, a penchant for maintaining the "special relationship" with the U.S. (which carries with it the related concern that too great a display of Europhoria will undermine Anglo-American entente). Britain has been willing to consider means of increasing its military cooperation with selected partners (for example, the military-to-military relationship with France has recently been strengthened by the creation of a joint air training center and commitments to bilateral defense-industrial projects). Similarly, British objectives for the WEU focus almost exclusively on improving WEU's operational capabilities (accelerating work on strategic lift, development of an exercise policy, improving political control through the development of a Situation Center, and clarifying the modalities governing the WEU/NATO relationship) and related technical issues. Beyond
that, however, the British government seems wedded to the view that encumbering the EU with decision making power for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is at best premature, at worst entirely contradictory to the U.K.'s overall approach to European politics, since a merger would ultimately entail complete surrender of national sovereignty in this sensitive issue-area.\textsuperscript{34}

Even staunch advocates of European unity have come to accept that formal subordination of WEU to EU is highly improbable. British opposition necessarily precludes this outcome, but the EU's neutral members do not wish to be stampeded into joining a military alliance. If WEU is placed under the institutional umbrella of the Union, countries like Sweden and Austria will have to either choose military alignment or opt out of the military side of CFSP and ESDI. In the event that an opt out is chosen, one has to ask how common the CFSP and its defense component would be. A two-track approach, with some states outside of the CFSP, others participating in it, may be a useful way to fudge the issue temporarily, but it does not provide a sure foundation for a truly regional security policy and defense effort. Military obligations of participants to non-participants would be unclear, and attempts to define "European" interests as a foundation for any EU force posture would become even more complicated and abstract than at present. Moreover, so long as the national veto is preserved, it is difficult to foresee many circumstances when the EU could effect a military operation: in this sense, national sovereignty will probably impede collective military efficiency, unless radical political reform takes place.\textsuperscript{35}

Conclusion: Towards a Dependent ESDI?

ESDI appears to have hit a brick wall. Lacking a clear conceptual foundation, national governments have not been able to do anything more than muddle through with a limited number of bilateral and multilateral technical projects over the last five years. As noted above, some such projects have been adversely affected
by larger problems (mostly budgetary) and more compelling political issues (monetary union and the related issue of public sector debt control). Moreover, the basic dilemma of ESDI—should ESDI be supranational, and if so, at what cost to national interests—remains unresolved. If European defense cooperation is to move beyond intergovernmentalism and bilateralism, it will require a clear philosophical foundation, a sure institutional base, and enhanced military capabilities in specific areas. None of these requirements has yet been met, despite bilateral efforts to address common defense concepts and seek remedies for operational weaknesses.36 Under current circumstances, it seems safe to assume that Europe’s fledgling security and defense identity will remain plagued by an inability to pose and answer primitive questions, much less muster the resources to translate concept into capability. As ESDI develops, we may reasonably expect it to be shaped by the wider needs of the trans-Atlantic defense community as this is centred upon NATO. With these summary comments in mind, the following short-term predictions can be made.

First, and to repeat the point, “Europe’s” defense and security policy will continue to be determined by an intergovernmental political process for several years to come. Although one does not expect a merger between the WEU and EU in the immediate future, if problems pertaining to the status of EU neutrals can be worked out, and if British objections can be overcome, the European Council may ultimately become the decision-making body for WEU. In this event, and assuming extension of QMV to CFSP-related issues, part of the groundwork would have been laid for a regional defense policy managed by a supranational institution.

Second, one should expect piecemeal progress on specific operational difficulties, and further consolidation of Europe’s defense-industrial base. Most of this activity will be bilateral, or confined to sub-groups of the EU-15. Further, improvements in European force capabilities will probably be partially determined by NATO’s needs, as European governments will continue to depend on the Atlantic Alliance for
territorial defense and large-scale power projection.

Third, and finally, WEU's access to NATO assets for military operations not involving the U.S. will have to be guaranteed, and several key inter-alliance issues (for example, the level of host-nation support provided by non-WEU NATO members for WEU operations) will require clarification. WEU leaders can be expected to make progress on meeting operational needs for the tasks outlined in the Petersberg declaration, but fundamental dependencies on the U.S. and NATO will not be eliminated, and economic considerations suggest that these dependencies may indeed be reinforced in the years ahead.

Notes

1. The Maastricht Treaty's Article J 4 refers to "the eventual defining of a common defense policy which might in time lead to a common defense." Although the Intergovernmental Conferences (IGCs) of 1996 were tasked with clarifying the relationship between the EU and NATO, British intransigence, especially with regard to ESDI's effects on the cohesion of NATO, will prevent a full merger. See The Financial Times, August 5, 1996, p. 5.


4. According to The Royal United Services Institute, the cost to Europe of building its own communications, logistics, force projection and satellite capabilities is around $107 billion per year at 1995 prices, a figure which would require an increase in the share of GDP devoted to defense by most European countries from 2.5% to 4%. See Philip H. Gordon, "Recasting the Atlantic Alliance," Survival 36/1 (Spring 1996), p. 44.

5. For a thorough description and evaluation of the concept of cooperative security, see Janne E.


11. Matra and BAe have announced the formation of a missile division. Representing a 1 billion pound joint venture, the new company is Europe’s largest guided weapons concern. GEC and Daimler Benz are also showing interest in joining the group. Financial Times, May 14, 1996, p. 1.


17. Ibid., p. 10. NATO’s other core functions are deterrence and defense against military threats to member states and preservation of the the strategic balance in Europe against the residual threat posed by the Former Soviet Union (FSU).


11 January 1994, para. 4.


23. It should be noted that WEU was offered a “separable but not separate” military capability. Ibid., p. 83.


27. Ibid., p. 62.


29. For extensive description of NATO member states’ involvement in out-of-area conflicts and crises, and the effects of these on the alliance, see Elizabeth Sherwood, Allies in Crisis: Meeting Global Challenges to Western Security (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990); also see Douglass Stuart and William Tow, The Limits of Alliance: NATO Out-of-Area Problems since 1949 (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990).


31. It might also be borne in mind that the system of western defense-industrial production has become conspicuously multinational in nature. This claim can be substantiated by the existence of strategic alliances among different national firms, the prevalence of licensing agreements, NATO’s technology development and service-industry groups, and the existence of numerous major combat systems which combine the inputs of several national suppliers within a single weapons platform (for example, the M1A1 tank has British-designed armor, a German main gun, and a Belgian machine gun). European powers have often complained that the so-called “two way street” in trans-Atlantic defense
trade is more beneficial to America than Europe, but one suspects that these complaints would be louder if certain advanced American systems and technologies were not available for common consumption.


34. Goulden remarks that merging the WEU and EU “would be to put institutional tidiness and the illusion of progress before Europe’s real security needs. It is a recipe not for more defense cooperation but for less. Encumbering the Union with military responsibility would do nothing to enhance the unique contribution that the EU can make to greater regional security through the political and economic instruments available to it....On the contrary, giving the EU military responsibilities for which it is not equipped would impede the task of extending stability and prosperity to the East, by adding a new obstacle to Central European accession and unnecessarily provoking Russian fears. It would also marginalize some NATO Allies, while confronting some EU member with choices they are not ready to face.” The latter point concerns the status of the EU’s neutrals-Sweden, Austria, and Eire. Ibid., pp. 23-24.


36. Paris and Bonn have pledged to define a “common security and defense concept” following Paris’ improving relations with NATO and Chirac’s recent military reforms. Talks are scheduled to take place at the next Franco-German summit in December 1996. See Financial Times, June 6, 1996, p. 1.