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## **"But We Have To Do Something" : the drivers behind EU crisis management operations**

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# **‘But We Have To Do Something’ The Drivers behind EU Crisis Management Operations**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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AFP	Agence France-Presse
ALTHEA	EU Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina
AMIS	African Union Mission in Sudan
Artemis	EU Military Operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (2003)
‘Berlin Plus’ (agreements)	Set of agreements between NATO and the EU concerning the Union’s use of NATO assets and capabilities for EU crisis management operations
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
BMI	Bundesministerium des Innern (German Federal Ministry of the Interior)
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
COM	European Commission
CPCC	Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CSU	Christlich-Soziale Union
CGS	Council General Secretariat
CIVCOM	Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management
Concordia	EU Military Operation in Macedonia
DSACEUR	Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe
EC	European Community
ECJ	European Court of Justice
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
EUFOR	European Union Force
EUFOR RD Congo	EU Military Operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (2006)
EUFOR Tchad/RCA	EU Military Operation in Chad / Central African Republic
EULEX (Kosovo)	EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo
EUMC	EU Military Committee
EUMS	EU Military Staff
EUPM	EU Police Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina
EUPOL (Afghanistan)	EU Police Mission in Afghanistan

EUPT	European Union Planning Team in Kosovo
EUSR	EU Special Representative
F.A.Z.	Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (German daily)
FFM	Fact-Finding Mission
FRA	France / French
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
G8	Group of 8 (major economies)
GAO	Government Accountability Office (US)
GER	Germany / German
GFA	General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Dayton Peace Agreement)
GPPO	German Police Project Office (in Afghanistan)
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies
ICR / ICO	International Civilian Representative in Kosovo / International Civilian Office (headed by ICR)
IFOR	Implementation Force (NATO Operation in Bosnia)
IPOS	Institut fuer praxisorientierte Sozialforschung
IPTF	International Police Task Force (UN Police Mission in Bosnia)
IPU	Integrated Police Unit
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force (NATO Operation in Afghanistan)
IR	International relations
ISG	International Steering Group for Kosovo
ISIS (Europe)	International Security Information Service
JAM	Joint Assessment Mission (Afghanistan)
KFOR	Kosovo Force (NATO Operation)
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MINURCAT	United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MS	Member state
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom

OHR	Office of the High Representative in Bosnia
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PIC	Peace Implementation Council (International body charged with implementing the GFA)
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PSC	Political and Security Committee
SAA	Stabilization and Association Agreement
SFOR	Stabilization Force (NATO Operation in Bosnia)
SG/HR	Secretary-General/High Representative of the Council of the EU (sometimes also HR/SG)
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
SWP	Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik
UK	United Kingdom / British
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNAMID	African Union / United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force (Croatia and Bosnia)
UNSG	United Nations Secretary-General
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WEU	Western European Union

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It was in one of my very first interviews that, when asked how ESDP operations come about, an EU official explained to me that they were typically preceded by an outcry in the media, ‘and then Solana says his famous words, “but we have to do something”’. In heeding his advice to put that phrase on this study’s cover, I am also paying homage to the many officials who made their precious time available in order to help me put together a history of what happened behind the scenes. Because they were promised anonymity, their names do not feature, but I would like to express my gratitude to all those who agreed to talk to me. Whereas their testimonies were indispensable to this study, they bear no fault for the false conclusions that I may have drawn from their collective (and at times mutually contradictory) recollections. I am especially indebted to many of my former colleagues at the German Foreign Office who not only helped me survive in the bureaucratic machinery that is ESDP, but also assisted me during my research.

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# CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

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In the singular form, the term ‘European security and defence policy’ would long have been considered an oxymoron. Security and defence traditionally epitomize sovereignty and the modern nation-state, and European history provides ample evidence of intra-continental rivalry and violent conflict that prodded individual countries to think about external security in mutually antagonistic terms. The end of the Cold War thus raised concern whether western European states, in the absence of a unifying outside threat, would fall back into security competition. Yet instead of moving ‘back to the future’ with great power competition spreading instability across Europe (Mearsheimer 1990), the European security architecture underwent a change towards closer collaboration and deeper integration. Not only did European states continue to accept the political constraints arising from collective territorial defence, but they increasingly complemented them with collective ‘out of area’ interventions. In assuming such tasks, European states also eventually decided to supplement (but not replace) their existing transatlantic framework of security cooperation, NATO, with a new institutional construct embedded into the European Union: the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).<sup>1</sup>

## A. THE RESEARCH PUZZLE

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Institutionalised cooperation in the field of security and defence is historically a rare phenomenon. Although the past knows of numerous incidences of cooperation in this policy area, notably in the shape of military alliances, these were generally *ad hoc*, intended to counter threats from third parties and therefore contingent on these threats. Yet ESDP came about (only) after such a direct menace in the shape of the Soviet Union had just collapsed. Although new threats have emerged as identified in the newly adopted European Security Strategy, these seem certainly less than existential by comparison (cf. European Council 2003). Indeed, the end of a necessity for a defensive alliance had prompted many academic analysts to predict the imminent demise of NATO. The latter’s dogged persistence might be attributed to organizational tenacity, but why, absent any pressing need, would sovereign states go further in voluntarily binding themselves? Why would European governments forgo their free hand in a field as sensitive to national identity and sovereign status as security and defence?

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<sup>1</sup> For stylistic reasons, this book will sometimes use the attribute ‘European’ as a substitute for ‘EU’; this is not meant to imply that the two are identical.

## *The Drivers behind EU Crisis Management Operations*

Some observers would likely argue that the collective foreign policy which ESDP embodies was the result of the unique features of the process of European integration. Yet ESDP does not only present a puzzle for those who 'ought to learn more about the European Community' as Stanley Hoffmann responded to John Mearsheimer's 'back to the future' proposition (Hoffmann 1990: 192). Hanna Ojanen has pointed out that theories specifically devoted to European integration were also explicit in predicting the absence of integration in the field of security and defence (Ojanen 2006). Within this field, traditional intergovernmentalists who stress the self-interested behaviour of national governments might be forgiven for deducing that the 'high politics' of security and defence would remain outside the remit of economically driven integration because of their zero-sum nature (Hoffmann 1966, 1982; Moravcsik 1998). Yet neo-functionalism, the theory predicting a gradual transfer of sovereignty to the European level due to functional spill-over, equally assumed that integrationist pressures would stop in front of the core of sovereign statehood (Ojanen 2006). As one observer noted, it is therefore not by chance that political scientists have largely ignored the earlier, failed European Defence Community of 1954 (Kaim 2007: 12).

The apparent conundrum of a new security arm for the European Union (EU) not only represents an interesting anomaly for those interested in theorizing international and European politics; it also embodies a potentially important component of the global security governance system. Since the ESDP became operational in 2003 the EU has initiated more than 20 crisis management operations within this framework. The character of these operations ranges from military stabilisation operations to civilian rule of law missions designed to prevent the outbreak of conflict.<sup>2</sup> In line with the ambitious title of the 2003 European Security Strategy, 'A secure Europe in a better world', these operations have taken place on three continents. The document itself proclaims that 'the European Union is inevitably a global player' (European Council 2003: 1). In view of the sheer number and the geographical spread of crises that the EU has committed itself to addressing, ESDP's theoretical salience is thus complemented by policy significance. In short, and as the amount of recent scholarly work on the subject attests, ESDP is intriguing for political scientists and practitioners alike.

So what exactly is the European Security and Defence Policy? At its most basic, ESDP is less a policy than an institutional structure within the European Union for taking

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<sup>2</sup> Both official documents and the academic literature use the terms 'mission' and 'operation' somewhat confusingly. On the one hand, 'mission' usually has a civilian connotation whereas 'operation' has a military one. On the other hand, 'operation' is also used as the generic term comprising both. Since this usage has become common, this study will keep to it, distinguishing explicitly military operations with the corresponding attribute where necessary.

## Chapter I: Introduction

and implementing collective decisions pertaining to civilian and military crisis management. As such, it forms part of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the Union's 'second pillar' created by the 1991 Maastricht Treaty. The Nice Treaty of 2000, whose provisions were applicable during the timeframe covered in this study, set out in Article 17 that '[t]he common foreign and security policy shall include all questions relating to the security of the Union, including the progressive framing of a common defence policy'. Art. 17, 2 further specified that '[q]uestions referred to in this Article shall include humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking'. Decision-making in the second pillar is intergovernmental, i.e. it is formally controlled by the governments of EU member states united in the Council of the EU. Since the Lisbon Treaty took effect in December 2009, the EU's 'pillar system' has in principle been abolished, but decision-making in the realm of CFSP remains far more intergovernmental than in other domains of EU cooperation (cf. Dinan 2010: 98). Moreover, in order to indicate progress in integration, the terminology evolved from ESDP to CSDP – signifying a now 'Common' Security and Defence Policy. Yet by the time of writing the latter represented above all a continuation of the former, and therefore I will use the term ESDP throughout this book: it is analytically more accurate because most of the events analyzed here took place while the policy was called ESDP, and it will hopefully limit readers' confusion stemming from the Union's ever-changing alphabet soup. In a nutshell, ESDP was and CSDP remains a tool for managing (potentially) violent conflicts outside of the EU's borders.

In light of its recent inception, how can we explain the Union's newly-found will to collectively engage in external conflict management? In order to understand and explain the drivers behind ESDP, this study will analyse the policy output in this area, i.e. the operations conducted in the ESDP framework, because these arguably form the core purpose of the policy. That premise might be challenged by the argument that either the institutional structure of ESDP in itself constituted the objective of the homonymous policy or that enhancing the (military) capabilities underpinning this structure formed the true policy goal. Yet not only is 'what the EU does' ultimately 'more important than mechanisms by which it does it' (Menon 2009: 228). When it comes to capabilities, 'feverish attempts to devise capabilities improvement schemes have failed to deliver much practical progress' (Menon 2009: 233; cf. Heise 2005; Witney 2008; Giegerich 2006: 204). This study therefore assumes that the Union's crisis management activities have in practice figured as ESDP's *raison d'être*, an assumption that was confirmed by most officials who were interviewed for this book.

Studying the drivers behind ESDP via that framework's operational record implies a shift in focus from the aspirations that the framework's initiators (may have) had to the tangible results they pursued. That shift is inspired by the idea that ESDP's actions constitute a more honest and effective proxy of its underlying purpose than

the political rhetoric regarding the EU's global objectives to be achieved via ESDP. This focus also plugs a gap by analyzing the very aspect of the ESDP framework whose theoretical analysis has so far been largely ignored. Whereas many studies inferred the logic behind ESDP from institutional developments and (the potential of) pooled capabilities (see e.g. Posen 2004; Art 2004; Hyde-Price 2006; Jones 2007; Anderson 2008; Selden 2010), there is hardly any theory-driven examination of what the EU has actually done, i.e. the operations undertaken within this framework (for an exception, see Gegout 2005). Moreover, even those who take issue with equating the drivers behind ESDP operations with those behind the framework at large will likely agree that the operational record of ESDP in and of itself constitutes an interesting object of study – and that these operations embody the logic of ESDP at least to an important extent. The present analysis will therefore focus on the EU's crisis management operations and reflect on the institutional and capability dimensions only inasmuch as the latter impact on the operational record.

To investigate the logic behind ESDP, this study thus seeks to analyse and explain why the European Union has decided to send out various crisis management operations. Since decision-making in the ESDP is intergovernmental, this puzzle implies the question why EU governments initiated and/or formally agreed to these operations. In order to answer this somewhat philosophical problem, this book will examine the conditions under which member states decided to dispatch and participate in ESDP operations, both in terms of the process of decision-making and of the underlying objectives of those involved. The fundamental research question guiding this study therefore asks: *what are the drivers behind ESDP operations?*

## **B. THE ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK**

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In attempting to understand the forces driving EU crisis management operations, this study will rely and expand on explanatory patterns prevalent in IR theory. In particular, it will analyse what goals governments pursued by repeatedly agreeing to collective interventions in foreign crises. In so doing, it goes beyond the specific policy objectives they may have sought and links them to underlying and more general motivations.<sup>3</sup> For this purpose, the next chapter will develop an analytical framework which sketches and compares the most plausible drivers: considerations of relative international power or notions of Europe's appropriate role in the world on the one hand, and considerations regarding the ultimate purpose of the EU's

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<sup>3</sup> I use the terms 'interests', 'preferences', 'motives', 'motivations' and 'intentions' as basically synonymous with objectives. Various theorists have defined their preferred term as different from (and superior to) the others (see e.g. Morgenthau [1948] 2006: 59; cf. Moravcsik 1997: 541-547; Kydd 2008: 427-9; Kratochwil 2008: 445). Yet these distinctions are often self-referential or rhetorical, and they often connote specific theoretical preferences – a linguistic pre-commitment that I seek to avoid.

## *Chapter I: Introduction*

internal integration process or domestic politics on the other. Specifically, these propositions will suggest that the drivers behind ESDP operations might be, first, the desire to balance the world's preponderant power, the US, by creating an alternative pole of power; that secondly these operations might be an expression of the EU's own role conception as a 'normative power' by attempting to project domestically held values into its environment; that they may thirdly constitute a means for achieving 'closer union' within the EU by way of traditional nation-building techniques, i.e. by fashioning a collective security identity; or finally that ESDP operations might serve to improve governments' domestic political position by offering them a framework for 'doing something' in response to domestic expectations. As the subsequent chapter will show, these potential purposes are neither comprehensive nor mutually exclusive, but they represent a useful starting point for systematically investigating the drivers behind ESDP.

In a nutshell, this study seeks to uncover which categories of motivations in terms of internal or external power and purpose were important in determining governments' positions. This objective implies a number of sub-questions: why member states decided to deploy a mission in a specific environment; what kind of mission they decided to deploy, i.e. what kind of mandate and resources they equipped these missions with; and why they did so in the framework of the ESDP. In order to answer these questions, this study will analyze the stated objectives of these operations; the reasons and justifications pivotal actors evoked, publicly as well as privately; the congruence between stated and insinuated objectives on the one hand and the strategy they employed on the other; and the contributions different member states made to these operations, as one way of scrutinizing whether they put their money where their mouth was.

In order to be able to delve into some depth with respect to motives and decision-making, this study needs to narrow its focus in several ways. Because these choices depend in part on the theoretical framework developed in chapter II, they will be explicated and justified only after explaining that framework. At this point, suffice it to say that this book will systematically analyze, on the one hand, the interests and motivations of 3 rather than all 27 EU governments: those of the UK, France and Germany. Those three were chosen not only because they were presumed to have been particularly influential, but also because they nicely mirror the range of stances EU governments have taken with respect to the most important cleavages differentiating European security policies. On the other hand, this study will focus on 4 operations from an overall population of 23. Specifically, this book will reconstruct the decision-making surrounding the military operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Chad / Central African Republic, the police mission in Afghanistan, and the rule of law mission in Kosovo and analyze their underlying drivers. Whereas chapter III will provide a detailed justification for selecting these cases, those four operations were again chosen for their importance as well as for the spread they embody in terms of

geography as well as the nature of their tasks and chains of command. In comparing the relative explanatory power of the examined drivers for these four specific ESDP operations, this book will attempt to assess the purpose behind ESDP more generally.

### **C. LIMITS OF THIS STUDY**

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In order to clearly delineate the contours of this investigation, it may be useful to sketch what falls beyond the scope of this book. To start with, this study focuses on only one aspect of ESDP (albeit arguably the most important). Whereas ESDP had been conceived as a mechanism both for acting collectively outside the Union as well as for developing (military) capabilities, this study analyses ESDP mainly with respect to its crisis management activities. The main reason for this is that capability development has remained a national task – despite attempts to coordinate it in various multilateral *fora*, most importantly in NATO. To somewhat overstate the case, various EU capability initiatives such as the EU Battle Groups notwithstanding there is simply not much capability development happening within the EU framework. Although the question of (lacking) European military capabilities may have spurred the development of ESDP, these have neither significantly improved nor can such improvements, where they have occurred, be convincingly linked to ESDP.<sup>4</sup> However interesting the reasons for this development, it falls outside the immediate scope of this book.

In focusing on ESDP operations as one aspect of a broader EU foreign policy, this study also considers just one means in the wider gamut of EU foreign policy instruments. It thereby leaves aside other diplomatic or coercive foreign policy measures such as aid conditionality, trade agreements and multilateral negotiations, collective demarches and declarations, or sanctions, all of which may complement or substitute EU action in the ESDP framework. It equally does not analyze crisis management missions carried out in other institutional settings that, depending on the circumstances, may be preferred to ESDP by EU member states, such as operations in the framework of NATO, the UN, the OSCE, by individual member states or in other coalitions. This self-restraint should not be interpreted as to imply that ESDP operations should or even can be analyzed in total isolation. Two research questions raised in the last section, namely why states decide to intervene in the first place, and why they do so in the ESDP setting, imply that they cannot. Yet links with these other features of European foreign policy are only touched upon where they

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<sup>4</sup> A notable exception is the work on the ‘Nordic Battle Group’ of the first half of 2008 (led by Sweden, with contributions from Finland, Norway, Ireland and Estonia) which several experts interviewed for this study credited with real efforts in terms of interoperability and capability development.

## Chapter I: Introduction

are relevant for ESDP operations; they are not the subject of this study in- and by themselves.

Inquiring into the reasons behind the evolution of ESDP nonetheless relates to the broader question of the EU's actorness. This in turn comprises two hotly debated issues, namely the theoretical and methodological challenges of generalizing an apparently singular institution, and the perennial debate about of what type of power – 'civilian', 'normative', 'ethical', 'post-modern', 'super-power' or 'Europe puissance' – the Union represents. The answer to the first issue, whether the EU is *sui generis* and therefore inherently incomparable, primarily depends on the precise question and the attendant research design (cf. Caporaso et al. 1997). Its specific history, institutional complexity and unique form of political authority appear to set it apart from other settings, preventing generalizability (cf. Rosamond 2000: 16; Wallace 1994: 9). At the same time, not everything about the workings of the EU is unique. Over-emphasizing exceptionality and historical contingency can too easily turn into an insurmountable obstacle to the comparisons that the academic field of political science depends on. The present study partly side-steps this dilemma by focusing on within-case comparison, that is, by comparing different instances of the EU employing the ESDP. Yet this self-limitation is not based on the assumption that ESDP operations are in principal non-comparable to peace-building operations in other multilateral frameworks. They in fact concern an aspect of the Union where its mechanisms are more easily comparable to those of other international organizations because member states take decisions in a formally and substantially intergovernmental setting rather than according to the more supranational 'Community method'. Therefore, the question of the EU's singularity does not, *a priori*, loom large in this study.

This brings us to the question of the foreign policy nature of the EU. Ever since the notion of 'civilian power Europe' was conceived by François Duchêne (1972), it has refused to bow out of academic discourse, and numerous re-births in the shape of 'normative' or 'ethical' power Europe have been suggested (Manners 2002, 2008; cf. Aggestam 2004: 15; Orbie 2006; Forsberg 2011). Others have challenged this flattering self-perception, arguing that the EU's altruism in its external relations is limited and self-serving (Bailes 2008; Youngs 2004), or that if there was anything particularly ethical about the EU's foreign policy, it was simply because the more powerful member states had designated the EU as the 'repository' for their normative 'second-order concerns' (Hyde-Price 2006: 223; 2008: 31; see also Smith 2002). Rather than adopting any position on the subject, this study starts out with an agnostic view on the EU's foreign policy identity as it intends to analyze precisely the features that would determine our judgment on the matter: the Union's foreign policy output, and the motivations that lie beneath. In addressing this task, it is important though to beware that ESDP represents but one aspect of European states' foreign and security policy. It might be skewed or even manipulated towards

conveying a specific public message, and thereby misrepresent the 'cumulative reality' of EU member states' broader foreign policy.

## **D. THE REST OF THIS BOOK**

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In seeking to elucidate the drivers behind ESDP operations, this book will proceed as follows. Chapter II will examine ways of explaining the drivers behind ESDP and its operations. Surveying the theoretically inspired literature, it will develop an analytical framework of four classes of potential purposes that may have motivated EU governments to adopt their respective positions. The principle categories along which these drivers are organized relate to whether foreign policy behaviour was primarily intended to generate effects within or outside of the EU; and whether it served to pursue political power as such or those ideational objectives most frequently attributed to the Union in the literature. Linking this framework to the IR theoretical literature, chapter II elaborates four related propositions with respect to the drivers behind ESDP operations and specifies the sort of foreign policy motivations, justifications and behaviour we would expect to find in order to consider the respective proposition plausible.

Chapter III will subsequently start out by introducing the reader to the larger historical and institutional context into which the ESDP has been embedded. Building on this overview, it will continue by elaborating the choices underlying this study in terms of research design. Specifically, this chapter will explain why this book systematically compares British, French and German preferences, and why and how the four case studies were selected. It will finish by discussing the conceptual and methodological issues that the research design raises.

Chapters IV to VII will subsequently determine the empirical plausibility of the four putative explanations by examining the evidence that specific ESDP operations represent with respect to their sheer existence, history, objectives, mandates and resources. For this purpose, they will delve into four case studies, examining ESDP engagements in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Chad. Reconstructing the respective decision-making processes as well as the evolution of the positions of the most relevant actors, each chapter will establish what the predominant drivers behind the respective operations were. The case studies will start from a description of the regional situation into which an ESDP intervention was to be inserted and subsequently trace the decision-making process from the agenda-setting phase via the operations' planning and preparation to the efforts undertaken to implement the respective mandates. Thus, these chapters could on the one hand be read as attempts of reconstructing diplomatic history, but they will on the other hand also be informed by an effort to link each case's specific policy objectives to the underlying drivers elaborated in chapter II.

## *Chapter I: Introduction*

Chapters VIII and IX will then serve to compare the findings of the four case studies along two dimensions. In a first 'cut', chapter VIII will examine the objectives of three key actors – the French, British and German governments – across all four case studies and link them with the broader literature on their respective foreign policy traditions. Based on the results, as well as the findings regarding each individual case study, chapter IX will then discuss the extent to which each proposition can contribute to understanding the drivers behind ESDP operations.

# **CHAPTER II: ESDP OPERATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY: AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK**

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## **A. INTRODUCTION**

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This chapter develops four alternative propositions that contend to explain why the EU has engaged in ESDP operations. In so doing, it draws on the explanations that have dominated scholarly accounts so far, but elaborates and subsumes them under four classes of potential explanations. The four drivers underlying these explications in turn have a bearing on the purpose of ESDP at large: to what extent can they, individually or in various combinations, explain what EU governments have ostensibly been aiming for since they decided to equip themselves with this foreign policy instrument? Before discussing the respective propositions, however, this chapter will first address the questions why such a theoretical approach is called for; what obstacles it entails; and what sort of explanatory categories an examination of the drivers behind ESDP operations requires. This introductory section will address these preliminary issues.

The present book sets out to explain why EU governments repeatedly engaged in collective crisis management endeavours in the framework of the ESDP. When it comes to such multilateral decision-making, each sequel of decisions that results in a particular operation is informed by a multitude of factors, many of which are contingent on specific constellations. This begs the question whether it is sensible to search for (general) patterns behind these endeavours in the first place, and whether comparing those patterns' relative explanatory power is feasible. Jolyon Howorth, probably the most prolific scholarly writer on ESDP over the last ten years, has asserted that 'ESDP has emerged overwhelmingly as a series of empirical reactions to historical events' (Howorth 2007: 22-23). Claiming that theoretical approaches so far have failed to provide a satisfactory, comprehensive answer, Howorth suggested that inductive empirical analysis was basically sufficient for understanding ESDP (Howorth 2007: 23-24). He even went on to wonder 'why scholars would wish to detect mono-causal or even dominant drivers behind complex political and historical processes' (Howorth 2007: 28). Instead, he argued that ESDP needed to be understood as the consequence of the confluence of four fundamental processes: the end of the Cold War and the attendant lesser US interest in Europe, a 'new world order' transcending the Westphalian international state system, the experience of the 1990s Balkan Wars and progress in European integration (Howorth 2007: 52-56). This gamut of underlying causes suggests that ESDP's purpose cannot be reduced to a means of addressing any single foreign policy

objective, but that it can only be understood as an evolutionary response to multifaceted and unpredictable historical developments. Such a view has obvious implications for any attempts to grasp the rationale behind ESDP's policy output as well. If the framework's very emergence should best be explained by reference to four sweeping historical processes, how could we possibly hope that its numerous and diverse instances of implementation follow any underlying logic?

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### THE UTILITY AND LIMITS OF IR THEORY

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It is hard to disagree on the difficulty of explaining complex, overlapping processes such as the emergence and frequent use of the ESDP framework by means of the parsimonious models international relations (IR) theories seek to provide. Yet comparing their respective explanatory prowess is helpful in probing the *extent* to which these models can explain the policy outcomes we observe. All four drivers identified by Howorth sound very plausible, but they may leave the reader wondering how much each of them mattered, whether they were all strictly necessary for the emergence of ESDP and whether they were collectively sufficient. Such wondering is not just an expression of self-referential intellectual curiosity, but it represents an attempt to distil those features which allow for comparison beyond the singular occasion where the four drivers coincided. The purpose of explicitly comparing the influence of various likely drivers is not necessarily to decide which driver was most important, but to enable the analyst to weigh the persuasiveness of each argument individually – and to gauge in which cases and under which circumstances it is particularly convincing.

Even if theoretical explanations necessarily fall short in accounting for a complex social reality, they are invariably part of our perception of 'events'. Thus Stephen Walt underlined that '[e]ven policymakers that are contemptuous of "theory" must rely on their own (often unstated) ideas about how the world works in order to decide what to do' (Walt 1998: 29; cf. Walt 2005a). It is for this reason that Robert Keohane insisted on the 'inescapability of theory' (Keohane 1986: 4; cf. Popper 1963: 46; Hempel 1965 [1948]: 243). Theories simply help us to distinguish the more important from the less important, and thereby allow for greater direction in collecting and linking relevant observations (cf. Kuhn 1962: 15-18; Popper 1963: 46). Since theoretical considerations are unavoidable, being explicit about the range of alternative explanations that the researcher has been examining should make it easier for the reader to make a more informed judgement as to the external validity of the author's conclusions. As a consequence, there is a strong case to be made for systematically considering expected causal relationships prior to any in-depth analysis – even where we expect to find a plurality of mutually irreducible drivers.

As the previous paragraph suggests, it is moreover important that we consider the full range of potential explanations as far as feasible. If the objective is to try to truly understand a phenomenon, it is insufficient to pick one explanation and dismiss alternatives on the basis of their supposedly mistaken assumptions – or by casting alternatives as straw men. Many explanations of ESDP have taken such a line though. For example, Bastian Giegerich justified his choice for a constructivist framework with ‘an insufficiency of Realism’, adding that constructivism offered ‘crucial theoretical assumptions that [...] make it superior for the analysis conducted here’ (Giegerich 2006: 29; cf. Krotz and Maher 2011: 567). Others have compared their preferred theoretical framework to contending alternatives, but closer analysis reveals that those alternatives are weighed against the main proposition primarily for rhetorical effect (cf. Jones 2007: 223-6; Gegout 2005). The danger of embracing a single, parsimonious theoretical model as the point of departure, however, is that it might lead us to focus on (and perhaps confirm) the presence of one of the drivers identified by Howorth, but to ignore the importance of the other three. More generally, ‘[n]o single approach can capture all the complexity of contemporary world politics. Therefore we are better off with an array of competing ideas rather than a single theoretical orthodoxy. Competition between theories helps reveal their strengths and weaknesses and spurs subsequent refinements, while revealing flaws in conventional wisdom’ (Walt 1998: 30). In other words, the utility of theory-inspired analysis can be enhanced by systematically comparing the explanatory power of a range of alternative propositions.

If explicit theoretical frameworks are desirable as a point for departure, which domain should they derive from? ESDP is situated at the crossroads of at least three overlapping theoretical fields: international relations theory, European integration theory, and theories of foreign policy decision-making. This study primarily draws on the first of those three although its framework will resonate with the other two as well. The reasons for privileging IR theory over integration and foreign policy theories are threefold. First, IR theory has been the framework of choice for most scholars seeking to explain the phenomenon of ESDP. In order to engage with this literature, following this tradition seems most straightforward. Secondly, in the interest of placing the process of European integration into perspective it needs to be explained in relation to general IR theories rather than with reference to theories devised specifically to explain European integration (Moravcsik 1993: 474). This is all the less contentious as ESDP decision-making is formally intergovernmental and thus clearly belongs to the domain that general IR theories have been seeking to explain; ESDP is hence *a priori* not as special as the supranational aspects of European integration. Moreover, EU integration theories explicitly excluded the field of security and defence from integrationist pressures (cf. Ojanen 2006). They consequently lack substantive propositions that appear particularly promising for

explaining collective security policy. Thirdly, whereas IR theory has usually aimed at revealing general laws in international politics, foreign policy theory has primarily focused on foreign policy decision-making processes (cf. Hudson 2008: 16). In line with the former, this book primarily intends to explain the purpose rather than the process of ESDP activity – although, in the absence of directly observable data on the ‘true’ motives of decision-makers, analysis of the process is pivotal for gauging the objectives which likely informed decision-making.<sup>5</sup>

Yet whereas these three theoretical fields differ somewhat in what they seek to explain, those differences should also not be exaggerated. Theoretical approaches such as realism, liberalism and social constructivism have informed all three, and this study draws on theories only indirectly insofar as they inspire the four propositions whose plausibility it will compare. In doing so, it will primarily (and, as far as possible, comprehensively) engage those theoretical explanations for ESDP that have already been put forward in the literature. The latter however do not offer readily comparable accounts of the possible rationales that ESDP may have served because they partly remained under-specified and because hardly any of them has been applied to what the EU *does* in the framework of ESDP, i.e. its crisis management operations. This study’s contribution thus consists not only in re-organizing and elaborating the different competing explanations, but also in applying them to an important and, in this respect, under-researched domain. Yet before we discuss *how* we might categorize the potential collective purposes expressed in ESDP, we need to dwell shortly on *what* it is we seek to explain.

ESDP operations are the result of a collective decision of EU governments to mandate such an operation. In comparing the explanatory power of competing propositions as to what may have led the latter to adopt the respective decision, this study takes a rationalist approach by assuming that these decisions are the result of some form of conscious weighing of the benefits and drawbacks on the part of EU governments. That calculation’s rationality may very well be bounded in that governments were unwilling or unable to fully appreciate the consequences of their decisions – this is in fact very likely. The assumption of a rational calculation of expected consequences, i.e. a ‘logic of expected consequences’, contrasts however with theoretical approaches which assume that such decisions are the result of a ‘logic of appropriateness’ (cf. March and Olsen 1998). According to the latter, EU governments would initiate, approve or reject an operation because that would appear natural and legitimate given the role and identity they have internalized in

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<sup>5</sup> The problems connected to evaluating the plausibility of diverging putative explanations will be discussed in greater detail in the context of this book’s research design in chapter III, section c.

their foreign policy posture or within the EU more specifically. Instances of role conflict might accordingly be overcome through argumentative persuasion, which contrasts with the bargaining logic embraced by rationalist approaches (cf. Checkel and Moravcsik 2001).

While various authors have attempted to test the plausibility of the 'logic of appropriateness' against that of a 'logic of consequences', it is dubious whether such a comparison will yield convincing insights (cf. Fearon and Wendt 2002). Whether actors in international relations are *fundamentally* driven by the desire to fulfil the expectations of significant others or the pursuit of individually derived preferences (or which mix thereof) is more a debate about ontological assumptions than about observable empirical implications. In comparing the plausibility of potential policy drivers on the basis of attendant empirical implications, this study opts to start from a rationalist perspective that examines the consequences that EU governments expected from whichever course of action they chose. Contrary to some bad practice in the discipline, this choice regarding ontological assumptions however does not entail any *a priori* commitment to privileging material over ideational factors (cf. Wight 2002: 39-40). There is no categorical reason why the 'logic of expected consequences' would not be compatible with governmental concerns about societies' ideational preferences and its own legitimacy.

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#### LATENT PURPOSES OF ESDP OPERATIONS

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If we assume that governments' behaviour in the ESDP framework is the consequence of rational calculations, what is it that governments seek to accomplish by conducting ESDP operations? To the author's knowledge there is no comprehensive theory of the sources of state preferences in foreign policy. As others have argued, this also extends to the more specific activities subsumed under the label of peace-keeping (cf. Bures 2007).<sup>6</sup> Instead of attempting to weigh the import of (all) possible drivers against each other, scholars have explored specific explanations that focus on states' relative power in the international system, the quest for national welfare and security, emerging global norms and duties, state-level variables relating to national strategic cultures, party-political preferences, transnational pressure groups, bureaucratic and governmental politics, media attention, public opinion as well as individual leaders' psychology or ideological preferences (see e.g. Smith et al. 2008). As this non-exhaustive list suggests, it would be difficult to explore every single possible aspect for all actors across a number of

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<sup>6</sup> Bures uses the term in a broad sense that makes it roughly equivalent to the sort of operations undertaken in the ESDP framework.

case studies. Therefore, this study will summarize and classify these potential drivers from the point of view of the formally responsible actors, namely EU governments. It will investigate what sort of interests they pursued, and which sort of pressures triggered their pursuit.

Any attempt to categorize the range of possible foreign policy drivers will likely be contentious and partial. In view of the potentially countless and historically contingent objectives governments may pursue in foreign policy, Raymond Aron concluded that a general, deductive theory of foreign policy was impossible (Aron 1968: 102). Yet at an abstract level we can arguably distinguish potential goals along two dimensions: whether foreign policy behaviour is primarily a function of pressures emanating from the international system or the domestic polity; and whether foreign policy primarily serves to increase actors' material power or whether it is driven by ideational interests and values. In other words, does foreign or domestic politics take precedence in governments' decision-making? And is foreign policy above all a function of the universal quest for survival and power, or does it reflect ideological purpose? These two distinctions yield the following matrix of potential drivers of security policy:

TABLE 1. POTENTIAL PURPOSES OF FOREIGN POLICY

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<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Power as an end</i>	<i>Ideational purpose</i>
<i>External purpose</i>	I	II
<i>Internal purpose</i>	IV	III

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The first distinction, between 'external' and 'internal' purposes, evokes the old divide between the international and the domestic level of analysis (cf. Singer 1961). It problematizes Ranke's claim of a 'primacy of foreign policy', the idea that a state's purpose consisted above all in its self-assertion in the international arena and that therefore foreign policy interests would take precedence over domestic politics (cf. Hefter 1951: 1; Cooper 2004: 102). Instead, it allows for the possibility that foreign policy may serve domestic political purposes. Given the EU's status as a hybrid between international arena for its member states and collective actor in the world, however, the distinction between 'external' and 'internal' seems more appropriate than one between 'international' and 'domestic': 'external' refers to the role that EU governments might want ESDP to play in the EU's environment whereas 'internal' refers to the function it could fulfil within the EU and/or its constitutive members.

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The second distinction, between 'power as an end' and 'ideational' purpose, takes up a long-standing tension between those who emphasize the pursuit of (international and/or domestic) survival and power *per se* as the primary objective of politics and those underlining the specific, idea-bound objectives which define political purpose. In the context of security policy, 'power' comprises state and/or domestic political survival – and the power resources that enhance the likelihood of the latter. 'Ideational purposes', on the other hand, encompass the policy goals that political actors seek insofar as those are not primarily instrumental to enhancing power. Clearly, the two are anything but mutually exclusive, but it is principally possible to distinguish between cases where a policy responds to specific ideational objectives and those where it mostly serves as an instrument in the quest for power.

Whereas the above matrix takes up ongoing theoretical debates on ESDP – notably between constructivists and role theorists on the one, and realists on the other hand – it proposes to re-organize them in a novel way. It assumes that foreign policy can be conceptualized as serving (at least) one out of four purposes: starting from the upper left corner and moving clockwise, it could be targeted at (I) influencing the external power position of the EU and its member states; it might (II) promote some normative vision of global order; it could (III) serve to indirectly advance particular political ideas at home; and finally, it might (IV) be intended to bolster a government's domestic political position. Distinguishing between these purposes is obviously not always straightforward since the dividing lines are blurred and because these purposes are often causally interconnected. Achieving global ideational objectives, for example, may contribute to greater relative power which in turn might increase a government's domestic support – or the other way around, or in a different sequence. Moreover, these dimensions are frequently complementary. Public policy can conceivably be intended to simultaneously advance ideological agendas, provide functional solutions to policy problems and garner political support. There is no reason to suspect that foreign policy would necessarily be different in this respect. Yet this book aims to investigate which sort of purpose was *pre-eminent* when it came to ESDP operations – or at least to provide an analytical framework for examining this question.

The two dimensions that this analytical framework reflects have played an important role in many of the contemporary debates between the various theoretical paradigms in IR theory. As Colin Wight deplored, such paradigmatic debates however tend to conflate various distinctions in the service of demanding 'that one declares one's allegiance. Once declared, one's analytical frame of reference is specified and one's identity firmly fixed. As a rationalist you *will* privilege material factors, causation and science; as a post-positivist/reflectivist you *will* privilege ideational factors, deny causation and are anti-science' (Wight 2002: 40, emphasis original). Similar conflation has characterized the dispute over explaining ESDP,

which primarily pitted social constructivists against realists. Whereas realists emphasized the structural pressures of the international system, the importance of material capabilities and a consequentialist self-help logic, constructivists have often countered by insisting on the significance of national identities, ideational processes and the logic of appropriateness (cf. Rynning 2011: 32; Giegerich 2006: 29; Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010; Meyer and Strickmann 2011). In disentangling these dimensions, the analytical framework above allows us to transcend the paradigmatic debates on ESDP at the same time as it enables us to zoom in on the substantive questions they have raised.

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### SPECIFYING LATENT FOREIGN POLICY PURPOSES

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How can we further specify these four purposes with respect to ESDP? Earlier theoretical investigations offer us an array of purported functions that the policy supposedly serves, and which can be fused with the empty matrix above. When it comes to linking ESDP with external power interests (I), the clearest proposition has come from structural realists. They have interpreted ESDP as some form of 'balancing' of European states against the world's strongest power, the US (Posen 2004; Stromvik 2005; Walt 2005b: 126-132; Art 2006; Posen 2006; Jones 2007; Peters 2010). According to their analysis, ESDP chiefly has an external function that it exercises on behalf of EU member states, and the latter is defined in terms of (relative) power. On the other hand, the EU may also pursue an external agenda tied less to its narrow power interests, but rather a commitment to certain (shared) normative principles for global order (II). This is not only the way the EU presents itself, but it has been elaborated by theorists brandishing the notion of a 'civilian', 'normative' or 'ethical power Europe' (Manners 2002; Aggestam 2004; Manners 2008; EU 2010: art. 21; Duchêne 1972). According to this interpretation ESDP's primary purpose would similarly lie in influencing the EU's external environment, but it would be defined by the liberal global order it seeks to strengthen.

The above dichotomy between a quest for power and the desire to shape the world in accordance with certain ideas and values will be familiar fare for IR theorists. What has received lesser attention in the discipline are the (potential) domestic functions of foreign policy, namely the idea that external action might primarily be aimed at achieving internal objectives. However, a number of social constructivists and rationalists have indeed interpreted ESDP in this vein, namely as a tool for strengthening European political community (III) if not an exercise in EU state- and nation-building (Tonra 2003; Anderson and Seitz 2006; Mitzen 2006; Anderson 2008; Selden 2010). It might appear somewhat counterintuitive to categorize European nation-building as an 'internal' function; yet from the perspective of a putative collective EU foreign policy it would be fundamentally different from the

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pursuit of policy objectives directed at the EU's environment. And whereas furthering European integration is admittedly just one possible internal ideational purpose of EU foreign policy, it is the one that has figured most prominently in the literature, constituting an important contender for explaining ESDP thus far.

Finally, EU foreign policy may be intended to bolster EU governments' domestic political power (IV). This proposition has received least attention in the literature but if, as Moravcsik wrote, 'the primary interest of governments is to maintain themselves in office', we might expect them to utilize foreign policy for that objective (cf. Moravcsik 1993: 483; Downs 1957). The relative dearth in applying this proposition to ESDP notwithstanding, some scholars have made arguments that (partly) fit this line of reasoning in contending that ESDP reflects domestic societal preferences, that it helps governments to share and deflect potential blame, and that preferences for a stronger European role tend to correlate with domestic political constraints on foreign policy, so that intergovernmental decision-making might be suspected to serve the purpose of strengthening governments vis-à-vis their societies (Kaim 2007; Dover 2007; Matlary 2009; Koenig-Archibugi 2004b). As with European state-building, foreign policy would primarily serve internal objectives, although in this case 'internal' refers to national polities rather than the EU as a whole. The reason is that the politicians who formally control ESDP decision-making are elected within these national polities, and are thus set to politically profit or otherwise as a function of any policy's popularity within that polity. We thus end up with the following matrix of four classes of objectives EU governments may have pursued via ESDP operations.

TABLE 2. POTENTIAL PURPOSES OF ESDP

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<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Power as an end</i>	<i>Ideational purpose</i>
<i>Purpose external to EU</i>	Pursuit of relative external power / balancing	Promotion of liberal values abroad / 'Normative Power Europe'
<i>Purpose internal to EU</i>	Pursuit of domestic political gain	Promotion of EU integration

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In sum, this matrix suggests that ESDP operations might serve to balance outside powers; to promote liberal norms and values in its external environment; to advance political integration within Europe; or to help governments meet domestic

expectations. These propositions arguably comprise and expand on the strongest theoretical explanations for ESDP that have been offered so far. Yet none of the potential purposes identified above has been systematically compared against what the EU is doing in the framework of ESDP, and some have not been applied to ESDP at all. This book aims to close that gap in the literature by systematizing, specifying and comparing the explanatory power of each of these ideas against the evidence provided by four ESDP operations. The caveats set out earlier in this section showed that this analytical framework cannot comprise all (possible) theoretical explanations for the drivers behind ESDP operations. Yet it offers a heuristic starting point which is theoretically driven and reflective of the state of the theoretical literature on ESDP while avoiding the danger of overly restricting the domain of possible findings. The rest of this chapter will explore each proposition in greater detail.

## **B. ESDP AND THE QUEST FOR EXTERNAL POWER (I)**

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This section will further specify the proposition that ESDP might be driven by an attempt to increase the EU's relative power in the world. The underlying idea has been the focus of structural realists' work, and some of the latter have also applied it to ESDP. At the same time, there has been little theoretical competition for realists in linking ESDP to the pursuit of external power. Therefore, the first proposition can be transferred quite easily from the existing realist literature – even though not all structural realists would necessarily subscribe to the notion that ESDP indeed served this purpose (cf. Rynning 2011: 26-8; Hyde-Price 2006).

Structural realism posits that a state is primarily concerned with its external environment and its own power position therein. This concern is deduced from the anarchical nature of the international system. Given the basic assumption that every state wants to survive but needs to rely on self-help, its relative power position is pivotal. Power is a means rather than an end though. What states primarily seek is security, i.e. assurance of their survival as independent actors (Waltz 1979: 126). In order to protect themselves against those that are more powerful, states will ally and bring about a balance of power (Waltz 1979: 128). Based on this proposition various realist scholars have argued that European states' cooperation in foreign policy is the consequence of the US' overwhelming weight in international politics after 1991, and that the former was intended to balance the latter (Posen 2004; Art 2004, 2006; Jones 2007).

The notion that international politics is largely driven by the power-political demands of the system rather than the preferences of its individual actors has a long pedigree. That 'order is the result of balancing by states under the condition of

anarchy to counter opposing power concentrations or threats [...] is the most elegant and time-honored theory of international order' (Ikenberry 2002: 3). Applying it to Europe, Barry Posen argued that 'unless the ultimate failure of all aspiring hegemon on the Eurasian landmass in modern times is to be attributed to chance or the intervention of Providence, it must be concluded that balancing ultimately happens and is backed with enough force to bring down the greatest powers' (Posen 2004: 7). From this vantage point, his argument that ESDP provided fresh empirical evidence for such balancing behaviour is only consequential.

The basic problem with applying the balancing proposition to contemporary Europe is that it is difficult to square with the fact that most EU member states seem content to acquiesce into US hegemony. In fact, they are cooperating rather closely with the US in NATO and elsewhere. Kenneth Waltz has motivated his expectation of future balancing against the US by underlining that benign hegemony today offered no guarantees against malevolent behaviour in the future (Waltz 1997). Yet even if we were to concur, why would European countries be more concerned about future US behaviour than about that of their European neighbours with whom they share borders and often difficult historical relationships? It is possible that such alignment could be explained by the sheer concentration of power in the US' hands, but the required degree of consensus among EU powers sits uneasily with the 'relative gains' logic inherent in a balancing strategy such as the one supposedly underlying ESDP (cf. Wohlforth 1999: 31).

Realists' answer to the absence of a determined counter-push against the US has consisted in widening the concept of balancing to include 'weak', 'soft' or 'constrained' balancing (Posen 2004; Pape 2005; Art 2006; Walt 2005b: 126-132; Peters 2010). They solve the puzzle of a European alliance without an appropriate threat by replacing that direct threat with an indirect, longer-term one where European states need to hedge against future vagaries of the US. In a nutshell, their argument is that the crucial (and shared) motivation for ESDP stems from EU members' desire to constrain the US (Art 2006: 182). 'Soft balancers' have had to concede that the purported balancing behaviour was not triggered by security threats, an admission which, in the eyes of some detractors, robs the balancing concept of its traditional meaning and thus undermines the argument's validity (Brooks and Wohlforth 2005: 78-79; Lieber and Alexander 2006: 192; see also Howorth and Menon 2009). Yet it is possible to conceive of incentives for balancing in the absence of any perception of threat if we adopt the logic of a 'balance of influence' argument (cf. Stromvik 2005). Because materialist versions of the balancing theory that focus on capabilities appear unrealistic from the start, Stromvik instead builds on Jeffrey Hart's conception of power as the ability to influence events. Testing this hypothesis against rival explanations, she finds that the 'EU's foreign policy cooperation has intensified during (or quite soon after)

transatlantic disagreements over international security management' (Stromvik 2005: 180).

Whereas any threat-based balancing logic founders on its inherent contradictions, the 'balance of influence' hypothesis offers a promising starting point for scrutinizing whether systemic power-political pressures are driving the European Security and Defence Policy. Although this proposition's logic diverges from realism's core concern for survival in an anarchical world, it reflects the theoretical paradigm insofar as the pivotal driving factor behind foreign policy activity is the search for relative power. However, as all foreign policy can generally be interpreted as an attempt to increase a state's influence in some way, we have to ascertain that this proposition does not become an unfalsifiable catch-all alternative. It is therefore necessary to insist that 'balancing for influence' involve some sacrifice in the shape of policy trade-offs (cf. Brooks and Wohlforth 2006: 188). Hence, it should be the desire to constrain third parties rather than a general aspiration for influence that would lead us to conclude that systemic balancing pressures drive ESDP. Or, in the words of Stephen Walt, such policies would reflect a '*conscious coordination of diplomatic action in order to obtain outcomes contrary to U.S. preferences*' (Walt 2005b: 126, emphasis original).

The most widespread proposition tying ESDP to the pursuit of external power thus revolves around the notion that the policy is intended to balance the US, and this hypothesis' strength seems greatest if it is focused on constraining the influence (rather than the threat or material power) of the latter. This idea in fact underlies a considerable part of the entire theoretical literature seeking to explain ESDP, notably the structural realist accounts. Alternative realist explanations that might focus on the role of Russia (as a potential threat to Europe) would be less convincing since ESDP hardly provides value-added in this respect over NATO. In fact, by alienating the US ESDP could be construed to undermine NATO and thereby expose EU member states to a greater threat. Yet although no one has argued as yet that Russia's power has been a driver for ESDP, we should keep it in mind insofar as it may provide a similar if secondary incentive for EU states to stick together.

The evidence realists cite in support of their proposition that ESDP was about balancing against the US is not only based on theoretical considerations. Analysts often point to one alleged instigator in particular: France. French foreign policy has traditionally insisted on national independence and *grandeur*, praised the advantages of a 'multi-polar' global order, and exhorted fellow Europeans to adopt

their own position autonomously rather than follow Washington.<sup>7</sup> Ever since French president Charles de Gaulle pulled France out of NATO's military chain of command in 1966 and twice vetoed Britain's accession to the European Community in 1963 and 1967 because the latter supposedly represented Washington's 'Trojan horse', French foreign policy has been perceived as seeking to balance the US. Since the 1950s, French governments repeatedly attempted to create an 'autonomous' European defence alliance, and Paris played a pivotal role in bringing about ESDP in 1998/99. Moreover, France has usually insisted on keeping such European endeavours as far removed from NATO as possible, leading to the charge that it sought to undermine the latter. Therefore, the importance of France's imprint on ESDP has often been regarded as a proxy for the EU's balancing intentions vis-à-vis the United States.

In short, a number of academic analysts have argued that the ESDP served to increase EU governments' relative power in the world by pooling their capabilities, and that the primary purpose of this was to increase the EU's global influence at the US' expense. The resultant first proposition is thus that *ESDP operations primarily serve to counter-balance the influence of the US*. This implies that considerations of balancing would have to take precedence over other concerns in the decision-making surrounding an operation. For this proposition to be vindicated, we should thus find that EU decision-makers were primarily focused on the power-political consequences of their activities, especially with respect to constraining US influence; that EU decisions and operations were based on a strategy which could credibly result in an increase in relative power vis-à-vis the US; that France took the lead in accordance with its traditional balancing objectives; and that the US would disapprove of, if not oppose these operations. Conversely, the absence of constraining intentions vis-à-vis the US and of power-political considerations (as evidenced by a credible logic by which EU action would result in greater relative power) would spell trouble for this proposition – as would US support for ESDP operations.

Does the above proposition cover all possible ways in which the quest for external power might inform ESDP? Although it resonates with a majority of those theoretical analyses that have sought to link the two in an explanatory framework, it does not cover all possible variations, and neither can it claim to represent all work that has been carried out under the label of 'realism'. The proposition notably does not fully

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<sup>7</sup> Anthropomorphizing capitals only serves to enhance readability – Washington et al. are simply shorthand for the respective government, unless specified otherwise. It should not be read to imply that governments are always unitary actors, but simply that they collectively acted on certain motives in a given situation.

comprise the explanations offered by classical realism because the latter often remain too indeterminate. For example, one recent review concluded that classical realism saw ESDP 'as a result of the changes wrought on Europe's nation-states by Europe's history, political choices and global processes' (Rynning 2011: 32). That sounds very plausible, but tells us too little about the suspected drivers to be channelled into a clear-cut proposition that could be contrasted with credible alternatives.

The first proposition also does not fully include those approaches that emphasize states' incentives to pool resources in order to enhance their own influence, irrespective of third parties' power, for example by creating 'voice opportunities' (Grieco 1996). The reason to shirk such a wide definition is that they cannot automatically be attributed to causal mechanisms which derive from the competitive search for relative power (cf. Legro and Moravcsik 1999). 'Voice opportunities' might also be about promoting a state's ideational interests or about advancing domestically popular causes. A search for influence defined too broadly would simply lead to a lack of falsifiability and could at most be contrasted with 'idealist' accounts – and any idea or ideal could still be subsumed under 'voice opportunities'. The first proposition thus resonates with realist thinking yet represents but one (albeit important and not very restrictive) interpretation of structural realism. Its focus on power-political systemic pressures moreover contrasts sharply with the normative purposes that the following alternative account ascribes to European foreign policy.

### **C. ESDP AND 'NORMATIVE POWER EUROPE' (II)**

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Where realists have invoked the pressure of power politics to explain the emergence of ESDP, a second strand in the literature has cited the normative aspirations of the EU for a better world to explain why the Union is increasingly engaging in crisis management. As in the case of our first proposition, its collective foreign policy would primarily be directed at its environment. Its objectives however would be less defined by the power position it would strive for than by the purposes for which power is used. Rather than defining security competitively in the sense of relative power, the EU would seek to transform (parts of) its environment in its own image. The claim that purpose trumps the quest for power and security might sound naive, but could also be sign of a greater rationality that sought to overcome a competition-based international security system in favour of collective security based on institutions providing for the non-violent resolution of conflicts – an objective often invoked by statesmen and international treaties. This proposition has a long intellectual pedigree in idealist, liberal and constructivist writing and is by no means a feature unique to the European Union.

To the author's knowledge there is no scholarly work that explicitly infers ESDP action from the EU's ideational aspirations. A number of analysts have however made related claims which could be transposed into such a proposition. To start with, Lisbeth Aggestam has argued that by the late 1990s British, French and German policy-makers converged around a conception of Europe as an 'ethical power'.<sup>8</sup> This 'common role of Europe as an ethical power', she continued, 'is slowly cementing a presence in international politics through the development of a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)' (Aggestam 2004: 20). Though less concerned with ESDP, Ian Manners has similarly argued that the EU is playing a transformative role in international politics, promoting a number of universally applicable principles such as democracy, the (international) rule of law, and fundamental human rights (Manners 2008: 46; 2002). John Owen has asserted that 'a major cause' for EU cooperation in the field of crisis management was 'the need to carry out liberal foreign policy more efficiently', implying that liberal purpose was more important than the exercise of power as such (Owen 2001: 142). Likewise, Michael Smith argued that 'the EU is increasingly attempting to articulate a unique vision of *ultimate ends* as well: promoting itself as a "civilizing force" for global governance and world peace' (Smith 2011: 160-1, emphasis original). Finally, even an avowed structural realist has argued that 'the EU has come to serve as the institutional repository of the *second-order normative concerns* of EU member states', although the implication here is that these are very much concerns of *second order* and partly reflect European hypocrisy (Hyde-Price 2008: 31, emphasis original). This caveat notwithstanding, his claim suggests that the EU might pursue a special if perhaps inconsequential normative role in its foreign policy.

The idea that the EU's foreign policy primarily flows from European principles and values is not only suggested by various scholars. It also reflects the way the EU presents itself. Its foundational 'Treaty on European Union' stipulates that '[t]he Union's action on the international scene shall be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation, development and enlargement, and which it seeks to advance in the wider world: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law' (EU 2010: art. 21). Similar aspirations can already be found in the Union's 'European Security Strategy' of 2003, which

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<sup>8</sup> As the claim of convergence makes clear, the international role of the EU is linked to national role conceptions of its member states, which in turn relate to their respective national political and strategic cultures. See section e) for a detailed discussion.

expressed the EU's ambition to 'contribute to an effective multilateral system leading to a fairer, safer and more united world' (European Council 2003: 15).

What are the values that the EU putatively promotes? As the above quote from the EU treaty indicates, the principles that the EU seeks to advance largely overlap with classic liberal values: their emphasis on human and civil rights, democratic representation and rule of law underlines the importance societies attach to the freedom of the individual (cf. Doyle 2008: 50). Moreover, the EU treaty explicitly affirms the universalist tinge of these principles. This poses only limited problems in relations with other liberal democracies because they are founded on comparable value systems, but it creates tensions with respect to governments who abuse the rights liberal democracies have come to consider self-evident (cf. Doyle 1986; Doyle 2008). The commitment to the idea that liberal norms should apply universally might thus create the basis for a normatively driven foreign policy that seeks to support other societies in a transformation towards liberal polities.

By itself, the EU's high-flying rhetoric should not be overemphasized since many nations' constitutional documents embrace similarly benign aspirations. Even the US' hawkish 2002 National Security Strategy claimed that '[o]ur Nation's cause has always been bigger than our Nation's defense' (Bush 2002: 1; cf. Sjørnsen 2006: 240). To ascribe (universally) good intentions to one's own policy is inherently self-serving. As Richard Youngs has pointed out, the EU's supposedly normative policy of promoting human rights has frequently been subordinated to strategic self-interest, changing in accordance to what looked politically convenient at given moments (Youngs 2004). If it was indeed self-interested political convenience as opposed to commitment to liberal principles that drove policy, then the causal effect of the invoked liberal principles would be spurious. However, there are reasons for giving the EU the benefit of the doubt at the outset of our investigation. It is not only a special kind of actor in international politics, but it arguably operates in the absence of significant international constraints and thus might actually be in a position to pursue a value-based foreign policy. That does not necessarily imply that it will, but the EU *could* plausibly define its security in such comprehensive terms as international rule of law and universal application of human rights. Moreover, for EU foreign policy to be guided by liberal principles there is no need for European states to entirely abandon power politics. As Hyde-Price suggested they may simply pursue such objectives in other institutional venues, using the EU as a convenient vehicle for secondary normative goals (Hyde-Price 2006, 2008). The EU's averred normative approach might thus be facilitated by the fact that there is a difference between European and EU foreign policy.

The claim that ESDP serves to promote the liberal values that the EU vaunts is therefore *ex ante* plausible enough to warrant closer examination. However, how can

we be persuaded that any invocation of norms and ideals does not just reflect an ‘uncanny ability to make the most inspiring idealism coincide almost perfectly with rather ordinary objectives’ (Lundestad 1990: 41)? As Helen Sjursen has argued, that distinction might be revealed by the extent to which the EU relies on legal norms, i.e. whether specific policies are based on generally applicable and potentially universalisable and self-binding principles of conduct (Sjursen 2006: 243-5). In particular, ‘a focus on strengthening the cosmopolitan dimension to international law would be a strong indicator for a ‘normative’ or ‘civilizing’ power’ (Sjursen 2006: 249). Insofar as a cosmopolitan dimension would emphasize the rights of individuals (as opposed to states) in international law and promote human security, such a focus would clearly promote liberal values. Scholars need to be careful not to set the bar unrealistically high, but readers should note that this characterization of normative power does not demand a revolution of international relations, but ‘merely’ an effort by the EU to pursue these values in a fashion that reaches beyond their invocation whenever this coincides with self-interest. As in the case of the first proposition, i.e. that the EU was balancing for influence, we however need to make sure that the pursuit of normative principles does not become an explanation by default. In order for us to accept that the quest for expanding liberal values was a driving force, the EU would also need to show that it was willing to pay a price for realizing them.

In short, if ESDP was an instrument of EU governments’ global pursuit of liberal values, we would expect that the activities undertaken in this framework reflect and further these principles. The resultant second proposition is thus that *ESDP operations primarily serve to promote collectively held liberal values*. In other words, the principles laid down in the treaties such as advancing democracy, the (international) rule of law, and fundamental human rights would have to take precedence over other considerations in the decision-making surrounding an operation. For this proposition to be vindicated, we would expect to find that EU decision-makers, in designing and directing foreign policy, were primarily concerned over the effective promotion of such principles; that the quest for improving the world proved more important than narrow self-interest; that EU decisions and operations were based on a strategy to this end; that EU governments were willing to take a risk and/or pay a price for the promotion of such principles in terms of power and/or welfare; and that the US would tend to support these operations due to its foundation on, and promotion of similar liberal values. Conversely, the proposition’s plausibility would suffer if ESDP operations were not informed by liberal values, if they would not add up to a credible scheme for promoting the latter, or were contingent on being cheap or serving other EU interests.

This second proposition clearly resonates with classic liberal IR theory although, as in the case of realism, it cannot claim to fully represent the approach much less test

it (cf. e.g. Morgan 2007: 30). It also overlaps with some constructivist interpretations that have sought to understand foreign policy as deriving from (national) identities, which in turn were seen as expressions of, primarily, domestic ideas of collective purpose and normative aspirations (see e.g. Katzenstein 1996; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse et al. 1999; Hopf 2002). Clearly, the EU could be imbued with a similar identity – and Aggestam made that argument when she contended that ‘British, French and German policy-makers gradually converged on a common role for Europe as an ‘ethical power’ at the end of the 1990s’ (Aggestam 2004: 12). This particular role identity also resonates with the ‘English School’s’ concept of ‘good international citizenship’ (cf. Dunne 2008). Dunne takes care to emphasize that this concept blends the idealism of promoting liberal values with realist prudence, but the above proposition does not necessarily imply that the pursuit of principles be reckless. Rather, it merely entails a focus on supporting the spread of liberal values abroad in a way that is not reducible to (collective) competitive self-interest.

In sum, the second proposition draws on a number of diverse theoretical approaches. These approaches overlap, however, in their focus on the ideational content of foreign policy, which in the case of the EU is most frequently associated with the promotion of liberal values. The main difference between the first two propositions then lies in whether the inescapable realities of global power politics or the normative aspirations of the EU inspire the ESDP operations we can observe. Both propositions share the expectation that the EU’s collective purpose as expressed in such action is directed towards its environment, albeit for different purposes and with different implications as for the EU’s likely strategies and priorities as well as third parties’ likely response. By contrast, the subsequent sections will discuss two alternative interpretations which conjecture that ESDP action might be more about European navel-gazing than a tool for influencing its environment.

#### **D. ESDP AND THE SEARCH FOR ‘EVER CLOSER UNION’ (III)**

In seeking to theorise ESDP, some scholars have identified a third rationale which they have credited with providing a convincing explanation for the phenomenon. This is the idea that the true purpose of a common foreign and defence policy might lie less in what it could achieve for the world than what it could do for European integration. In other words, ESDP may not so much have been about influencing the EU’s environment, but about furthering the union among Europe’s nations and governments. Such a focus is partly vindicated by history. European Political Cooperation, the precursor of the EU’s current Common Foreign and Security Policy into which ESDP is embedded, ‘was not created to help Europe solve international problems; it was created to prevent international problems from disrupting the

Community' (Smith 2004: 4). The Union's seemingly incessant preoccupation with tinkering with its institutional setup over the last two decades may suggest that the days of European self-absorption have not waned – which makes the suggestion that a common defence policy might primarily serve to advance institutional integration *prima facie* plausible.

The idea that ESDP may be the result of the objective of building closer European political community has primarily been suggested by a number of constructivist observers. Ben Tonra speculated that 'CFSP might thus be better understood in terms of identity creation than as an exclusively rationally-based exercise in national self-interest' (Tonra 2003: 738). Others have stressed how European foreign policy cooperation responded to EU governments' desire for 'ontological security'. Faced with a 'deep, incapacitating fear of not being able to organize the threat environment', actors search out routines to bring threats under cognitive control (Mitzen 2006: 273). In the case of the EU, this was purportedly achieved by a 'coordination reflex', which helped EU member states to maintain a sense of stable identity in the face of deep uncertainty (Mitzen 2006: 275-80). What this suggests is that EU governments may be primarily interested in maintaining and fostering such a sense of shared identity rather than in achieving specific foreign policy objectives. This proposition also resonates with research carried out under the label of 'Europeanization'. The concept has been criticized for its exceeding flexibility, comprising as it does processes of collective identity formation, 'uploading' of national preferences to the EU level, and 'downloading' of EU policy initiatives into national political processes (Moumoutzis 2011). Yet the idea built into the concept of Europeanization, namely that EU governments may adapt national positions to accommodate European policies, relates to the proposition that European integration as such might provide an ulterior motive (cf. Gross 2007b: 505). This proposition is also reflected in the writings of Michael Smith, who, from an institutionalist perspective, argued that the EU's collective foreign policy 'helps provide a valuable social commodity for the EU: internal unity' (Smith 2004: 257).

A second, even more radical approach linking ESDP with the objective of closer European integration has been proposed by Stephanie Anderson and Thomas Seitz, who have argued that ESDP represented a way of European nation-building via 'swaggering' (Anderson and Seitz 2006: 34). In the absence of credible resource commitments to ESDP, the argument runs, the whole enterprise makes sense only as a step towards new symbols of European nationhood: 'ESDP is a tool for creating pride among the people and support for the European Union' (Anderson 2008: 62). The primary objective of an EU foreign policy, in other words, is to garner legitimacy for the Union rather than to shape the EU's environment in whichever way.

## *Chapter II: ESDP Operations and International Relations Theory*

The idea that ESDP may be linked to the quest for 'ever closer Union' that the EU Treaty's preamble invokes has even received indirect support from realist quarters. Zachary Selden ventured the thesis that the ESDP 'is in large part a product of the institutional development of the EU and the consolidation of its authority over internal issues' (Selden 2010: 397). Drawing parallels with the US' development in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Selden argues that central authorities on both sides of the Atlantic developed means of power projection because they could, rather than because of any specific threats or balancing necessities (Selden 2010: 398). Selden's line of reasoning suggests that 'central authorities', i.e. the European institutions, will in a first step be interested in centralizing power, irrespective of foreign policy necessities. In stretching this argument, one might suspect that these authorities may leverage foreign policy for the purpose of centralizing power – a logic that would chime with the larger idea that ESDP served the purpose of European integration.

Whereas all of the accounts related above differ in the precise causal chain by which they explain EU cooperation in the field of foreign policy, they share the idea that such cooperation might be embraced more for internal than external reasons. Such cooperation and the European unity that it attempts to generate is seen as a goal in itself, and ultimately as a means towards deeper political integration within the Union. This begs the question how such an objective could be distinguished from the more specific aims that foreign policy seeks to achieve – or those generic objectives that the preceding two propositions laid out. Beyond professed motivations, the answer again lies partly in the price that the EU would be willing to pay. Would it be willing to sacrifice external influence or normative principles for the sake of European unity, or, alternatively, are its activities primarily sensible as acts for the sake of European action?

In short, if ESDP was an instrument for EU governments to pursue closer European integration, we would expect that the Union's operations were conceived in a way to increase EU visibility and advance its legitimacy. The third proposition is thus that *ESDP operations are driven by EU governments' desire to promote European integration by means of showcasing the EU's ability to contribute to international security*. To put it differently, the pursuit of international visibility for the EU as an international security actor would have to prevail over alternative considerations in the decision-making surrounding an operation. For this proposition to convince us, we would expect to find an emphasis on 'flag-raising exercises'; a conscious choice for the EU framework against available institutional alternatives (such as NATO or the UN) on the grounds of political visibility rather than functional adequacy; and an emphasis on EU unity and EU activity as a goal in and of itself, irrespective of the effect an operation could be expected to have on its target. By contrast, if we were to find that considerations of external influence trumped concerns for EU unity and

action, or if the latter did not have any recognizable impact on decision-making, this would undermine the plausibility of our third proposition – even if ESDP operations in effect were to have led to greater European integration.

How can we distinguish the proposition that ESDP operations have been promoted for the sake of European integration from the two rival explanations discussed earlier on? Clearly, the idea that ESDP be done to promote a more visible, coherent and legitimate EU is in principle consistent with the latter. Further integration may put the EU into a better position to pursue external power or promote liberal values. Yet whereas the propositions are presented as competing explanations, evidence for one of them does not necessarily falsify the others. What is at issue are the drivers that have been behind ESDP missions, not the ultimate state of the world that they may (un)wittingly advance. If there is evidence that such operations seek to promote European integration, we can still weigh the claim that this may ‘only’ be an intermediate objective on the way to ulterior goals. In contrast to the argument advanced by some realists (cf. Jones 2007; Art 2006), however, the present study does not accept closer cooperation between European states *in itself* as proof of such ulterior motives.

The proposition that ESDP served European integration primarily takes up social constructivist interpretations of European foreign policy which have focused on the relationship between EU action and an emerging European security identity. Yet whereas many constructivists have sought to understand the interaction between the two, this third proposition focuses only on the extent to which the objective of closer European integration fostered EU action – rather than the feedback the latter might have (had) on closer integration. The reasons for this self-limitation are twofold. On the one hand, the operations under review in this study took place within a relatively short timeframe so that their impact on the formulation of basic governmental preferences (such as the one for a EU security identity) can be expected to be limited as of yet. On the other hand, this study self-consciously opted to limit itself by starting from a set of classes of possible foreign policy goals rather than seeking to identify their fundamental sources. It may well be that ‘[t]hrough complex processes of institutionalization, the EU has fundamentally changed the way its member states define and pursue their interests’ (Smith 2004: 263). As Michael Smith’s monograph however makes clear, these results were the long-term and often unintended consequences of cooperation rather than governments’ explicit objectives. The third proposition, by contrast, simply examines to what extent the deliberate quest for closer European integration has had an impact on ESDP policy-making, not whether the resulting habits may have impacted back on national preferences with respect to integration.

In short, the proposition that the objective of closer political union in Europe might lead the EU to be active in the framework of ESDP is consistent with, and made plausible by, the research agendas of several theoretical approaches in international relations as well as European integration studies. At the same time, it does not (aim to) do justice to all possible hypotheses that could be derived from these approaches. Rather, as pointed out before, these theories and their previous applications to EU foreign policy serve as inspirations for potential causal mechanisms which might be at work in the run-up to ESDP operations. After thus examining the way in which ideational interests in European integration may have inspired EU external action, we now turn to the remaining power-political interest that potentially informed governments' positions: their pursuit of domestic political profit by way of European external action.

### **E. ESDP AND DOMESTIC POLITICS (IV)**

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The final proposition explores how EU foreign policy might have been targeted at winning domestic approval. This proposition combines two ideas: first, that foreign policy objectives reflect societal preferences, and second that governments, in making foreign policy, primarily consider likely domestic reactions. The first consideration is rather widespread (if sometimes implicit) and has informed work in most theoretical paradigms: from constructivist investigations into the 'national strategic cultures' underpinning ESDP via liberal analyses of member state preferences and preference assumptions in rationalist institutionalism up to classical realists' assertion that foreign policy behaviour was shaped by 'national legacy in terms of history, culture and outlook' (Rynning 2011: 31). This shared assumption has however rarely resulted in systematic comparative analysis of the extent to which governments have represented such domestic preferences, and how their influence on governments' positions compares to other drivers in their impact on foreign policy.

Whereas most researchers agree that states in international politics promote their national interests, the drivers behind the latter are contested between the various theoretical paradigms. It is primarily scholars from the constructivist and liberal camp who have sought to elucidate the sources of these interests within national polities (cf. Checkel 2008: 74; Moravcsik 1997). When it comes to understanding ESDP, the most important strand within constructivism in this respect has been the literature on 'national strategic cultures' and 'political cultures'. This literature links states' behaviour to nationally shared sets of beliefs, values and ideas about the appropriate means and ends of foreign policy (see e.g. Giegerich 2006; Meyer 2006; Katzenstein 1996; Duffield 1999). It conceptually overlaps with the role-theoretical literature discussed in the section on 'normative power Europe', but it differs to the

extent that it stresses the differences between *national* strategic cultures within the EU rather than the convergence if not consensus on the EU's external role that the former highlighted. For this reason such cultural approaches have often been understood as constraints on, rather than drivers behind a collective foreign policy (cf. Hyde-Price 2004: 326-7; Giegerich 2006; Duffield 1999).

Although the literature on national security cultures provides a plausible framework for linking national beliefs and values to foreign policy activity, it cannot be directly appropriated for the proposition that governments may use foreign policy for domestic political purpose. The reason is that the causal link this literature invokes runs directly from nationally shared principles to governmental behaviour. Governments hence do not use beliefs *strategically* with respect to their societies, but out of a stable and collectively shared understanding of history. Changes in policy are possible if rare as such national consensus may intermittently be punctured by events that lead to its re-interpretation. One frequently cited example is the effect of the 1990s Balkan wars on Germany's earlier refusal to use force 'out of area' (cf. Hyde-Price 2001; Maull 2000). Yet whereas the culturalist literature often relies on a 'logic of appropriateness', the exact nature of the link between shared beliefs and foreign policy positions is generally asserted rather than tested against alternative explanations. Politicians may of course embrace nationally shared ideas because they believe in them, but simply assuming so excludes the possibility that their stance is of tactical provenience, that they do so because it helps them survive domestically. As Brian Rathbun put it, '[e]lectorate and cultural concerns work in tandem' (Rathbun 2004: 37). Similarly, it is conceivable that the 'norm entrepreneurs' that constructivists have often invoked to explain policy change promote new norms as a result of the proven inadequacy or incoherence of their previous policies (cf. Giegerich 2006), but also that they do so because they perceive political opportunity in an adjusted policy position.

In short, there is *a priori* no reason as to why the relationship between national beliefs and values and foreign policy stances should follow a logic of appropriateness rather than one of expected consequences, and the literature on ESDP and national strategic cultures does not provide strong arguments to that effect. Much of the empirical evidence of this relationship that scholars in the culturalist line of research have assembled could thus also be marshalled in support of the idea that governments attempt to please domestic audiences. This observation obviously should not be turned around into the equally flawed conclusion that any deference to or defiance of national belief systems is necessarily proof of politicians' scheming calculations. The question of likely motives is rather one to be decided on the basis of the empirical evidence – although, as this chapter's introduction warned, that might frequently be difficult and sometimes impossible to decide. This caveat notwithstanding, the fourth proposition examines whether governments are

primarily influenced by domestic expectations rather than cultural conditioning because this fits more clearly into the matrix of potential purposes of foreign policy and the study's meta-theoretical choice for a 'logic of expected consequences' set out at the beginning of this chapter.

The second theoretical paradigm in which the link between national politics and foreign policy has undergone close examination is liberalism. The relationship has figured most prominently in the 'new liberalism' literature, which claims that governments (face strong incentives to) represent domestic interests in foreign policy-making (Moravcsik 2008, 1997; see also Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2005). According to this interpretation, democratically elected governments respond to the demands and expectations of domestic groups or the general public out of self-interest, namely their desire to remain in office (Moravcsik 1993: 483; Doyle 2008: 61; Downs 1957). Remarkably, this idea has not received a lot of attention in the literature on ESDP (cf. Krotz and Maher 2011: 571), despite the fact that 'liberal intergovernmentalism', the EU studies equivalent of 'new liberalism', has been fairly influential in the literature on European integration. Two monographs have used this framework to investigate the emergence of the ESDP (Kaim 2007; Dover 2007). Both however interpret liberal intergovernmentalism in a loose fashion, with Kaim emphasizing structural changes in the international environment over domestic expectations of governmental responses and Dover criticizing the framework for misrepresenting the nature of the domestic political process as well as its inability to subsume motivations relating to external objectives such as 'geopolitical considerations and the desire to appear pro-European' (Dover 2005: 521).

The idea that ESDP operations may serve governments in their quest for political profit largely overlaps with new liberalism's emphasis on representation of societal interests. Yet it is also able to incorporate Dover's criticism insofar as it does not depend on a process whereby governments simply aggregate societal wishes.<sup>9</sup> Instead, it implies that governments may act out of their own volition if they expect net political gains from (in-)action. Moreover, whereas (sincerely) geopolitical motives are indeed beyond the explanatory power of a framework focused on domestic political gain, the desire to *appear* pro-European or otherwise might just be explained by the latter, provided the intended target is the domestic audience. In principle, even geopolitical or European considerations could thus fall under a 'domestic politics' explanation if there is sufficient reason to believe that such

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<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that liberal intergovernmentalism, too, does not predict that foreign policy is a consequence of direct societal pressure, but that governments in this domain are relatively free to pursue symbolic goals 'under loose public or elite opinion constraints' (Moravcsik 1993: 495).

considerations were primarily the result of an attempt to direct attention away from domestic political conflicts and scandals, or to appear at home as a competent steward in matters foreign policy. The crucial question dividing this proposition from the first is whether the perception of domestic audiences or foreign powers is the primary target of any policy. Distinguishing between the two may sometimes be difficult, but can arguably be deduced from the (lack of) credibility of the strategy used to pursue the ostensible foreign policy objective.

Since domestic politics in EU member states is structured by competition between political parties, a focus on the former begs the question how foreign policy might relate to governments' partisan composition. Surprisingly little comparative research has been done in IR to systematically link party politics and foreign policy decisions – perhaps because of the continuing legacy of a focus on 'national' interests. One very notable exception is a monograph by Brian Rathbun which examines the relationship between party ideology and support for humanitarian intervention in the Balkans with respect to the three European countries this book also focuses on, the UK, France and Germany (Rathbun 2004). He concludes that there was a palpable partisan divide in that left-leaning parties supported interventions on account of 'inclusive' party ideologies emphasizing solidarity with (vulnerable) foreigners whereas right-leaning parties focused on 'exclusive' objectives such as foreign policy credibility and suppression of refugees. He moreover finds this 'policy-seeking' behaviour a stronger explanation than rival accounts based on 'national culture' or electoral 'office-seeking'.

While the partisan hue of national governments doubtlessly plays a role in their respective approaches to foreign policy-making, the fourth proposition, in linking foreign policy to domestic politics, does not distinguish *ex ante* between party ideology and 'office-seeking' behaviour. The reasons are threefold: first, the distinction is difficult to test empirically. Rathbun expects office-seeking behaviour to be characterized by the party leadership initiating policy changes prior to elections and compares this to changes introduced by experts after events threaten parties' ideological coherence (cf. Rathbun 2004: 35). Behaviour in line with the first hypothesis may however carry significant risks. As politics supposedly stops at the water's edge, blatantly opportunistic changes in party position that are not carefully couched in ideological recalibration might provoke a backlash and undermine party credibility (cf. Downs 1957: 142). Moreover, incoherent responses to the issues of the day also present political risks. In other words, what Rathbun defines as 'policy-seeking' could very well be a more reflexive mode of 'office-seeking' behaviour whereas his 'office-seeking' behaviour equals a populism that might be self-defeating for the mainstream parties he focuses on. The second reason for dropping the distinction between party ideology and 'office-seeking' is that the timeframe that this study focuses on saw only one change in government that would allow us to

compare parties' stances independent of whether they carry governmental responsibility or not.<sup>10</sup> Thirdly, the operations undertaken in the framework of ESDP were far smaller in scale, less risky, and therefore less politicised than the Balkan interventions of the 1990s. In the absence of politicization, partisan debate is much less likely.

Given the conceptual, empirical, and theoretical caveats listed above, an abstraction from partisan ideology at the investigation's outset seems justifiable. That does not imply that such findings are excluded. At the conceptual level, however, party ideology can for now be subsumed under the quest for domestic political gain since its independent effects are likely to be small in our cases and correlated with the latter. Governments as well as political parties need to show that they stand for something while managing the risks of a potential fallout with public opinion at large. This leads us to the question of what policies governments might pursue in order to achieve domestic political gain.

In and by itself, the claim that governments orient foreign policy action toward expected domestic political benefits does not tell us very much, but needs to be complemented by substantive assumptions about societal expectations when it comes to ESDP-style crisis management. Two incentives appear prevalent: on the one hand, EU governments might politically benefit from demonstrating that they are capable of influencing international events in line with domestic values and priorities. Put differently, their authority and legitimacy might be threatened if they prove unwilling or unable to exert such influence and thereby appear callous or irrelevant. On the other hand, they are threatened by the potential perception that they are paying too high a price in treasure or casualties for foreign policy projects whose benefits are dubious, uncertain or essentially public goods. Consequently, governments need to pre-empt the twin dangers of standing accused of pointless activism and excessive risk-taking or complacency and weakness. Both incentives vary across member states since the domestic political benefits from being seen to 'do something' as well as the preferences for where and how (not) to intervene hinge on geographic, historical and cultural factors.

Does this entail that EU governments can just do whatever they believe might benefit them domestically? It certainly does not because EU governments are

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<sup>10</sup> The very first discussions on the earliest operation under consideration here started in 2002, and all operations were in their implementation phase by 2009. In between, only the German government's 'colour' changed, and even that change was arguably minor for foreign policy as Social Democrats who had previously led the government held onto the Foreign Office.

### *The Drivers behind EU Crisis Management Operations*

significantly constrained in their behaviour by the interdependence of state preferences (cf. Moravcsik 1997: 523). Interdependence arises first and foremost with respect to the countries that form the object of foreign policy. As multiple attempts throughout history show, it is simply difficult to influence foreigners (Cooper 2004: 113-27). Yet interdependence is particularly palpable in the case of multilateral foreign policy cooperation, where consensus between 27 member states on whether and how to attempt to exert such influence is a formal prerequisite to interaction with target countries. Debate and negotiations among EU member states over ESDP operations are consistent with all propositions introduced so far as governments may differ in their preferred strategies over how to achieve the purported collective objectives such as external power, the spread of liberal values or the promotion of European integration. What is distinctive about the fourth proposition, however, is that such divisions would be a reflection of the differing incentives governments face with respect to their domestic audiences.

In sum, there are a number of theoretical angles which suggest that domestic drivers might loom large in foreign policy-making even if the domestic political consequences of security policy have rarely been the focus of systematic analysis – a gap that the fourth proposition aims to close. If ESDP was an instrument of EU governments' pursuit of domestic political profit, we would expect that operations were tailored to appeal to societal expectations and to eschew potentially negative reactions as a consequence of foreign policy (in-) action. The resultant fourth proposition is thus that *ESDP operations primarily serve to ensure or improve governments' chances for domestic political gain by advocating popular causes and/or avoiding domestically difficult foreign policy issues*. Put differently, it would be the appearance of competent and legitimate foreign policy, responsiveness to societal priorities and the ability to manage potentially risky issues at arm's length that would determine which missions to take on and under which circumstances. For this proposition to be vindicated, we would expect that national positions on these missions be tailored with a view to the respective societal preferences and priorities rather than target needs; that policies may diverge from what would constitute 'effective solutions' with respect to enhancing external power and/or promoting liberal values; that these policies may lack a credible strategy with respect to these goals as the latter are secondary to domestic politics; that the emphasis would be on activities that domestic audiences would feel good about while avoiding risks and deflecting potential blame; and that debate between EU governments primarily reflected differing domestic political priorities. On the other hand, if we were to find that considerations of external effect trumped domestic political concerns, that EU governments chose to pursue unpopular projects in the national or even European interest, or that domestic considerations simply played no role in negotiations, we would reject this proposition.

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As set out before, this fourth proposition partly resonates with liberal and constructivist interpretations even though it goes beyond most of them in suggesting that governments may not just be guided and constrained by domestic expectations but may seek to use foreign policy for net political gain at home. It also (partially) evokes the logic of ‘two-level games’ according to which governments use domestic constraints to manipulate the outcomes of international agreements and exploit international agreements to overcome domestic resistance to preferred policies (Putnam 1988). Janne Matlary has used that model to analyze ESDP and argued that collective crisis management helped EU governments to share political risks and blame at a time when European publics were unwilling to countenance unilateral foreign policy adventures (Matlary 2009). Others have pushed that logic further by dwelling on the correlation between support for the ‘supranationalization’ of EU foreign policy and domestic constraints. If the German and Italian governments are particularly supportive of diluting national autonomy in this field, then perhaps that is because it may improve their position vis-à-vis strong parliaments (cf. Koenig-Archibugi 2004b)?

The emergence of ESDP has even been interpreted more generally as a struggle of state bureaucracies against the shackles of democratic control (Bickerton 2011; for a more charitable interpretation of the role of bureaucracies, see Mérand 2008). This image of a domestic political struggle for power is also echoed in a realist’s observation that ESDP ‘reflects the erosion of political power within Europe and is, as such, a measure created to cope with inner weakness, not external power’ (Rynning 2011: 32). Yet the bureaucratic struggle for greater discretionary power also chimes with, and provides a plausible motive for, the third proposition, namely that ESDP is an instrument for advancing greater European integration. In order not to confound two distinct objectives – appealing to societal principals versus unshackling the state from societal control – and because the former can be more usefully compared to the other three propositions, the focus of the fourth proposition is on the need for governments to appeal to their electorates.

Although the interpretations of the works cited above are rather diverse and partially differ from that embraced in the fourth proposition, they overlap insofar as they attach primary importance to the domestic as opposed to the international struggle for power. However, whereas it is comparatively straightforward to discern between the pursuit of external power and domestic popularity, how can the latter be distinguished from the promotion of liberal values? After all, the idea underpinning ‘normative power Europe’ is also that the EU advance values which are collectively shared, so their promotion might conceivably bring governments domestic credit. The difference between advancing liberal values and pleasing domestic audiences by appearing to promote these values is thus not a clear-cut one. However, there are two elements which might help to make the distinction: the

extent to which domestic priorities might diverge from the endorsement of such values, and the credibility of any strategy designed to advance them. With respect to the first element, if governments are unwilling to invest anything substantial into promoting liberal principles for fear of domestic criticism of the expense, we can conclude that the invocation of values was primarily for domestic consumption. Similarly, if governments do not have a minimally credible strategy for achieving what they purport to achieve, they are likely playing to the domestic gallery. Both distinctions admittedly involve difficult value judgments, but whether those are convincing can best be decided in hindsight.

In sum, the proposition that ESDP operations may serve to procure domestic political net gains for EU governments' relates to a number of theoretical approaches and specific hypotheses that have been put forward to explain ESDP. At the same time it entails a number of restrictions so as not to constitute a residual explanation capturing any driver at the domestic level. Focusing on governmental objectives in claiming credit and avoiding blame for foreign events, it sets aside party ideology as well as the struggle of the state apparatus for autonomy against democratic control – except for where they overlap with the pursuit of domestic political gain. The following, concluding section will summarize and contrast the four propositions and attendant empirical implications and discuss the benefits and drawbacks of using this novel framework rather than engaging in the traditional exercise of comparing the plausibility of various theoretical paradigms.

## **F. CONCLUSION**

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The preceding sections specified four propositions about generic drivers that may have propelled EU governments into undertaking ESDP operations. They linked these drivers to, and distinguished them from those elaborated in earlier theoretical work. Moreover, each section deduced some empirical expectations that would likely indicate that the respective driver was at work. For better overview, they are summarized in one table below:

TABLE 3. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSITIONS REGARDING DRIVERS BEHIND ESDP

<i>Drivers</i>	<i>Propositions</i>	<i>Empirical expectations</i>
EU governments' pursuit of relative external power (I)	<i>ESDP operations primarily serve to counter-balance the influence of the US</i>	<p>Concern primarily over power-political consequences</p> <p>Presence of credible strategy to increase relative power at the expense of US influence</p> <p>EU-US disagreement, US opposition</p> <p>France taking the lead</p>
EU governments' pursuit of liberal values (II)	<i>ESDP operations primarily serve to promote collectively held liberal values</i>	<p>Operations designed to effectively promote liberal values rather than narrow self-interest</p> <p>Presence of credible strategy for effective expansion of liberal norms</p> <p>US goodwill or support</p>
EU governments' pursuit of European integration (III)	<i>ESDP operations primarily serve EU governments' desire to promote European integration by means of showcasing the EU's ability to contribute to international security</i>	<p>Emphasis on 'flag-raising exercises'</p> <p>Conscious choice for EU framework against plausible institutional alternatives (such as NATO or UN)</p> <p>Emphasis on EU unity / activity as goal in and of itself, irrespective of functional adequacy in theatre</p>

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EU governments' pursuit of domestic political gain (IV)	<i>ESDP operations primarily serve to safeguard or improve governments' domestic political position by advocating popular causes and/or avoiding domestically difficult foreign policy issues</i>	National position tailored to respective societal preferences rather than target needs or expected consequences in terms of external power Divergence from 'effective solutions', absence of credible strategy Focus on avoiding risks and blame that may cause domestic political harm
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While these propositions arguably comprise most of the theoretically inspired attempts to explain ESDP so far, they clearly do not encompass all possible explications. Rather, they offer four 'ideal types' of purposes that may only be approximated – and which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Moreover, it should be stressed that all these propositions are not intended to check whether the theoretical stances informing them *as such* are correct. Instead, this study merely seeks to examine to what extent they can explain collaboration in the ESDP framework.

If this analytical framework systematically covers external and internal as well as both power-related and ideational purposes, what could it be missing? As already mentioned, the two ideational purposes (II and III) simply represent the conceptions most prevalent in the literature. This omits potential rival ideational objectives. Moreover, each proposition could have been specified differently, as the discussion of each 'related' literature attests. Whereas this discussion served to identify the presumably strongest alternative, empirical research may yet call for a revision of that judgment.

Beyond those theoretical qualifications, however, two further caveats are in order. First, the driving forces behind each operation will necessarily relate to the *proximate* policy objective it seeks to promote. The latter, however, may not always be easily or unambiguously attributable to any one of the *underlying* purposes set out in the propositions. Secondly, the proposed underlying drivers are political in nature whereas most of the day-to-day policy-making is characterized by the interaction of bureaucracies. While diplomats and military officers will generally support their political masters, they face additional incentives related to organizational goals that may cross-cut and even eclipse political purposes. This

effect is likely to be stronger with respect to issues that are not heavily mediatised and politicised – as may arguably be the case for many ESDP operations. Both these qualifications may dilute the extent to which we are able to find unambiguous evidence for one or more of the potential drivers specified in this chapter. Yet these caveats notwithstanding, we should expect to find *some* evidence for our propositions. After all, foreign policy-making in general is subject to comparable friction, qualifications and constraints, but this has not made it inaccessible to theoretical explanations that focus on its links to various political purposes.

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### RELATING THE ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK TO IR THEORY

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In searching for general political patterns, the four propositions relate to key theoretical cleavages in IR, but attempt to overcome the battle of the ‘isms’ in favour of a narrower distinction between the potential purposes ESDP may serve. Yet what is the advantage of introducing yet another analytical framework rather than simply testing the more familiar IR theories? In fact, the benefits of such an approach are threefold. First, and as discussed in this chapter’s introduction, it allows us to break into their individual elements the different dimensions along which such approaches simultaneously oppose each other. Secondly, IR theories overlap considerably in the mechanisms they invoke for explaining international politics. As a consequence, there is extensive controversy about which paradigm ‘rightfully owns’ which mechanism. A good part of the debate in IR consists in scholars accusing rival paradigms of expropriating arguments or even terms that are ‘properly’ realist or liberal (see e.g. Mearsheimer 1995; Moravcsik 1999; Legro and Moravcsik 1999). By introducing propositions related to, but not identical with or comprehensively representing theoretical paradigms, this study aims to make use of their analytical insights while eschewing the descent into a debate merely about labels.

Thirdly and most importantly, the mainstream IR theories of realism, liberalism, and social constructivism are often indeterminate when it comes to translating their generic explanatory models into specific policy explanations. This is clearest in the case of social constructivism. As two well-known constructivists pointed out, ‘[c]onstructivism is not a substantive theory of politics’ and does not ‘make any particular claims about the content of social structures or the nature of agents at work in social life’ (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001: 393; see also Checkel 1998: 342; Kratochwil 2003: 126). Moreover, it is a social theory that in principle could be applied to all levels of analysis, whether it be the EU’s position in international society, member states’ behaviour within the EU, or the role of domestic or bureaucratic norms and identities. Last but not least, constructivists are not necessarily committed to explanation. Instead of focusing on causality, it is the ‘how’ or ‘how possible’ question that is of greater importance to the constructivist

research programme (Wendt 1998: 105). Clearly, these properties do not provide the preconditions for specifying 'the' constructivist explanation for ESDP operations.

Although liberalism and realism are by contrast substantive theories of international politics, and, at least in their modern guises, committed to causal explanation, their explanatory models equally do not translate into singular propositions whose plausibility could be compared. Liberalism for one has been accused of lacking the necessary coherence for constituting a single paradigm since the causal models used under this label vary widely – variously 'appropriating' the domestic level in the case of Moravcsik's 'new liberalism' or any independent variable that may explain international cooperation, such as states' regime properties in the democratic peace theory or the effects of international institutions on state behaviour (Rathbun 2010). Without any inherent core logic, what could liberalism *as such* explain about a specific phenomenon in the vein of ESDP? Contemporary realism, particularly in its neo-classical guise, has had to contend with similar charges (cf. Legro and Moravcsik 1999). Even structural realism, the most parsimonious and focused of the paradigms, has struggled to reach a common position on explaining ESDP. With respect to the latter, one realist thus identified three positions in the literature which contradict each other (Rynning 2011: 25-8). It is hence again impossible to arrive at 'the' realist explanation, and the rejection of any one particular interpretation labelled 'realist' would likely trigger the counter-argument that the theory's application had been misconstrued.

The fact that it is impossible to relate the 'grand theories' of IR to one specific view on ESDP thus provides a strong argument for detaching our investigation of the policy's drivers from any purported testing of theoretical labels. As we saw in the earlier sections, all propositions with the exception of the first were linked with all three paradigmatic theories in one way or another. This underlines the gap between grand IR theory and the preconditions for explaining specific foreign policies, and supports the case for building the sort of 'middle-range' theories the propositions encapsulate (cf. Merton 1957). Yet narrowing down the scope of our investigation to the specific objectives that governments may have had for pursuing particular policies also comes at a price. By restricting itself to a focus on governmental incentives, this study gives up on some of the theoretical richness that linked particular objectives with specific drivers such as the role of societal actors, supranational institutions, global norms, or national identities. In particular, this limits the number of specific empirical expectations these propositions generate. Since we cannot directly observe governmental objectives, we can only draw inferences from the process by which decisions are taken and the vigour with which certain objectives are apparently pursued. By sacrificing specific predictions on what pressures push governments into action, and instead focusing on their goals, we are

deprived of some possible markers as to which sort of causal process we might be witnessing.

On the upside, a focus on governments' objectives rather than the structural constraints they face removes some of those theories' limitations by allowing for purposive and anticipatory behaviour on the part of the essential actors. With its greater appreciation for the role of agency such a framework attenuates the structural bias that IR theories arguably exhibit. This appears appropriate in view of this book's focus on one particular feature of foreign policy, and thus on only one aspect of the overall set of measures by which governments react towards the manifold pressures and incentives they face. The focus on agency is all the more fitting as we are facing a policy which, at face value, seems to confound IR theorists' emphasis on structural pressures at the expense of discrete choices. Clearly, EU governments' foreign policy choices are formulated against a background of dispositional and, ultimately, structural causes (cf. Carlsnaes 2008). Yet in historical comparative perspective, European states have rarely faced fewer external security threats and pressures. Similarly, the potential internal demands for expanding liberal values, deepening European integration or pursuing a more proactive foreign policy seem also less than inescapable. Given the absence of visible pressures, making ESDP happen reveals substantial voluntarism on the part of EU governments and so justifies a focus on their objectives rather than inexorable structural pressures. Subsequent chapters will therefore analyze how and why the EU governments *chose* to collectively engage in four foreign crises, and what this says about our four propositions. Before, however, the next chapter will elaborate *how* this book will study their plausibility.

## **CHAPTER III: STUDYING ESDP OPERATIONS**

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This chapter serves to discuss the choices underlying the research design by which this study examines ESDP operations' broader drivers. In particular, it will reflect on the reasons for selecting specific ESDP actors and policy outcomes and on the conceptual choices that form the basis of this study. Before engaging into a detailed analysis of the research design, however, we need to roughly delineate the object of analysis. For this purpose, the following section will sketch out a quick overview regarding the context into which ESDP is embedded. It cannot hope to do justice to the multitude of political struggles, institutional precursors and rivals, or legal and bureaucratic finesses that preceded and accompanied the emergence of the ESDP. Instead, it simply intends to summarize a few important aspects of the ESDP's politico-institutional environment in order to give a rough impression of how the subsequent analysis relates to the wider architecture of European (security) cooperation.

### **A. HISTORICAL PROLOGUE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK**

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As noted before, the ESDP is embedded into a broader EU foreign policy framework, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The latter was launched with the Maastricht treaty which entered into force in 1993. The CFSP in turn hailed from the 'European Political Cooperation', which had been introduced in 1970 as an informal consultation mechanism between members of the European (Economic) Community (EEC; EC after Maastricht), designed to 'prevent international problems from disrupting the Community' (Smith 2004: 4). Although it was hence created with a view to bolstering the EC, institutionally it was kept strictly separate from the latter (not even being included into the Treaties until the Single European Act of 1987). By ushering in the overarching institutional framework of a 'European Union', the Maastricht Treaty denoted an important attempt at integrating the various facets of cooperation between European governments. Yet the 'pillar structure' which it created also kept intergovernmental cooperation in foreign and security policy apart from the more supranational EC. The latter continued to function according to the 'Community method' which implied a strong role for the European Commission as 'guardian of the treaties', 'motor of European integration', and entity with the sole right of initiating EU legislation. The Community method moreover entailed a stronger role for other supranational institutions such as the European Court of Justice and the European Parliament, as well as significant constraints on member states' autonomy. The secular trend towards 'qualified majority voting' procedures

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meant that EU members increasingly lost the possibility of individually vetoing European legislation – even though the latter would subsequently bind them.

The CFSP, by contrast, remained founded on consensus among all EU governments, and it was characterized by a conscious effort to keep the influence of supranational institutions at bay. The pivotal institution for taking decisions was (and remains) the EU Council of Ministers, which unites member states' representatives at ministerial level. With the Treaty of Amsterdam, signed in 1997, the Union however also equipped itself with a 'High Representative of the CFSP' who would simultaneously head the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers (Council General-Secretariat / CGS) (cf. Christiansen 2006: 89). Initially a small bureaucracy established in 1986 with the Single European Act, this Secretariat was designed to support the EU Council presidencies – that were rotating between member states' governments – in coordinating matters of external relations, without having to make recourse to the 'supra-national' European Commission (cf. Dijkstra 2009: 436; Christiansen 2006: 89). Over time, it has become an influential player in its own right and grown to comprise some 2500 officials (cf. Gray and Stubb 2001: 6; 19; Howorth 2007: 65). For ten years from 1999 onwards, the office of High Representative and Secretary-General (HR/GS) would be held by Javier Solana, a former Spanish foreign minister and NATO Secretary-General.

The fact that an ESDP came to be embedded into the structures of the EU and its CFSP was by no means a foregone conclusion. Several attempts during the Cold War to establish an organization for European defence cooperation failed, most notably the European Defence Community in 1954 and the Fouchet Plan of 1961. The end of the Cold War brought with it new uncertainties over the future security architecture in Europe. Various institutional alternatives beckoned: apart from the EC, options ranged from the inclusive Conference on (later Organization for) Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE/OSCE), a (renewed and expanded) NATO, or the Western European Union (WEU), an intergovernmental organization essentially uniting those states with membership in both NATO and the EU. Those institutions could obviously coexist, but questions regarding their interrelationship and inter-organizational hierarchy bedevilled policy-makers throughout the 1990s. Whereas most EC governments by then wished for the EU to take on a stronger role in the domain of foreign, security and defence policy, the British government in particular objected to the EU venturing into defence policy.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The UK was not the only country to object: Denmark secured a full 'opt-out' from defence cooperation in 1992 following the rejection of the Maastricht treaty in a referendum, which means that to date decisions with military implications are taken by 26 instead of the usual 27 EU governments.

The proximate cause for the 'birth' of ESDP was the result of a change in British policy. In December 1998, the newly elected Labour government under Tony Blair co-signed a Franco-British initiative at the bilateral summit of Saint-Malo which stated that 'the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so in order to respond to international crises' (quoted in Rutten 2001: 8). This initiative was subsequently tied into the CFSP and institutionally digested with the Nice Treaty of 2000. In the wake of intergovernmental discussions from 1999 until 2001, the EU set up several new institutions charged with implementing the ESDP: a Political and Security Committee (PSC) at ambassadorial level, tasked with directing (within limits) crisis management operations on behalf of the Council of Ministers; an EU Military Committee (EUMC) to advise the PSC on military matters and to direct the EU Military Staff (EUMS), a small organization attached to the Council Secretariat and designed to provide military expertise; and a Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CivCom), an advisory body mirroring the EUMC on the civilian side.

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### INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

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The most difficult issues that the ESDP encountered upon its inception pertained to inter-institutional questions, both within the EU and in its relationship with NATO (cf. Jopp 1999: 18-22; Gnesotto 2005: 19; 21; Howorth 2007: 89-91; 135-177; Nowak 2006: 139-141). Within the EU, tensions arose between the Commission and the Council and its Secretariat as to whether the latter were not treading on the territory of the former in the domain of civilian crisis management. These tensions were tentatively addressed in the Lisbon Treaty, which aimed at greater intra-institutional coherence by fusing the office of the CFSP's High Representative with that of a Commission Vice-President and undergirding it with an European External Action Service who would draw on both Council and Commission personnel – although practice still has to show whether this arrangement will indeed improve intra-EU coherence.

Politically most challenging, however, was ESDP's relationship with NATO. This relationship was obviously embedded into the larger context of transatlantic relations, notably the close bilateral relations the US had with many individual EU member states as well as the multiple multilateral settings in which they interacted. As others have detailed, the US' reaction to ESDP has been variegated, fluctuating and ambiguous for several reasons (Howorth 2007: 135-177; Giegerich et al. 2006; Hunter 2002a). Yet it was the emerging institutional relationship between NATO and ESDP which became the primary theatre for the struggle over rivalling concepts for the future European security architecture. The stakes were summed up in the

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response that US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright published three days after the declaration of Saint-Malo: Albright signalled approval, but conditioned it on avoiding what she referred to as 'the Three Ds: decoupling, duplication and discrimination' (Albright 1998). The injunctions against decoupling (of ESDP decision-making from NATO) and duplication (of expensive defence resources already at NATO's disposal) were aimed at safeguarding direct US influence on European security affairs. Their importance subsided over time as US policy-makers came to appreciate the EU's limited ambitions and benign intentions. The third issue, discrimination, revolved around the question of how to treat Turkey. Because this issue has evolved into one of the most important problems for ESDP via its entanglement with and impact on relations between the EU and NATO, it deserves a short historical detour.

Turkey was (and remains) the most important non-EU European NATO member. Its relationship with the EU has been difficult. Applying in 1987 to accede to the EU, it became an accession candidate only in 1999 and started negotiations in 2005. During that time span, 13 countries (and more since) applied to and joined the EU whereas Turkey's eventual accession remains in serious doubt. Successive US administrations have supported Turkey's EU candidacy and insisted that ESDP not entail any deterioration for Ankara's position vis-à-vis the EU. Yet in view of the evolving institutional changes a relative degradation was the default option. ESDP's purpose as listed in Art. 17, 2 of the Nice Treaty, the so-called 'Petersberg tasks', had been taken over from the WEU. For implementing these tasks, the WEU had made arrangements with NATO to draw on the latter's assets and capabilities in the area of operation planning and command, control and support functions. These were agreed at a NATO ministerial meeting in Berlin in 1996, came to be known as the 'Berlin agreement', and afforded considerable rights of participation to the WEU's associated members, among them Turkey.

As the ESDP increasingly 'cannibalised' the WEU functions, Turkey, with US support, wanted to see these rights replicated in the EU (cf. Missiroli 2002). Yet whereas the WEU had largely been content to remain subordinate to NATO given that all its members also participated in the latter, this was not the case with the EU. The Union, comprising several militarily non-aligned member states, insisted on decision-making autonomy. Turkey's complaints have been opposed not only by those insisting on decision-making autonomy though, but also by EU governments less enthusiastic about the prospect of Turkish EU membership more generally. EU-NATO inter-organizational rivalries thus came to provide a convenient smokescreen for various power struggles between different member states and with third parties. Their ramifications will be analysed in greater detail in chapter IV, in the context of the EU's Bosnia operation. Suffice it to say at this point that it took the two organizations more than four years to reach a complicated set of agreements

specifying the conditions under which the EU could draw on the very NATO assets that it was not supposed to duplicate. With reference to its predecessor, this framework came to be known as the 'Berlin Plus agreement'.

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## ESDP AND CAPABILITIES

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While these institutional issues proved hard to digest, they were not an end in themselves. The British defence minister at the time, George Robertson, warned in March 1999 that '[i]nstitutional re-engineering alone will solve little [...] you cannot send a wiring diagram to a crisis' (quoted in Howorth 2001: 771). Instead, he insisted, it was 'political will and the ability to act that matter first and foremost' (quoted in Howorth 2007: 62). In other words, what mattered were the crisis management operations embodying political will and the capabilities needed to underpin them. Indeed, the question of capabilities had been one of the reasons why many EU governments – and London in particular – had supported the emergence of an ESDP. Their hope was that EU cooperation could leverage the transformation of European militaries from their traditional focus on territorial defence to the new task of global crisis management (cf. Menon 2009: 232; Howorth 2007: 103). To this end, a number of capability initiatives were launched, from the Helsinki Headline Goal of 60.000 deployable troops via the more quality-oriented Headline Goal 2010 to the creation of a European Defence Agency (EDA). Yet whereas military reforms slowly unfolded across the continent, the ESDP proved unable to generate the aspired additional political interest in capabilities and therefore essentially remained consigned to stock-taking. After his term had expired, the first head of the EDA thus summarized somewhat bitterly that 'the pattern of under-achievement is by now familiar: EU leaders commit to ambitious defence goals and deadlines, celebrate inadequate outcomes, move the goalposts, and authorise a further round of "reviews" and "roadmaps"' – if those goalposts were not 'dismantled altogether' (Witney 2008: 9; 30).

The narrative on the civilian side is not that different: after various stock-taking exercises the EU elaborated a 'Civilian Headline Goal' mirroring its military equivalent. However, as in the military domain it emerged not only that the focus needed to shift from quantity to quality, but also that capability development was essentially a national process whose voluntary nature limited the EU's impact (cf. Grevi and Keohane 2009: 109). It proved particularly difficult since the required capabilities (police officers, prosecutors, judges etc.) had to come from professional domains where multilateral collaboration has a more limited history than in the militaries, many of which look back on 50 years of close cooperation in NATO. Moreover, the necessary personnel are often employed at lower levels of government, limiting national authorities' direct access. Finally, much effort had to

be expended trying to increase the coherence between the Council's and the Commission's responsibilities (cf. Howorth 2007: 132; Nowak 2006: 37). In their assessment of the first 10 years of ESDP, two experts thus concluded that, despite advancements on specific problems, 'progress in the supply of civilian capabilities has been permanently outpaced by increase in demand' (Grevi and Keohane 2009: 109). In short, capability development has hardly ever driven ESDP. To the extent that capability improvements took place, whether in the military or civilian domain, it was primarily in response to urgent operational needs. This brings us to the driving force behind progress in ESDP to date: the operations carried out in this framework.

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### ESDP OPERATIONS

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Since the EU ushered in its first ESDP operation on 1 January 2003, its list of activities has quickly expanded to comprise 23 operations by the time of the Lisbon Treaty's entry in force in late 2009.<sup>12</sup> While some observers have compared this number favourably to the one operation that NATO initiated during the same timeframe (Howorth 2007: 17), ESDP's 'usability' needs to be qualified insofar as most of these operations required far more modest resources. The following table provides an overview detailing the acronym, host country, time period, type, scale, and operational purpose of those operations. As it shows, ESDP operations have been rather diverse with respect to their size, mandate, length, and geographic location.

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<sup>12</sup> As the ESDP became the CSDP in December 2009, those 23 operations encompass the entire population of ESDP operations.

TABLE 4. OVERVIEW OF ESDP OPERATIONS<sup>13</sup>

<i>Mission type</i>	<i>Mission acronym</i>	<i>Host Country</i>	<i>(Approx.) max. number of international personnel</i>	<i>Time period</i>
Military (in chronological order)	Concordia	FYROM	400	31/03/2003-15/12/2003
	Artemis	DR Congo	1.800	05/06/2003 - 01/09/2003
	EUFOR Althea	Bosnia	7.000	Since 02/12/2004
	EUFOR Congo	RD DR Congo	2.000	12/06/2006 - 30/11/2006
	EUFOR Tchad/RCA	Chad / Central African Rep.	3.300	28/01/2008 - 15/03/2009
	EUNAVFOR Atalanta	Somalia	1.800	Since 08/12/2008
	Civilian (in chronological order)	EUPM	Bosnia	500
Proxima		FYROM	200	15/12/2003 - 14/12/2005
EUJUST Themis		Georgia	10	16/07/2004 - 14/07/2005
EUPOL Kinshasa		DRC	30	09/12/2004 - 30/06/2007

<sup>13</sup> The precise number of missions could be challenged on the basis that two ‘new’ missions (EUPOL RD Congo, EUPAT) were simply the continuation of older missions under a new label, that the EU’s support to AMIS did not strictly qualify as a mission in its own right, and that EUBAM Moldova-Ukraine is, strictly speaking, not governed by the ESDP framework. In nevertheless including those activities, I am following the overview provided by the Council Secretariat’s website.

The maximum number of international personnel has been compiled from: the Council Secretariat’s website; Howorth 2007: 210-211; Grevi, Helly and Keohane, eds. (2009).

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<i>Mission type</i>	<i>Mission acronym</i>	<i>Host Country</i>	<i>(Approx.) max. number of international personnel</i>	<i>Time period</i>
Civilian (continued)	EUJUST Lex	Iraq	60	Since 09/03/2005
	EUSEC	RD DRC	50	Since 08/06/2005
	EU support to AMIS	Sudan	50	18/07/2005 - 31/12/2007
	Aceh Monitoring Mission	Indonesia	220	15/09/2005 - 15/12/2006
	EUPOL Copps	Palestinian territories	50	Since 14/11/2005
	EUBAM Rafah	Palestinian territories	70	Since 25/11/2005
	EUBAM Moldova-Ukraine	Moldova / Ukraine	120	Since 01/12/2005
	EUPAT	FYROM	30	15/12/2005 - 14/06/2006
	EUPOL Afghanistan	Afghanistan	320	Since 15/06/2007
	EUPOL Congo	RD DRC	60	Since 01/07/2007
	EULEX Kosovo	Kosovo	1.650	Since 04/02/2008
	EU SSR Guinea-Bissau	Guinea-Bissau	15	12/02/2008 - 30/09/2010
	EUMM Georgia	Georgia	340	Since 15/09/2008

## *The Drivers behind EU Crisis Management Operations*

Since it is beyond the scope of this study to discuss the driving forces behind each of the above missions, the subsequent section will discuss the selection of four case studies. Before doing so however, this section will conclude with a short description of how these operations are institutionally managed and directed (for a more detailed discussion, see Dijkstra 2011: 103-28; Grevi 2009a; Mattelaer 2008). In principle, every operation comes about as the consequence of a consensus among all EU governments and is formalized by a legal act dubbed 'Joint Action'.<sup>14</sup> Although any EU government or the Commission can propose such an operation, in practice this has mostly been channelled through the Council's presidency acting in tandem with the Council Secretariat. Whereas the Council formally sanctions key decisions such as the launch, mandate and budget of an operation, substantial discussions on strategy are usually finalized by the PSC. The latter is routinely mandated by the Council to provide 'political control and strategic direction' for an operation. Operational control is then transferred to the head of mission / operation commander, who regularly briefs the PSC and its advisory bodies, but otherwise reports via the High Representative (in practice: the Council Secretariat) or the EU Military Committee and its Chairman respectively.

The PSC in turn out-sources much of its 'directing' to its military and civilian advisory bodies which, on the basis of planning documents and regular reports from the operation, make recommendations to the latter which the PSC will generally endorse. Some of the decision-shaping, notably the outlining of options and the drafting of planning documents, is *de facto* done by the Council Secretariat and the EUMS, in collaboration with the Council presidency and senior operation personnel. For civilian missions, accountability to the Council Secretariat and the PSC is complemented with financial accountability to the European Commission since the biggest part of missions' financial resources stems from the Community budget. Military operations by contrast cannot be financed from the Community budget. Here, the general rule is that 'costs lie where they fall', i.e. that states participating in an operation need to cover the expenses incurred by their troops; some collectively incurred cost items are designed 'common costs' by consensus and shared by all member states (except Denmark) according to a gross national product scale.

In sum, member state governments play a pivotal role in directing ESDP operations in that they do not only authorize them, decide on their budgets, and appoint the

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<sup>14</sup> Apart from the Danish opt-out regarding military operations, the EU Treaty under certain circumstances also allows for 'constructive abstention', i.e. an explicit opt-out from a specific measure while allowing other EU members to adopt it. This option's only invocation so far has been Cyprus' abstention from the Joint Action creating EULEX, the EU rule of law mission for Kosovo.

operation commander / head of mission, but also need to agree to every (official) planning document. However, the High Representative and his Council Secretariat also have significant possibilities for exercising influence in that they draft those documents in the first place, provide 'technical' and legal advice, and counsel the presidency in negotiating a consensus among member states. The position of the European Commission, by contrast, has been much more limited although it needs to sign off on the financial implications of civilian missions (cf. Dijkstra 2011: 104). After this short introduction to the institutional context of ESDP crisis management, the following section will zoom in on the specific facets that this book will examine.

## **B. CASE SELECTIONS**

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The objective of examining the driving forces behind ESDP operations entails a number of choices. At the most generic level, this relates to the trade-off between the breadth and the depth of the analysis. When it comes to a systematic investigation of the drivers behind ESDP operations, the balance that needs to be struck between the two relates to three dimensions in particular: the number of potentially decisive actors, their possible motives and the range of policy outputs to be put under closer scrutiny. It would obviously be overambitious to attempt to thoroughly review the positions of all 27 EU governments, much less those of their constituent parts or even third parties with a potential interest in ESDP operations. Therefore, this study will particularly focus on the positions of three pivotal EU governments: French, British and German.<sup>15</sup> Similar self-restraint is necessary when it comes to systematically considering the range of motives they may have entertained in adopting their positions. For this purpose, the preceding theoretical chapter deduced four main propositions from the literature on ESDP. Finally, the explanatory prowess of these propositions will be appraised with respect to 4 out of the 23 ESDP operations listed above. Whereas one dimension, the choice of propositions in terms of likely motives, has already been elaborated in the preceding chapter, this section will explicate the selection of primary research objects in terms of actors and outcomes.

In selecting specific actors and outcomes for closer analysis, this study tried to avoid bias by including both 'most-likely' and 'least-likely' cases for each of the four propositions (cf. George and Bennett 2005: 121-2). Yet it cannot claim that each case study is necessarily the perfect match for the respective proposition, e.g. that the

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<sup>15</sup> In focusing on these three governments, subsequent analysis will sometimes refer to capitals as actors (as in, London thought ...). These anthropomorphisms only serve to preempt vocabulary monotony and refer to the respective governments' representatives.

military operation in Chad was definitively the most likely case for proposition I and the least likely one for proposition IV. Such immodesty would founder on the difficulty of conclusively linking, *a priori*, certain features of any operation with specific drivers. Whereas I will argue, for example, that military operations are an easier case for the balancing proposition than civilian missions because a competing 'hard power' framework represents a greater potential threat to US hegemony than do 'soft power' tools, this assumption could be questioned on account of the more principled challenge to US dominance that the EU's civilian activism may present. Others could therefore argue that seeking to wield influence via non-coercive instruments, e.g. by following a strategy of 'change through rapprochement', has greater potential than using military power and that a 'civilian power' strategy therefore is a stronger indicator of balancing behaviour. Whichever assumption is more promising will often remain in the eye of the beholder. In exposing the logic underneath the choices inherent in the research design, the subsequent paragraphs can therefore only demonstrate that the latter represent a reasonable, rather than necessarily the optimal point of departure.

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#### SELECTING ACTORS

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The first analytical choice relates to the actors this study will systematically look at. In selecting the governments of France, Germany and the UK, this study follows a tradition quite prevalent in studies of European foreign policy. Most analyses of this subject area have either focused on exactly those three member states (cf. Kaim 2007; Mérand 2006, 2008; Major 2009; Rathbun 2004; Hilz 2005), or included them all among a sample of four states (Giegerich 2006; Meyer 2006). There are several reasons to justify putting these three actors centre-stage. First of all, those three countries are generally judged to be the most powerful in the EU, combining economic and political heft with the greatest spending on defence (in absolute terms). Secondly, they have the biggest foreign policy machineries among EU governments and therefore tend to take a position on all aspects of EU foreign policy, rather than rubberstamping part of the agenda for lack of interest. Moreover and related, they form (or participate in) various *fora* that pre-shape EU discussions, be they the permanent UN Security Council membership for the UK and France, the bilateral Franco-German Security and Defence Council, the frequent bilateral cooperation between Paris and London in foreign policy- and defence-related matters, or their collective membership in the Balkan Contact Group. On a more practical level, all three governments also operate in languages which are accessible to the author.

The most important reason for selecting Germany, France and the UK, however, relates to the variation which they represent with respect to three dimensions that

are traditionally credited with explaining differences in European foreign policy behaviour.<sup>16</sup> First, in geo-strategic terms the UK and France occupy the two 'extreme' positions along the Atlanticist – Europeanist dimension, i.e. along an axis measuring the extent to which European states search proximity to the US in questions of European security (cf. Stahl et al. 2004; Giegerich 2006: 202). Germany falls in between, but has traditionally been closer to the UK's stance. Secondly, France and the UK on the one, and Germany on the other hand occupy opposite positions with respect to their disposition to project military force 'out of area' (cf. Giegerich 2006: 198-202; Matlary 2009). Thirdly, Germany and the UK traditionally take opposite stances regarding the desirability of European integration, including in the realm of foreign and defence policy, with Germany among the most integrationist and the UK among the most sceptical (cf. Mérand 2006; Koenig-Archibugi 2004a). France falls somewhere in between as it traditionally wants to strengthen the EU's role in security and defence, but tends to favour intergovernmental rather than supranational means for that end. In other words, the three countries that this study focuses on cover the full breadth of the pivotal dimensions which divide defence policies across the EU, with each opposing the other two along one axis.

Whereas these three dimensions do not perfectly mirror the drivers embedded in the four propositions, they obviously relate to them. US suspicions regarding European balancing intentions have always centred on 'Europeanist' governments and France in particular, whose striving for 'autonomy' from NATO was interpreted as an attempt to curtail US influence. 'Atlanticist' governments such as the UK, by contrast, have tended to emphasize how 'shared transatlantic values' resulted in parallel foreign policy behaviour. They thereby not only contradicted the claim that the EU had any interest in balancing the US, but also underlined how transnationally shared values rather than the systemic distribution of power shaped their security policy. Taking both views on board is hence necessary to appreciate the range of motivations that might find expression in ESDP and will make any findings

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<sup>16</sup> In distinguishing these three dimensions, I build on Giegerich (2006: 12-13; cf. Meyer 2006: 11) who also evokes the first two of them, although he splits the second into a preference for civilian vs. military instruments and for differing purposes of the military (whether for territorial defence or 'out of area' interventions). As the two empirically overlap (those who are queasy about employing military force tend to focus their armies on territorial defence almost by default), I drop that distinction, but add a third one on European integration because ESDP operations imply not only a decision to intervene, but also a (potentially deliberate) choice for the EU institutional framework of intervention. For a very similar assessment, see Major (2009: 57).

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more robust than a focus on governments representing merely one side of this debate.

The same goes for states' disposition with respect to projecting military force, as this links up with (potentially differing) national role conceptions as well as domestic expectations more generally. Whether such expectations have an impact can be best assessed if the full gamut of dispositions towards military force projection is represented in the sample of actors under scrutiny. Finally, it seems reasonable to suspect that the outlook on European integration, in particular the area of foreign and defence policy, will have implications for the extent to which the objective of furthering such integration may inform ESDP policy-making. In sum, by including three countries which embody the diversity of European security policy traditions (while at the same time being in a position to have an impact), we improve our chances of avoiding a biased image that may result from only taking into account the explanations and justifications of either side along one of the three dimensions.

The argument above does not imply that this study can claim to have taken into account all views that might be relevant within the EU. The selection notably does not include any small EU member state or any country that acceded to the EU after the end of the Cold War, whether formerly neutral or part of the Warsaw Pact. However, these historical (non-) alignments have largely receded or been reinterpreted so as to make ignoring these dimensions a justifiable omission. Rather than forming homogenous blocks, their foreign and security policies differ considerably, and can arguably be captured by the three dimensions alluded to above: with respect to the Atlanticist – Europeanist divide, Sweden and Finland of the 'formerly neutral' and virtually all Central European countries have harked closer to the British position, whereas Ireland, Austria and Cyprus have kept their distance to NATO. This becomes apparent, for example, if we compare the size of their respective contributions to NATO's Afghanistan operation. This division is repeated when it comes to the use of force for the purpose of coercion, where Ireland and Austria are more reserved than Sweden, a split that also divides Central Europeans among each other. Finally, these countries' governments have also differed in the enthusiasm with which they embraced the prospect, opportunities and strictures of a common European foreign policy.

In sum, whereas the systematic inclusion of further EU governments would likely have added insight insofar as their approach would have included diverging combinations of positions taken along the three dimensions alluded to earlier, the marginal benefit of such an inclusion seems smaller than the added cost in terms of resource diversion. This study's self-limitation to three EU governments is all the more justifiable as it only relates to the systematic examination of their motives across all cases. In addition, wherever empirical analysis suggested a particularly

significant role for other actors in a specific case study, this was followed up by research into those actors' motivations. In this sense, the idea that the three governments were particularly important in formulating ESDP policy was a starting point for research that was inductively amended when it came to specific operations.

Although decisions in ESDP are taken by EU governments, there are obviously a host of other potentially important actors. The latter range from specific domestic or transnational groups such as parliaments, political parties, the media, non-governmental organizations or interested bureaucracies to EU-level institutions and actors external to the EU, be they influential states such as the US or international organizations such as the UN or NATO. However, neither domestic nor international players figure as actors in their own right because their influence is wielded via EU governments: if the US, the UN, or the International Crisis Group (ICG), for example, wanted the EU to perform a certain operation, they would need to convince (some) EU governments to support their cause. The assumption is hence that such actors' influence would be revealed by examining the roots of EU governments' motives. The case is somewhat different for EU institutions because two of them, the European Commission as well as the High Representative for the CFSP with his Council General Secretariat (CGS), directly participated in the decision-shaping process. Whereas the Commission has largely taken a back seat with respect to ESDP, concerning itself primarily with limiting the latter's impact on Community procedures and prerogatives, Solana and the CGS clearly had a stake in ESDP as the most visible expression of EU foreign and security policy. Moreover, assisting the rotating Council presidencies put the CGS into a potentially pivotal position as it came to represent continuity and institutional memory. Finally, whereas the Secretariat's obligation to support the presidency and the concomitant need to achieve consensus among member states limited its ability to push its own agenda, this likely led it to gain a thorough knowledge of different member states' interests, priorities, and red lines – a knowledge of obvious interest for this study. For these reasons, this study also systematically checks for the impression various officials in the Council Secretariat had with respect to the discussions surrounding each operation.

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### SELECTING OPERATIONS

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Whereas the analytic focus on the three EU governments and the CGS as pivotal actors is attenuated by the inductive element in the research design, the choice is less transient when it comes to the policy outputs, the ESDP operations. A number of criteria guided the selection for the four case studies from a population of 23

operations.<sup>17</sup> First, in order to be able to draw conclusions about the drivers behind ESDP more generally, the case studies were selected with a view to being representative of the larger population. While it is impossible to achieve representativeness in the strict, statistical sense of the word, the operations were chosen to reflect the diversity present in the larger population of ESDP operations. This does not constitute a foundation for empirical generalization, but it offers a starting point for theoretical generalization (cf. George and Bennett 2005: 109-11). Secondly, this study focuses on operations that, at face value, constituted the most important elements of the ESDP's operational record so as to ease the potential counter-charge linked to the lack of true representativeness. Even if those four operations were not truly representative, they would still represent the most important among the ESDP's efforts to impact on international security. Above all, however, the case selection depended on theoretical considerations. The operations were selected on theoretical assumptions about how specific operational properties would likely indicate certain underlying drivers (cf. George and Bennett 2005: 83-4). The following paragraphs will discuss these choices in greater detail.

The operations carried out in the ESDP framework could be ordered according to several criteria: whereas the earlier overview opted for chronology, two other salient properties are their geographical location and their respective nature, i.e. whether they are civilian or military. Both features are relevant because one could tentatively link them to different potential drivers: geographical distance would, *ceteris paribus*, tend to correlate with the level of international political ambition. Acting outside of Europe – as one crude proxy of geographical (and cultural) difference – may thus be driven by different factors than crisis management in the EU's borderlands. With respect to the second property, mission type, balancing intentions or the idea of nation-building by way of 'swaggering' could most plausibly be linked to military operations (cf. Anderson and Seitz 2006). Civilian missions, by contrast, would seem to fit more easily with the EU's 'normative power' claims, and

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<sup>17</sup> When it comes to the decision of whether to deploy an operation, the population is greater than 23 and includes a number of operations that have been considered, but were not mandated. On the one hand, including only operations that actually took place is methodically dubious as it implies selecting on the dependent variable and thereby introducing a selection bias (cf. King et al. 1994); on the other hand, including case studies of non-operations creates methodical problems of its own, namely the unclear size of the population and the question as to whether a potential operation was considered seriously enough to constitute a relevant case; the lack of public traces a non-operation leaves; and the dearth of data as to the drivers behind the promotion and/or rejection of such a non-operation since many aspects will never come to be considered, and because a non-decision generally requires a far lower degree of justification than does an actual operation.

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perhaps the publics' preferences for keeping or getting the troops home. Using these two operational features to form a simple matrix would suggest selecting two civilian and two military operations, one of which would respectively be situated within and outside of Europe.<sup>18</sup> By selecting one operation from each field of the matrix, we not only include one example of each combination of salient properties, but also allow for structured comparison along either dimension (civilian vs. military and European vs. outside of Europe). This in turn could help us to identify potential patterns that may link each characteristic with specific drivers. If we categorize the 23 ESDP operations according to the first two criteria, geographic location and operation type, the following table results:<sup>19</sup>

TABLE 5. ESDP OPERATIONS BY TYPE AND LOCATION

	<i>Military</i>	<i>Civilian</i>
<i>Within Europe</i>	Concordia*; <b>EUFOR Althea*</b>	EUPM; Proxima; EUJUST Themis; EUBAM Moldova-Ukraine; EUPAT; <b>EULEX Kosovo</b> ; EUMM Georgia
<i>Outside of Europe</i>	Artemis; EUFOR RD Congo; <b>EUFOR Tchad/ RCA</b> ; EUNAVFOR Atalanta	EUPOL Kinshasa; EUJUST Lex; EUSEC RD Congo; EU support to AMIS; Aceh Monitoring Mission; EUPOL Copps; EUBAM Rafah; <b>EUPOL Afghanistan</b> ; EUPOL RD Congo; EU SSR Guinea-Bissau

In addition to geography and mission type, there is a third generic feature that applies to military operations. The latter can be further differentiated by distinguishing between operations carried out in the 'Berlin Plus' framework, i.e. by relying on NATO's planning and command and control assets, or 'autonomously'. Given the US' misgivings about any 'decoupling' from or 'duplication' of NATO, we may speculate that if ESDP was about balancing against the US, we would most likely find evidence for this driver in the decision-making surrounding autonomous operations. Conversely, an EU operation with recourse to NATO assets may raise the

<sup>18</sup> For similar criteria, albeit with a somewhat diverging justification, see Dijkstra 2011: 48-50.

<sup>19</sup> Selected operations in bold; \* indicates 'Berlin Plus' operations

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question of the added value of deploying under an EU flag in the first place if, as it happened, such EU operations followed earlier NATO deployments – unless, that is, we assume that this EU flag in itself constituted the operation’s purpose as the ‘EU security identity’ proposition suggests. In other words, the distinction between ‘Berlin Plus’ and ‘autonomous’ military operations implies similarly differentiated expectations as the distinction between inside and outside of Europe: the latter would more likely indicate attempts at balancing whereas the former may suggest ‘nation-building’ efforts.

As table 5 showed, a relative majority of ESDP operations has been civilian in nature, and a relative majority has taken place outside of Europe. Conveniently, the distinction between ‘Berlin Plus’ and ‘autonomous’ operations overlaps perfectly with those military operations carried out within and outside of Europe respectively: ‘Concordia’ and ‘Althea’ are the only two ‘Berlin Plus’ operations undertaken so far, and simultaneously the only military operations undertaken in Europe. Conversely, autonomous operations are identical with those undertaken outside of Europe. In other words, the two assumed proxies for potential balancing intentions – greater geographical distance and an autonomous command structure – correlate in practice. This leaves us with the task of choosing one particular operation from each of the four subsets.

Starting with the upper left quadrant, there are only the operations in Macedonia and Bosnia to choose from. I opted for the latter because, with initially 15 times as many soldiers on the grounds, it constituted a far more important undertaking. Indeed, many interviewed officials described the Macedonian undertaking primarily as a ‘test case’ and ‘exercise’ for the Bosnian operation. In theoretical terms, Althea is interesting because it apparently represents a puzzle for the balancing proposition: if ESDP was about curbing US influence, and Althea was the biggest ESDP operation, why would the US not veto the EU’s takeover of this operation thitherto under NATO command? This problem becomes much less puzzling once we assume that the real purpose was flying the EU flag for the sake of building an EU security identity. Such an explanation would moreover resolve the potential conundrum of why Western states, in their declared mission of deterring any threats to Bosnia’s stability and integrity, would forgo the participation of the strongest possible deterrent power, the US. Hence, whereas the operation constitutes a hard case for the balancing proposition, Althea simultaneously represents an easy case for the ‘European integration’ proposition.

Moving counter-clockwise to autonomous military operations, the choice is similarly easy. EUFOR Tchad/RCA constituted the biggest such operation so far, and the most remarkable one in terms of the logistical challenges involved. If ESDP served the purpose of balancing US influence, we would expect operations that counter US

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interests or, in the absence of any plausible examples for the latter, were at least designed to show off the EU's potential for acting independently from Washington. EUFOR Tchad/RCA clearly embodied the operation with the greatest potential for impressing the military universe and therefore the most likely instance for the balancing proposition. At the same time, such an unsolicited display of interventionist voluntarism seems to amount to a difficult case for the 'domestic expectations' proposition. Given the military intervention fatigue in Europe following the controversy over, and difficulties in, Iraq and Afghanistan, why would EU governments take on new responsibilities, especially in countries few Europeans would find on a map, much less care about? In view of these considerations, EUFOR Tchad/RCA would appear to constitute an easy case for the balancing proposition, and concurrently a hard nut to crack for the proposition that links EU crisis management to domestic expectations.

Civilian missions present difficult cases for either the balancing or the security identity propositions: sending civilian (and often rather technical) advisers on improving the rule of law to a third country hardly amounts to effective balancing, and it seems too limited an instrument to promote nation-building in Europe. Yet such missions make face value sense in view of our two remaining propositions: on the one hand, the underlying idea of spreading security sector standards and human rights abroad embodies the liberal aspirations inherent in the 'normative power Europe' proposition. Such aspirations are especially selfless where they concern far away, conflict-ridden places. There should thus hardly be an easier case for finding normative and ideational motives at work than in an operation designed to support civilian policing arrangements and the rule of law in Afghanistan. Coincidentally, this mission also represents the biggest civilian mission outside of Europe thus far. At the same time, it should be a tough case for the nation-building proposition insofar as the latter relies on creating experiences of collective success for the purpose of broadening the EU's appeal among European citizens (cf. Anderson and Seitz 2006: 29-30). Already in 2006 when this mission was conceived, it was clear that establishing the rule of law in Afghanistan would be anything but a matter of course.

The remaining quadrant assembles the civilian missions undertaken within Europe. Again the choice was for the biggest and, in many ways, most important mission, namely EULEX Kosovo. Not only does this operation comprise four times as much personnel than the next biggest competitor, it is also the only civilian mission that involves 'executive functions', i.e. which has a mandate beyond monitoring and advising to include substituting for local law enforcement under certain circumstances. In theoretical terms, this should be an easy case for the domestic expectations proposition insofar as the objective of preventing organized crime and conflict-induced emigration in a region enclosed by the EU links up to domestic law and order concerns and can be easily explained at home. Simultaneously, it figures

as a hard case for balancing since there is very little about the mission's properties that could conceivably be linked with curtailing US influence.

In sum, this study has selected four operations, one from each of the categories identified earlier on. In each case, the mission represents the biggest and most important specimen of its kind, but also relates to the propositions in such a way as to include 'easy' and 'hard' cases. Moreover, the above choice of operations also embodies a chronological spread although that dimension is less important given the short overall timeframe. Yet as conceded earlier on, the arguments underpinning this selection could be challenged and twisted to generate alternative configurations. Moreover, the selection above is somewhat biased in that it does not include a 'hard case' for the 'normative power Europe' proposition. The reason is simply that it is difficult to conceive, *a priori*, the properties that would indicate disregard for the EU's own role conception. One could of course have argued that the turn away from civilian power instruments, as perhaps most clearly embodied in Althea's deterrence function, in itself constituted such a property. I refrained from thereby forcing 'theoretical symmetry' on the case studies because any forthright link between normative ends and civilian means introduces additional assumptions that might bias the study's outcomes. Similarly, some might take issue with the intentional bias that results from focusing on the most important ESDP operations, arguing that it limits the representativeness of the sample for the wider population. This bias serves a purpose, however, in that this study's puzzle relates primarily to explaining activism in the ESDP institutional framework at large rather than the 'average operation'. In short, the selection of operations follows theoretical expectations based on specific operation properties, but it also embodies the diversity of ESDP operations in terms of geography and mission type.

### **C. METHODS AND SOURCES**

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So far, this study has established four contending propositions for explaining ESDP operations and selected four cases against which their explanatory power is to be compared. This begs the question of how we are going to assess the plausibility of those propositions. As the last section argued, it is far from straightforward to deduce the (deeper) driver(s) underlying any particular operation from one particular feature of the latter because in reality various motives may interact and the (intended) consequences of action may not always be readily apparent even to its instigators. By way of example, a hypothetical operation initiated for the sake of promoting domestic values abroad could be embraced by other actors because of their expectation that it may promote European integration – and turn out to achieve primarily the latter result. Moreover, various proposed drivers may imply similar expected outcomes, rendering the weighting between different explanations

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difficult. Returning to our example, an operation which verifiably (was hoped to) contribute(s) to the dispersion of liberal values may concurrently increase the EU's relative power, promote its collective security identity, and respond to domestic expectations. Whether expected and observed outcomes correlate may thus be not enough for knowing whether a specific driver was indeed instrumental in bringing about a certain outcome.

Because such co-variance is insufficient for establishing the consequential drivers behind ESDP operations, this study traces the process by which each operation came about (cf. George and Bennett 2005: 205-32). In other words, it establishes a detailed chronological account of how pivotal actors positioned themselves with respect to a mission across its overall 'life cycle'. The latter is divided into three phases, from the emergence of the idea for an operation during the agenda-setting phase via its evolution during the preparatory phase to its 'performance' during the implementation phase. The advantage of this approach is twofold. On the one hand, a detailed historical narrative helps to establish the various moments of decision-making and forces the analyst to link these multiple observations into an explanation that reduces the problem of indeterminacy (George and Bennett 2005: 207). On the other hand, systematically observing various actors' positions at different points in time increases the analyst's leverage over the research problem as it offers more opportunities for scrutinizing whether the empirical implications of the different propositions can indeed be observed across the entire case (cf. King et al. 1994: 29-31). In other words, the different operation phases can be used to cross-check whether any putative driver remains plausible once all relevant aspects of an operation's evolution are considered.

In order to allow for such a coherent comparison across the multi-faceted reality of the four case studies, this study relies on the method of structured, focused comparison. As two methodologists have defined it, '[t]he method is "structured" in that the researcher writes general questions that reflect the research objective and that these questions are asked of each case under study to guide and standardize data collection, thereby making systematic comparison and accumulation of the findings of the cases possible. The method is "focused" in that it deals only with certain aspects of the historical cases examined' (George and Bennett 2005: 67). The analysis thus draws upon a number of recurring general questions which structure the investigation of each case along the phases of each operation's life cycle (cf. George and Bennett 2005: 86-8).

The research objectives of the present study, namely to identify the drivers underlying the four selected operations, entail a particular focus on systematically comparing the level of support that each mission received from various actors. This study thus asks who initiated the selected ESDP operations; who was especially

supportive in the decision-making process, and who gave support only reluctantly (since decision-making in ESDP is by consensus, the fact that an operation took place implies unanimous 'support'); what actors' motives were in initiating, supporting or grudgingly tolerating operations; whose influence proved decisive, and for what reasons; who contributed significantly to a given operation and who provided no, or only token support; why certain governments did (not) contribute; and to what extent governments' professed objectives are in line with the degree of support they provided. Systematically comparing both the levels of and reasons for support across the agenda-setting, preparation and implementation phase of each operation will allow us to reach a relatively robust assessment with respect to whether any of the four different propositions add up to a convincing logic.

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## CHALLENGES

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In investigating the question of ESDP operations' underlying drivers, this study relied primarily on two types of data. On the one hand, it drew on publicly available governmental documents such as legal acts, press releases, and speeches as well as the secondary literature on ESDP; on the other, it relied on confidential interviews with officials involved in the policy-making process. Both sets of sources were used to retrace the actions of pivotal actors as well as the objectives they sought and the constraints they faced. To reconstruct this diplomatic history, the author conducted 69 semi-structured, open-ended interviews with officials as well as a handful of academic observers who had closely followed these processes (details below). The interviews were semi-structured in that they adhered to the logic of structured, focused comparison evoked earlier in this section. Accordingly, they generally started off with requests to the respective officials to describe, from their perspective, the process that had led to the emergence of a particular operation, followed up by questions on who initiated and supported particular steps and for what motives, who resisted, what position the US took, what interests their own principals pursued and which motives they suspected behind others' behaviour, who contributed what kind of resources to the respective operation for which reasons, and which justifications were used by the relevant actors at each juncture. Beyond this basic grid of questions, however, each interview was allowed to take a different direction, based on each respondent's specific role and insights.

Reconstructing the diplomatic history of ESDP operations from these sources is challenging for two reasons. The first consists in limited access to data on the decision-making process: proceedings in the Council and its working groups, where decision-shaping takes place, are not public. In fact, not only are discussions between member state representatives classified but also their results, i.e. basic operation planning documents. This implies a need to rely on confidential sources,

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which is inherently problematic. A lack of identification will always leave doubts on officials' reliability, and any reliance on data that cannot be publicly reproduced makes potential replication more cumbersome. In short, the lack of access to 'hard data' against which propositions could be tested in a transparent and reproducible way – e.g. accessible diplomatic archives – makes it difficult for the scholar to identify, much less demonstrate the motives underlying the various policy positions.

Secondly, there are problems related to the nature of confidential interviews with officials that go beyond the issue of inter-subjective verification. When it comes to contemporary security policy, a lack of distance in terms of time might make respondents less willing to disclose their motives because the latter may allow second-guessing current policy that interviewees would rather keep disguised. Next, respondents might have psychological, ideological, or even career-related interests in seeing one particular interpretation of history reported. This might in some instances give them an incentive to deceive scholars by insinuating plausible yet misleading motivations. Moreover, current commentary might lead the analyst to search for particular pieces of data, thereby introducing additional bias.

Last but not least, the problem is not only one of access to data on the process of decision-making. Diplomatic proceedings and planning documents themselves may be strategic in the sense that they do not necessarily spell out – or even hint at – the 'true' motives of actors, but rather reflect the perceptions that officials tried to impress upon their peers. For example, a government seeking to leverage ESDP for balancing the US may propose a hypothetical operation on account of its ostensible potential for protecting vulnerable individuals, rather than its desired indirect effect of strengthening its relative power. Finally, those initiating policy may themselves not have been fully conscious of the ultimate consequences of their proposals. Rather, they might have felt driven by the need to somehow respond to 'events on the ground' while ignoring the way in which these responses would impact on their governments' longer-term interests. This multi-layered potential for obfuscation encumbers process-tracing and thereby increases the uncertainty of any findings.

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### REMEDIES

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There are two responses to the caveats listed above. The first is simply to acknowledge that there *is* little 'proof' to underpin analysis of contemporary foreign policy. While the possibilities for inter-subjective verification could be enhanced by relying on public sources such as academic papers or newspaper reports, this does not solve the underlying problem because these analyses usually substantiate their claims with similarly tainted evidence: claims of anonymous officials and/or interpretations by either these officials or observers. Given that the primary potential sources of 'hard evidence', the respective diplomatic archives, will likely

remain closed for many years to come, there is little alternative to relying on 'soft sources' such as confidential interviews. The resulting methodological concerns have to be weighed against the interest that an analysis of a very topical issue evokes. Yet they also imply that this work – one of the first that is explicitly interested in a systematic analysis of the drivers behind ESDP missions – can only provide a springboard for other scholars to extend and possibly correct the analysis, eventually on the basis of archival sources. The present study by contrast is largely based on secondary sources, above all confidential interviews with officials who participated in the decision-shaping process.

The second, more uplifting response points to the manifold possibilities for acquiring and cross-checking information on the decision-making process. In order to increase the reliability of the data, this study used triangulation wherever possible, i.e. it collected and compared data from different, alternately independent sources (cf. Patton 1990: 187-8). Whereas individual claims regarding the motives of various actors may be fickle, this study compared the accounts of multiple officials with different backgrounds and assessed their plausibility against the internal coherence of a narrative across different phases of an operation. In particular, the interviewer did not only ask respondents for their own motives and constraints regarding specific decisions, but also for the positions of other relevant actors, inviting interviewees to describe their perceptions of other officials' motivations and constraints. Importantly, the emphasis was on having officials describe the respective process from their point of view. The interviewer thus consciously tried to avoid intervening with the narrative, in particular with respect to pushing officials to plumb for any of the surmised interpretations (cf. Weiss 1994). However, if their accounts contradicted those of their colleagues or other academics and journalists, I eventually confronted interviewees with the discrepancy, asking how they would explain the latter.

In order to encourage interviewees to be as open and frank as possible despite the political sensitivity of the issue and the confidentiality of deliberations in the context of the CFSP, respondents had to be promised anonymity.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, the names of those interviewed are not included in the study, but references to information obtained in interviews include appropriate, non-identifying descriptions of the source in order to allow the reader some judgement on their particular angle. The

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<sup>20</sup> On the condition of anonymity, about half of the respondents agreed to the author taping the conversation. I fully transcribed the ten most insightful of those, and most of the direct quotations cited later on derive from those transcripts. Regarding those conversations not recorded, some officials explicitly declined being taped whereas the majority worked in buildings which did not allow any recording devices to enter.

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great majority of the interviews were face to face and took place during 2009, primarily in Brussels, Berlin, Paris and London. These were complemented by a few interviews conducted later, elsewhere or by telephone. A total of 63 officials from the European institutions (17) and relevant national ministries or embassies (Germany: 16; France: 12; UK: 6; other member states: 12) as well as 6 think tank experts were interviewed, three of the former twice.<sup>21</sup> 23 of those officials were military officers or worked in defence ministries, whereas almost all the others were career diplomats.<sup>22</sup> I chose respondents according to their (suspected) involvement in ESDP, and in the selected operations. Access varied, as did the number of detailed and consistent 'oral histories' that could be assembled on the respective operations. There are a few episodes which could not be fully reconstructed because participants apparently perceived them in contradictory ways. In these cases, the subsequent chapters will render the rival accounts of what supposedly happened without any final judgement. Wherever possible, however, such data was triangulated, and formulations will reflect the degree of certainty that the author has with respect to what happened.

Clearly, these efforts in corroboration can only ease rather than fully dispel doubts about the primary data. For this study, the difficulties of avoiding bias and participants' spin are both enhanced as well as attenuated by one particular factor, namely that the author worked on the topic of ESDP as a desk officer in the German Foreign Office from July 2006 to December 2007. Naturally, this study does not necessarily reflect the views of the German government but was written in a personal capacity as well as in a conscious effort to transcend (national) partisanship. Yet it is equally natural that the insights and experiences of this personal history have informed and influenced this book. On the one hand, this constituted a handicap insofar as the author invariably brought pre-conceived ideas to the research matter with respect to what likely happened. On the other hand, it offered a unique vantage point for identifying crucial questions and potentially supportive respondents, as well as a valuable backdrop against which to judge the specific accounts and plausibility of officials' explanations as to how the policy process unfolded. In balancing these two considerations against each other, it is ultimately up to the reader to decide whether these circumstances confer greater or lesser credibility to the analysis.

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<sup>21</sup> The difference between 69 interviews and 72 interviewed officials is due to three interviews where two officials were present.

<sup>22</sup> The seniority of officials went from desk to director level (according to the grades used in the EU Council Secretariat), i.e. it focused on those involved in day-to-day policy-making rather than those bearing political responsibility.

Irrespective of this particularity, any research on drivers behind (contemporary foreign) policy-making will necessarily rely on the author's judgements as to whether and to what extent participants' accounts represent a description – however distorted by the partiality of their insights – or a potentially biased sense-making or exculpatory exercise. This implies that the scholar's opinion becomes entangled in the analysis although few would admit this as openly as Thucydides, often depicted as the intellectual forefather of international relations theory, whose description of the Peloponnesian War starts out with 'an account of the causes of complaint which they [the warring parties, BP] had against each other and of the specific instances where their interests clashed', but is followed by the assertion that 'the real reason for war is, *in my opinion*, most likely to be disguised by such an argument' (Thucydides [410 BC] 2006: 42, emphasis added). Thucydides not only admits to his account's subjectivity, but links this to the asserted difference between justifications and proximate interests on the one hand, and underlying drivers on the other.

Both elements reverberate in the present study. In essence, it is an account of different governments' and other institutions' clashing and overlapping interests and the justifications they gave for their positions. But, in my opinion, these positions also disguise more fundamental reasons. This book's analysis will thus examine to what extent such underlying causes, developed into four competing propositions in the preceding chapter, can explain EU governments' (in)action with respect to ESDP operations. It will combine a history of the diplomatic struggles – and thus the proximate causes – behind these operations with an attempt to identify their fundamental drivers. Such an explanation necessarily involves a degree of interpretation. Whereas the reconstruction of the policy process by itself could conceivably be presented as historical description, linking the latter to generic drivers – drivers which might even be beyond the consciousness of those shaping the policy – cannot be reduced to incontestable inferences from empirical observations.

Since it tends to ascribe a politically motivated intentionality by default, such an approach introduces a bias insofar as it may overestimate the extent of political calculation at the expense of a functionally inspired, 'problem-solving' approach. The link between observable policies and unobservable, underlying motivations is in fact often tenuous. It is encumbered by decision-makers' potential lack of self-awareness regarding their fundamental motivations, their interest in dissimulating selfish motives, and the difficulty of ascertaining that any correlation between the latter and policy outcomes is indeed causal rather than coincidental in nature. Because fundamental drivers are ultimately unobservable, we can only analyze whether specific policies make a certain underlying intent plausible. Much of the reasoning therefore has to rely on 'as if' arguments: whereas we cannot observe whether any

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particular motive 'caused' a policy decision, we can deduce political incentives, demonstrate the congruence between such incentives and policy outcomes, provide a plausible theoretical link, and point to incidental evidence for causation.

This is the strategy that this study followed. After deducing potential explanations from the theoretical literature, it reconstructs the diplomatic history behind the four ESDP operations. It then weighs the extent to which these accounts can be explained by each putative driver, both in terms of the process by which an operation came about and the results it (predictably) generated. Whereas this analysis is primarily based on arguments as to how plausible the empirical record renders the various supposed objectives, this is complemented with evidence for causal linkages wherever possible. The next four chapters will delve into this diplomatic history by covering four important instances of ESDP action. We will start with the Union's biggest operation yet, in a country that probably played a greater role than any other in convincing EU governments to create an ESDP in the first place: Bosnia.

## CHAPTER IV: EUFOR ALTHEA

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On 2 December 2004, the European Union launched its third and thus far largest ESDP military operation with an initial deployment of around 7000 troops in Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereafter Bosnia or BiH). Dubbed 'Althea' after the Greek goddess of healing, the operation was tasked by the Council of the European Union to provide deterrence and continued compliance with the Dayton Peace Agreement and 'to contribute to a safe and secure environment in BiH' (Council of the EU 2004a). Prior to the start of Althea, NATO had been responsible for implementing and guaranteeing the military part of the Dayton Accords that ended the war in Bosnia in late 1995. Yet at its Istanbul summit in June 2004 the Alliance had decided to conclude its 'Stabilization Force' (SFOR), making way for the EU force. This begs the question why the EU took on this crisis management operation, and why it did so nine years after the initial international deployment.

In examining this question, this chapter harks back to the propositions developed in chapter II. What would this entail in the case of EUFOR Althea? The first proposition suggested that ESDP operations might serve to balance US influence. This explanation is somewhat puzzling in the case of the Bosnian operation because the Union took this operation over from NATO of which the US forms part, which in turn implies that the latter had to formally agree to the change in command. One possible solution to this conundrum would be if we saw the US pushed out. European governments would thus have wanted to limit US influence through a change in the political oversight mechanism, and the latter would have conceded for reasons as yet unknown. Indications to this effect might include the initiative's provenance from particularly US-critical EU governments (e.g. France), EU insistence on maximising the operation's autonomy from NATO, *ex post* contentment over having balanced successfully, and US resistance to being pushed out. By contrast, was the operation's idea to have originated in US-friendly EU governments, have been welcomed by the US, and been used as a means of strengthening the transatlantic relationship, we would conclude that the 'balancing' proposition was misleading.

The second proposition hypothesized that ESDP operations primarily served to promote collectively held values. To accept this explanation, we would expect to find the EU primarily concerned about how best to help Bosnia entrench a liberal peace. Indications to that effect may include that deliberations about the operation were focused on how best to achieve the latter objective, that justifications for (national) policy positions on the operation were framed with a view to achieving that objective, and that there was cooperation with the US on account of similar values that both sides sought to promote. In contradistinction, an emphasis on narrow self-

interests would lead us to reason that the EU's normative role conception cannot explain its behaviour regarding Bosnia.

The third proposition had suggested that ESDP operations had been driven by governments' desire to promote European integration. This could explain why the operation was transferred from one Western multilateral organization to the next, and why Western governments, in their professed quest for stability in Bosnia, opted to switch to a seemingly weaker guarantor of that stability. Accordingly, we would expect to find indications of a conscious choice for the European against competing and equally suited institutional frameworks, justifications emphasizing the major step that the EU (rather than Bosnia) would be taking by adopting this operation, and an emphasis on exploiting the visibility that this operation afforded the EU. In contrast, was the choice for the EU to have resulted from considerations external to the EU, or were EU governments reluctant to involve the EU and raise its profile, we would conclude that the motive of European integration was not a major driver behind Althea.

Finally, the fourth proposition conjectured that ESDP operations primarily served to help governments demonstrate their capacity of influencing international events in line with domestic expectations. We would consequently expect to find indications that governments tailored their positions according to what they considered domestically beneficial, that justifications related primarily to domestic expectations, that the latter overlapped at least partly, and that intergovernmental conflicts regarding Althea were primarily the consequence of diverging societal expectations. This last proposition would be less convincing, however, if the considerations regarding Althea had primarily focused on international objectives, or if governments had even taken on domestic political risks for the sake of international objectives.

## **A. BACKGROUND**

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Bosnia had been one of the six republics that made up the former Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia. The beginnings of the process of Yugoslavia's disintegration can be traced back to political developments during the Cold War when ethnic nationalism became a rallying point of opposition to one-party rule in the country, which was increasingly seized by the political nomenclature as the legitimacy and clout of communist ideology collapsed during the late 1980s (cf. Cousens and Cater 2001: 17-18; Malcolm 1996: 202-212). With revolutionary change sweeping through Central and Eastern Europe, Yugoslav politicians, and Serbian communist leader Slobodan Milošević in particular, sought to change Yugoslavia's constitutional order

in favour of ethnic nationalist agendas (cf. Silber and Little 1995: 29-48; Malcolm 1996: 202-212).

On 25 June 1991, the Yugoslav republics of Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence. Whereas the former was able to quickly end violent clashes with the Yugoslav's People's Army, Croatia became the site of a longer conflict that came to resemble full-scale war from August 1991 until a UN-mediated ceasefire in January 1992. The independence of those two republics left Bosnia in a heavily Serb-dominated rump-Yugoslavia. After a referendum on 1 March 1992 that produced an overwhelming majority for Bosnian independence but was largely boycotted by ethnic Serbs, Bosnia thus also declared its independence (cf. Malcolm 1996: 231). Minor skirmishes between (para-)militaries claiming to defend Bosnia's three large ethnic communities – Bosniak, Serb and Croat – and assaults on the civilian population erupted into large-scale fighting and 'ethnic cleansing' just when the European Community recognized BiH as an independent state on 6 April 1992 (cf. Cousens and Cater 2001: 21; Berdal 2004: 453).

With a cost of more than 100.000 lives according to conservative estimates (cf. Tabeau and Bijak 2005), the war that engulfed Bosnia until October 1995 marked the nadir of Yugoslavia's violent breakup. Neither the Serbian side – aided by the Yugoslav army – nor the coalition of Bosniaks and Croats (whose respective forces intermittently also fought among each other) were able to achieve decisive military victory. The international community proved unable for a long time to prod the parties towards a diplomatic solution. The European Community, after a precocious declaration in the early days of the dissolution of Yugoslavia that 'the hour of Europe' had come, failed to get a grip on the crisis (cf. Duke 2000: 213; 221-223). The United Nations equally could not solve the conflict either diplomatically or through various attempts at coercion, including an arms embargo, a mandate for a no fly zone to be enforced by NATO, the setting up of an *ad hoc* war tribunal, and its peace-keeping operation UNPROFOR. The latter, lightly armed and mandated, figured the two foremost military powers of the EU, the UK and France, as the most significant troop contributors. UNPROFOR was however repeatedly humiliated by warring militia, culminating in its paralysis vis-à-vis the genocide accompanying the fall of Srebrenica in July 1995 (cf. ICJ 2007: 20; Berdal 2004: 454-456; Gow 1997: 156-183).

In the end, it was the involvement of the US and its apparent willingness to use greater force after summer 1995 that ended the war in Bosnia (cf. Economides and Taylor 2007: 101; Gow 1997: 276-278; Duke 2000: 219; Daalder 2000). NATO's air strikes in combination with successful local ground offensives brought about a decisive change in relative power on the ground (Berdal 2004: 461; Malcolm 1996: 266-267; Cousens and Cater 2001: 26). A general cease-fire in BiH on 5 October

1995 was followed by negotiations for a comprehensive peace agreement in Dayton, Ohio, with the place bearing witness to the US' key role in the process. Similarly, the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR), which was responsible for implementing the military aspects of the Dayton Accords and which one year later would be re-baptized into Stabilization Force (SFOR), was US-led.

The Dayton Peace Agreement provided for extensive powers for the international community in Bosnia. Its eleven annexes parcelled out, among a range of international institutions, the core of what government is about – including, but not limited to political decision-making, internal and external security, and economic regulation (cf. GFA 1995). While military aspects were assigned to NATO, the UN became responsible for re-building the police with the International Policing Task Force (IPTF), and a High Representative was designated to monitor and ensure the implementation of the civilian side of the Dayton Accords. The High Representative, answerable to a newly created 'Peace Implementation Council' (PIC) comprising 55 states and international organizations, saw his influence rise over the first years to the point where he became the embodiment of supreme power in Bosnia. With the help of the so-called 'Bonn powers', he became able to impose and invalidate legislation as well as to appoint and dismiss any Bosnian official (cf. van Willigen 2009: 90-121; Knaus and Martin 2003; Chandler 2000: 65).

The international administration that was to oversee the implementation of the Dayton Accords in Bosnia has proven a mixed blessing. In part this was because '[t]he Dayton agreement reflected the interest of the US administration in bringing the fighting to a halt, rather than the readiness of the three warring parties to settle their political differences' (Burg and Shoup 1999: 318). International efforts to build a sustainable state have therefore been only partially successful: while the requisite institutions were established, they came to be only superficially embedded in Bosnian society (cf. van Willigen 2009). This lack of sustainability can partly be attributed to the fact that there has been little incentive for Bosnian politicians to compromise or take any painful decisions because the international community has proven willing to act as a decision-maker of last resort via its High Representative. As a consequence, Bosnia to this date is 'addicted to' and dependent on international decision-making (cf. Prelec 2009).

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#### BOSNIA'S IMPACT ON EUROPEAN SECURITY POLICY

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While the peace-building effort in Bosnia has essentially been a project of 'the West' at large, it has time and again been hampered by differences of opinion on and between the two Atlantic shores. At the start of the conflict, the US administration of George H.B. Bush, worried about the upcoming 1992 elections, 'was content to accept the strangely possessive argument of EEC leaders who had claimed from the

start of the Yugoslav war that this was “a European problem” (Malcolm 1996: 240). The subsequent Clinton administration for a long time dithered on its Bosnia policy, torn between the moral impetus and domestic pressure to ‘do something’ and weariness of becoming involved militarily (cf. Daalder 2000; Berdal 2004: 456-7; Gow 1997: 322; Duke 2000: 209-10). Combined with the ‘tougher’ approach the US publicly advocated at times, i.e. a lifting of the arms embargo against Bosnia as well as NATO air strikes against Serbian positions, this led to resentment on the part of European powers, in particular the UK and France, who feared for their soldiers on the ground becoming the object of Serbian reprisals (cf. Berdal 2004: 456; Stromvik 2005: 172-173). Yet whereas the transatlantic was the deepest of all the rifts dividing the West, European capitals among themselves also frequently did not agree on the appropriate policy (cf. Berdal 2004: 454; Malcolm 1996: 249; Gow 1997: 166-174; 182; Cooper 2004: 123).

Given the US’ pivotal role in bringing about the Dayton Accords, it also took the lead in its implementation. The US thus held key positions in Bosnia’s international administration and initially contributed not only the force commander, but also the biggest national contingent of IFOR/SFOR amounting to a third of the overall force, 16.500 out of 54.000 troops (Bowman 2002: 9-10). The size of US troop commitment to implementing peace in Bosnia has been traced to two motives: the fact that all local parties demanded this participation as a result of their distrust of the ineffective and largely European peace-keepers during the UNPROFOR operation, and US perception that it needed to maintain its leadership position in NATO (Bowman 2002: 1; regarding the former, see also ICG 2004b: 6-7; Batt 2009: 3).

Yet whereas the international administration of Bosnia can be described as US-led (cf. van Willigen 2009: 60), Washington has repeatedly been ambiguous about its commitment (cf. Reichard 2006: 250-251). Thus, President Clinton initially promised his domestic audience that US participation in IFOR would last only for one year (Kim 2008: 2; Duke 2000: 220). Unease about a seemingly open-ended commitment was also strong in the US Congress, which asked the administration early on to reflect on whether some form of US withdrawal would be possible (Bowman 2003: 3-4). Finally, in 2000, future president George W. Bush ran on a platform that was suspicious of extensive US involvement in nation-building, not least with an eye on the Western Balkans (Kupferschmidt 2006: 11; ICG 2004b: 3; see also Rice 2000: 51-53). The new administration’s determination to follow up on that pledge led the International Crisis Group to plead, in May 2001, for NATO and especially the US to carry on in Bosnia (ICG 2001). While the US’ weight was dominant in deciding the future of Bosnia, neither policy direction nor issue salience have thus been entirely consistent (cf. Malcolm 1996: 267-271; Bancroft 2009; Kim 2006: 4; Gow 1997: 208; Burg and Shoup 1999: 317-318; Daalder 2000: 90-91). As

James Gow wrote, 'this forced an understanding [on Europeans, BP] that the US could no longer be relied on to be there – and might well not be reliable when it was' (Gow 1997: 320). As the next section sets out to analyze in greater detail, the US' will to withdraw in combination with European ambitions to prove their mettle were the main reasons for Bosnia to appear on the agenda of the newly established European Security and Defence Policy.

## **B. PUTTING OPERATION ALTHEA ON THE ESDP AGENDA**

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ESDP engagement in Bosnia came onto the EU's agenda against the backdrop of an earlier, unsatisfactory European involvement. In an attempt to compensate for these prevarications, EU governments came to invest into building a viable Bosnian state. The international community's efforts in this respect have essentially been two-pronged (cf. European Commission 2003: 11): on the one hand, internationals have attempted to 'push' state- and nation-building forward by means of the 'Bonn powers' that the High Representative has been equipped with, i.e. by imposing solutions on Bosnia. On the other hand, they have attempted to 'pull' Bosnians via conditionality, trying to leverage the perks of eventual membership in Euro-Atlantic institutions for inciting domestic reforms. For the EU, which saw its vocation mainly with the latter element of the strategy, this translated into offering Bosnia, as well as the other Western Balkans countries, the prospect of potential EU membership. First expressed at the European Council in Feira in June 2000 and substantiated at the European Council in Thessaloniki in June 2003, the process towards EU membership has been slow and unsteady, but has cleared a number of formal hurdles, with a 'Stabilization and Association Agreement' (SAA) finally signed on 16 June 2008. Yet whereas the EU's strategy puts much emphasis on the 'carrot' of future Bosnian membership, the High Representative continues to wield the 'stick' of the 'Bonn Powers'. The EU came to bolster and complement the latter with operations in the ESDP framework.

After the end of the war in Bosnia, European countries had successfully lobbied for the job of High Representative to go to a European (Daalder 2000: 157). From 2002 onward, the latter was 'double-hatted' as EU Special Representative (cf. Council of the EU 2002a). At the same time, the Council of the EU also offered to create an ESDP police mission for Bosnia in order to replace the UN-run predecessor (Council of the EU 2002b). Launched in January 2003 as the first ever ESDP operation, the 'European Union Police Mission (EUPM)' did not have an 'executive mandate' as its UN antecedent did, i.e. it did not substitute for local law enforcement. Instead, it was entrusted with the objective of establishing 'sustainable policing arrangements under BiH ownership in accordance with best European and international practice, and thereby raising current BiH police standards' (Council of the EU 2002a). This

was to be achieved by monitoring and mentoring the upper echelons of the Bosnian police. With its mandate adjusted in 2005, 2007 and 2009, EUPM is still ongoing, nowadays with a focus on the fight against organized crime and on honing the criminal justice system (Council of the EU 2005a, 2007c, 2009).

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## IMAGINING ALTHEA

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ESDP engagement did not stop there, however. In its conclusions of the December 2002 summit, the European Council ‘indicated the Union’s willingness to lead a military operation in Bosnia following SFOR’ (European Council 2002). It took another two years though until the EU’s High Representative Javier Solana could proclaim the mission’s launch on 2 December 2004. What were the reasons, and what intentions were shaping the EU’s voluntarism as well as the subsequent decision-making process?

A number of analysts have asserted that the Union’s motives for taking on EUFOR Althea had less to do with Bosnia than with the EU’s desire to establish itself as a credible security actor (Kupferschmidt 2006: 11-12; ICG 2004b: 1; Gross 2007a: 146). The reasoning, also borne out in a number of interviews conducted for this study, was that there was an appetite within the newly established EU crisis management structures to operationalize and ‘test’ ESDP (Interviews with CGS and MS officials).<sup>23</sup> As several officials from the Secretariat themselves pointed out, there was a clear bureaucratic interest for Solana and his Council General Secretariat in such operations because they represented a visible and tangible result (Interviews). Compared to ESDP operations, they explained, other instruments of the CFSP such as common declarations and positions were cumbersome to achieve and provided little visibility for the EU while running the risk of being denigrated as only talking the talk. It should thus not come as a surprise that Solana is reported to have ‘aggressively pushed’ for an EU takeover of a NATO operation in Macedonia which preceded EUFOR Althea as the very first, if small, military operation to be run by the EU (Woodbridge 2002: 3; cf. Dijkstra 2011: 132).

Javier Solana was not alone however in his quest for an EU military role in the Western Balkans. Among EU governments, London and Paris have in particular been singled out as having pressed for an EU takeover from NATO in Bosnia (Franco-British summit declaration 2003; see also Bowman 2003: 1; Taylor 2006: 51; Howorth 2003: 249; Reichard 2006: 251). Interviewed officials moreover underlined that the former were ‘pushing an open door’ when it came to persuading

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<sup>23</sup> CGS is shorthand for Council General Secretariat, MS for member state.

Berlin of the proposal, and that the idea of an EU takeover received widespread support among EU governments (Interviews with CGS, UK and GER officials). On their part, German officials even claimed that Berlin was in fact among the most active, because of its government's interest in focusing ESDP on its geographic neighbourhood rather than any post-colonial endeavours as well as its general enthusiasm for making the ESDP operational (Interviews). Agence France-Press thus reported that German Defence Minister Struck described the proposed takeover in Bosnia literally as a 'good test' for the EU's fledgling security arm (AFP 2002).

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### WASHINGTON'S AMBIVALENCE

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The very concept of an EU operation in Bosnia was premised on the idea that NATO, and more specifically the US, wanted to leave Bosnia in the first place. There had certainly been indications to that effect (cf. Hill 2003; Burns 2003; Daalder 2000: 144-9). Yet when the European Council announced the EU's willingness to take over SFOR in late 2002, the reception was anything but enthusiastic. NATO was 'not amused' when it saw itself confronted with a public announcement by the European Council that was 'not fully pre-agreed' between the two institutions, as one official put it (Interview with GER official; see also Reuters 2002). Although talks between the two organizations had been ongoing since summer 2002, it had proven impossible to reach a solution agreeable to both (Interview with MS official). The fundamental sticking point was an attempt on the part of the US to relegate the ESDP to 'drying the dishes while the US runs the show', as the Financial Times quoted a senior EU diplomat (Dempsey 2004). In a document originally entitled 'delineation of tasks', the US sought to codify via NATO a general framework of cooperation between the two organizations which would have distributed responsibilities along the lines of hard power for NATO and soft power for the ESDP (Interview with MS official).

According to European officials, the principal (if publicly unspoken) motivation for the US' hesitation was its ambiguity with respect to the idea of the EU acting on its own, rather than through NATO (Interviews with FRA, GER, UK and CGS officials; cf. also Didzoleit and Koch 2003; Wernicke 2004; Giegerich et al. 2006: 393). While a long-running phenomenon, this ambiguity related to US fears that ESDP presented a French plot of organizing European resistance to US leadership in European security affairs (see e.g. Hunter 2002b: 28). As one British official put it pointedly, 'the US position was very bad at the time, and that was our fault. The UK did not properly prepare the US in 1998/99, mentally. I don't know what Blair was thinking he was doing at the time, but the Washington establishment saw ESDP as a perfidy of London. It caused deep disquiet – how could London make deals with that US-hating Chirac?' (Interview).

## *The Drivers behind EU Crisis Management Operations*

US ambivalence with respect to an EU takeover in Bosnia was a symptom of a more general dilemma that American administrations encountered. George Robertson – a former British defence minister and NATO Secretary-General at the time, and thus hardly one of the ‘usual suspects’ for latent European anti-Americanism – is reported to have referred to the American position as ‘a sort of schizophrenia’ which implied ‘on the one hand saying, “You Europeans have got to carry more of the burden.” And then, when the Europeans say, “OK, we will carry more of the burden,” they say, “Well, wait a minute, are you trying to tell us to go home?”’ (quoted from *The Economist* 1999). Thus, there has traditionally been a tension in US foreign policy between the wish to rebalance the sharing of the burden of military security in Europe and the fear that such a rebalancing might lead to lesser US influence on European security affairs (cf. Bowman 2003: 8). This ambivalence and associated fears about EU ‘balancing’ came to be primarily expressed through the contested nature of relations between the ESDP and NATO, the major obstacle on the road to EUFOR Althea. Negotiating ‘Berlin Plus’

In order to have NATO decide to transfer the command over its SFOR operation to the European Union, the latter needed to overcome more than just US ambivalence towards a shift in emphasis from transatlantic to European responsibility for Europe’s security. Partly in order to soothe US concerns about European autonomy, it was understood early on that the EU would rely on NATO command and control assets rather than plan and conduct the operation on its own (see e.g. Dempsey 2003a). As a consequence, the operation also depended on an agreement between the two organizations as to how exactly such cooperation would be designed. Negotiations on such arrangements, which came to be known under the moniker of ‘Berlin Plus’, had been ongoing for years (see previous chapter, first section). Yet concerned about the impending accession of Cyprus to the EU, Turkey drove a hard bargain vis-à-vis the EU concerning its rights of participation in ESDP (cf. Missiroli 2002). These demands not only raised Greek hackles, but also French objections to what was seen as interference in the EU’s decision-making autonomy. Turkey on the other hand could count on US support against ‘discrimination’ with respect to pre-ESDP times.

It was precisely when the negotiations about the relationship between NATO and the EU were reaching a decisive point that the European Council indicated the EU’s wish to step into NATO’s shoes in Bosnia. The basics of this accord, i.e. that not all EU member states would automatically be able to participate in ‘Berlin Plus’ operations, had already been agreed (Interview with MS official). The ‘Declaration of the Council meeting in Copenhagen on 12 December 2002’ thus noted laconically that ‘[a]s things stand at present, the “Berlin Plus” arrangements and the implementation thereof will apply only to those EU member States which are also either NATO members or parties to the “Partnership for Peace”, and which have consequently

concluded bilateral security arrangements with NATO' (European Council 2002: 13). The underlying 'reason' is that Turkish representatives refuse to sit at a table where a badge announces the presence of Cyprus so as not to indirectly confer upon the latter any semblance of recognition – unless and until the conflict in Cyprus is solved to Turkish satisfaction (for a nice example of the attendant agony, see Gros-Verheyde 2011a).

Because 'Berlin Plus' was thus preconditioned, it was 'imperative' that it would be finalized before the impending accession of the 10 new member states in May 2004 which included Cyprus and Malta (Interview with CGS official). Neither state had a partner- or membership agreement with NATO – and, in the case of Cyprus, did not stand a chance of getting one due to an expected Turkish veto in NATO (cf. Dempsey 2005). Since Cyprus and Malta could not be expected to explicitly agree to excluding themselves from certain instances of EU decision-making, 'Berlin Plus' needed to be finalized before those two countries had a vote.

The very day before the summit that announced the EU's intention to take over the operation in Bosnia, EU discussions on this issue were taking place in Copenhagen while NATO's North Atlantic Council negotiated in Brussels. Yet whereas a compromise was reached in both *fora*, leading to an 'EU – NATO declaration on ESDP' on 16 December 2002, the texts that the two respective bodies internally agreed on were not identical (Interviews with CGS and MS officials; cf. NATO-EU 2002). In an effort to increase its leverage regarding Cyprus, the Turkish government insisted that the North Atlantic Council add the words 'and strategic cooperation' when it adopted the 'agreement on military cooperation' between the two organizations (Interview with MS official). The EU however, at Greece's urging, did not follow suit. This led, and continues to lead to insistence on differing interpretations of what 'Berlin Plus' pertains to (Interview with CGS official; see e.g. Reichard 2006: 91). Under pressure from Cyprus, Greece and France in particular, the EU has argued ever since that the Berlin Plus consultation framework only apply to questions that are directly related to the EU's use of NATO assets, e.g. operations conducted through NATO's headquarters. At Turkey's urging, NATO has on the other hand insisted that basically any question of political import falls under the category of 'strategic cooperation'. As a consequence, meetings between the EU and NATO have become close to meaningless since the only agenda item which both sides agree falls under Berlin Plus is operation Althea.

Whereas the Turkish-Cypriot conflict has over time come to constitute a sheer insurmountable obstacle in its own right, it initially also represented a convenient smokescreen for the US and France (and their respective associates) to attempt to promote their particular visions of the European security architecture. This struggle was intensified by the transatlantic tensions associated with the impending invasion

of Iraq. In view of this unpropitious timing, it is perhaps unsurprising that the European Council's bid regarding SFOR was initially greeted by loud silence on the part of NATO (cf. Kim 2006: 2). Yet transatlantic cooperation on ESDP did not generally come to a halt over Iraq. Negotiations on how to implement 'Berlin Plus' instead advanced apace. This was due to the fact that progress on implementing 'Berlin Plus' was of particular concern to those interested in 'binding' the new European Security and Defence Policy to NATO, namely the 'Atlanticist' EU member states.<sup>24</sup> Whereas France, in the context of the difficult inter-organizational issues, suggested an alternative *ad hoc* solution for taking over the aptly named operation 'Allied Harmony' in Macedonia, the UK and Germany in particular insisted that the mechanism be properly executed (cf. Howorth 2007: 232; Dempsey 2002). The Berlin Plus implementation agreements were thus formally signed on March 17, 2003, i.e. days before the invasion of Iraq. Less than two weeks later, that framework was tested for the first time when operation 'Concordia' – as 'Allied Harmony' came to be re-baptized under the EU flag – was ushered in (Council of the EU 2003).

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#### FURTHER OBSTACLES: THE 'CHOCOLATE SUMMIT' AND OPERATION ARTEMIS

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The relatively quick resolution of all outstanding issues with respect to operation 'Concordia' shows that it was seen as a welcome 'test case' by all sides – despite its concurrency with the divisive US intervention in Iraq (cf. Dempsey 2003b). With respect to the much larger operation in Bosnia, however, the US made it known at the June 2003 biannual meeting of NATO's foreign ministers that it saw an EU takeover as 'premature' (AFP 2003; see also Robertson et al. 2003). In their testimony to the US Senate, administration officials justified this assessment with the EU's unwillingness to deploy a sufficiently large force and NATO's particular aptitude in apprehending war criminals and countering terrorism (Senate Hearing 2003: 16-17). Moreover, there was considerable scepticism in the US as to whether the EU was actually militarily ready and operationally capable to take on this task, and to what extent such a handover would 'risk' the prior US investment (cf. Kupferschmidt 2006: 11; ICG 2004b: 2-3; Kim 2006: 4; Senate Hearing 2003: 28-31; 34-36). Indeed, the US commander of SFOR used precisely this reasoning when he told Reuters that 'I think the end-game is to leave this place so that the investment that we've made to this point is not going to be a wasted investment' (Dunham 2003). Given the EU's well-known eagerness to 'buy out' the US investment, this was hardly an obliging comment. Most interviewed European officials, in any case, were convinced that

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<sup>24</sup> For a more general discussion of the Atlanticist-Europeanist cleavage, see (Stahl et al. 2004; Major 2009: 57; Howorth 2000).

behind all these caveats lurked Washington's fear that ESDP might become some sort of competitor (Interviews with UK, FRA, GER and CGS officials).

US fears of a hidden French agenda of weakening NATO via ESDP were fuelled when four EU member states – France, Germany, Belgium and Luxemburg – met at the highest level in the Brussels suburb of Tervuren on 29 April 2003 to launch efforts for reinforced and more autonomous European defence cooperation. Ridiculed as the 'Chocolate summit', this proposal not only met with fierce replies from the US and UK as well as other governments who felt this initiative was deeply divisive for both NATO and the EU, it also soured relations between the two organizations to 'rock-bottom' in the words of one official (Interview with CGS official; see also Keohane 2009: 130; Evans-Pritchard and Helms 2003).

Washington was jolted into new suspicions when the EU conducted its first 'autonomous' military operation in the summer of 2003, temporarily reinforcing the UN peacekeeping mission MONUC in Eastern DRC. What piqued US officials about 'Operation Artemis' was not only its French origin combined with the subtle message that the EU could intervene without NATO support, but also the paucity of consultation with NATO despite the two organizations' commitment to consult in the framework of Berlin Plus (cf. Giegerich et al. 2006: 9-10; Didzoleit and Koch 2003; Keohane 2009: 130). One analyst reported that 'European officials say there was little, if any, discussion in EU councils on whether to consult with NATO, as France made clear its aversion to doing so' and went on to point out that 'French military officials reportedly informally asked U.S. officers if U.S. transports would be available to airlift European troops to Bunia. The U.S. side advised that such requests appropriately should come under Berlin Plus. The French soon dropped the matter and opted to lease Ukrainian transports' (Michel 2004: 90).

In hindsight, several officials argued that France had been 'desperate' to prove that the EU could conduct such autonomous operations and hinted that the run-up to operation Artemis violated the spirit if not the letter of Berlin Plus insofar as transparency vis-à-vis the US and NATO was very limited (Interviews with CGS, GER and UK officials). One Council official reasoned that France had always been afraid that if the US knew too much, it might somehow prevent operation Artemis, so France acted in a secretive way, leading to negative US reactions that confirmed French fears (Interview with CGS official). French and U.S. mistrust of the other side's motives thus proved self-fulfilling. Mutual suspicions threatened to feed into a vicious circle of attempts to contain policy initiatives emanating from Washington and Paris respectively. In the course of 2003, this repeatedly came to resemble the zero-sum games that Western powers like to consider a thing of the past when it comes to their mutual relations in security policy. The relationship simultaneously

continued to be constructive in other areas though, notably concerning the operation in Macedonia.

With respect to the takeover of SFOR in Bosnia, the bad blood surrounding operation Artemis (not to speak of Iraq) meant that only in autumn 2003 were there the first careful signs that this transfer was coming back on the agenda (cf. Hill 2003; Burns 2003). The December 2003 NATO ministerial meeting concluded that '[o]ver the coming months, Allies will assess options for the future size and structure of SFOR, to include possible termination of SFOR by the end of 2004, transition possibly to a new EU mission within the framework of the Berlin+ arrangements and to a new NATO HQ Sarajevo' (NATO 2003). While the wording is tentative even by diplomatic standards, it contained the defining features of the deal that would eventually be finalized one year later: an EU military operation replacing SFOR under the Berlin Plus framework, i.e. using NATO assets, but complemented by an additional new NATO Headquarters in Bosnia.

### **C. PREPARING EUFOR ALTHEA**

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The subsequent year during which the transition from NATO to EU responsibility was planned and prepared saw the continuation of transatlantic tensions by more bureaucratic means. Although Berlin Plus had been created to specifically safeguard a close transatlantic link, Washington had come to see that framework as insufficient for guaranteeing SFOR's succession. It was hence decided that, while the EU would take over the deterrence function of SFOR, NATO would also remain in the Bosnian theatre with a small Headquarters presence (cf. NATO 2004a). Next to NATO's residual military presence, the US also decided to keep a small bilateral US presence whose tasks again overlapped with NATO's responsibilities (cf. NATO 2004b). This incidentally pleased Bosnians who were reassured that the US would continue to co-guarantee stability. However, most observers presumed that the US stayed because some parts of the administration did not like the feeling of being pushed out (Interviews with MS officials; see also Moore 2004; Wernicke 2004; Kupferschmidt 2006: 16). At the same time, a much reduced NATO presence was considered more palatable to US public opinion as it allowed for a US leadership role in NATO without committing significant assets. As several officials underlined, a continued NATO operation with only a small US contribution would have undermined the US claim to leadership in NATO on which its continued investment into the alliance depended domestically (Interviews with CGS and MS officials).

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**INTERORGANIZATIONAL RIVALRY**

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The compromise solution of an EU operation with a parallel NATO operation ‘which has the principal task of providing advice on defence reform, [and] will also undertake certain operational supporting tasks, such as counter-terrorism whilst ensuring force protection; supporting the ICTY, within means and capabilities, with regard to the detention of persons indicted for war crimes; and intelligence sharing with the EU’ opened up new questions (NATO 2004a). Since there were now two operations with partially overlapping mandates on the ground, there was a need to divide tasks and responsibilities among both, if only to avoid a potential ‘blue on blue’ encounter between the EU and NATO. The surrounding tug of war for political control over the EU operation poisoned the inter-institutional (and transatlantic) atmosphere once again (Interview with MS official; see also Kupferschmidt 2006: 8-9). In the end, the delineation of tasks proved so controversial that the political bodies in Brussels simply could not find a solution but passed the buck to the military commanders in theatre (cf. Kupferschmidt 2006: 16). In Solomonic wisdom the latter proposed conjoint decision-making in areas of overlapping responsibility, a compromise that was subsequently endorsed without much discussion (nor official knowledge of the precise technical arrangements) by both organizations in Brussels (cf. Kupferschmidt 2006: 16). Although this arrangement proved workable in the case of operation Althea, the torturous process and the uneasy solution which could easily be imagined to unravel in an operation of higher intensity and greater stakes cast considerable doubt over the feasibility of potential future ‘Berlin Plus’ operations.

Next to the question of dividing tasks between the EU and NATO, a second ‘technical’ but politicized issue to hamper negotiations between the two organizations was the question of the chain of command (cf. Kupferschmidt 2006: 19-20; Dempsey 2003a). According to the Berlin Plus framework, NATO would make its DSACEUR<sup>25</sup> – who by tradition comes from an EU country – available as the operation commander for ESDP operations. Yet whereas under EU crisis management procedures the force commander in theatre would be directly answerable to the operation commander, NATO procedures provide for a middle tier consisting of regional commands with Naples the command responsible for the Balkans. What made this discrepancy a problem for a number of EU members was the fear that an additional NATO layer of command might undercut the EU’s autonomy (Interview with MS official; cf. Kupferschmidt 2006: 19; Gourlay 2004: 5). Originally, the liaison officer in Naples would moreover not have been an EU citizen (Interview with MS official). Last but

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<sup>25</sup> Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe

not least, the 'obvious' solution of parallel command and reporting lines from SHAPE<sup>26</sup> to both Naples and Bosnia and back did not comply with the military maxim of a 'single chain of command' that France in particular insisted on (Kupferschmidt 2006: 19). Although Paris' position reflected political preferences more than military needs, the earlier, disconcerting experience in Bosnia with parallel chains of command during the times of UNPROFOR lent some credibility to this concern.

There were good reasons for integrating the regional NATO command in Naples into the EU chain of command, though. Since the EU-led operation in Bosnia and the NATO-led operation in Kosovo provided tactical reserves for each other and shared their over-the-horizon operational reserves and air support, some coordination below the strategic level in SHAPE seemed appropriate (cf. Kupferschmidt 2006: 19; NATO 2004b). Eventually, the solution consisted in putting a NATO officer from an EU country in charge of the liaison function and 'double-hatting' him for both EU and NATO functions while keeping the command and reporting lines compatible with both EU theory and NATO practice (Interview with MS official). This implied that, in theory, DSACEUR would directly lead the operation and simply keep Naples updated, while in practice Naples would consider itself part of the chain of command (cf. Kupferschmidt 2006: 19). The fact that this liaison officer could only be appointed more than 3 months after the relevant Joint Action had been adopted, and that French officials continued to malign this arrangement attests however to the politically contested nature of this 'technical' issue (PSC 2004a; Gourlay 2004: 5; Kupferschmidt 2006: 19). Interviewed officials reasoned that France and Greece were not as such opposing 'Berlin Plus', 'but interested in demonstrating autonomy from NATO' and that 'France in particular wanted to show autonomy by having a separate headquarters to fly the EU flag' (Interviews with CGS and MS officials).<sup>27</sup>

The discussions around the delineation of tasks and the precise chain of command demonstrate the high sensitivities and competing agendas for ESDP operations between member states with Atlanticist or Europeanist leanings (cf. Monaco 2003: 2). The tedious process left many officials wondering whether using the Berlin Plus arrangements was feasible for anything but handovers from NATO (where time

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<sup>26</sup> Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, NATO's operational headquarters and seat of (D)SACEUR

<sup>27</sup> France originally insisted that the new EU operation should have its own headquarters in order to fly the EU flag. However, Althea was eventually co-located with the remaining NATO operation, triggering acrimonious fights as to who would get to occupy the top floor...

pressure is much more manageable because there is by default a force present in theatre). One interviewee pointed out that this was just an example of bureaucracy at its most typical – the more time you gave a big organization for a task, the more time it would consume (Interview with CGS official). Others cited the fact that the decision-making on petty details was such a torturous process as evidence that some autonomy-minded member states may have tried to ‘prove’ that Berlin Plus was ‘too difficult to be worth it’ (Interview with CGS official). Yet such reasoning may also have informed Atlanticist obstinacy. Since NATO assets are deemed vital for truly challenging EU operations, making them available only after a tedious process (which governments can only afford in the aftermath of a NATO operation) might help to entrench a certain *de facto* division of labour between the two organizations. Whether the ‘conspiracy theorists’ were right has however become unlikely to be ever discerned as the EU membership of Cyprus has depressed the chances of any ‘fresh’ Berlin Plus operation, to the disappointment not just of London, but also of Berlin (Interview with GER and UK officials).

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#### TURNING A PAGE IN BOSNIA?

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Much of 2004 thus passed with difficult negotiations over the precise terms of reference for operation Althea, but on 2 December the transfer of authority finally took place. While the EU at that point was eager to demonstrate continuity and carry over NATO’s credibility, it also wanted to prove its value added. Thus, the operation’s first force commander reminisced how Javier Solana, in instructing him, insisted that Althea be ‘new and distinct’ and ‘make a difference’ (Leakey 2006: 59). That difference was to shift the emphasis from military to civilian means and to show, in the words of the High Representative in Bosnia, Lord Ashdown, that Bosnia was changing tracks as it left the ‘road from Dayton’ to turn onto the ‘road to Brussels’ (Leakey 2006: 60; cf. Dijkstra 2011: 148-54). As much as this seemed consequential nine years after NATO troops entered the country to implement the Dayton agreement, some observers judged it to be self-serving, with the EU tailoring the operation’s orientation and mandate to the means it had available and the message it wanted to convey, but without paying too much heed to Bosnian needs (e.g. ICG 2004b: 4).

When operation Althea took off in December 2004, it thus encapsulated compromises between Western European capitals on a range of issues: the degree of autonomy the operation would enjoy from NATO and thus the US, the kind of international actorness the EU would aspire to, the institutional setting that would satisfy member states’ sensitivities with respect to the preceding two issues, and the kind of tools regarded as necessary for fostering stability in Bosnia. Whereas France and Sweden in particular would have favoured a more autonomous operation, most

EU member states preferred the reassurance and the political signal that NATO involvement gave. The fact that the Berlin Plus arrangements were complemented (if not supervised) by a continued NATO presence in Bosnia was considered by some as the price to pay for Washington's approval (cf. Wernicke 2004). It is at the same time somewhat ironic that NATO, with its presence in Bosnia geared primarily to supporting security sector reform, secured a 'soft power' role for itself next to the EU's 'hard power' role of providing deterrence.

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#### **D. IMPLEMENTING ALTHEA**

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When the international stabilization operation swapped NATO's for the EU's flag, this initially amounted to little more than changing badges (cf. *The Economist* 2005). The operation's structure, force orientation, and even force composition remained largely the same as before (cf. Kupferschmidt 2006: 20). The only significant contributor that left the operation was the US, but in 2004 it 'merely' supplied about 15% of the force, as opposed to the 30% which it had originally accounted for (Kim 2006: 2). The other non-EU NATO members, Canada, Turkey, Norway, Romania and Bulgaria, stayed on with Althea, and so did six other 'third states' as non-EU contributors are referred to.<sup>28</sup> At the same time, several of the EU's non-NATO member states substantially re-engaged in Bosnia on the occasion of the transfer to Althea, with Finland, Sweden and Austria collectively committing almost 10% in 2005 after they had been largely absent from SFOR for some years (cf. IISS 2008c: 157, 160, 168).

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#### **CROSS-NATIONAL PARTICIPATION**

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Althea initially comprised approximately 7000 soldiers, just as SFOR before its replacement in late 2004. 80% of the former were directly taken over from the preceding NATO operation so as to highlight the continuity between the two forces and thereby underscore Althea's credibility (cf. Kupferschmidt 2006: 20; *The Economist* 2005). Continuity was further emphasized by the fact that almost all NATO members continued to contribute to Althea. Apart from the US, whose wish to withdraw from SFOR was instrumental in starting Althea, the only NATO members

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<sup>28</sup> Albania, Argentina, Chile, Morocco, New Zealand, and Switzerland were also accepted as contributors by the EU (PSC 2004b). Whereas the EU stresses that ESDP is an 'open project', i.e. that it generally welcomes contributions from third states, the exceptional range of 'third countries' in operation Althea is mainly a legacy of SFOR which at one point involved an even more significant and diverse range of contributors (see e.g. Bowman 2003: 8-10).

not participating were Denmark and Iceland: the former has formally excluded itself by 'opting out' of any military undertakings in the EU framework and the latter does not have any armed forces. Similarly, merely three EU member states did not participate in Althea: apart from Denmark, only Cyprus and Malta remained absent – but they were in fact prohibited from contributing by the conditions attached to Berlin Plus (cf. European Council 2002: 13). This near-universal participation, rare for ESDP operations, gives an indication of how widespread support for Althea was across EU capitals.

Whereas almost all capitals expressed commitment by participating, it is insightful to take a look at the size of their individual troop contributions so as to gauge the relative enthusiasm with which they did so. Such a comparison necessitates a few preliminary words of caution though because such figures might represent poor proxies of a state's commitment to an operation for a number of reasons. First, an operation is planned with a view to military needs – and the means to fulfil those needs are not always distributed equally across member states. 'Military needs' also figure in another way. As several interviewees hinted, since modern Western militaries partly rely on peace support operations to justify defence expenditure, some armies (or sub-units thereof) might be actively interested in 'doing something' (Interviews with MS officials; cf. also Mérand 2006: 138). Western armies also frequently have targets in terms of overseas deployment, i.e. to have 10% of personnel active in peace support operations. The vagaries of whether and when commitments to other international operations change or end, rather than the merits of a particular new mission might therefore impact on the decision on which scale a country will participate in such an operation.

A second reason for being careful before equating troop contributions with a country's enthusiasm for a mission is that key positions in the operation's military hierarchy are usually offset by the requirement to contribute a larger number of troops. A lower figure might thus reflect a nation's (temporary) inability to secure important positions in the operation's hierarchy. Thirdly, to see which operations a country supports relatively strongly, national commitments would also have to be compared to national capabilities more generally. Fourthly, the operation itself is not the only possible benchmark against which contributions can be compared. It is also plausible to compare overall contributions to crisis management which, depending on strategic assessment and/or domestic preferences regarding means of peace support, might be skewed towards non-military contributions. Fifth, it also makes sense to compare troop contributions across crises. As British officials stressed, the UK's extraordinary commitment to the rather uncomfortable operation in Afghanistan means it has fewer troops to spare for less risky crises such as Bosnia where other countries willing to take on the task could be found more easily (Interviews with CGS and UK officials).

### *The Drivers behind EU Crisis Management Operations*

The five issues discussed above illustrate that the scale of national participation does not necessarily correlate closely with the political importance a country attaches to a certain operation. That analytical problem is further compounded by the lack of good and reliable data on troop contributions. What is publicly available are usually only synopses that are difficult to compare because they may alternately refer to the total turnover of national troops in a given region, or their average or maximum number, or their number on any day picked by chance – often not even specifying which measure is being used. While the present study has attempted to cross-check and complete numbers wherever possible, interview information on such figures is usually insufficiently specific to be used for more than approximate verification. Thus, all numbers and the conclusions drawn from them must be taken with a considerable pinch of salt.

TABLE 6. NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO ALTHEA<sup>29</sup>

	<i>2004</i>	<i>April 2005</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>March 2009</i>	<i>Sept. 2009</i>
Germany	1.000	1.227	900	235	138	122	132
UK	1.100	669	590	21	12	10	10
France	1.500	381	450	73	101	96	3
Austria	2	265	287	178	103	118	90
Belgium	4	48	51	-	-	-	-
Bulgaria	36	192	134	115	116	118	120
Czech Rep.	7	61	65	5	-	-	-
Denmark	4	-	3	-	-	-	-
Estonia	1	2	33	3	2	2	2
Finland	0	158	177	64	53	45	4
Greece	250	182	155	45	45	44	44
Hungary	150	119	118	158	158	158	166
Ireland	50	45	57	25	43	40	43
Italy	979	1.032	882	363	248	283	297
Latvia	1	3	2	1	2	2	-

<sup>29</sup> The numbers in columns 2 and 4 – 6 are taken from an annual publication of the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) labelled ‘The Military Balance’. Unfortunately, this publication does not provide the exact dates at which contributions were assessed, nor is it fully consistent: Column 2 stems primarily from a 2008 longitudinal overview on European contributions, with non-European contributions added on the basis of the 2005 ‘Military Balance’ and refers to the period before NATO’s last drawdown to some 7.000 soldiers, so the shift from column 2 to 3 captures more than just the transition (IISS 2008c: 157-170; 2005: 114). Moreover, columns 4 and 5 seem to include not just Althea, but also the (significantly smaller) NATO operation as well, hence the contribution of the US and Denmark (IISS 2007: 160-1; 2008b: 160). By contrast, column 6 explicitly refers to Althea only (IISS 2009: 170-1). Numbers in column 3, which have been included because they capture the initial force distribution after the transition, stem from another secondary source, whereas the last two columns were retrieved the operation’s website where they are unfortunately not accessible anymore (Lindstrom 2005: 95; Althea 2009b, 2009a).

*The Drivers behind EU Crisis Management Operations*

Lithuania	97	1	1	1	1	1	1
Luxembourg	23	1	1	1	1	1	1
Netherlands	1.000	447	261	67	75	73	75
Poland	287	206	236	203	204	205	189
Portugal	330	167	193	14	51	55	51
Romania	106	110	85	49	58	57	55
Slovakia	29	4	42	42	40	72	32
Slovenia	158	165	84	58	34	29	26
Spain	935	538	495	284	376	307	316
Sweden	7	81	67	24	-	-	-
Albania	70	70	70	70	13	13	13
Argentina	-	1	2	-	-	-	-
Canada	800	112	11	8	8	-	-
Chile	-	24	15	21	21	32	32
Macedonia	-	-	-	-	12	12	12
Morocco	800	133	135	-	-	-	-
New Zealand	12	-	11	3	-	-	-
Norway	125	3	22	2	-	-	-
Switzerland	0	9	26	26	25	25	25
Turkey	1.200	229	368	253	242	232	273
U.S.A.	839	-	256	207	-	-	-
Sum							
Contributions	11.902	6.688	6.285	2.619	2.182	2.153	2.012

The preceding caveats notwithstanding individual countries' participation shed some light on the preference intensity of member states for operation Althea. Germany and Italy provided the biggest individual contributions, with the UK, Austria, Finland, Spain and the Netherlands investing relatively heavily as well (cf. Kupferschmidt 2006: 19; IISS 2008c: 157-170). Germany's and Italy's enthusiasm can be explained by geographic proximity and their history as primary target

countries of war-induced refugees which created relatively strong domestic interest in the events in the Balkans, from public opinion to Home affairs ministries. At the same time, however, Althea – as the most important incarnation of ‘Berlin Plus’ – mirrored their preferences with respect to the shape of transatlantic security cooperation, namely the potential to cooperate in a European framework, but nested, where convenient, in a transatlantic setting that provided both expertise and credibility at lower costs (Interviews with GER officials).

For the UK, the latter was also attractive, but the Balkans was becoming relatively less of a priority as the country increasingly engaged in Iraq and Afghanistan (Interviews with UK and GER officials). France for its part remained less than happy with Berlin Plus as British and German officials at the receiving end of French complaints confirmed in interviews (Interviews with CGS, FRA, GER and UK officials). France remained engaged, however, as its government knew that the Balkans was important not only in its own right, but also as the place where ESDP must not fail for it to retain any credibility (Interview with CGS and MS officials; cf. *The Economist* 2005). The substantial reengagement of the traditionally neutral European countries – Ireland, Sweden, Finland, and Austria – can equally be related to their preference for a European framework. Whereas Ireland’s contributions remained constant with both the NATO and the EU operation, the other three countries increased their participation considerably after the takeover. Sweden’s engagement remained limited as did its enthusiasm for Berlin Plus, but Austria and Finland started to make important contributions again. An EU operation was apparently domestically more palatable than a NATO mission (Interview with CGS official).

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#### EU-NATO RELATIONS REVISITED

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The near universality of participation at the induction of operation Althea attests to the breadth of support for this mission across EU capitals whereas the distribution of troop contributions indicates, albeit imperfectly, whose preferences were particularly well mirrored by the specific institutional setup. Yet although Berlin Plus proved workable for Althea, relations between the EU and NATO could hardly be described as the ‘strategic partnership’ that both organizations and most member states – principally those with two club cards – professed to strive for. Repeated attempts at improving these relations, notably from the British and German side, failed to overcome inter-organizational competition and the underlying problem of the Turkish-Greek-Cypriot triangle, which both the US and France used to support their vision of the ideal relationship between the EU and NATO (Interviews with MS and CGS officials).

### *The Drivers behind EU Crisis Management Operations*

A speech that NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer gave at an ESDP conference in January 2007 may serve as an illustration. Starting out by emphasizing the importance of EU-NATO relations, he went on to ask: 'How do NATO-EU relations stand? Let me answer that by means of a little anecdote. A few weeks ago, one of my staff told me he had been invited to a conference on "frozen conflicts". And then he added with a smile: "Of course it's about the Caucasus, not about NATO-EU relations!'"'. De Hoop Scheffer went on to identify the main culprits for this situation, arguing that '[s]ome deliberately want to keep NATO and the EU at a distance from one another. For this school of thought, a closer relationship between NATO and the EU means excessive influence for the USA' (de Hoop Scheffer 2007; see also *The Economist* 2007). To complete the picture, suffice it to say that conference participants related not just Solana's increasingly foul mood, but also how the French ambassador to Germany had already left the room by that point – to protest the fact that a NATO Secretary-General would be invited in the first place to give a speech at an ESDP conference.

Yet whereas the wider relationship between NATO and the EU was thus bedevilled, Althea actually helped to keep it alive to some extent because it gave the two organizations a setting in which they had to meet regularly to exchange information on the operation (Interview with GER official). It thereby created a space for regular get-togethers which the backers of Berlin Plus attempted to widen by trying to complement those meetings with 'informal meetings', 'coffee', or even 'informal informals' (their informal nature allowing for guests, and for table badges to disappear).<sup>30</sup> On the ground, by contrast, the most contentious issues were not necessarily between EUFOR and its co-located NATO HQ, but rather among different EU actors. The fact that many of EUFOR's tasks were essentially non-military in nature and related in particular to fighting organized crime brought it in a difficult relationship with the EU Police Mission tasked to do just that – but without an executive mandate (cf. Michel 2006: 4; Leakey 2006: 65; Gross 2007a: 142; Juncos 2006). EU internecine turf battles – fuelled by national caveats as to what national contingents were allowed to do – were however largely settled within the first year of EUFOR's operation (cf. Leakey 2006: 63; Michel 2006: 4; Dijkstra 2011: 153-4).

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<sup>30</sup> Such arrangements could of course easily be torpedoed should either Turkey (and the US) or Greece (and France) so wish, e.g. by posing preconditions for attending the coffee or by insisting that a given topic was so important that it needed to be formally discussed. As interviewees pointed out, attempts to this end have meanwhile largely collapsed as Turkey's reservations against such meetings have only hardened (Interviews with CGS and MS officials).

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THE THREAT OF ALTHEA'S DISSOLUTION

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Whereas there had originally been broad agreement across the EU on the need for a credibly-sized operation, European militaries increasingly came to view Bosnia's travails as an essentially non-military task (Interviews with CGS and MS officials). With the security situation judged as stable and safe, medium-term plans were being drawn up for downsizing the force (Interviews with MS officials). There was however a feeling that the EU needed to tread carefully, in particular with a view to the upcoming Kosovo status negotiations, which it was feared might fan secessionist pressures in Bosnia (Interview with MS official). Yet in 2006 the UK announced, in different bilateral settings, its prospective near-withdrawal over the following months (Interview with CGS and MS officials).

The British notice that the UK would henceforth participate at much reduced levels – the IISS records a shift from 590 troops in 2006 to 21 in 2007 (IISS 2008c: 170) – changed the dynamics of the planning process. Described by German and French diplomats as 'rather brutal' and 'un-British in style', it reflected the UK's serious overstretch and the pressure that the Ministry of Defence felt, in terms of resources as well as politically from the House of Commons (Interviews with MS officials; cf. Self 2010: 180-6). While a renewed outbreak of military hostilities in Bosnia seemed less and less likely, both France and Germany were reluctant at the time to accelerate the drawdown since they considered the situation in Bosnia and the region (i.e., Kosovo) as politically still too fragile (Interviews with MS officials). Unable to convince the UK to change its decision, they nonetheless insisted on characterizing Althea's 'reconfiguration' in the respective Council conclusions as 'progressive' and 'reversible' (Interview with MS official; Council of the EU 2007d).

While both Paris and Berlin were less than happy with London forcing their hand when they would rather have preferred to wait and see, officials considered the decision to reduce Althea's strength justifiable (Interviews). Moreover, the German military was also becoming increasingly unhappy about its non-military tasks in Bosnia, and in late October the German defence minister publicly raised the idea of a German withdrawal (Interview with GER official; Dempsey 2006a). This likely happened in response to domestic concerns for 'overstretch' given Germany's substantial contributions to operations in DRC and Lebanon in summer 2006 while facing Anglo-Saxon criticism over too limited engagement in Afghanistan prior to the biennial NATO summit in November that year. Yet it also shows that a drawdown in Bosnia was not unequivocally opposed when it came to Berlin. The Council thus decided to downsize Althea from 6500 to around 2500 troops, with Italy, Poland, Spain and Turkey taking on a relatively bigger part of the burden (all of whom still saw their contributions fall in absolute terms, see IISS 2008c: 157-170). Although the security situation in Bosnia subsequently remained stable despite a worsening

political deadlock, this process produced an awkward precedent for future decision-making on Althea.

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### WHITHER ALTHEA?

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After the decision to reconfigure Althea in early 2007, the operation continued for another two years without much debate or political progress in Bosnia. Discussion about the mission picked up again in late 2008, however, when France, unable to achieve EU consensus on closing the operation, decided to follow the British example and unilaterally withdraw most of its contribution (Interviews with CGS and MS officials). French officials insisted that this decision was based on the fact that the military tasks in Bosnia were simply finished, yet privately they also pointed out that 'the MoD was very much in favour of pulling out' (Interviews). Others also emphasized that France, as previously the UK, needed troops elsewhere, and one explained that the underlying motive was that French defence minister Morin 'needed to prove to parliament that he was closing down something' and that he took the decision 'for domestic consumption' (Interviews with CGS and GER officials).

With Finland also announcing withdrawal, there rose the spectre of Althea ending by 'development' rather than deliberate collective decision. Such a development would likely have undermined the EU's credibility not just in Bosnia, but also beyond. The downward spiral could be stopped in spring 2009, but the process highlighted the pressure the EU found itself under to close down an operation that most European militaries considered superfluous. As one official put it in May 2009, 'in recent discussions we have established that we should not be withdrawing unilaterally anymore [...] Our future pullouts, they need to be collective decisions because everybody is quite worried, in terms of an ESDP or the EU's credibility, that Althea will just slowly die, without a proper decision to draw down. You don't want to die until you get down to option 3 because that would just look incredibly bad, so people are more focused now on the need to stay, together' (Interview with MS official). In view of the precedent that London set earlier, it is ironic that the official just quoted was British.

The majority of EU member states, especially the UK and the Netherlands, reacted anxiously to the Franco-Finnish retreat (Interviews with CGS and MS officials). On the one hand, they understood the pressure most Western European armies felt under – indeed, as British officials admitted, their own unilateral decision to draw down in BiH came back to haunt London as it found itself between a rock and a hard place trying to argue why other militaries needed to stay when the UK had decided its troops were not needed anymore (Interviews with UK and CGS officials). Moreover, with Bosnia set to be elected to the UN Security Council in 2010, a foreign

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military presence seemed anachronistic, and the lure of declaring the operation a success and closing it down perfectly understandable. Last but not least, many European militaries felt that, as a German officer put it, there were 'no more brownie points to be won with the US' for staying in Bosnia, and that now only Afghanistan counted – a message that the UK had previously amplified (Interviews with MS and CGS officials).

Yet many EU capitals – especially the ones in the region, but also London and Berlin – continued to perceive risks for the political transition in Bosnia towards Euro-Atlantic integration (Interviews with CGS, GER and UK officials). In this context, Bosnia experts still opined that EUFOR's presence was helpful in that a Western general in a black limousine signalled to local politicians that they could not get away with just anything (Interview with MS official; cf. Dijkstra 2011: 136). Due to these regional threat perceptions, Greece and Turkey were among those most strongly in favour of continuing the operation, stressing that regional stability in the Balkans was more important than deploying to Afghanistan (Interview with CGS official). This coalition is of course somewhat ironic given that Althea is currently the only incarnation of 'Berlin Plus', a favourite bone of contention between the two countries. Yet while Althea was in fact never needed in the sense that Bosnian security services have so far always been able to handle any security challenges, there is a residual risk given what is perceived as irresponsible behaviour on the part of Bosnian politicians (Interview with CGS official). The counter-argument, that these politicians might behave irresponsibly precisely because a safety net in the shape of Althea exists, can however also not be easily dismissed.

At the same time that many European capitals were thus having a 'big rethink' on Bosnia, the advent of a new US administration with many 'old Bosnia hands' in positions of responsibility has further complicated discussions (Interviews with CGS and MS officials; cf. Sebastian 2009: 3-4). Many Clintonites involved in US Bosnia policy in the 1990s, from Joe Biden and Hillary Clinton to Richard Holbrooke, James Jones and Ivo Daalder, returned into the Obama administration with their opinions on the conflict still partly shaped by their experience of 15 years earlier (Interview with CGS official). US discontent with the EU's progress in BiH and Washington's resulting desire to once again take centre stage has led to EU protests that eventually dissuaded the Obama administration from nominating a special envoy for Bosnia (cf. Romac 2009; Bancroft 2009). The US apparently turned to indirect pressure on the UK instead (Interviews with CGS and MS officials). Thus, the UK's Shadow Foreign Secretary attacked the EU's intention to withdraw, putting domestic pressure on the incumbent government to defend an almost untenable position at the European level – namely to keep others from following its example (cf. Morris 2009). This in turn has not pleased either Javier Solana's Council Secretariat nor a number of more

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'autonomy-minded' member states including the Swedish EU presidency at the time (cf. Sebastian 2009: 2-3).

What made the debate about the future of Althea particularly difficult was that it became intricately linked to the wider question of the future of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) in BiH. Whereas the EU has taken responsibility for the OHR's ultimate stick, Althea, the High Representative himself is answerable to the 'Peace Implementation Council' (PIC), comprising among others the US and Russia, as well as to the EU with his 'second hat' as EU Special Representative (EUSR). It would thus be preferable to close down Althea together with the OHR, but the EU cannot decide the latter whereas simply closing down its own operation would open it to the charge of behaving irresponsibly. The solution has been to shift Althea's emphasis towards non-executive tasks, but this only side-steps the question of whether the operation is truly prepared to deter potential spoilers.

The evolution of Althea to a non-executive operation also brought up old debates about 'Berlin Plus'. That framework was evidently not drawn up for non-executive training missions, and the proposed use thereof for such purposes raised eyebrows in those member states concerned about EU autonomy (Interviews with UK and GER officials). Why would NATO have to have a say in an EU mission where neither its assets nor its credibility were seemingly needed? Predictably, there was pressure in particular from Greece and Cyprus to change the new mission's format, and with good arguments: closing down Althea would not only allow the EU to book it as a success, but also signal that BiH was advancing and that a new chapter of cooperation had been opened (Interviews with FRA and UK officials).

Those advocating a continuation of Althea under 'Berlin Plus' however also brought important arguments to bear. Why should the EU have to change its Operational Headquarters and re-start with changes in procedures (opening up predictably intractable problems such as how to exchange information with NATO), financing and logistics (Interview with UK official)? Moreover, it seemed sensible to stay close to NATO in case a possible if unlikely extraction operation was to become necessary. Yet perhaps most important was the reasoning shared by London and Berlin: that Althea was helpful in keeping EU-NATO relations afloat because it mandated continued if hardly meaningful meetings (Interview with GER official). Ironically, whereas 'Berlin Plus' had originally been considered necessary to underpin operation Althea, that relationship was thus over time reversed to the extent that a few years later Althea was considered useful for underpinning 'Berlin Plus'. By way of compromise, the EU eventually decided that Althea would continue under Berlin Plus, but that this did not set a general precedent. When the ESDP formally became the CSDP in late 2009, Althea was thus still ongoing and still guaranteeing Bosnia's

constitution against potential violent challenges, despite its constantly diminishing size.

## **E. PROXIMATE DRIVERS BEHIND ALTHEA**

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Taking a bird's eye view of the operation's history, what were the drivers behind Althea? Although this case study analyzed in detail the tensions between various capitals, the first point to notice is the degree of consensus regarding the operation. Throughout its existence, most EU capitals proved supportive. At least in hindsight, British, French and German officials all claimed that their governments had been enthusiastic about this operation. They moreover acknowledged that their EU counterparts backed the operation too, including the principle of implementing it via the ESDP framework. Finally, the breadth of troop contributions also indicates widespread support. Although the reasons for this enthusiasm varied in part, they converged in the shared incentive to demonstrate that EU governments were able and willing to take responsibility in international crisis management. To understand why, we need to look back at what Bosnia had meant for their foreign policies.

While talk about an ESDP operation in Bosnia started only in 2002, the drivers behind Althea reach back to the 1990s. The war in Bosnia topped the list of post-cold war foreign policy disasters for most if not all EU governments. The unfortunate slogan of the 'hour of Europe' came to encapsulate the huge gap between what Europeans expected from themselves and what they could deliver (cf. Hill 1993). This letdown applied not just to the European Community collectively, but also to European states individually; the leading military powers in Western Europe proved unable to effectively address the conflict in Bosnia. This did considerable damage to Europeans' self-image as pursuers of an 'ethical' or even just an effective foreign policy. Europe's public stood aghast at the all too apparent failure of their governments to act decisively in defending the values that – especially after the revolution of 1989 – were supposed to form the basis of all European societies, if not a new world order (cf. Gow 1997: 298-299; Silber and Little 1995: 329; Duke 2000: 213; 223; Sabrow 2009). As the Economist's 'Charlemagne' once put it with respect to the EU's CFSP, 'the memory that really haunts the EU is its ignominious failure to deal with the Balkan wars in the 1990s' (The Economist 2005).

In essence, EU governments showed themselves to their electorates – as well as to the US and the 'international community' at large – as helpless and incompetent to address a morally outraging crisis at Europe's doorstep. Their subsequent efforts to redeem themselves in the region thus served not only to (re-)gain some foreign policy credibility, but might also be considered an expression of bad conscience of the way European governments had mishandled the original Yugoslav crisis in the

'old' framework of European cooperation (cf. Duke 2000: 221-223; Bretherton and Vogler 2006: 196; Juncos 2006). The American desire to pull out thus offered Europeans a 'second chance' in Bosnia (Wernicke 2004; The Economist 2005).

The fact that Bosnia came onto the ESDP agenda reflected more than a desire to make up for the failures of the 1990s though. It was also embedded in a conscious attempt to make ESDP work as a tool for European governments to influence their environment. A British Foreign Secretary recently underlined Bosnia's crucial role in this respect when he traced the St-Malo Declaration of 1998 and subsequent EU crisis management operations back to the war in Bosnia (Miliband 2009). The shared experience of this debacle united rather than divided European governments and enabled them – in spite of their differences in strategic outlook – to agree on the desirability of the ESDP instrument in general and a significant number of operations in particular, foremost among them operation Althea.

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#### HELPING WASHINGTON

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It was the confluence of the European wish to take responsibility in the framework of ESDP with Washington's wish to withdraw that enabled the EU to become NATO's successor in Bosnia. This consensus notwithstanding, there clearly was some residual American ambiguity towards the idea of ESDP that limited enthusiasm for the takeover in Washington, a hesitation amplified by the concomitance with the transatlantic fall-out over Iraq. Yet both German and British officials stressed that what their respective governments considered particularly attractive about the operation was the ability to actually help the US – and no one suggested that there was any intent of pushing the US out (Interviews). In fact, as one interviewee pointedly put it, had the US really opposed ESDP or the takeover of the operation in Bosnia, it would simply not have happened (Interview with CGS official).

Washington's ambiguity was mirrored in the mixed motives to be found within the European Union. Although an EU military operation in Bosnia enjoyed widespread support, London, Paris and Berlin each supported it for somewhat different reasons. As a number of officials from the Council Secretariat as well as all three capitals pointed out, France was above all interested in making ESDP operational, in proving that the EU was able and willing to act autonomously in the domain of international security (Interviews). As one of them argued, the deal in St-Malo had been that France agreed to the first idea of 'Berlin Plus' in exchange for getting the ESDP 'toolbox' for the EU, a compact spelt out in paragraph 9 of the 1999 Washington Summit Communiqué (NATO 1999). In order for that toolbox to become operational reality in Bosnia, France was willing to re-new this deal even though its political preference lay with an autonomous operation (Interviews with CGS and MS officials).

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For the British government, priorities were different if not inverse. Taking over SFOR implied lending a hand to the US in view of Washington's professed wish to disengage from Bosnia at the same time as it offered an opportunity to tie the fledgling ESDP to NATO, thereby making sure any 'duplication' was avoided (Interviews with UK officials). As one interviewed British official reminisced, 'we had no problem with ESDP, but we did not want it to damage NATO, and we wanted to keep NATO as the first choice for crisis management' (Interview). A Council official recalled that 'France wanted the operation to get started and found it easier to disperse doubts about its intentions because Berlin Plus made it more acceptable; for the UK, it was the other way around – help the US, but that was easier and more acceptable in the EU context' (Interview).

London had reasons beyond strengthening transatlantic ties for pushing for operation Althea. It felt that this operation was a way of promoting EU enlargement, a traditional British foreign policy objective, and of showing that the UK as one of the two founding member states of ESDP was still committed to that policy (Interviews with UK officials). One British official thus argued that 'London pushed very hard for a transfer of SFOR to the EU, because it felt that was something that the EU could do, that was politically attractive for the EU because of the latter's engagement on the civilian side, and because of the Thessaloniki commitment to the eventual integration of the Western Balkans. So all the planets were aligned, but the deal was that it would be carried out under Berlin Plus' (Interview). Another concurred, underlining that 'the UK pushed for this operation. There is a widespread perception, fuelled mostly by Paris, that London is holding ESDP back, but the UK supported it. There was a lot of tension between Paris and London on ESDP in the beginning that is sometimes referred to as constructive although it is rather destructive, but the UK was perfectly enthusiastic about the operation – the terrain was not too challenging, but showed Europeans that they needed to develop their capabilities, so it was very much in the UK's interest' (Interview). In short, as one close observer noted at the time, 'Britain staunchly supported the EU plan for Bosnia, believing it would be an incentive for the Europeans to improve military capabilities, take on more of the burden-sharing in the Balkans and allow the US to redeploy its forces elsewhere' (Dempsey 2003c).

The British view was echoed in Berlin which, apart from pointing to the US interest in leaving Bosnia, also stressed the military interest in implementing the Berlin Plus framework. German officials in both the Foreign Office and the Defence Ministry emphasized the political interest in keeping a close link to NATO (Interviews). They also stressed the financial interest in avoiding duplication, i.e. the fact that Germany already paid for NATO assets such as SHAPE and thus wanted these being put to use whenever possible – rather than paying for an extra EU set of assets with the largest contribution coming from Berlin. German officials moreover underlined that, when it

came to more 'high-end' operations involving considerable risks to troops, they preferred 'Berlin Plus' wherever that would be politically possible (Interviews). The keen interest in seeing to it that Berlin Plus would work, and that transatlantic relations thereby be strengthened, was hence an important driver behind operation Althea. In addition, and in contrast to aspirations in London and Paris, German officials also stressed their interest in showcasing that ESDP was primarily about stabilising the EU's neighbourhood, not post-colonial endeavours – a preference that a relatively big deployment in Bosnia conveniently underlined (Interviews).

In short, the most important cleavage dividing EU governments regarded the question of how 'autonomously' the operation should be run. Interestingly, this tension continued to surface even after the operation had been agreed upon. It came to be reflected in petty bureaucratic struggles during the operation's preparation and proved to be still virulent by the time that the question of its succession arose. Moreover, capitals' preferences in this respect were reflected in the size of their contributions. Yet the role of Washington was not the only issue to divide EU governments; they also displayed some variation with respect to the second major driver, their shared desire to make ESDP operational.

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#### OPERATIONALIZING ESDP

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The EU's desire to establish itself as an actor in international security was the second important reason for Althea's inception. Not only did this motive frequently surface in interviews with officials, it also explains why political responsibility was shifted from NATO to the EU in the first place. Moreover, the need to show that the EU could do it, too, explicates why this shift was accompanied by a high degree of continuity between SFOR and Althea. Finally, it also provides an explanation for EU governments' contentment with an increasingly symbolic presence and their desire to declare success paired with apprehension that Bosnia could yet derail and thereby destroy the EU's standing. The incentives for operationalizing ESDP comprise EU governments' interests in demonstrating their ability to influence international events as well as the bureaucratic interest of the new EU structures of proving their value-added. As several interviewees pointed out, after the first years of ESDP in which thorny institutional issues had to be resolved, everyone was eager to have a 'proper operation' also in the military realm (Interviews with CGS and MS officials). That is not to imply that just any operation would have been welcome; the decision on undertaking a mission was certainly coupled with an appreciation as to the Union's capacity to handle such a task. Thus, when Belgian Foreign Minister Louis Michel had suggested at the December 2001 Laeken summit that the EU might take over responsibility for military security in Afghanistan, this proposal was quickly rejected (Lobjakas 2001).

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Yet it is probably fair to state that, in the early days of the new century, ESDP officials went on a 'mission-shopping tour'. As there were few new operations on the horizon that appeared feasible for ESDP, they opted for 'legacy operations' (Interview with CGS official). The Balkans offered a prime opportunity in this respect – due to a relatively stable security environment, geographical proximity, extensive knowledge of and (military) experience in the region, and therefore less uncertainty with respect to potential risks. Since NATO was present in theatre, time horizons for planning could moreover be relatively generous when compared to true crisis management. Whereas Berlin Plus had originally hardly been intended for such 'legacy operations', they offered good testing grounds for a 'controlled experiment' in a region where European governments and bureaucracies had a lot of expertise and influence. Reportedly, 'an ideal test run' for ESDP is also how Althea's first force commander, General Leakey, described the operation at its outset (cf. Wernicke 2004).

Bosnia's instrumentality in establishing the EU's credibility as a security actor was repeatedly criticized in the run-up to operation Althea (cf. Kupferschmidt 2006: 11; ICG 2004b: 4; Senate Hearing 2003: 16; 28-31; 34-36; The Economist 2005). The International Crisis Group (ICG), for example, judged by mid-2004 that 'Brussels seemed not so much to be engaging in the empire-building of which it is sometimes accused as aiming for a mission which was doomed to success by its own lack of ambition' (ICG 2004b: 4). The allegation was that the EU wanted to carry out this operation primarily as a means to test and promote ESDP on relatively safe territory, rather than because it believed it had the right strategy and instruments for Bosnia's travails. Yet one motive obviously does not exclude the other, and the interviews conducted for this study suggest that their relative importance diverged between the different capitals. Whereas France and the EU Council Secretariat were particularly eager to promote or, in the words of a British official, 'glorify' ESDP, the UK seemed more interested in the policy's potential for bringing Bosnia closer to the EU orbit and tying ESDP to NATO (Interviews with CGS, UK and FRA officials). German officials on the other hand stressed the perfect compatibility of all those objectives (Interviews).

A final difference between EU capitals related to their attitudes in weighing the national costs of contributing troops against the collective benefits of a credible EU presence. Both the UK and France came to favour the former at the expense of the latter, for reasons that were only partly related to the situation in Bosnia. Yet whereas EU governments wrangled over the issue of burden-sharing, many officials pointed out that the most pronounced split actually ran through these very governments, pitting ministries of defence against ministries of foreign affairs (Interviews with UK, FRA and GER officials). The former tended to emphasize that the military job was done, that the security situation was and continued to be safe

and stable, and that their troops in Bosnia were basically getting depressed from only drinking coffee when they were needed elsewhere (Interviews with MS and CGS officials). By contrast, diplomats emphasized the political function of confidence-building that an ultimate military deterrent fulfilled; moreover, they wanted the 'comprehensive work of art' that the Western Balkans as a whole represented to be taken into account (Interviews with MS and CGS officials). As one official summed it up, 'the military view is that the job is done, but politically, it is different – and everyone agrees that Bosnian politics sucks' (Interview with CGS official). Once the debate over which logic ought to take precedence had been won by defence ministries in the EU's two biggest military powers, it became increasingly difficult for diplomats in the other countries to make the case for staying on. As one official argued, 'if a big state, if the French withdraw and say, not interested any more, that is a signal to the others' (Interviews with MS official). Similarly, another pointed out that 'currently, reality is catching up with the operation, and there is a moment when the begging and screaming of the neither the commander nor the Council Secretariat will do any good anymore, when the national position prevails and member states will simply withdraw' (Interview with CGS official).

In sum, the lines of conflict regarding operation Althea have remained remarkably stable. They notably included US ambivalence about EU leadership on Bosnia; the resulting transatlantic disagreements translating into intra-European tensions as to the appropriate degree of autonomy from NATO; EU governments' desire to celebrate a foreign policy success and to bring their troops home grating against concerns about the credibility of an EU military deterrent; and the inter-organizational competition with NATO, fuelled by member states' diverging preferences. Yet these conflicts also have to be contrasted with an equally stable set of agreements: the collective affirmation of the EU's responsibility for Bosnia; the considerable effort to reach compromises that translated into broad support, if to different degrees of enthusiasm; and the commitment to see the EU succeed as a regional security actor, a commitment that remained powerful enough in 2009 to contain member states' rush out of operation Althea.

## **F. CONCLUSION**

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As this chapter showed, operation Althea was driven by a mix of overlapping and diverging member state preferences. The former were due to common Balkan experiences and aspirations as well as to the importance that all EU governments attached to being perceived as conducting a legitimate and competent foreign policy; the latter to differing perceptions as to what exactly such a policy would imply. What does this entail with respect to the propositions set out in the theoretical framework?

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With respect to the first proposition, Althea provides only very limited evidence of EU behaviour that could be qualified as balancing the United States. Several factors instead militate against such an interpretation. First, it was Washington's interest in having Europeans take over responsibility in Bosnia that put such an operation on the EU's agenda in the first place. Secondly, both German and British officials motivated their support with the fact that they perceived an opportunity to help (rather than balance) the US, and because it promised to tie the fledgling ESDP to NATO via a successful implementation of the Berlin Plus framework. They thus sought to strengthen ties with the US. Third, the implementation of Althea did not bear witness to either balancing intentions or any shift in the balance of power. The transition from NATO to EU command did not constrain Washington but allowed it to palm off a responsibility it had repeatedly claimed it no longer wanted. At the same time, the US remained engaged via its bilateral presence, its planners in NATO headquarters, and, most importantly, its bilateral influence on various EU governments. This influence continued to show long after SFOR had ended, such as when officials explained countries' withdrawal by the fact that Bosnia did not win them any brownie points with the Americans anymore, as well as in Washington's ability to prevent the operation's closure. After all, Althea owes its continuing existence in part to US insistence on keeping the OHR alive.

There is, however, one catch. At various points, Washington expressed ambivalence towards ESDP if not dissatisfaction with the relationship between ESDP and NATO. Even after Althea had been set up, this continued to translate into Franco-British haggling over the degree of dependence that the European framework of cooperation would have on the transatlantic one, a rivalry fuelled by inter-organizational competition between the NATO and EU bureaucracies. And whereas differences with respect to the transatlantic relationship have narrowed cross-nationally in the course of this operation, they still impact on member states' position – at least at the bureaucratic level – as the debates on the future evolution of operation Althea attest.

However, these differing preferences for the EU-NATO relationship are not as such evidence for balancing. Only one of our three capitals fought for greater EU autonomy, and Paris' reasons for doing so cannot unequivocally be traced to concerns about relative power. Apart from strategic considerations, they may just as much have reflected domestic political expediency, a question that will be further discussed in the last two chapters. Moreover, it deserves emphasis that both Washington and Paris agreed to the transition to Althea, something they are unlikely to have done had they not expected net political benefits. Although they haggled over the precise distribution of those benefits, the wish to realize them was the stronger impetus. To the extent that the US' negative reaction indicated transatlantic discord, Washington was primarily combating the shadows of its own illusions –

although Chirac's intermittent rhetoric about his objective of 'multi-polarity' admittedly helped giving such mirages some face-value credibility (cf. Howorth 2000: 48; Chirac 1999; Giegerich 2006: 116). Franco-American differences over specific institutional questions were scholastic rather than intrinsically competitive in nature – a state of affairs for which the notion of balancing simply evokes misleading associations.

Similarly, there was little evidence in the decision-making process that the EU may have been enacting its own normative role conception, as the second proposition had suggested. The pivotal internal reason for the EU to replace NATO reflected the EU's self-interest in establishing its credentials as an international security provider rather than the notion that an ESDP operation had a value-added in promoting liberal values. However, it was inscribed into a wider engagement for which remorse over Europe's earlier lack of will in Bosnia played a significant role. The West's overall intervention in Bosnia was designed to defend liberal values insofar as it aimed to suppress further human rights violations and to draw the country into the 'Atlantic' community of liberal states (cf. Daalder 2000: 165; 173-8; Duke 2000: 223; van Willigen 2009). Since the EU has participated in attempting to re-shape the country into a non-sectarian polity, it has also been accused of (and praised for) trying to impose a liberal peace (cf. Merlingen and Ostrauskaite 2005; Cooper 2004; Paris 1997). Thus, whereas the installation of operation Althea did not follow a specifically liberal impetus, it formed part of a wider effort (albeit not one restricted to the EU) which can be characterized as liberal and normatively inspired.

With respect to the third proposition, Althea provided considerable evidence that EU governments pushed for the transition from NATO to EU command in order to demonstrate the EU's ability as a military actor. Not only French and German, but also British officials attested to this motive. There was a palpable desire in the EU to show that ESDP was 'more than paperwork' and a feeling that the Western Balkans were a suitable testing ground (Interviews; cf. Andréani 2000). The added benefit of developing ESDP in the Western Balkans was that no member state had doubts about the Union's collective interest in South-Eastern Europe, and that it offered the chance for a flattering comparison in demonstrating the development the EU had undergone since it last engaged in Bosnia in the early 1990s. In view of the limited changes on the ground, it is plausible that part of the transition's objective was to provide a symbolic booster for ESDP.

There were few indications, on the other hand, that this objective of building an EU security identity was primarily a means for achieving the end of European nation-building. Although European institutions, and Javier Solana in particular, pushed for this transition in order to establish the Union's credentials in peace support operations, the crucial support that he received from member states was hardly

motivated by integrationist intents – only some German counterparts mentioned those, among more important ones. Moreover, there was no concerted effort in member states to exploit the operation's visibility for promoting the added value of European integration, and the objective of fostering an EU security identity subsided in importance over time. As the EU has grown more active in the ESDP framework, it has come to depend much less on Bosnia for the purpose of flying its flag. This change notwithstanding, there is a keen awareness that Bosnia could yet severely damage the ESDP if the EU was to show itself unable to keep a potentially unstable Bosnia under control.

Regarding the fourth proposition, there is little evidence that Althea was directly shaped by domestic expectations for foreign policy action. Yet indirectly societal pressure has arguably been influential in informing Western governments' Bosnia policy for almost two decades. As the ill-timed promise of the 'hour of Europe' shows, European politicians were already in 1991 responding to – and co-creating – expectations as to what they could achieve. James Gow summed up the motivations in Western capitals concerning their reaction to the wars in Yugoslavia by pointing out that '[t]he political worries of Western governments concerned popular opinion and the need to win votes at the next election' (Gow 1997: 306; cf. Daalder 2000: 109). While this made them reluctant to use force for fear of the risks attached to fighting a war that was not strictly necessary, the resulting lack of consequentiality also posed significant domestic political risks. In the US, Madeline Albright played a key role in convincing President Clinton to engage by stressing that 'the disaster in Bosnia was "destroying" the administration's credibility' (Daalder 2000: 93; 159).

It is plausible that similar concerns informed EU governments' decision to take action in Bosnia. The 'need to do something' arguably led European governments to engage in UNPROFOR in the first place, but failed to demonstrate decisive influence on events in Bosnia. EU governments therefore faced considerable incentives to build tools for collective crisis management and to revisit their engagement in Bosnia in order to shed the image of indecisiveness and powerlessness derived from their role in this country in the 1990s (cf. Bretherton and Vogler 2006: 196; Andréani 2000: 94-5). EU governments were thus eager to show that they were (now) able to take responsibility for security in their own 'backyard'. Many officials indicated as much when they emphasized how favourably the current situation – when Europeans could decide to act by themselves, as Europeans – compared to the crises of the 1990s (Interviews).

Whether concerns about foreign policy credibility related to governments' worries about international or domestic legitimacy can of course be debated. The same goes for the reason of the correlation between the relative size of states' contribution on the one hand, and their enthusiasm for Berlin Plus or – for the 'post-neutral'

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countries – the transfer from SFOR to Althea on the other. Similarly, we may interpret the increase in self-interested attempts to ‘free-ride’ on the efforts of others as reflecting domestic fears of over-extension and preferences for decreasing military spending – but it may also have other reasons. Finally, the very visible differences in national positions regarding transatlantic relations is often treated as a manifestation of states’ struggle for international influence, but it may instead also reflect of domestic (elite) preferences. Whereas these more generic sources of national security policy preferences will be discussed in greater detail in chapter VIII, suffice it to say at this point that the evidence regarding operation Althea all but contradicted the balancing proposition, was limited but compatible with the ‘normative power Europe’ and the ‘domestic expectations’ propositions, and provided considerable support for the assumed objective of an EU security identity – but not the suspected ulterior goal of European integration.

## CHAPTER V: EULEX KOSOVO

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EULEX Kosovo was set up by the Council of the EU on 4 February 2008. In the respective Joint Action, the Council mandated the mission to ‘assist the Kosovo institutions, judicial authorities and law enforcement agencies in their progress towards sustainability and accountability’ through ‘monitoring, mentoring and advising, while retaining certain executive responsibilities’ (Council of the EU 2008e: art. 2).<sup>31</sup> As in the case of Bosnia, this entails a puzzle as to why the ESDP instrument was employed at such a late stage. Given that NATO intervened in Kosovo in 1999 and that the international community has been highly engaged ever since, why did the EU set up this monitoring mission only in 2008?

In examining this puzzle, the present chapter again applies the theoretical alternatives elaborated in chapter two. In order to avoid repetitiveness, this introduction will only highlight one feature of the operation that is specific to this case and therefore deserves preliminary mention. Whereas the balancing proposition has generally been applied to the EU’s relationship with the US, in the case of Kosovo we also need to consider the auxiliary proposition based on ‘balance of threat’ theory (cf. Walt 1987). Given the conflict between Russia and the West over Kosovo, the EU may accordingly also have attempted to contain or repel Russian influence in the Western Balkans. EU governments would consequently have wanted to limit US and/or Russian influence by transferring political control over regional events from the UN (Security Council) to the European Union. The consequences of the remaining three propositions are analogous to those developed for the Bosnian case (see introduction to previous chapter).

### A. BACKGROUND

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Kosovo has been on the international agenda for many years. Formerly an autonomous province in Yugoslavia, it has long been subject to contention between the territory’s majoritarian Albanian population and Serbia, the Yugoslav republic of which it was part. Its degree of autonomy from Belgrade increased during the 1960s and 1970s, yet it never became a full republic within Yugoslavia. This status would have given it the theoretical right to secede that the republics eventually all exercised after the fall of communism. Moreover, Kosovo’s autonomous status

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<sup>31</sup> When referencing international legal documents, the abbreviation para. refers to the paragraphs in the preamble, whereas art. refers to the actual articles.

within Serbia was rescinded in 1989 at the instigation of Serbian president Milosevic – a measure frequently credited with pivotal significance in bringing about Yugoslavia's disintegration (e.g. Judah 2008: 67). During the years of Yugoslavia's violent implosion 1991-1995, Kosovo Albanians resisted Serbian control primarily by civil disobedience. However, their strategy changed when the Dayton Accords of November 1995, which ended the war in Bosnia, brought about an international reevaluation of the Milosevic regime without promising amelioration for Kosovo Albanians (Judah 2008: 79). Aided by a huge increase in the regional availability of weapons following Albania's temporary implosion in 1997, the 'Kosovo Liberation Army' (KLA) took up a violent campaign against Serbian authorities and civilians in Kosovo (cf. Judah 2008: 79-84). The Milosevic regime responded with a brutal crackdown and severe human rights abuses. Western-instigated negotiations between the two sides in February 1999 at Rambouillet failed to bring about a solution. When the Albanian side accepted the deal proposed by Western powers but Milosevic refused, Western leaders took a tough stance. Haunted by guilt over their indecisive action earlier in Bosnia, they decided to take military action against Yugoslavia (cf. Judah 2008: 87). Even though NATO could not obtain an explicit UN Security Council mandate, on March 24, 1999 it started bombing targets across Yugoslavia.

NATO's air campaign was to last for 78 days towards the end of which Milosevic was coerced to accept the arrangement set out in annex II of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (UNSC 1999; cf. Ker-Lindsay 2009a: 146). At the root of this deal was a compromise between NATO and Russia arrived at the May 1999 G8 summit which combined the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces from Kosovo with some form of autonomy for the latter, to be decided in future negotiations (cf. Ker-Lindsay 2009a: 146; Kim and Woehrel 2008: 4). Meanwhile, resolution 1244 authorized a UN civilian mission (UNMIK) as well as an international security presence under NATO command (KFOR) to take control of the province. UNMIK's objective was to 'provide an interim administration for Kosovo [...] while overseeing the development of provisional democratic self-governing institutions' as well as '[f]acilitating a political process designed to determine Kosovo's future status, taking into account the Rambouillet accords' (UNSC 1999: art. 10; 11(e)). UNMIK was structured into four pillars which comprised police and justice (initially humanitarian aid), civil administration, democratic institution-building and reconstruction (Kim and Woehrel 2008: 10). The first two pillars were led by UNMIK whereas the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) took the lead for institution-building and the EU for reconstruction. UNMIK was backed up by NATO operation KFOR. The latter peaked at nearly 50.000 soldiers in 1999, decreased to 16.000 soldiers by 2004, yet remained at that level until 2009 (Kim and Woehrel 2008: 12-13; Woehrel 2010: 3).

Kosovo's international administration was among history's most extensive in scope and depth. It provided for extensive executive powers and *de facto* turned the province into an international protectorate. A constitutional framework for Kosovo was created in May 2001, and subsequently governmental authority was gradually transferred to local institutions. However, UNMIK and its masters did not allow these institutions to directly challenge the notion of Yugoslav (Serbian) sovereignty, in part so as not to endanger democratic transformation in Belgrade where Milosevic had been forced from power in October 2000 (cf. Ker-Lindsay 2009a: 148-149). In response to Kosovar pressure for a status decision, UNMIK in 2002 adopted a 'standards before status' approach. This policy conditioned talks on final status on progress in eight key areas comprising fields such as functioning democratic institutions, rule of law, and refugee returns and reintegration (cf. Ker-Lindsay 2009a: 149; van Willigen 2009: 82-83). However, the ensuing delay and uncertainty over a future status solution contributed to increasing problems for UNMIK to keep Kosovar calls for political progress towards independence at bay.

Matters came to a head in March 2004 when violent demonstrations and attacks on Serbian enclaves in Kosovo surprised the international community (cf. Kim and Woehrel 2008: 6; Ker-Lindsay 2009a: 150). Unable to contain the violence during two days, KFOR and UNMIK lost much of their standing in the province. Not only did the riots lay bare the lack of progress that had been made towards inter-ethnic reconciliation, thereby damaging whatever prospects for a potential future reintegration of Kosovo into Serbia there still were, they also showed that Kosovo could not continue to exist as an international protectorate for much longer (cf. Ker-Lindsay 2009a: 151). It was in the wake of the subsequent discussions on the way forward that an eventual ESDP mission came into play.

## **B. PUTTING EULEX ON THE ESDP AGENDA**

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The riots came as something of a shock to the international community regarding how unpopular UNMIK, and how urgent political progress in Kosovo had become. The UN, increasingly disillusioned with the mission's prospects, subsequently came to look for an exit from Kosovo. Its administrative role in Kosovo had been exceptional anyhow, and it had always been, in the words of UN envoy Eide, 'little more than a holding operation seeking to avoid the question of Kosovo's future status' (Eide 2004a). In fact, it was obvious after 1999 that the Albanian majority in Kosovo would hardly accept any solution short of independence (cf. Weller 2008: 17). Yet Western capitals had been interested in delaying final status for as long as possible. Such a postponement, it was hoped, would allow fresh wounds from the war in Kosovo to heal and avoid knock-on effects in Bosnia, Macedonia, or even the frozen conflicts in the former USSR (cf. Weller 2008: 17).

Over time, this holding operation proved unsatisfactory however because it failed to provide Kosovars with the perspective and recognition they craved, and because it lacked economic viability. The absence of clarity over status deterred investment, and the social concomitants, unemployment and poverty, further fed Kosovar dissatisfaction with the *status quo* (UNSG 2007a: para. 8-9). As one official put it, it was 'obvious that UNMIK was not welcome anymore' (Interview with MS official). Another pointed out that 'Kosovo had been an unhappy experience for the UN because all Special Representatives had eventually gone native from the UN headquarters view', adding that '[t]he March 2004 events figured on the list of top 5 UN disasters' (Interview with CGS official; cf. King and Mason 2006: 189).

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### THE RESPONSE OF WESTERN CAPITALS

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After the riots, Western capitals came to accept that putting off a status solution would undermine stability in the province (Interview with CGS official; Ker-Lindsay 2009a: 152; Woehrel 2005: 3-4; Weller 2008: 82). They now needed to weigh their preference for further delay against the risk that renewed violence might potentially be directed against UNMIK and KFOR. The International Crisis Group (ICG) opined shortly after the riots that the latter had 'exposed the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the NATO-led peacekeeping force (KFOR) as very weak. [...] KFOR and NATO have lost their aura of invulnerability and invincibility'; lest immediate action be taken 'Kosovo risks becoming Europe's West Bank' (ICG 2004a: 1). The leading German weekly excitedly quoted the assessment of a Kosovar veteran that 'one dead KFOR soldier each day would suffice' to expel the foreign occupiers (Flottau and Kraske 2004). A British observer noted more soberly that 'it would have been difficult for those leaders who had advocated intervention just five years earlier to explain to their electorates why the very people they had saved were now shooting at them' (Ker-Lindsay 2009b: 109). Domestically, EU governments were thus caught between the need to vindicate their earlier intervention, fear for Westerners' safety, and headlines describing Western troops there as 'paper tigers' and 'milquetoasts' (Kraske and Szandar 2004; Flottau et al. 2004). Because NATO troops had taken responsibility for security in Kosovo, Western governments now had to prove their ability in getting a grip on the situation (cf. King and Mason 2006: 14; 16; 253-54). Consequently, they needed progress on the political front.

In view of the Kosovo Albanian position, it was rather clear by this time that the only viable answer to the 'status question' would be independence, and that the process to this end could not remain on hold for much longer (cf. Ker-Lindsay 2009a: 151; Weller 2008: 17; 21). As two former UNMIK officials reasoned in 2006 – i.e. when status talks were just beginning, – the March 2004 violence had 'produced a paradigm shift that some might describe as accepting reality and others as giving up.

[...] Violence had once again advanced the independence agenda as nothing else in the previous five years' (King and Mason 2006: 189; 191). In short, Western governments came to perceive Kosovar independence as the only viable way out. As one analyst put it, 'those countries that had originally supported humanitarian intervention [...] had no choice but to support independence in order to extricate themselves from the situation before they too became seen as some form of neo-colonial occupier' (Ker-Lindsay 2009a: 155). As the quote makes clear, there was little enthusiasm in Western capitals about the prospect of another Balkan statelet, but it was simply seen as the least bad option.

It took some time before Western governments became fully conscious of the fact that Kosovo was heading for independence, and even longer before they admitted it (cf. Ker-Lindsay 2009a). The US administration played a pivotal role in this process as its early decision to push for status talks and Kosovo's independence reduced the chances for EU governments to continue attempting to muddle through (Interviews with CGS and MS officials; Ker-Lindsay 2009a: 153; Wood 2006). A few months after the riots, the German defence minister's complaint that soldiers' presence in Kosovo could no longer serve as a substitute for political courage to address the province's status had still earned him an angry rebuke by Germany's foreign minister (cf. Beste and Szandar 2004a). At that point EU capitals still hoped to contain Kosovo's ambitions for just a bit longer, relying not least on the goodwill of Kosovars towards the US. Once the latter stated its intention to complete 'unfinished business in the Balkans' (cf. Burns 2005), the limited leverage EU capitals had vis-à-vis Pristina however diminished further. As one official put it laconically, 'the path to independence was decided in Washington, with good arguments' (Interview with MS official). London followed suit, with a senior diplomat publicly stating in February 2006, i.e. *before* the actual start of status negotiations, that 'Kosovo can win independence' (Reuters 2006; cf. Ker-Lindsay 2009b: 24). In December 2005, France's president Chirac had reportedly been the first major world leader to point out the inevitability of Kosovar independence to the Serbian president (cf. Ker-Lindsay 2009b: 29). Germany's government was less keen, as were other EU capitals, and the US repeatedly deferred to the EU by not insisting on its own, shorter timelines (cf. Ker-Lindsay 2009b: 52; ICG 2007a: 15; Harnisch and Stahl 2010: 20). Yet Washington's decision that accepting independence was the easiest way to extricate itself and the international community from Kosovo limited the wriggle room for EU capitals.

Whereas the international community came to see progress on Kosovo status as urgent, it also took note of the fact that implementation of the standards which had originally been supposed to precede status negotiations was 'uneven', and particularly that '[t]he Kosovo police and judiciary are fragile institutions' (Eide 2005: 2; 3). The prospect of UNMIK's withdrawal and eventual independence thus

raised the issue of some form of 'bridging structure' to chaperon Kosovo on its path from international protectorate to full sovereignty (Interview with MS official; cf. Rupnik 2001: 26; Ker-Lindsay 2009b: 18). Echoing Eide's call for 'efforts to bring Kosovo closer to European standards even after the conclusion of future status negotiations', the UN Special Representative (UNSR) at the time opined that 'I believe that there will be a need for some sort of international presence, both military and civilian, for many years to come' (Eide 2004b: 4; Jessen-Petersen 2004). It was at this point that EU capitals as well as the European institutions came to consider an ESDP mission (Interviews with MS officials). Indeed, Eide himself argued in 2004 that '[w]ith the future-status question looming, UNMIK should be looking to reduce its presence and to hand increasing responsibilities to the European Union' (Eide 2004a). On the one hand, this was indeed 'natural' given Kosovo's professed European vocation. On the other hand, the EU was simply the one institution that was left when considering all possibilities. As one official put it, 'the UN was already there and had screwed up, NATO does not have a civilian arm, the OSCE has no teeth, the Council of Europe no means at all – which leaves the EU' (Interview with MS official). Moreover, given that the Western Balkans are surrounded by EU members, no international organization was interested in competing with the EU as the intervention structure of choice (Interview with MS official).

With the benefit of hindsight, the EU's decision to deploy an ESDP mission in Kosovo can easily seem 'natural development' rather than discrete decision. When the author asked various officials as to when the idea for this mission had come up, they usually argued that 'there had always been a feeling that the EU would take over' and that it was 'clear from the beginning' that Kosovo was 'an EU baby' (Interviews with CGS and MS officials; cf. Koeth 2010: 232; Economides and Ker-Lindsay 2010: 497). This may appear obvious in view of the EU's role as Kosovo's major donor (cf. Koeth 2010: 227). Yet prior to the riots and the subsequent soul-searching within the international community the EU had not envisaged replacing UNMIK. A declassified report by Javier Solana to the Council of the EU just one month earlier makes no mention of potentially employing ESDP instruments, but only recommends enhanced effectiveness, coherence, visibility and focus of EU actors, within and beyond UNMIK (Solana 2004). Less than two weeks after the riots, however, German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer was reported in the German press to have ruminated that 'in the long run [...] everything points to an European Union protectorate' (Beste and Szandar 2004b). In short, the March 2004 riots acted as a catalyst for an enhanced EU engagement, the moment after which the 'feeling that the EU would take over' crystallized. With the UN eager to leave the province, an EU official noted that UNMIK 'actively tried to pull in the EU' (Interview with CGS official). Moreover, the US was also instrumental in pushing for a transfer of

responsibility: 'the US wanted the UN out and regional organizations in, as elsewhere' (Interview with CGS official).

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### THE EU'S STANCE

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Although both the UN and the US were interested in pulling in the EU, the Union was not only sucked into Kosovo for want of other options. To the contrary it proved keen to increase its engagement in Kosovo, for a number of reasons. First, EU governments were clearly interested in finding a sustainable solution for the province in order to foster regional stability and prevent any 'security spillover' in the shape of renewed hostilities, refugees, and/or organized crime (Interview with MS official; cf. Judah 2008: 15; Toshev and Cheikhameguyaz 2005: 274-5). In other words, they wanted Kosovo sorted out, no matter by whom. In light of their hope that European integration would help in overcoming sectarian tensions, it was only 'natural' for the EU to take control of as many levers as possible in attempting to steer the province into a European direction. Given geographical proximity and the fact that the greatest part of KFOR troops came from EU countries, EU governments also had the highest stake in ensuring Kosovo's stability. Secondly, EU governments wanted to give a signal that Europe was in a position to take responsibility in Kosovo – especially in view of the EU's reliance on the US during the Kosovo crisis of 1999 (Interviews with French and German officials; cf. Pond 1999: 90). Thirdly, member states as well as the European institutions saw an opportunity in such an engagement to buttress ESDP's standing in the security realm (Interviews with MS officials; cf. Toshev and Cheikhameguyaz 2005: 275; Dijkstra 2011: 224-8).

In many ways the transition in Kosovo presented the crisis the EU had been waiting and preparing for to bolster its credentials. Several other civilian crisis management missions – the rule of law mission EUJUST Themis in Georgia, the Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) and the Palestinian missions (EUPOL COPPS and EUBAM Rafah) – were done with the forthcoming Kosovo mission in mind; internally, they were even partly justified in terms of testing ESDP structures for the prospective tasks in Kosovo (Interviews with MS officials). While the EU's focus on Kosovo was partly a consequence of the West's earlier intervention and the subsequent need for an exit strategy, EU governments were also eager because they expected that agreeing on a solution would be easier than it eventually turned out to be (Interview with MS official). Initially, the divisive issue of whether to recognize an independent Kosovo loomed only under the surface. The working hypothesis was that there would a negotiated solution subsequently endorsed by the UN Security Council or, in the absence of a negotiated compromise, a solution imposed by the latter (Interview with MS official). Equipped with such a mandate, and building on UNMIK's work, Kosovo appeared a feasible task for the EU, one through which it would likely gain in

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reputation (Interviews with MS officials). Last but not least, the mission afforded the opportunity to affirm the geographic priority many EU capitals attach to the Western Balkans in terms of ESDP deployments (Interview with MS official; cf. Schaefer 2007).

EU governments and institutions thus started preparing for an eventual ESDP engagement. Javier Solana in particular set about extending his influence in the province: immediately after the March riots, he appointed a 'personal representative' in Pristina (CGS 2004). Moreover, the UN in July 2004 chose the EU Special Representative in Macedonia as the new UN Special Representative (UNSR) , in a sign of the future shift in responsibility from the UN to the EU, and after lobbying by Solana (Dijkstra 2011: 224; cf. Der Spiegel 2004). The close relationship between the new UNSR and Solana's Council Secretariat was further underlined when the latter seconded personnel to the former (Interview with CGS official). Unsurprisingly, the new UNSR echoed Eide in his call for a transition from the UN to the EU (Jessen-Petersen 2004). The UN subsequently invited the EU in late 2005 to join the discussions in Vienna on the 'future arrangements' regarding Kosovo (Interview with CGS official). Last but not least, the Council Secretariat became closely involved in the discussions of the 'Balkan Contact Group', an informal institution for discussing questions related to the former Yugoslavia which comprised the US, Russia, the UK, France, Germany and Italy. Although the EU institutions previously had not had a role in this setting, the Solana-appointed 'EU Representative' to the Kosovo status process, Stefan Lehne, became an increasingly important actor in the course of the negotiations regarding Kosovo's future governance (Interview with MS official; cf. Solana and Rehn 2005a).

Javier Solana and the Council Secretariat thus played a significant role in formulating EU policy regarding Kosovo (cf. Dijkstra 2011). They did so, however, with full support of the 'Quint', the members of the Balkan Contact Group minus Russia (Interviews with MS and CGS officials; on the role of the Quint, cf. Gegout 2002). For the Quint, the benefit of involving the Council Secretariat lay not only in enabling the latter to prepare for an eventual engagement, but also in building broader legitimacy among EU governments for future action without having to involve 27 bureaucracies in the delicate deliberations. In February 2005 the European institutions thus received an explicit tasking by EU governments: in its conclusions, the 'Council invited the SG/HR [i.e. Solana, BP] and the Commission, in close cooperation with the Presidency, to examine with the United Nations and other relevant players what might be the future contribution of the European Union to the efforts of the international community in Kosovo to implement Resolution 1244, how the EU might assist in the overall evaluation of the implementation of the standards, and what it might contribute to the later stages of the process' (Council of the EU 2005c: 12). This tasking resulted in two joint reports in 2005 by the High Representative

Solana and the Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn which foresaw among other measures the preparation of a possible ESDP rule of law mission in Kosovo (CGS 2005; Grevi 2009b: 355).

The reports emphasized that police and the rule of law should be priorities for a potential future EU engagement (Solana and Rehn 2005a; cf. Dijkstra 2011: 227). This focus in many ways again represented a 'natural' development. As one official put it, 'there was not such a great deal left of UNMIK' (Interview with CGS official): of the four pillars, the fourth, economic reconstruction, was being wound down in the advent of the EU's 'Stabilization and Association Process' – and would have been outside ESDP's remit in any case. The third pillar, institution-building, remained with the OSCE, and the second pillar, civil administration, had already been downsized and largely transferred to Kosovar authorities (Interview with CGS official). The first pillar, police and the rule of law, was what was essentially left – and where numerous observers attested to serious deficiencies (Interviews with MS officials; Eide 2004b; Weller 2008: 82; King and Mason 2006: 194-95; Grevi 2009b: 363).

The EU's increasing engagement in Kosovo would not be limited to the ESDP mission in the area of rule of law which is the focus of this analysis. Apart from numerous initiatives by the European Commission in preparation of eventual EU membership, the planning team preparing the ESDP engagement worked alongside a second preparatory mission tasked with preparing the office of an International Civilian Representative (ICR) who would simultaneously serve as EU Special Representative (EUSR) (Council of the EU 2006b; Grevi 2009b: 355-57). The ICR was to oversee the implementation of the status settlement (UNSG 2007a: Annex, 11.). Endowed with sticks in the form of corrective powers along the lines of the High Representative in Bosnia, he would also double as EUSR in order to harness the carrot of closer association with the EU. As EUSR he would 'promote overall EU political coordination in Kosovo' and 'give local political guidance' to the prospective EULEX mission, but he would not be directly involved in the mission's chain of command which ran from the Head of Mission via the CGS to the PSC (Council of the EU 2008d: art. 3).

EULEX's agenda-setting phase was characterized by a remarkable degree of consensus among EU governments. Strengthening rule of law in Kosovo was perceived by all to be in their shared interest, even though the process was largely driven by the member states represented in the Contact Group as well as by the European institutions. Their collective interest lay in extricating themselves from a situation in which they, through KFOR, were left with the thankless and dangerous responsibility for stability in Kosovo – and in demonstrating the EU's maturity as a security actor by showing that, this time around, EU governments would be able to

effectively take responsibility for the Western Balkans. Whereas this proved relatively uncontroversial among European capitals, consensus for the EU mission built on the assumption that there would indeed be a negotiated solution and a UN mandate before any ESDP deployment (cf. CGS 2005: 2; Ker-Lindsay 2009a: 152). As subsequent developments showed, this proved too strong an assumption.

### **C. PREPARING EULEX KOSOVO**

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In November 2005, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed former Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari as UN Special Envoy for Kosovo status talks which were to determine the province's future. Just as the first direct talks between Serbian and Kosovar representatives started in Vienna, the EU in February 2006 sent a fact-finding mission to Kosovo to explore its potential future engagement (Council of the EU 2006a: para. (10); Kim and Woehrel 2008: 15). Upon return the latter advised member states, *inter alia*, to set up a permanent European Union Planning Team in Kosovo (EUPT) to prepare for a civilian mission (Council of the EU 2006a: para. (10)). This planning team was authorized on 10 April 2006, and established itself in Pristina about a month later (Council of the EU 2006a; Dijkstra 2011: 229). It was tasked to keep preparations in sync with the status process, to report on and take into account local conditions, and not least to facilitate an eventual transfer of responsibility from UNMIK (Council of the EU 2006a: art. 1, 2). At that point, the EU expected a conclusion of the status talks by early 2007 and consequently a transfer of responsibility from UNMIK to a future ESDP mission by summer 2007 (Grevi 2009b: 356).

The idea for preparing the mission via a planning team reportedly originated within the Council Secretariat, whose civilian planning capabilities at the time were too embryonic to allow for preparing a mission of the size envisioned for Kosovo (Interviews with CGS and MS officials). There had already been a precedent in having a planning team prepare for a potential mission, namely for a potential rule of law mission for Iraq (cf. Council of the EU 2004b). In the Iraq case, the team had primarily served as a diplomatic compromise allowing Atlanticist Member states to claim that the EU was already doing something for Iraq while it permitted the war's discontents to argue that such a decision had not yet been taken (Interview with MS official). Consequently, British and French officials had haggled over every Euro for the Iraq planning team (Interview with GER official). For the EUPT, it was different: the planning team was seen as a technical rather than political instrument and encountered little controversy. In contrast to the discussions about the earlier Iraq planning team, 'it was only about – how do we get more money in' (Interview with MS official; cf. Dijkstra 2011: 234-5).

Given the uncertainties and difficulties that plagued the international community's dealings with the Kosovo dossier, how come the EUPT encountered so little controversy? To some extent this was due to the fact that it was only a preparatory step for a *possible* EU crisis management operation – the relevant Joint Action explicitly specified that the planning team did not prejudice any subsequent decision on whether or not an ESDP mission was to take place (Council of the EU 2006a: para. (13)). In theory, every capital kept the right and opportunity to shape or even veto a later, substantial mission. More importantly, EUPT planning at first relied on the assumption that there would be a negotiated and UN-mandated status solution for Kosovo. The EU furthermore built on intense preliminary discussions in the 'Quint', meaning that basic policy outlines had already been agreed among key foreign ministries (Interviews with French and German officials; cf. Weller 2008: 24; 26). Finally, for non-Quint EU governments, the EUPT and the EU's collective planning process offered a better opportunity to remain 'in the loop' and to provide input than the implicit alternative of leaving planning to the Quint (cf. Koeth 2010: 234). Yet whereas the idea underlying the EUPT was uncontroversial across EU capitals, some rifts emerged as to how 'robust' the mission should eventually become.

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### THE DEBATE ON ROBUSTNESS

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The first clear manifestations of EU thinking on what the role of ESDP in Kosovo might be can be found in the Solana-Rehn reports of 2005 which described rule of law as a priority sector for the EU and took pains to emphasize that any new mission 'cannot be EUMIK' (Solana and Rehn 2005a, 2005b; cf. Dijkstra 2011: 227). This emphasis on discontinuity between UNMIK and any EU successor mission was due to the need to demonstrate to Kosovo Albanians that the EU was not the continuation of UNMIK by other means. As UNMIK had become hugely unpopular in Kosovo, the EU had obvious incentives to emphasize that its mission entailed the beginning of a new chapter. Yet a modest size also reflected the capability constraints and financial means available in the CFSP framework, and the international community's opinion as summarized by Ahtisaari's Austrian deputy who argued that a future international civilian operation in Kosovo ought to be 'as light as possible and as robust as necessary' (Rohan 2006). So when the 12 EUPT staff members started work in Pristina in May 2006, the assumption was that the EU would eventually field a mission considerably smaller than UNMIK (Dijkstra 2011: 230). An options paper by EUPT of 26 September 2006 thus presented three alternatives regarding the future mission strength but recommended the 'light' mission with 800-850 international personnel, to focus on monitoring, mentoring and advising rather than 'executive policing' where international police would partially substitute local efforts (cf. Dijkstra 2011: 230; Grevi 2009b: 357).

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The original preference for a 'light footprint' came to be qualified over time. This was partly a consequence of the evolving circumstances, with a negotiated status solution becoming less likely and the potential for violence and hence the need for robustness increasing accordingly (Dijkstra 2011: 231). However, it also reflected the discrepancy between what headquarters considered desirable for the political reasons elaborated above and what the planners on the ground considered necessary (Interviews with MS officials). At issue was primarily the question whether and to what extent the prospective mission would dispose of crowd and riot control units which could be called upon to intervene in violent demonstrations in instances where Kosovar police would be unwilling or unable to do so. In such cases, the EU would not just monitor and mentor local police but substitute them and take up an executive role. Whereas Solana and his Secretariat wanted a mission 'as light as possible', the planners in Pristina increasingly considered a more robust setup necessary and were able to prevail due to the constant interaction with member states that EUPT's format as a quasi-mission permitted (Interview with MS official; cf. Dijkstra 2011: 234). In this sense one member state official argued that EUPT had been a 'miserable experience' for the Council Secretariat in that it lost control over the planning process (Interview with MS official).

The question how big and robust the future mission should become not only reflected tensions between the political and operational levels. It also echoed disagreements between capitals (cf. Bono 2010: 261-2). Whereas France in particular pressed for an (important) executive engagement, others such as Ireland, Austria and Italy were initially rather disinclined (Interviews with FRA and GER officials). A French official reminisced that Paris wanted a 'credible and important' mission, emphasizing the significance of 'the first executive engagement' (Interview). He went on to argue that there was 'a big reluctance to engage in some kind of muscular ESDP', that 'many states were reluctant about this possibility', and that 'France was really instrumental in taking forward the idea that we needed executive functions' (Interview with FRA official). Specifically, Paris suggested transferring crowd and riot control (CRC) units thitherto under KFOR command to EULEX, whereas British officials reportedly argued that EU-led riot control units would be too expensive and instead suggested a 'pragmatic approach' of 'combining' KFOR and EULEX in this respect (Interview with FRA official).

In hindsight, French officials expressed surprise at the controversy and hypothesized that other capitals may have suspected them of pursuing 'anti-NATO' politics by attempting to wrest control over crowd and riot units from NATO's KFOR (Interviews). The French side countered by underlining that KFOR itself was adamant to rid itself of its responsibilities for riot control and get involved only as 'third responder' (i.e. after local police and EULEX would fail to get a grip) and that therefore such units needed to be under EULEX' rather than KFOR's control

(Interviews with FRA officials). Moreover, they contended that it would be politically awkward if the international military *expanded* its role in this field after Kosovo's independence and the transition from UN to EU supervision, and that the EU therefore needed to have as many riot police units as UNMIK previously did (Interviews with FRA officials).

Officials from other member states confirmed heated debate on the subject but qualified French claims of having been instrumental in endowing EULEX with riot police (Interviews with MS officials). According to them, the need for such units was quickly acknowledged. More contentious instead was the question of how many CRC units were needed. German officials put differences in this respect down to conflicting national policing traditions rather than disagreements regarding KFOR, especially with respect to the issue as to how robustly violent demonstrations ought to be quelled (Interviews). In this debate, the 'soft' side was reportedly represented by Ireland (where uniformed police do not carry firearms), and most outspokenly opposed by France, which favoured its national gendarmerie model (Interview with MS official). Given that the police were to operate as *one* force, the EU had to reach some agreement as to which weapons and demeanour the mission would collectively display. Worries about the French approach increased when France (successfully) put forward the candidacy of a retired military general as head of the civilian EULEX mission.

Differences between national policing systems in Europe reach beyond riot control demeanour. It was also difficult to ensure compatibility between civilian policing models and gendarmerie-style forces which operate under military command. In the case of Germany, for example, police are legally barred from operating under military command. In order to be able to participate, German officials thus needed to ensure that any framework would be flexible enough to accommodate German conceptions of policing (Interviews with GER officials). They were hence particularly unenthusiastic about French proposals of integrating another (military) chain of command in the shape of the European Gendarmerie Force, an idea which Paris therefore dropped (Interview with FRA official).

Beyond these difficulties of reconciling diverging national policing traditions, the debate on the role of international CRC units also related to the question of local ownership. One faction, led notably by Austria, wanted to give as big a role as possible to Kosovars, and therefore opposed an extensive EU riot police engagement (Interview with GER official). On the one hand, EU governments explicitly embraced the idea of strengthening local capacity and were certainly not eager to substitute for Kosovar efforts (cf. Grevi 2009b: 357; ICG 2007a: 19). A British official thus commented that the UK 'wanted the mission to be primarily about mentoring and advising. We don't want to see a creep towards a more executive mandate, with

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Kosovo structures left wanting once the international community leaves' (Interview with UK official). On the other hand, EU governments did not wish to be entirely dependent on Kosovar police and wanted some leverage in theatre. In the course of discussions, the number of EU Integrated Police Units (IPUs) thus increased from 2 to 4, but the EUSR-to-be, Pieter Feith, did not succeed in his request for 'at least 6 IPUs' (Interview with GER official). Finally, these debates also related to financial and distributional concerns. Germany in particular did not want costs to skyrocket and argued that EULEX in any case could not cover every possible contingency, a concern which British officials shared (Interviews with FRA, GER and UK officials).

In the end, EU governments endorsed a Kosovo mission of around 2000 international staff, which was significantly larger than originally envisaged (cf. Grevi 2009b: 360; Dijkstra 2011: 230). As one official noted, this was partly a consequence of a shift in focus from the police more narrowly to the entire rule of law system (Interview with MS official). It was partly a consequence, too, of the discontinuity in planning that resulted from the 'spillovers' of the status process (cf. Dijkstra 2011: 231). Yet it also reflected greater appetite in Paris for a strong executive mission, risk aversion in other capitals, and the fact that the mission was planned from the field rather than within the Council Secretariat.

The preparatory phase encountered difficult problems beyond that of the mission's size. They included the precise tasks for the mission, its structure, its presence in the municipalities of northern Kosovo, how to organize witness protection in Kosovo, how much non-EU contributions to accept, and many logistical questions, especially on how to organize and pay for the transfer of UNMIK property to EULEX (Interviews with MS officials). Originally, these questions were difficult primarily on their own, technical merit and politically not very divisive. Yet discussions in the Council (working groups) became increasingly difficult as doubts rose over the soundness of the underlying 'working hypothesis': that Ahtisaari would be able to come up with a solution for the status issue which the UN Security Council would subsequently endorse. That claim had always been tenuous. As a German official commented, 'it was obvious that things might turn out differently, but then we always pointed to the working hypothesis' (Interview). This gimmick enabled the EU to finalize a (preliminary) draft concept of operations in early 2007, which was subsequently 'frozen' pending the results of the status process.

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### THE PROBLEM OF STATUS REVISITED

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By the time the EU had largely agreed the planning documents for its future ESDP operation in spring 2007 the status process had stalled. After 14 months of negotiations including 17 rounds of direct talks and 26 expert missions to Belgrade and Pristina, Martti Ahtisaari concluded on 10 March 2007 that 'the potential of

negotiations is exhausted' (Ahtisaari 2007). As he considered the parties unable to reach a negotiated solution, Ahtisaari forwarded his own 'Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement' to the UN Secretary-General, along with his recommendation of 'supervised independence' (cf. UNSG 2007a). The proposal did not mention status though in many ways it implied statehood for Kosovo, e.g. by covering all powers associated with statehood (cf. Weller 2008: 47-9). Its main thrust however lay in committing Kosovo to a range of minority rights primarily benefiting Kosovo's Serbs, rights whose implementation would be monitored and guaranteed by the international community with the EU taking on a pivotal role (cf. Weller 2008: 47-55). In the accompanying recommendation, Ahtisaari argued explicitly that 'the only viable option for Kosovo is independence' and that Kosovo, rather than setting a potentially dangerous precedent for separatism elsewhere, 'is a unique case that demands a unique solution' (UNSG 2007a: para. 5; 15). The separation of the comprehensive settlement from the recommendation of supervised independence was intended to allow the Security Council 'to endorse the substance of the settlement without necessarily confirming the status' (Weller 2008: 44). The UN Secretary-General on his part endorsed both the proposal and the recommendation and, on 26 March 2007, forwarded them to the UN Security Council (UNSG 2007a).

The UN Security Council approved neither the recommendation nor even just the comprehensive settlement however. Instead, negotiations in New York and within the Balkan Contact Group dragged on. By July 2007, Western capitals presented a decidedly less ambitious UNSC draft resolution (Weller 2008: 57-9). Without referring to status or even just Ahtisaari's 'comprehensive proposal', it proposed further negotiations, but provided that UNMIK would ultimately be replaced by an EU International Civilian Representative and an ESDP mission after a four month delay (UNSC 2007a: art. 4-7). This would have allowed the EU to eventually implement the Ahtisaari proposal under an explicit Security Council mandate, yet without clarifying Kosovo's status. Russia however opposed this solution as an indirect endorsement of the Ahtisaari proposal which in turn might have been read as UN acquiescence into Kosovar independence (cf. Weller 2008: 59). Instead, the Contact Group only agreed to conduct another round of negotiations under new mediation – a troika of EU, US and Russian diplomats – and strict deadlines, but without any automaticity (cf. ICG 2007c: 2). With the Ahtisaari proposal on the table, Kosovar negotiators were however not inclined to make new concessions or even go back on the question of independence, which Belgrade refused to accept (Weller 2008: 60-7).

While the Contact Group decided to make one last attempt at negotiation, patience in Kosovo was running out (cf. ICG 2007d: 6-7). Already in November 2006 the ICG had captioned its analysis of the situation with 'Kosovo Status: Delay is Risky' (ICG

2006a). Kosovo Albanians became ever more angered at the international community's perceived tolerance of, and rewards for Serbia's delaying tactics (cf. UNSG 2008a: para 33.; Weller 2008: 66; ICG 2007a: 10; 2007c: 7-8; Bilefsky 2007; Patten 2007). The prospect of continued limbo for Kosovo thus led to concerns in Western capitals that Pristina might act unilaterally or even resort to violence – as was arguably Belgrade's and Moscow's intention (ICG 2007a: 10-11; 13; 2007c: 11; 2007d: i; 2008b: 10). Therefore, Western capitals had stressed that the troika negotiations would be the very last attempt to arrive at a negotiated solution. To calm Kosovar nerves, US president Bush went so far as to promise, in Tirana and prior to the start of the troika negotiations, that the US would recognize Kosovo's independence (ICG 2007c: 6). Yet when the troika process concluded in December 2007, the Security Council went back to deliberating on Kosovo, and both Serbia and Russia made clear that they considered this just the beginning of further negotiations (cf. Weller 2008: 66-7).

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#### DISCONNECTING STATUS FROM EULEX

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Given that the troika seemed hopeless yet risky, why did EU governments agree to such negotiations? Some may have hoped against better knowledge that a mutually tolerable solution could still be found – although the lack of progress on the Kosovo dossier at the US-Russia summit in Kennebunkport on 1-2 July 2007 should have made it irrevocably plain for EU governments that there would not be any Security Council resolution (cf. ICG 2007a: 12; Kim and Woehrel 2008: 18). The second reason, however, was that the Quint hoped that such negotiations would at last persuade all EU governments that all possibilities for a negotiated settlement had been exhausted, and that there were only downsides to further delaying the decision on Kosovo's status (cf. ICG 2007c: 4; 2007a: 19; Economides and Ker-Lindsay 2010: 503). For this reason, the troika negotiations were led by an EU representative (cf. Weller 2008: 60-6).

The Quint's first objective was to persuade as many EU members as possible to support a unilateral declaration of independence should the UN Security Council predictably fail to reach agreement. The ICG noted that a French official 'alluded to a straw poll among political directors in Lisbon in mid-July that suggested a large majority would be prepared to move [i.e. recognize Kosovo without a Security Council endorsement, BP], a major shift from three months earlier when only five had that position' (ICG 2007a: 13; cf. Spiegel Online 2007). In other words, as long as there was hope that the UN Security Council might find a compromise (or such hope needed to be expressed for the sake of public diplomacy), very few governments were prepared to discuss any alternatives. Once that hope had visibly vanished, however, a large majority was willing to weigh the real options – a supervised and

controlled transition versus volatile local dynamics – and opted for the former (Economides and Ker-Lindsay 2010: 500-4). The second objective consisted in building a minimal consensus in the EU regarding the supervision of a newly independent Kosovo independent of a UN Security Council approval. Once it became clear that not all EU governments would be willing to recognize a unilateral declaration of independence, the focus shifted to achieving EU unity in supporting the ESDP mission (cf. Ker-Lindsay 2009b: 97). By fall 2007 this reasoning was broadly accepted across EU capitals. The ICG thus quoted an UN official that EU member states ‘want the missions much more than they don’t want independence’ (ICG 2007c: 21).

By the end of 2007, EU governments managed to achieve unity insofar as they agreed on the common message that the negotiation process had been exhausted, that Kosovo was a ‘sui generis’ case and did not represent a precedent, that the EU stood ‘ready to play a leading role’ (code for the ESDP mission) and that the Western Balkans’ future lay in Europe (European Council 2007: para. 65-71). However, this show of unity masked disagreement as to the legal foundation on which to base the ESDP mission. The absence of a fresh UN Security Council resolution implied a significant deviation from planning assumptions and posed considerable headaches in a number of EU capitals. Whereas the UK and France in particular argued that UNSC resolution 1244 in combination with an invitation by the newly sovereign Kosovo authorities would suffice, others insisted on an explicit invitation by the UN Secretary-General (cf. ICG 2008c: 11). For those that would not recognize Kosovar independence, the latter’s invitation was obviously insufficient, and with an invitation from Belgrade not forthcoming, they at least wanted an invitation by the UN Secretary-General to replace UNMIK, which could be read as a confirmation that the UN saw EULEX indeed as compatible with resolution 1244 (cf. Richter 2009: 34; Haber 2009: 86-7; ICG 2008c: 11; 31).

Whereas the Quint indicated that it would recognize the new state, five EU member states – Spain, Romania, Slovakia, Greece and Cyprus – made their opposition to independence clear. As one official noted, the last days before the Joint Action’s approval thus saw difficult negotiations at the highest level, with the Cypriot president reportedly personally deciding against a veto in the Committee of Permanent Representatives at the last moment (Interview with MS official; cf. Bilefsky 2007; Economides and Ker-Lindsay 2010: 503-4). Cypriot opposition clearly did not so much concern Kosovo as relate to the domestic problem of Northern Cyprus and the fear of creating a precedent in which the EU decided to override the UN on such a matter (Interview with MS official; cf. Ker-Lindsay 2009b: 121-2). The four other countries opposing Kosovar independence similarly feared domestic repercussions as they comprised sizeable minorities with actual or suspected separatist ambitions, Basque and Catalan in the case of Spain and Hungarian in

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Slovakia and Romania. Greece in turn is generally supportive of Cyprus' concerns and shares with Serbia a bond in Orthodox culture – as do Cyprus and Romania (cf. Koeth 2010: 242).

These differences among EU governments with respect to Kosovo's status impacted on the last part of the planning phase. The draft 'concept of operations' worked out in early 2007 under the assumption of a UNSC endorsement of the Ahtisaari proposal now needed to be adjusted to the new circumstances and translated into an Operational Plan. The challenge consisted in consenting hundreds of pages of planning documents that related to the exercise of sovereign powers (police, judiciary, and customs) while keeping the very notion of sovereignty at bay. At this point, the five countries that would not recognize Kosovo created considerable obstacles. For example, they insisted on removing from official planning documents all terminology reminiscent of sovereignty, i.e. 'citizen', 'government', 'borders', 'legislation' etc. (cf. Richter 2009: 38; ICG 2008c: 11). EU diplomats in the end succeeded in overcoming this recipe for acrimony. The results amounted to, in the words of one participant, 'doing the same thing, but calling it differently' (Interview with MS official). According to another, the five non-recognizing governments 'just kept raising questions about basic principles, on every small logistics issue. That was not so helpful, but in the end they did not block it' (Interview with MS official). Yet another recounted how 'the language on status always crept in' and a fourth, asked which civilian ESDP mission had been the most difficult to negotiate, readily declared that 'by far the most difficult, politically most dangerous was Kosovo, definitely' (Interviews with MS officials).

To sum up, EULEX' preparatory phase was characterized by growing dissent between EU capitals as it became clear that there would neither be a negotiated settlement nor a UN Security Council resolution. The most divisive question had originally been the issue of EULEX' size and robustness, an issue that capitals perceived through the lens of national policing traditions. At the same time, the tension between the EU and NATO apparently had some bearing on the discussions as well, at least in the eyes of French officials. Yet these differences regarding the substance of EULEX paled in comparison to the tug-of-war over how disagreement on status would be conceptually-linguistically reflected in planning documents. The Joint Action, by referring to the pre-independence situation, kept all options open, but at the same time implied that the Ahtisaari proposal would be implemented without saying so (Haber 2009: 86). Yet it also built on the assumption that the UN would support a transfer of authority, an issue that would plague EULEX' early implementation phase.

## **D. IMPLEMENTING EULEX**

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On 17 February 2008, Kosovo declared its independence in a move coordinated with the Quint (cf. Kim and Woehrel 2008: 19; Weller 2008: 70; ICG 2007c, 2008b).<sup>32</sup> After the ‘inevitable’ Troika failure in December 2007 (ICG 2007c: i), Kosovo’s leadership had been persuaded to delay this declaration until after the second round of presidential elections in Serbia on 3 February 2008 (cf. Blockmans and Wessel 2009: 277; Kim and Woehrel 2008: 19). The very day after the elections, the EU approved the Joint Actions authorizing EULEX and the EUSR in Kosovo as well as the concept of operations for EULEX (Council of the EU 2008e, 2008d). The EU then scrambled to finish operational planning in order to allow it to physically launch EULEX on 16 February, one day before Kosovo’s declaration of independence (CGS 2008e; Dijkstra 2011: 237). This timing allowed it to still refer to ‘the institutions (hereinafter the Kosovo institutions) created on the basis of Resolution 1244’, thereby circumventing the implicit (non-)recognition that any (lack of) reference to the newly independent Kosovar institutions would have entailed (cf. Council of the EU 2008e: para. (2)).

The events leading up to and surrounding Kosovo’s declaration of independence were ‘well choreographed’, with Kosovo’s leaders avoiding triumphalism and reaching out to the Serbian minority (ICG 2008b: 2). The declaration included a unilateral commitment by Kosovo’s authorities to implementing the Ahtisaari plan with its extensive guarantees for the Serb minority and an invitation to the EU to monitor and supervise the plan’s implementation (ICG 2008b: 2-3). It was followed by quick recognition of Kosovo’s independence on the part of the Quint and a majority of EU member states. A first step towards the implementation of the Ahtisaari plan was furthermore taken when Kosovo’s parliament, after diplomatic pressure, endorsed the entire Ahtisaari package rather than considering the proposed laws individually and engaging in ‘cherry-picking’ – as would have been conceivable given that such guarantees had initially been foreseen by Ahtisaari as the – now lost – ‘price’ for Serbian recognition of Kosovo (cf. ICG 2008b: 4). With respect to Kosovo’s commitment to the Ahtisaari plan and the attendant invitation to the EU to supervise its implementation, the conditions for the deployment of EULEX as well as the ICR/EUSR were thus quickly met.

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<sup>32</sup> The International Crisis Group reports that the independence declaration was ‘largely written by the U.S. State Department’ and that even Kosovo’s flag was chosen ‘with strong U.S. involvement behind closed doors’ (ICG 2008a: 4).

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## AN IMPEDED DEPLOYMENT

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Yet the launch of EULEX Kosovo on 16 February 2008 did not translate into an immediate operational 'big bang'. To some extent this was due to the presence of the planning team, which had been used as a vehicle for slowly building up the mission even in advance of its official launch. By February 2008, the EU Planning Team had already grown from the initial 12 to 120 staff (Dijkstra 2011: 238). With a target of around 2000 international staff for EULEX it was obvious that full deployment would take some time. For this purpose the Ahtisaari plan had foreseen a 'transition period' of 120 days, i.e. until mid-June 2008. The slow build-up also served to channel financial resources into the mission. As the annual budget for all civilian CFSP activities was capped at 160 million Euro in 2007 and 285 million Euro in 2008, Kosovo's budgeted cost of 205 million Euro for the first 16 months – in parallel with a number of other expensive missions such as EUPOL Afghanistan – posed significant challenges (cf. CGS 2008a, 2009a; Council of the EU 2008e: art. 16).

The decisive obstacle to EULEX' quick build-up however was political more than bureaucratic. The Ahtisaari plan had foreseen that UNMIK would hand over its responsibilities to the Kosovar authorities and a quickly expanding EU mission during the 'transition period'. Yet due to Russian objections the UN did not initiate this transition period, and therefore the mission's standing and prospective tasks remained shrouded in uncertainty. By default, UNMIK simply stayed on, and this posed a number of problems for EULEX: first, it implied a technical problem insofar as EULEX had counted on, and budgeted, taking over UNMIK's vehicles and buildings. When it turned out that UNMIK was not leaving, EULEX had to re-start procurement processes and find additional financial resources, resulting in delays and distraction from other tasks (cf. Dijkstra 2011: 239-40; Grevi 2009b: 358; ICG 2008c: 13; 31). These delays in turn entailed problems with personnel recruitment as pre-identified and scarce specialists became unavailable (Dijkstra 2011: 240).

More critically still, the lack of an invitation by the UN Secretary-General to EULEX implied political challenges. For most of its tasks the mission depended on UNMIK relinquishing its responsibilities (cf. Haber 2009: 87). Moreover, several EU governments insisted that they would deploy only at the invitation of the UNSG in order to be on a sound legal basis (ICG 2008c: 11; 31; Haber 2009: 87). Finally, Serbia's vehement opposition in conjunction with its connivance if not tacit support of limited violence in Northern Kosovo made EULEX' deployment to this part of the country too risky for many EU governments to consider (cf. ICG 2009: 5-6; 2008c: 4-7; Haber 2009: 88). This in turn compromised deployment plans as EULEX did not want to deploy to Albanian areas only because this could have been interpreted as acquiescence into a *de facto* partition of Kosovo along ethnic lines (cf. ICG 2008c: 31; Grevi 2009b: 359; Koeth 2010: 238). Such acquiescence, proposed for example by

the Swedish foreign minister, would likely have rankled Kosovo Albanians authorities and thereby greatly have limited EULEX' leverage because the former expected the international community to enforce their sovereignty in Northern Kosovo in return for the minority rights they granted (cf. ICG 2008b: 5). At the same time, Kosovo's authorities were determined not to recognize UNMIK's authority anymore come the end of the transition period (ICG 2008b: 6; de Wet 2009: 86). Yet by mid-June, when the transition period should have ended and EULEX have been fully deployed, the mission had grown to only 300 rather than 2000 staff (ICG 2008c: 8). This combination of an emasculated UNMIK and an un-deployed EULEX raised the spectre of a vacuum in terms of international supervision.

The absence of UN endorsement thus created a host of complications. In view of Russia's opposition to the Ahtisaari plan and the attendant transition to EULEX, the ICG had warned as early as August 2007 that 'the UN Secretariat and Secretary-General will have to carry part of the burden of these necessary decisions, most likely in the teeth of Russian opposition' (ICG 2007a: 19). To the disappointment of EU diplomats, and despite his earlier endorsement of the Ahtisaari plan, the UN Secretary-General teetered for a long time before giving the EU a cautious green light. One interviewed official heaved heavy sighs when recalling 'this dreadful Secretary-General who never wanted to decide anything, this Ban Ki Moon, it was just terrible' (Interview with MS official). In view of the protracted difficulties in making the International Civilian Representative and EULEX operable, the International Crisis Group warned that political will in EU capitals might be fading (ICG 2008c: 11). Instead of pushing forward, the ICG feared, the EU was sitting out yet another Serb ballot – parliamentary elections in May 2008 – while blaming the UN for its lack of support, and consequently losing credibility with Kosovars (ICG 2008c: 12).

The EU's patience (or lack of decisiveness) arguably paid off when pro-European forces won parliamentary elections in Belgrade in May 2008 (cf. Pond 2009). Serbia, the UN and the EU subsequently edged forward in finding a complicated compromise: rather than initiate the 'transition' involving UNMIK's transfer of responsibilities to the Kosovo state, EULEX and the International Civilian Representative – as foreseen in the Ahtisaari plan – the UN Secretary-General on 12 June 2008 announced his intention to 're-configure the international civil presence in Kosovo' (UNSG 2008b: para. 19). The UNSG combined this announcement with a letter to the Serbian president which affirmed that resolution 1244 continued to be in force, and which offered talks on a number of practical issues regarding Kosovo (UNSG 2008b: Annex I). While protesting the re-configuration, Serbia accepted the offer of talks since it could interpret the latter as the nucleus for renewed status talks – an answer which amounted to a 'soft no' (cf. Haber 2009: 88). Brokered in the Balkan Contact Group, this compromise deal of 're-configuration' for 'new talks'

enabled each side to move forward while denying significant concessions (cf. Haber 2009: 87). The 're-configuration decision' helped EULEX insofar as the mission could henceforth consider itself covered by UNSC resolution 1244.

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### COMPROMISE WITH SERBIA

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The compromise embedded in the UNSG report of 12 June 2008 was only a first step because UNMIK's re-configuration still had to be implemented and because the EU was reluctant to deploy to Northern Kosovo without a more forthcoming attitude on the part of Belgrade. Despite considerable Russian pressure on the UN Secretariat to refrain from supporting EULEX, the UN finally signed a 'technical arrangement' with the EU on the sale of UNMIK mission assets on 18 August 2008 (ICG 2008c: 17-18). After further intensive negotiations, a more far-reaching compromise was found between the UN, the EU and Serbia in November 2008: accordingly, Serbia accepted to cooperate with EULEX under the condition of the latter's 'status neutrality' and in view of further talks with the UN on issues regarding Kosovo; Pristina demanded EULEX' quick deployment while rejecting such talks; the EU reminded Serbia of the basic principles of EULEX, thereby implicitly reiterating the content of the Ahtisaari package; and the UN Secretary-General noted further talks while the UN Security Council indirectly endorsed EULEX via a presidential statement (Haber 2009: 88; UNSG 2008c: XI.; Annex I; UNSC 2008a). The documents' quasi-simultaneity allowed each side to maintain its own interpretation and to underline the inclusion of those parts particularly palatable to its respective constituency, even though other parties did not accept those parts.

The actual agreement, in terms of overlap of stated positions, was all parties' acceptance of EULEX. As a French official put it with satisfaction, the agreement thereby vindicated the Quint's strategy because it 'managed to disconnect the question of independence from the question of EULEX', the objective of which 'was to implement Ahtisaari without saying it' (Interview). The same reasoning was given by a senior German diplomat who argued in an opinion piece that EULEX created a mission which – in terms of size, concept and objectives – mirrored the mission suggested by Ahtisaari but omitted mentioning its political implications even though the latter were visibly implemented (Haber 2009: 86).

The complicated compromises elaborated above came at a significant price, however. As diplomats pointed out, initially there had been 'a general agreement that we should not do "Bosnia bis", that means not a complicated institutional setup of the international presence, but we ended up with something more complicated than in Bosnia' (Interview with MS official). Beyond the complications inherent in

institutional complexity 'there was a casualty in that new scheme, which was the ICO'<sup>33</sup> (Interview with MS official; cf. Grevi 2009b: 358-9). The lack of clarity on Kosovo's status weakened the role assigned to Pieter Feith, previously a senior official in the Council Secretariat, who was appointed as both ICR and EUSR. In his role as ICR, Feith represented a coalition of countries which had recognized the independence of Kosovo that he was to supervise. The 'ICR hat' was important in that it implied 'corrective powers', i.e. the ability to directly intervene and correct decisions by Kosovo's authorities that the ICR deemed inconsistent with the Ahtisaari proposal (cf. ISG 2008: 3.). With his second hat as EUSR representing the EU as a whole, however, Feith needed to be 'status-neutral' and, as officials pointed out, 'those countries that did not recognize are very scrupulous about what the EUSR says or does in his capacity as EUSR' (Interview with MS official; cf. ICG 2008c: 11; Richter 2009: 38). The EU's lack of unity on the question of Kosovo's status has thus not only weakened its credibility with local actors, but also devaluated the 'corrective powers' of Feith's International Civilian Office – and thus the EU's ability to induce Kosovo's authorities to implement the liberal policies contained in the Ahtisaari proposal.

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### ACHIEVING OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY

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After the compromise of 26 November 2008, EULEX quickly took most tasks over from UNMIK. UNMIK remained in Kosovo with a small presence in order to provide the EU's presence with a 'UN umbrella'. Yet primary responsibility for monitoring the rule of law shifted to EULEX as the mission declared Initial Operational Capability on 9 December followed by Full Operational Capability on 6 April (CGS 2008d, 2009c). This handover involved considerable inter-institutional acrimony between the UN and the EU as cooperation on the ground in Pristina was not only impeded by political issues, but also by bureaucratic foot-dragging and personal interests related to UNMIK officials' lack of enthusiasm for losing their jobs (cf. Dijkstra 2011: 239; Richter 2009: 39-40). Yet in keeping with the Quint's objective of implementing the Ahtisaari plan without saying so, the time span between initial and full operational capability corresponded precisely to the 120-day transition period foreseen by the latter.

Such subtle hints for the initiated notwithstanding, the situation was obviously different from the one foreseen by Ahtisaari in that EULEX officially acted under the

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<sup>33</sup> ICO stands for International Civilian Office, which is the structure headed by the International Civilian Representative (ICR), and is tasked with supervising the implementation of the Ahtisaari plan.

old UN resolution and insofar as UNMIK did not entirely wind down (cf. Richter 2009: 36). The ensuing ambiguity implied not only the need to coordinate with a rump UN presence, but it also triggered substantive challenges, among them the question which law the rule-of-law mission would actually help applying (de Wet 2009: 93; Grevi 2009b: 358; Richter 2009: 38-9). The Kosovo authorities which EULEX was sent to support enacted their own legislation. Their expectation that EULEX help them implement this legislation posed problems for the latter because Serbia had, since 1999, established parallel structures in Northern Kosovo that continued to insist on applying Serbian or UNMIK law (cf. Grevi 2009b: 358; ICG 2010c: 18). How could these contradictory expectations possibly be addressed in a 'status-neutral' fashion?

The challenges resulting from the institutionally complicated international presence became particularly salient with respect to Northern Kosovo. On the one hand, EU member states sought to minimize risks for EULEX personnel by limiting their presence in Northern Kosovo as much as possible (ICG 2010c: 21-2; Haber 2009: 88). On the other hand, they were eager to avoid further sanctioning Kosovo's *de facto* partition. Such a partition might become entrenched, they feared, if EULEX would deploy merely to the rest of Kosovo whereas the North remained UNMIK territory. Not only did EU governments fear for the regional implications of such a 'solution', they were also under significant pressure from Kosovo's new government: if the latter would get neither Belgrade's recognition nor at least limited authority over Northern Kosovo, as had been suggested in the Ahtisaari plan, why should they submit to their end of the deal, i.e. extensive rights for the remaining Serbian enclaves and continued international supervision (cf. ICG 2008b: 5-6; 2008c: 33; 2010c: 3)?

In the end, and despite frequent criticism as to the EU's inability to forge a fully coherent and comprehensive policy regarding Kosovo, most analysts credited the EU for managing the transition from UNMIK to EULEX rather well (cf. Grevi 2009b: 366; Richter 2009: 43-4; Pond 2009; Dijkstra 2011: 241). While few of the challenges the mission – and the EU in general – faced in Kosovo have been solved, the new-born state and the region have remained stable to the extent that the International Crisis Group, in August 2010, suggested that a mutually agreed re-drawing of borders between Serbia and Kosovo might be a price worth paying for a comprehensive settlement between Belgrade and Pristina (cf. ICG 2010a: 25). Such a solution had previously always been excluded for fear of stoking revisionist pressures in the region. That the ICG dared tabling it 2,5 years after Kosovo's declaration of independence is an indication that EU governments have so far managed to obtain what they desired most in the Western Balkans – stability and a measure of control, with the EU playing an important role.

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## EULEX' CONTRIBUTORS

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As argued in before, the staff contributions different member states made to EULEX can be seen as an indicator of governments' interest in, and support for the mission.<sup>34</sup> The most conspicuous aspect of national contributions to EULEX is once again how broad-based they have been. Whereas the Council Secretariat's fact sheets diplomatically state that 'most EU member states' along with several 'third states' participate in the mission, officials privately specified that all but Cyprus have contributed at one point (Interviews with CGS officials; cf. Grevi 2009b: 354; Busse 2010). Spain's position has also been ambiguous. Originally, the government planned to participate and was thus still engaged at the point of transition to EULEX, but apparently Prime Minister Zapatero eventually decided otherwise (Interviews with CGS and MS officials). Beyond those cases, however, the broad participation confirms the claim made throughout this chapter that EU governments were united in their wish to influence developments in Kosovo from up close, whatever their stance on Kosovo's status. Indeed, Romania as one of those countries not recognizing Kosovo was reported as the biggest contributor to EULEX in summer 2010 (Busse 2010).

Whereas national efforts in terms of contributions to EULEX were broad-based, officials pointed out that in the course of 2009 the UK became noticeably less engaged than France, Germany or Italy – or Sweden and Finland, for that matter. British diplomats justified this drawdown by pointing to the effects of the financial crisis which had not just squeezed the public purse in general, but London's budget for (civilian) peace-building in particular (Interviews). Because a big part of that budget consisted in non-discretionary assessed contributions to the United Nations, the fall of the British Pound Sterling vis-à-vis the dollar had severely curtailed London's discretionary spending in that field and forced it to take a very hard look at priorities (Interviews with UK and CGS officials). Whereas this reasoning is perfectly comprehensible, it does suggest that Kosovo was not among the British government's highest foreign policy priorities.

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<sup>34</sup> The caveats listed in chapter IV apply here as well. Moreover, EULEX Kosovo has never published even one full breakdown of its personnel by nationality. Finally, aggregate numbers are somewhat misleading as one specialized and experienced prosecutor may constitute a scarcer and therefore more 'valuable' contribution than a readily available, entire unit of riot police. One unofficial overview has been published online by a think tank, but it does not distinguish between seconded and contracted personnel so that, for example, there are a few Spanish nationals listed although Spain as such is not contributing (ISIS 2010; cf. Grevi 2009b: 360).

A final aspect which many interviewed officials stressed was the participation in EULEX Kosovo of a significant US contingent of around 80 personnel. This represented the first time Washington contributed personnel to an ESDP operation. Although the US had previously been engaged in UNMIK, its participation in EULEX was anything but self-evident since the mission legally operates under the 'political control and strategic direction' of EU governments, i.e. without the US officially having a voice at the table (Council of the EU 2008a: art. 1, 2). Whereas it is hardly conceivable that US concerns would not have an important bearing on EU decision-making, the US' acceptance of these terms was hailed by EU officials as evidence that Washington has embraced ESDP as a useful tool in international crisis management.

## **E. PROXIMATE DRIVERS BEHIND EULEX KOSOVO**

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Throughout the evolution of EULEX Kosovo, the mission's fate has been closely intertwined with the Kosovo status process. For Kosovo Albanians, the acceptance of international supervision in the realm of minority rights and rule of law was the price to pay for progress in status, a commitment to 'standards after status' as it were. From the point of view of the international community, the mission was conceived as an instrument to manage and control the status process, but at the same time depended on the latter. Over time, the broad consensus that originally underpinned EULEX Kosovo came to be strained by the tension between the EU's wish to manage developments in Kosovo and the region and its disunity with respect to the political finality of this evolution. The interconnection, however, remained and implicitly extended to EU-internal deliberations: the focus on the ESDP mission came to serve as a tool for safeguarding EU unity, but its effectiveness depended on local willingness to cooperate, which in turn was a function of local expectations of, and disappointment with the status process.

For most EU governments but also for Washington, the decisive motive for an ESDP engagement in Kosovo was the desire to disengage from an unsustainable situation that they had come to co-guarantee through NATO while ensuring that the region did not slide back into armed conflict. Unable to effectively counter the charge of neo-colonialism, and unwilling to risk regional security by simply withdrawing or actively suppressing Kosovo's ambitions, the EU came to argue (and believe) that there was no feasible alternative to independence because the *status quo* was unsustainable (European Council 2007: para. 68; cf. ICG 2007d; Patten 2007). As the International Crisis Group summed up, there was 'no good alternative' to Kosovo's independence because '[f]orcing Kosovo Albanians back into a constitutional relationship would reignite violence' (ICG 2007d: i). The consequences of potential policy alternatives, i.e. just staying on in the face of popular protests, simply leaving and letting Belgrade and Pristina figure it out, or colluding with Belgrade in forcing

Pristina into some form of attachment to Serbia simply seemed worse (cf. Ker-Lindsay 2009b: 98). They would likely have implied either responsibility for renewed instability and civilian suffering or the active use of force to suppress Albanian resistance combined with the risk of Western casualties. Either outcome would have been very difficult to communicate after NATO's intervention on the Kosovo Albanian side in 1999.

Independence for Kosovo however also implied risks of renewed instability, not least because of the Serbian minority in Kosovo whose likely marginalization in an Albanian-dominated Kosovo could have reignited inter-group hostilities. For this reason, the Ahtisaari proposal offered the recognition that Kosovars craved on condition of the latter's compliance with a mechanism for the temporary supervision of Kosovo: the ICR and EULEX. Yet the reason for Pristina to tolerate such intrusive EU oversight was European recognition of Kosovo's sovereignty at least in principle. In the course of 2007, the necessity of reciprocity in exchanging oversight for recognition eventually persuaded most EU governments, including all EU members of the Quint (Paris, London, Berlin and Rome). Their collective weight and credibility proved sufficient to convince Kosovo Albanians to tolerate EU supervision despite non-universal recognition.

Clearly, EULEX could have been more effective and the EU's position in the region stronger had the EU taken a unified stance vis-à-vis the question of recognizing Kosovo's independence (cf. Economides and Ker-Lindsay 2010: 510). Apart from avoiding the institutional contortions described earlier, this would have strengthened the mission's standing with Kosovo Albanians, helped the Serbian government to face down nationalist revisionism at home, encouraged third countries to recognize Kosovo and limited Russia's ability of kindling mischief in the region – all objectives that the EU sought. Given these obvious benefits for the EU, and for the mission's universally supported objective of maintaining control over local developments, why was the Union unable to achieve a coherent collective stance on Kosovo's independence?

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### THE DRIVERS OF EU DISUNITY

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While 22 EU member states recognized Kosovo, the governments of Spain, Romania, Greece, Slovakia and Cyprus opted to publicly oppose the Ahtisaari deal – even though they allowed for its implementation (cf. Economides and Ker-Lindsay 2010: 509). They justified this stance by invoking international law, and particularly the sanctity of territorial integrity (cf. Almqvist 2009: 10). Yet this reasoning does not necessarily imply that their policy choice was guided by normative principles. Rather, their position was self-interested insofar as they have been historically close to Serbia and/or host potentially separatist minorities (cf. ICG 2007d: 10).

### *The Drivers behind EU Crisis Management Operations*

Recognition of Kosovo's independence would thus likely have led to domestic repercussions. That the nature of their objection lay in politics rather than concern for the sanctity of international law also showed when they kept to their position even after the ruling of the International Court of Justice that 'the adoption of the declaration of independence of 17 February 2008 did not violate [...] any applicable rule of international law' (ICJ 2010: 122.).

For those governments that recognized Kosovo, it is even clearer that self-interest informed their legal position rather than the other way around. They emphasized time and again that Kosovo was a unique case, thereby explicitly rejecting the idea of a principled decision based on weighing international legal norms (cf. European Council 2007: para. 69; Council of the EU 2008c). Indeed, in systematically comparing the stated reasons of both recognizers and non-recognizers of Kosovo, Jessica Almqvist noted that the former reasoned in terms of political considerations, avoiding legal issues by claiming that 'there is no settled international law governing the case' (Almqvist 2009: 9). One observer noted that 'the finest legal minds in Britain's Foreign Office were charged with finding a solution in international law to legitimise the Eulex mission' (Traynor 2008: 19). Surely this is interest defining norms rather than the other way around. EU internal discussions were moreover dominated by the inevitability of Kosovar independence rather than the question of the 'right' of Kosovo Albanians to secede (cf. Noutcheva 2009: 1072-3). As Gergana Noutcheva points out, had the EU purposely acted as a 'normative' power, Kosovo's independence could have been used as a precedent and 'occasion to move towards reforming the international legal order in line with cosmopolitan law and beyond power politics' by invoking a right to 'remedial secession' as a consequence of past human rights abuses (cf. Noutcheva 2009: 1073).

EU governments' record with respect to the Kosovo issue could thus be (and has been) interpreted as a sign that states put their national interests ahead of general normative principles (cf. Noutcheva 2009: 1072-3). This begs the question of the sources of such interests. It is doubtful whether the 'non-recognizing' governments were primarily concerned about the threat Kosovo's independence might pose to their territorial integrity rather than the travails and risks of explaining to their domestic audiences why it did not. Had these governments been truly concerned about their national territorial integrity, they would have been well advised to fully embrace Western claims that Kosovo presented a '*sui generis*' case. Instead, they undermined this logic by withholding recognition on the grounds that this presented a threat to national unity. They hence *emphasized* the connection between Kosovo and their own separatist questions even when they knew (and tolerated) that Kosovo's independence would soon become a reality. Given that EULEX' mission 'is, de facto, seen to provide political legitimization of Kosovo's structures of governance', these governments arguably abetted independence while publicly

expressing discontent (cf. Economides and Ker-Lindsay 2010: 505-6). In short, their behaviour undermined rather than advanced the cause of their countries' territorial integrity, but helped to elude potentially difficult domestic debates.

The case of Spain, the most important hold-out in the EU against recognizing Kosovo's independence, is instructive in this respect. The ICG notes in one report that Madrid allegedly 'had volunteered to join the first wave of recognizing countries if the independence declaration were delayed after 9 March', i.e. after general elections in Spain (ICG 2008c: 11-12). Spain's centre-left government apparently did not appreciate the prospect of the centre-right opposition accusing it of undermining the cause of Spanish territorial integrity by recognizing Kosovo's unilateral secession (cf. Johansson-Nogués 2008: 2). In order not to undermine its credibility (and thus its domestic legitimacy), Madrid subsequently needed to stay the course. A later ICG report hence quotes a senior Spanish official explaining that 'our position on Kosovo is extremely contradictory between our goal to strengthen EU foreign policy on the one side and the fact that we contribute to weaken it on the European continent itself. In the government everyone is aware of this contradiction, but we cannot change our position for the moment' (ICG 2010a: 2). The Spanish government thus knew that it undermined its own foreign policy objectives, but apparently feared the potential backlash at home should it pursue a more coherent foreign policy (for a similar assessment on Spain's withdrawal from KFOR, see also Abend 2009; Sebastian 2010). In other words, domestic politics weighed more heavily on the Spanish government's decision-making than international consequences.

The Quint acted almost as one within the EU regarding the Kosovo question even though both Berlin and Rome were more reluctant than London and Paris to countenance Kosovo's independence in the absence of a UN Security Council resolution (cf. Spiegel Online 2007; ICG 2007a: 13; Economides and Ker-Lindsay 2010: 498-504). Berlin's comparatively late support for Kosovo's independence reflected greater domestic concerns over UN legitimacy, and greater difficulties for the government to convince its audience at home that all avenues but unilateral independence had truly been exhausted (cf. Spiegel Online 2007; ICG 2007a: 15; Der Spiegel 2008). It is thus no coincidence that a German diplomat was selected to represent the EU in the final troika negotiations (cf. Spoerl 2007). On the one hand, this was intended to bind the German political class to the troika's findings (namely, that it was impossible to reach a negotiated settlement) and thereby to ensure that Berlin would also support Kosovo's unilaterally declared independence. On the other hand, Germany's reluctant agreement to the latter also made it a credible advocate for recognition in other EU capitals, and thereby helped in building the critical mass of support within the EU needed to convince Kosovo Albanians to buy into EU supervision.

In the end, the EU succeeded in splitting the divisive issue of whether to recognize the emerging state from the shared objective of nurturing this state (cf. Economides and Ker-Lindsay 2010: 509). Although even the technical implementation of EULEX became deeply entwined with the politics of recognition, the mission enabled the EU to transcend the unsustainable *status quo* in Kosovo and to demonstrate the EU's ability to act effectively in the external security realm. Simultaneously, it allowed member states with political stakes in emphasizing national territorial integrity to avoid facing the consequences of their national policies, i.e. an uncontrolled process of secession.

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## THE ROLE OF EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

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The narrative of this case study with its emphasis on the Quint as the decisive driver behind the evolution of Kosovo may appear to contradict Dijkstra's assessment that the Council Secretariat 'received precious little support from the member states and control was very limited' as well as the claim by a Council official he quotes stating that member states 'did not want to have Kosovo on the agenda, because they knew they would be divided' (Dijkstra 2011: 233). There is indeed some reason to qualify the claim that control was 'very limited'. The planning documents that the Council Secretariat drafted were not only subject to substantial input by member states via the Ahtisaari team and the EU Planning Team, they were also painstakingly negotiated in the Committee for Civilian Crisis Management, with a provisional concept of operations for EULEX agreed on in the first months of 2007 (Interview with MS official). As one member state official recounted, even the working-level committee of CivCom 'in several instances rode roughshod over the ideas of Pieter Feith', the EU's highest prospective office-holder in Kosovo (Interview with MS official). Rather than indicating that mission planning was outsourced to the Council Secretariat, German diplomats characterized the preparation of EULEX and the elaboration of a draft concept of operations as their presidency's greatest and most difficult achievement in terms of ESDP operations – despite the parallel, difficult negotiations on EUPOL Afghanistan (Interviews). One Council official moreover recounted, without prompting, that with EULEX as opposed to other ESDP missions '[t]here is great commitment, even PSC ambassadors are interested in all the details' (Interview). Finally, the presence of a planning team shifted the balance of power between the Secretariat and member states to the advantage of the latter (Interviews).

Whereas the Council Secretariat may indeed have exercised considerable influence in pre-shaping decisions by drafting the relevant documents, it did so within the political parameters set by the Contact Group. The asserted lack of member state control thus needs to be qualified insofar as the Secretariat knew what (particularly

relevant) member states wanted from their constant interaction in the context of the Vienna status talks. However, from a higher vantage point the entire contradiction between member states and the Council Secretariat is spurious. EU governments above all wanted a fix for Kosovo that would not embarrass them, and in this respect faced diverging preferences insofar as the language on Kosovo's independence was concerned; how the Council Secretariat would solve that conundrum in terms of specific policies was distinctly of secondary importance to them (for a similar logic regarding Bosnia in 1995, see Daalder 2000: 139).

## **F. CONCLUSION**

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What does EULEX' development suggest with respect to our theoretical propositions? First, the idea that the mission may have been an instrument to balance third powers is hardly tenable. The entire Kosovo status process was collectively managed by the Quint, i.e. a coalition of the four biggest EU member states and the US – and the latter played by far the most important role. Not only was Washington the strongest and earliest backer of Kosovo's independence, it also actively supported the EU's replacement of the UN and eventually agreed to participate in a mission under the 'political control and strategic direction' of the European Union. This belies even the possibility of anti-American motives. To the extent that US power impacted on EU action regarding Kosovo, it was in persistently pushing European capitals both to accept that Kosovar independence was unavoidable and to take primary responsibility for managing the process.

The EU did not balance against Russia either. Wherever strategic considerations on the relationship with Russia had shaped EU considerations, they had aimed at enticing it into a (tacit) consensus. As Marc Weller pointed out, '[t]he US and the EU states were willing to grant Russia a controlling seat at the table, without insisting on collective responsibility for decisions taken' (Weller 2008: 94). The EU proved willing to go to some lengths to accommodate Russian concerns, in particular with respect to ever longer negotiations, and took a more adversarial stance only once it saw no other option. Caught between Kosovar pressure for independence on the ground and its own responsibility for stability, it acted 'unilaterally', but without any tangible intention of containing Russian influence. Neither was balancing Russia implemented: many EU governments hesitated, and some eventually refused to pool political capital in recognizing Kosovo. This refusal to unite came despite the fact that this undermined the EU's credibility, made it more difficult for Serbia to come to terms with the loss of Kosovo, and thereby left 'Russia with a standing invitation to make mischief' (ICG 2008b: 1; cf. Koeth 2010: 246-7; Economides and Ker-Lindsay 2010: 510). Had EU governments indeed acted to balance Russia, they would have colluded to rely on their own collective authority in putting EULEX on the ground, as

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originally provided for in the Joint Action of 4 February 2008. Instead, they insisted that the latter's legitimacy depended on the very UN acts that Russia could hold hostage. In short, when it came to Kosovo, there is little to suggest that the EU was motivated by balancing intentions or geo-political considerations more generally. The Union did not maximize its potential collective influence, but rather allowed itself to be divided on the question of Kosovo's status, and thereby weakened.

Secondly, the EU's Kosovo policy was hardly driven by a conscious pursuit of liberal principles such as the defence of international law or the promotion of a remedial right to secession as an ultimate deterrent against human rights violations. Although Kosovo arguably represented an opportunity for the Union to endow the concept of 'normative power Europe' with a real-life illustration of promoting cosmopolitan values, decision-making was instead spurred by EU governments' belief that supervised independence was politically the cheapest exit strategy. Moreover, EU capitals made it clear time and again that they saw Kosovo as a '*casus sui generis*' rather than any precedent for a general right of self-determination (European Council 2007: para. 69; Haber 2009: 84; Council of the EU 2008c). That characterization may have been self-serving, but it demonstrates that EU governments themselves rejected the notion that they were acting on principle rather than convenience.

Yet whereas EU governments' behaviour was self-interested, EULEX was still part of a broader Western intervention that was primarily inspired by concern over human rights violations. Indeed, it was embarrassment over the 'triumph of the lack of will' in Bosnia which got the West into Kosovo in the first place (cf. Ker-Lindsay 2009b: 1; Judah 2008: 87; Gow 1997). What the decision-making on EULEX demonstrated was the limits of Western liberal aspirations in that the original goals of establishing a liberal multi-ethnic entity were postponed if not discounted after the March 2004 riots in favour of a narrower focus on stability and a face-saving retreat from originally higher ambitions.

The third proposition had suggested that EULEX might have served as an instrument for promoting further European integration, presumably driven by European institutions. There is some evidence for such instrumentalism. In explaining the Union's motives, several officials invoked Europeans' earlier reliance in Kosovo on American power and noted that success in the Western Balkans was crucial for the general credibility of the EU's foreign policy. Marc Weller similarly reported frequently hearing the comment from European officials that '[t]his is not about Kosovo, it is about the ability of the EU to act' (Weller 2008: 94; cf. ICG 2007a: 13). Moreover, the substantial role of EU institutions in accompanying the status process and preparing EULEX might be taken as an indication that, in the end, Kosovo was more important as an exercise in identifying a common European purpose than in its

own right (cf. Anderson and Seitz 2006; Pond 1999: 90). There is however little evidence to suggest that Javier Solana and his secretariat were actually allowed to steer Kosovo policy, or even to usurp the credit for the benefit of EU nation-building. The key decisions shaping EULEX and the context into which it would be inserted were taken by EU governments, particularly those represented in the Quint.

The putative aim of furthering European integration is also undermined by the visible limits of the will to European unity. Whereas the objective of safeguarding internal unity within the Union was instrumental in achieving consensus on the mission, it fell short of ensuring unity on status as well. In this respect, EU governments clearly placed national priorities over European unity. By contrast, if the mission were to have served to boost the EU's credentials as a quasi-nation state, agreement in the realm of symbolic politics – rather than just on a technical mission – would have been a pivotal prerequisite. This caveat does not imply that the driver of European integration was entirely absent though. In the absence of a common European foreign policy framework, the dissenting EU governments would likely not have associated themselves with implementing the Ahtisaari framework. That they did so evinces the importance they attached to demonstrating collective purpose.

Finally, what about the proposition that the EU's Kosovo policy principally depended on domestic expectations? There is again little to suggest that EU policy was directly shaped by societal pressure for foreign policy action. Yet in analogy to the Bosnian case EU governments were clearly concerned about the reputation and credibility of their foreign policies, and these concerns are more plausibly linked with domestic rather than foreign criticism: after all, it had been domestic expectations in Western countries that their leaders do something about Milosevic's human rights violations that had triggered the NATO intervention on behalf of Kosovo Albanians in 1999. What was at stake was the ability to remain in control of events, and thus the relevance of their foreign policies. When the March 2004 riots cast doubt on the liberal peace Western leaders claimed they were building in Kosovo, EU governments wanted to show that they were able to manage the transitional process rather than see their hands forced by local politics. As one observer noted, 'it would have been difficult for those leaders who had advocated intervention just five years earlier to explain to their electorates why the very people they had saved were now shooting at them' (cf. Ker-Lindsay 2009b: 109). Renewed instability could easily have triggered not just incomprehension but also domestic blame and derision for governments' inability, despite important investments, to properly handle a small conflict on Europe's doorstep.

Beyond the counterfactual argument above, domestic expectations also form the most plausible explanation for the diverging positions EU capitals took with respect to the question of recognizing Kosovo's independence. Whereas Kosovo's future was

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hardly a topic of much domestic discussion, non-recognizing governments used the occasion to defend 'national interests'. Yet the latter were defined in a way so as to dodge potential domestic political risks and blame rather than by putting maximum distance between their own concerns and the fate of Kosovo. The alleged Spanish interest in adjusting the Kosovo timetable to the Spanish electoral cycle is the most blatant example (cf. ICG 2008c: 11-12), but the opposition to recognizing Kosovo's independence more generally prevents the sort of closure that would strengthen the case for seeing Kosovo as a 'sui generis' consequence of Yugoslavia's disintegration. Whereas such assessments will often be in the eye of the beholder, we can sum up that the drivers behind EULEX Kosovo again contradicted the balancing proposition, provided limited and indirect support for the 'normative power Europe' and 'EU security identity' propositions, and made the 'domestic expectations' proposition look rather plausible.

## **CHAPTER VI: EUPOL AFGHANISTAN**

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This chapter analyses the drivers behind the EU Police Mission in Afghanistan, which was set up by the Council of the EU on 30 May 2007. Harking back to the propositions developed in chapter II, it will assess the mission's diplomatic history against these putative underlying drivers. The empirical expectations related to the latter are again analogous to the operation in Bosnia (see introduction to chapter IV). In terms of its specific mandate, the Joint Action establishing EUPOL Afghanistan tasked the mission to 'significantly contribute to the establishment under Afghan ownership of sustainable and effective civilian policing arrangements' and to 'support the reform process towards a trusted and efficient police service, which works in accordance with international standards, within the framework of the rule of law and respects human rights' (Council of the EU 2007a: art. 3). The mission was framed as part of the wider international effort to work towards a 'secure, stable, free, prosperous and democratic Afghanistan' (Council of the EU 2007a: para. 1, 2). How did the EU come to intervene in Afghanistan in this specific shape, again more than five years after the international community originally intervened in the country?

### **A. BACKGROUND**

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Afghanistan has been high on the international community's agenda since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. In the aftermath of the attack, a US-led military coalition, Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), intervened in Afghanistan to overthrow the Taliban regime and eliminate terrorist groups operating in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Following the establishment of an interim Afghan government through the Bonn agreement of December 2001, the international community has also embarked on a wider state-building project in Afghanistan. In resolutions 1386 and 1401, the UN Security Council mandated an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) as well as a civilian Assistance Mission (UNAMA) to support the interim government. ISAF came under NATO command from August 2003 onwards, and its area of operations has been gradually expanded from Kabul to comprise the entire country by October 2006. Less formally, the G8 in 2002 also divided up the establishment or reform of key Afghan state institutions, which was to be coordinated by 'lead nations': the US for the army, Germany for the police, the UK for counter-narcotics, Italy for the judicial system, and Japan for financing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the various militias (cf. Barley 2008: 55; Wilder 2007: 18-19; Peral 2009: 327).

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The tasks the international community faced were enormous. Afghanistan is one of the world's poorest and least developed countries, featuring high rates of illiteracy and devastated by more than 20 years of civil war. Its government remains highly dependent on external military and financial support, with more than 90% of its budget funded from external sources (cf. Maas 2007: 8). Lack of rapid social progress and governmental legitimacy coupled with a deteriorating security situation led the international community to increasingly correct its initial 'light footprint' approach that had relied on quick devolution to Afghan ownership (cf. Gross 2009: 13; Perito 2009: 2-6). This resurgence in international efforts was however hampered by the lack of a unified international strategy on re-building the state (cf. Barley 2008: 55). The fragmentation of different international actors has thus hampered individual efforts – with various 'lead nations' operating next to a UN mission with a nominal coordination position and overshadowed by the US, which controlled the most important set of resources and strategic levers (cf. Gross 2009: 13-15).

In dealing with its lead in building an Afghan police, Germany in 2002 established the German Police Project Office (GPPO) which focused on training Afghan police, notably by building the Afghan police academy and mentoring senior Afghan police officials (BMI 2010). Modest in scale, the GPPO comprised around 40 German police officers as well as additional experts for specific training measures, underpinned by an annual budget of 12 million Euros (BMI 2010). When the security situation in Afghanistan deteriorated from 2005 onwards, this limited, long-term approach however came under criticism from the US (cf. Grono 2009: 3; Kempin and Steinicke 2009: 152; Thruelsen 2010: 83). Frustrated by the lack of German action, the US increasingly became the main donor for training Afghan police (cf. Wilder 2007: 19-21; Grono 2009: 3). According to the US Government Accountability Office (GAO), US support to Afghan police rose from 5 million dollars in 2003 to 840 million and 2,7 billion in 2005 and 2007 respectively (GAO 2008: 11). This engagement however was targeted more at procuring additional forces for counter-insurgency rather than building the civilian police that inspired the German efforts (cf. Wilder 2007: x; Gross 2009: 28; Grono 2009: 3-4). Tellingly, responsibility for police-building moved in 2005 from the State Department's to the Pentagon's purview, with police training forming part of OEF (in 2009 it came under NATO responsibility). The scale of US engagement in the police sector, combined with the country's overall weight in Afghanistan, made it unlikely that Germany would be in a position to coordinate these efforts, its presumed task. Rather, the two approaches simply co-existed although they were 'philosophically conflicting' – one attempting to patiently build capacity from the top, the other attempting to produce large numbers as quickly as possible (cf. Murray 2007: 113; ICG 2007e: 8; Thruelsen 2010: 86).

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Germany was not alone in facing such challenges. Italy's engagement in the justice sector (as well as the UK's lead in counter-narcotics and progress on militia disarmament) were similarly troubled (cf. Gross 2009: 37). Their challenges consisted not just in the difficulties of the situation on the ground, but also in the weight and impact of US policies that they found hard to influence. Although EU countries collectively carry a significant share of the burden of attempting to stabilise Afghanistan, the European Union as an actor lacked the commensurate influence (cf. Korski 2009; Buckley 2010). On the one hand, the Union was an important donor, with the Commission alone having committed more than 1,2 billion Euros to Afghanistan for the period of 2002 until March 2008 (cf. Korski 2009: 12). Together with member states contributions, this added up to 3,7 billion for the period until 2006, which made the EU the second largest donor after the US (Gross 2009: 21). On the other hand, the EU as such was hardly visible: its representation was split between rotating EU Council presidencies, an EU Special Representative, and the Commission delegation. Moreover, the Commission has been less visible than the amount of aid that it disbursed suggests because it has only paid for, but not implemented its own programmes. The EU's lack of influence and visibility thus formed a backdrop to reinvigorated EU engagement in Afghanistan.

A last aspect shaping the setting into which EUPOL was going to intervene was the debate between Western capitals about burden-sharing in Afghanistan. While a perennial issue within NATO, it reached renewed relevance when the costs, risks and casualties of the counter-insurgency in Afghanistan began to rise from 2005 onwards. Most EU countries were already active in Afghanistan prior to EUPOL's inception, both as donors and militarily in ISAF, in which 25 out of 27 EU members have taken part (cf. Korski 2009). Yet the US, together with the UK, Canada, the Netherlands and several smaller 'Atlanticist' countries, came to bear the brunt of the fighting (and dying) in the southern and eastern regions of Afghanistan whereas other governments, notably from the EU's big continental countries, were significantly less engaged (cf. Korski 2009: 3; *The Economist* 2008c). This led to repeated calls for Europeans to do more to support the Alliance's efforts in Afghanistan. Most European governments remained wary of committing more troops though, stressing that progress in Afghanistan required greater focus on civilian engagement instead. Given European electorates' aversion to greater military engagement in the country, observers suspected that 'criticism of the "over-militarized" strategy of the US in Afghanistan is a convenient foil to hide their own limitations' (Korski 2009: 8; see also Kaim 2008). In short, the situation prior to the EU's police mission was characterized by a renewed international focus on Afghanistan, pressure on EU governments to do more, and international

disagreements over the appropriate strategy to address the deteriorating security situation in the country.

## **B. PUTTING EUPOL AFGHANISTAN ON THE ESDP AGENDA**

Ideas for a stronger EU engagement in Afghanistan had been simmering a while before the first exploratory mission was sent to the country during the summer of 2006. A precursor can be found in the proposal of making ISAF 'a European Union force' as Javier Solana put it in support of the Belgian presidency at the EU's Laeken summit in December 2001 (cf. Lobjaskas 2001). Struck down as premature by other EU governments, it came back in a different form once NATO realized ISAF's dependence on stronger civilian engagement in Afghanistan. Many interviewed officials thus attested to US and NATO pressure for greater EU commitment (Interviews with CGS and MS officials; see also Kempin and Steinicke 2009: 153; Dempsey 2008a). A former Bush administration envoy for Afghanistan, for example, wrote in a commentary for the International Herald Tribune in September 2005 that it was time 'to stop asking what NATO can do for the EU, and begin asking what the EU can do for NATO. And Afghanistan is the place to start' (Dobbins 2005). Expectations also arose elsewhere: the International Crisis Group (ICG) recommended in late 2005 to investigate 'the possibility of using European Security and Defence Policy civilian missions in the field of security sector reform', about which it also reported 'very early discussions' (ICG 2005: iii; 11).

Faced with such demands, the November 2005 EU-Afghanistan Joint Declaration still mentions only the EU's intention to 'continue to support' work in the police and justice sectors (Council of the EU 2005b: 4). With pressure mounting however, 2006 saw a change in approach. A German official attested to preliminary bilateral discussions, with the UK and the Netherlands, on a potential EU second pillar role in Afghanistan from March 2006 onwards (Interview; Kempin and Steinicke 2009: 153). The EU Council presidency for the first half of the year, Austria, strenuously tried to keep the issue off the EU's agenda since it 'lacked interest in Afghanistan' and wanted to avoid predictably difficult negotiations (Interview with MS official). The subsequent Finnish presidency however was quite happy to take on this issue 'because the political pressure was to do something, to show that Finland is doing something' (Interviews with MS officials). As one official argued, Afghanistan was a thorny issue in Finnish domestic politics, but the Finnish government felt that it needed to offset its very limited military engagement (Interview with MS official).

Thus in July 2006, directly after the start of the Finnish EU Council presidency, a first EU exploratory mission took place (cf. Peral 2009: 327). This was followed in September 2006 by a 'Joint EU Assessment Mission' (JAM), undertaken by the

Commission together with the Council General Secretariat (CGS), with participation notably from German, British, Dutch and Finnish national officials (Interviews with CGS and MS officials). Its report to the Political and Security Council (PSC) encompassed an analysis of Afghanistan's rule of law sector as well as a number of recommendations on strengthening the EU's impact (Council of the EU 2006c: 44-5). In particular, it recommended 'that the EU could consider contributing further to support the police sector through a police mission' (Council of the EU 2007a: para. 4).

What were the drivers behind this development? Undoubtedly, the outside expectations already alluded to played a considerable role. The latter were also reflected within the EU, where the 'Atlanticist' governments with a traditional pro-US stance and the most substantial exposure to fighting in Afghanistan such as the UK, the Netherlands and Denmark pushed the idea of greater EU engagement in Afghanistan (Interviews with CGS and MS officials; cf. Kempin and Steinicke 2009: 153; Gross 2009: 28). One official involved in the deliberations went so far as to argue that 'the idea was forced upon member states, upon the Council Secretariat and the Commission by the UK' (Interview with MS official). Yet several British officials denied that London was the primary instigator. As one of them argued, 'it should have been a British idea' given the UK's investment into stabilizing Afghanistan, but was not – in his view because London was 'rarely' able to formulate and upload British interests in Brussels (Interview). These contradictory assertions suggest that it was perhaps the perception of UK pressure more than an actual initiative from London which helped convince the EU that it needed to do something in Afghanistan.

Beyond the widely shared perception of Anglo-American pressure, many officials also credited the European institutions with substantial voluntarism. Already the EU's first Special Representative for Afghanistan had deplored the EU's lack of visibility in the country, and other observers have noted that EUPOL's inception was partly a consequence of Brussels' wish to address this gap (Klaiber 2007: 10; Wilder 2007: 21). As one CGS official observed when asked about the sources of EUPOL Afghanistan, 'ESDP is where Solana can produce tangible results, whereas with EU diplomacy such as on Iran this is much more difficult, so there is a clear stake for him to have ESDP grow' (Interview). This was also the perception among national diplomats, one of whom recalled that 'when I saw how high-ranking the CGS participation in the JAM was, I knew they were up for mission-shopping' (Interview with MS official). In other words, the Secretariat seemed interested in acquiring the public relations opportunities that visible engagement in Afghanistan promised. This institutional bias for action was further boosted by the interest of the Secretariat's 'political master' at the time, the Finnish EU Council presidency (Interviews with MS officials). Yet again perceptions may have differed from reality. Several CGS officials

explicitly rejected the idea that the Secretariat played an active role in ‘acquiring’ the mission in Afghanistan. Instead, they emphasized that the assessment mission had been an ‘autonomous’ initiative of the European Commission which sought to strengthen its role in Afghanistan, and whose exploratory mission the Council Secretariat only joined because it was aware of the interest of some member states (Interview with CGS officials). Indeed, one well-placed official claimed that the Secretariat had internally advised against an ESDP mission in Afghanistan on professional grounds, but complied in view of member states’ wishes.

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### JUSTICE OR POLICE ENGAGEMENT?

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Whereas the exact provenance of the first push for an ESDP engagement in Afghanistan remained disputed, it was apparently the confluence of a perception of US interest and EU voluntarism that gave the decisive impulse for getting the debate started. Yet to allow for a coherent approach, the initiative needed the support of at least one of the two ‘lead nations’ in the police and justice sector respectively. Neither the Italian nor the German government initially took a consistent position towards a possible European takeover of their national projects though. In interpreting their contradictory signals, officials variously emphasized those countries’ strategic behaviour or the unintended consequences of their actions in bringing about EUPOL Afghanistan (Interviews with CGS and MS officials).

Originally, many European officials had expected an ESDP engagement in Afghanistan in the realm of justice because that seemed the neediest sector (Interviews with CGS and MS officials; Gross 2009: 37). As one interviewee put it tongue-in-cheek, ‘the Italians had understood very early on that it would be impossible to build rule of law in Afghanistan, so they never started trying’ (Interview with MS official). The task the Italian government faced was certainly daunting. It was confronted with different and overlapping legal systems as well as a lack of educated and independent judges and prosecutors in Afghanistan (Interviews with MS officials; Gross 2009: 37-8; ICG 2010b: i). Moreover, the differences in judicial traditions between Afghanistan and western countries made it challenging to find appropriate advisors. Another interviewee thus explained that, once the Italian government realized that its justice ‘lead’ was going nowhere, ‘they had the idea that, actually, we Europeanize this one. We could, you know, get more resources, and we could get ourselves out of this black hole’ (Interview with MS official). This idea of ESDP action in the domain of justice was also promoted by the EU’s Special Representative in Afghanistan (Interview with MS official). Yet after a change in government in Italy in May 2006 it happened to fall out of favour in Rome (Interview with MS official). This was the moment when, according to a number of officials, the idea of ESDP action in Afghanistan took on a life of its own. After Italy’s

turnaround on Europeanizing its national lead in justice, they reasoned, everybody suddenly looked at Germany, and the latter thereby fell victim to the Italian change of mind (Interviews with CGS and MS officials).<sup>35</sup> These officials hence stressed Berlin's surprise at the Joint Assessment Mission's recommendation of an ESDP police mission because the perception in Germany had been that the JAM's objective had been to look at how to support the Italian efforts in the domain of justice.

This focus on unintended consequences would explain the initial German reticence regarding an ESDP police mission. Other officials however argued that parts of the German government, rather than being the victim of Italian caprice, had been pulling strings all along (Interviews with CGS and MS officials). They presented Berlin's reluctance as the consequence of an internal disagreement rather than surprise. Accordingly, officials in the German Ministry of Interior (MoI) had been eager to protect the reputation of their 'pet project' in Afghanistan, which they saw as implicitly tainted by the attempt to Europeanize it. At the same time, officials in the Foreign Office and the Chancellery had reportedly promoted that idea behind the scenes, attempting to overcome MoI resistance via EU structures. They thus signalled to the Council Secretariat that the report could recommend an ESDP police mission. As one official remarked, had Germany wanted them out, the respective recommendations would not have appeared (Interview with GER official). Due to the MoI's opposition, however, it was 'not easy not to block' the JAM's carefully-worded recommendations which included '*inter alia*, that the EU could consider contributing further to support the police sector through a police mission, and that a fact finding mission could be sent to Afghanistan to explore further the feasibility of such a mission' (Interview with GER official; Council of the EU 2007a: para. (4)).

Comparing the accounts of various German officials, there is little evidence that the German government had promoted an ESDP police mission in Afghanistan prior to the JAM (Interviews). Thus the different emphases interviewees put on German strategic behaviour vs. Berlin being caught up in an EU process likely played out in sequence: the EU institutions' perceived show of interest triggered an internal reevaluation of Germany's national efforts and came to be seen by some officials as an opportunity for passing the lead for police-building to the EU. This attitude however emerged as a response to the perceived interest of British and EU officials in Europeanizing police-building rather than as an originally German strategy. This outside interest was then instrumentalized for overcoming internal resistance, but

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<sup>35</sup> An Italian official challenged this perception arguing that, while Italy had indeed suggested greater EU engagement in Afghan justice reform, it had not promoted using the ESDP framework for this purpose (Interview).

at the cost of increasing outside expectations that an ESDP police mission was to come about.

The question of the prospective mission's focus on the police or justice sector was however not simply one of ambiguous member state preferences, but was further complicated by inter-institutional issues. The European Commission considered that an engagement in the justice sector belonged to its turf, and that this precluded an ESDP mission (Interviews with CGS and COM officials). This debate took place against the backdrop of the 'ECOWAS case', in which the Commission sued the Council in 2005 over a similar question of institutional prerogatives – and won in 2008 on the grounds that 'there is an encroachment upon Community competences whenever the Council adopts, in the framework of the CFSP, an act which *could* properly have been adopted on the basis of the EC Treaty' (cf. ECJ 2008: para. 36; emphasis added). One fundamental tug of war between the EU institutions related to this 'could' (rather than 'should'), i.e. whether the *possibility* of Commission action prevented the Council from acting (cf. ECJ 2008: para. 52; 60; 61). In a testimony to the House of Lords, the EU's Civilian Operation Commander referred to this case as 'heavy in its consequences' (House of Lords 2008: Q334). He even juxtaposed the civil-military cooperation that much of the literature describes as the great strategic issue of the moment as 'relatively unproblematic' compared to the 'challenge' of 'working with the Commission, which is very jealous of its prerogatives' (House of Lords 2008: Q334). The strategic orientation of the prospective ESDP mission was thus not only a consequence of the attitude adopted by the German and Italian governments, but also owed a lot to EU inter-institutional struggles over competences. According to one testimony, the fight between the Commission and the Council Secretariat was 'at least as fierce' as the one between member states 'because the idea was that there would be also an interface with the Afghani justice, and Commission said that, no way, that's our territory, you have nothing to do with justice, not even an interface' (Interview with CGS official).

To make matters even more complicated, officials invoked a number of other, more instrumental reasons for focusing any eventual ESDP engagement on the police rather than the justice sector: the fact that, in the police sector, there existed a project to build upon; that the EU had more experience with police missions; and that police is a resource more readily available than justice officials (Interviews). As several officials stressed, greater numbers signify greater engagement, irrespective of whether the means are truly adequate to the ends. This logic favours the deployment of soldiers over police and of police over judges because the former are easier to commit and make for more impressive numbers (Interviews with MS officials).

EUPOL's genesis up to the JAM thus was the result partly of strategic action and partly of the unintended consequences of muddling through. Egged on by the 'Atlanticists', the EU had been looking for a greater role in Afghanistan, resulting in a volatile EU process. Rome's change of mind saw Berlin confronted with partners' expectations. Subsequently, some German officials came to perceive this as an opportunity for rescuing its increasingly lacklustre national project. The recommendation of the JAM, to consider an ESDP police mission and send a Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) to that effect, was thus the result of an interaction between Anglo-American pressure, EU institutional interests and inter-institutional turf-fighting, practical considerations, Italian indecision, and interest from parts of the German government – as well as various misperceptions regarding these factors. The mission's early phase thus showed the difficulties for policy-makers to control the ESDP agenda in the face of interaction effects that are hard if not impossible to predict.

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#### FROM THE JOINT ASSESSMENT MISSION TO THE FACT-FINDING MISSION

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The JAM presented its recommendations in the PSC on 13 October 2006. The PSC then referred the report to its subordinate Committee for Civilian Crisis Management (CivCom – responsible for civilian ESDP mission oversight) in order for the latter to formulate a consensual advice on what to do. This produced a divisive debate pitting French against British representatives, with Paris opposing an ESDP engagement in Afghanistan and London strongly arguing in favour (Interviews with CGS and MS officials; cf. Gross 2009: 28). In the words of one witness, 'the French and British were really almost hitting each other, I mean, attacking each other on a personal level because they had [such] strong instructions' (Interview with MS official). Another concurred that he had 'never' seen such verve on the part of his British colleagues, whereas 'the extremely reluctant French' had to be 'dragged' along (Interview with MS official). What was behind these different positions?

The UK's motives in promoting ESDP action related to an assessment in London that the German lead in building police had been ineffective and needed to be shot down or Europeanized (Interview with GER official). This stance was reflected, for example, in a British parliamentary report which concluded that 'the steady progress being made towards the creation of the Afghan National Army stands in sharp contrast to the disappointingly slow pace on police reform, for which Germany was the 'lead nation' before responsibility was transferred to EUPOL. As a consequence, the United States has considered it has no option but to invest a considerable amount of effort and resource in police reform' (House of Commons 2009: 4). Similar assessments were echoed by a number of NATO and US officials,

which repeatedly stressed their disappointment with the state of the Afghan police as opposed to the US-trained army (cf. Dempsey 2006b). The recurrent contrast between the police's and army's condition was probably intended and certainly interpreted as shifting blame onto Berlin's doorstep (cf. Busse 2007a). Yet besides the politics of blame it should also be noted that the British government had come to attach greater priority to Afghanistan than most of its EU counterparts (Interview with UK official; see also House of Commons 2009: 101). In its 2010 election manifesto, the Labour party even lists 'bringing stability to Afghanistan' among the country's top 4 challenges for the next decade – next to global competition, climate change, and an ageing society (Labour 2010: 0:2). That stabilising Afghanistan is effectively declared an absolute security policy priority and used for canvassing voters illustrates the domestic political stakes and explains London's interest in engaging partners' help – as well as its exasperation with Berlin's perceived lack of responsiveness. The German government appeared neither willing to send significantly more troops (to the South of Afghanistan), nor was it quick to expand efforts elsewhere, e.g. by substantially increasing police training.

The view from Paris was rather different. French officials underlined that the EU was not the right player for Afghanistan, stressing the mission's likely difficulties due to country size, the Afghan police's low level of education and the very important activities on the part of the US (Interviews with FRA and GER officials). If Washington spent 1 billion dollars on police in Afghanistan, how could the EU with an overall budget of 250 million for all civilian CFSP activities hope to be of any consequence? Another big and costly mission would only create problems for the EU's capacity and the CFSP budget, especially given the big upcoming EU mission to Kosovo (Interview with FRA official). On the face of it, this reticence was surprising since Paris has been the most important promoter of ESDP in many other instances. In the case of Afghanistan though, Paris clearly had 'different priorities' (Interview with CGS official). The French government reportedly felt that the EU had no authentic and autonomous interest in Afghanistan, and it resented the fact that this operation followed 'NATO logic' rather than 'EU logic' (Interview with French observer). A French diplomat pointedly mentioned the ESDP missions in Iraq and Afghanistan as the two cases (out of more than 20) where 'the value added of the EU is unclear' (Interview).

In its own view, Paris may thus simply have been averse to 'instrumentalizing' ESDP. Officials from other countries however also suspected that the French government, at the time still presided over by Jacques Chirac, did not want to do the Bush administration any favours and valued the opportunity to showcase NATO's inaptitude (Interview with GER official). While the practical arguments against the mission put forward by French representatives turned out to be well-founded and were shared by a number of member states, to traditional US allies Paris' resistance

reeked of Gaullist anti-Americanism. Both London and Paris apparently perceived the debate around an Afghanistan mission in terms of their traditional argument over ESDP's relationship to US and NATO policy, with the former advocating a supporting role and the latter emphasizing EU autonomy.

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### THE GERMAN DILEMMA

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The bitter struggle between France and Britain put Germany into a pivotal position. Not only had it been the notional lead nation in building the Afghan police, it was also gearing up to take over the EU Council presidency in the first half of 2007. Yet according to several eye witnesses, the initial German position in CivCom consisted in sitting on the fence (Interviews with MS and CGS officials; cf. Gross 2009: 28). As one non-German committee member put it, 'the Germans didn't know what to say because the Foreign Office said yes, but the Ministry of the Interior said no. So, I was in a meeting and, depending on the day, the instructions from the German delegate in CivCom, what he said, was totally different, depending on where he got the instructions - until the Chancellor's office decided, imposed that yes, we go the European way' (Interview with MS official).

Whereas the French and British governments defined their position primarily in terms of the Atlanticist-Europeanist divide, this was somewhat different for their German counterpart. Berlin also perceived Anglo-Saxon criticism as a reason for changing tack - indeed, that criticism was shared by some German officials (Interviews). One official thus argued that the national police project had simply failed to evolve, still focusing on Kabul with the 40 police officers that it started with in 2002 - whereas by 2006 the NATO operation had massively expanded in numbers, geographical reach and approach, for example by setting up Provincial Reconstruction Teams throughout the country (Interview). While invoking US criticism, he presented the effort to Europeanize the project as an attempt to fulfil rather than shirk German responsibility. Another official emphasized public relation benefits: Europeanization was not only supposed to bring in the additional resources critics called for, but also deflect expected future blame from the German government to the EU (Interview with GER official).

In contrast to Paris and London, Berlin's consideration of transatlantic relations came to be superseded by two domestic factors: first, the prospective Europeanization triggered resentment within the German Ministry of Interior since it was perceived as an indirect admission if not accusation that 'their', national project had failed (Interviews with GER officials). This in turn made the government wary at first to embrace the mission. This reluctance however was counterbalanced by the domestic political need to emphasize the importance of civilian means for

rebuilding Afghanistan, and the role that EUPOL Afghanistan could potentially play in demonstrating Germany's contribution in this respect.

In the end, the internal German tug-of-war was won by those in favour of Europeanizing the German project. The overriding motive was likely the attempt to blunt transatlantic criticism of inadequate German contributions in Afghanistan, which built up further in late 2006 around NATO's Riga summit (Interviews with GER officials; cf. F.A.Z. 2006; Busse 2007a; Gya 2007: 2; Kempin and Steinicke 2009: 153). Due to this criticism, the German government found itself in a dilemma: on the one hand, it felt the need to dispel the idea that Germany was 'free-riding' in Afghanistan because of Berlin's resistance to sending soldiers to the (more dangerous) South of Afghanistan (cf. F.A.Z. 2006). On the other hand, it could hardly respond to US demands for greater engagement in the face of societal and parliamentary disapproval over what was already seen as an overly militarized approach in Afghanistan (cf. Kaim 2008; Harnisch 2010: 64-6).

The easiest way out of this dilemma was to insist that civilian engagement was just as important in addressing the situation in Afghanistan. In the wake of parliamentary debates over German participation in ISAF, the German government has thus sought to dampen domestic criticism by promising to put more emphasis on civilian efforts (cf. Kaim 2008: 616). For this argument to hold, the government needed to defend the German record in this field as well as promise increased commitment. It particularly needed to react to headlines, taken up in the German media, that 'Germany has failed' in building an Afghan police (Busse 2007a). Moreover, the (opposition) Green and liberal parties explicitly demanded greater engagement in the police sector (cf. Bundestag 2006; F.A.Z. 2006). Thus, parts of the German government saw considerable benefits in Europeanizing the German police lead, and instrumentalized Germany's EU presidency and the attendant foreign expectations to overcome internal resistance. In this respect, one German diplomat attested to 'dynamics never before experienced' as British officials proved well briefed on German internal discussions and used this knowledge to relentlessly push for Europeanization (Interview). Resistance within the MoI was thus surmounted by invoking outside pressure and expectations.

According to several officials, it was the fact that Germany decided to come out in favour of the mission which decided the debate in Brussels (Interviews with MS officials). As a result of continuing French objections, CivCom could not come up with a coherent recommendation as to whether to send a fact-finding mission. Instead, it advised the PSC 'in diplomatic language [...] that there would be both pros and cons' (Interview with MS official). At the political level France however stopped short of vetoing the mission, adopting instead what one official labelled 'unconstructive abstention' (Interview with CGS official). Although a number of

other member states were also critical about the prospective mission's likely success, they remained in France's shadow. One official thus recalled that 'the French did not want it, and they defended themselves for quite a while – and we were also not enthusiastic [...] but in the end it was a political decision, there was a session where the French fell over, and from then on it was clear' (Interview with MS official).

This begs the question why Paris came to tolerate a mission whose strategic objective – supporting a struggling NATO operation – it resented. One French diplomat reasoned that, with France opposing a 'civilian arm' for NATO, it was difficult to argue that the EU should not engage in that area either (Interview). The principal argument, he argued, was however that Paris did not want to oppose the strong wish of a number of the other member states (Interview). In particular, it wanted to show support to the incoming German Council presidency, and it was Berlin's shift from unconvinced to supportive which came to change the balance for the French government (Interview). As Paris felt there was not that much at stake for itself, it subordinated its opposition to this particular mission to its interest in a good relationship with Germany and other EU partners (Interview).

### **C. PREPARING EUPOL AFGHANISTAN**

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Following the Fact-Finding Mission to Afghanistan from 27 November to 14 December 2006, the Council approved the Crisis Management Concept for Afghanistan on 12 February 2007 (Council of the EU 2007a: para. 5). From then on, planning went remarkably quickly, with the Joint Action adopted on 30 May stipulating 'a planning phase beginning on 30 May, and an operational phase beginning no later than 15 June 2007' (Council of the EU 2007a: art. 1). In order to fulfil its objective of contributing to 'effective civilian policing', the mission was tasked to 'work on strategy development', 'support the Government of Afghanistan in coherently implementing their strategy', 'improve cohesion and coordination among international actors', and 'support linkages between the police and the wider rule of law' (Council of the EU 2007a: art. 4). Thus, EUPOL's mandate was broad but differed from the German project insofar as it focused less on training but mainly on strategy and coordination (cf. Gross 2009: 30; Kempin and Steinicke 2009: 155; Scholz 2008).

Given the preceding acrimony, the quick leap into action begs the question why the EU set up its mission so quickly. The answer lies in the German position: initially reluctant at the prospect of an ESDP police mission replacing its national police project, the German government shifted towards becoming its strongest supporter in early 2007. At a certain moment, according to a non-German official, Germany

became the ‘model student’ of the EUPOL supporters, pushing for the biggest possible mission (Interview). Thus, Berlin insisted that only a significantly expanded operation as compared to its national project would justify the transition to an ESDP mission (Interviews with MS officials). The German government’s ‘adoption’ of the mission became visible in a number of facts: the first two heads of missions were German police officers, and the mission initially started out with predominantly German staff (cf. MFA/MOI 2007: 3.). Germany was also the first EU member state whose PRT concluded a ‘technical agreement’ with EUPOL, and it provided by far the greatest contributions in kind – armoured cars, apartments, and IT equipment, with an aggregate value of 6,7 million Euros – to get the mission started despite the EU procurement problems noted above (MFA/MOI 2007: 1; 6; Bundestag 2007b: 9b); 15). So what caused Berlin to throw its weight behind the mission?

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### THE ROLE OF THE GERMAN PRESIDENCY

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At the beginning of its EU Council presidency, the German government found itself in a quandary: on the one hand, as the process for the EUPOL mission had been set in motion and expectations raised, any attempt to stop it would likely have put the spotlight on the German national police project’s shortcomings. Crippling an EU initiative aimed at strengthening rule of law in Afghanistan would moreover have undermined its argument that international engagement in Afghanistan needed to focus more on the civilian side, an argument that was essential for domestic politics (cf. Kaim 2008). On the other hand, the MoI continued to resist this logic due to the implicit blame (on the inter-ministerial clash, see also Loewenstein 2008). Since the resources necessary for the ESDP mission, i.e. policing expertise and staff, were controlled by the MoI, the rest of the government however needed to bring it on board.

Berlin’s shift from fence-sitting towards pushing for the biggest possible mission resulted from the compromise reached within the German government that Europeanizing its national project would be acceptable (only) under the condition that a European mission explicitly build on this project and be at least three times bigger than its national project, i.e. 120 police officers (Interview with GER official). Since the German MoI considered its national project the victim of unfair criticism, expansion represented both the only acceptable rationale for replacing it and the ‘price’ that the ministry demanded for agreeing to an EU mission. Officials in the MoI subsequently justified their resistance by making it known in the German press that they doubted that an EU mission could deliver these resources (cf. Busse 2007b). From the perspective of the rest of the government, this shift in argumentation was preferable to the earlier, principled MoI resistance that forced Germany into fence-sitting. Yet it also heralded expectations that Germany would take primary

responsibility for turning EUPOL into a success, as well as a fixation on numbers that would come back to haunt the mission.

Berlin's commitment to jump-starting EUPOL was a response towards the incentives the German government perceived: first, it was committed to turning this mission into a success of its own rather than any future EU Council presidency (cf. Buckley 2010: 4). EUPOL's inauguration served to demonstrate progress in ESDP under German leadership and the government's ability to set priorities in this policy area. Beyond this self-interest in terms of public relations, officials also maintained that Germany still had a responsibility to help with Afghan police-building (Interview with GER official). Berlin therefore wanted to make sure that it would successfully complete the transition to an ESDP mission as the agenda-setting presidency. Such control seemed advisable in view of the earlier French opposition, but also because the presidency had a disciplining effect on internal critics (Interview with GER official). By turning EUPOL Afghanistan into a (big) success, the government would be able to silence the external critics of its national police-building project (and its limited engagement in Afghanistan more generally) as well as its internal ones which resented Europeanization. Internal and external constraints thus intertwined to get Berlin to redefine its stance regarding Europeanization.

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## OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

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Despite Berlin's enthusiasm for EUPOL Afghanistan, the mission's preparation did not proceed smoothly. In part, the difficulties stemmed from the security situation in Afghanistan, which led to significant concern among member states about operational risks and 'force protection' (Interviews with MS officials; cf. Bundestag 2007c: 13008 (B)). In attempting to limit operational risks, the EU imposed strict security guidelines in terms of housing and transport, which in turn made the mission highly dependent on the requisite equipment (cf. Gross 2009: 30; Peral 2009: 334; Buckley 2010: 4). Cumbersome EU procurement procedures however prevented EUPOL from quickly acquiring the housing containers and armoured cars that it needed (Interview with MS official; cf. Buckley 2010: 4; Kempin and Steinicke 2009: 158; Dempsey 2008a; Perito 2009: 10) Although member states realized this problem, no one was going to take potential blame by demanding 'publicly' – i.e. in EU committee – that security restrictions be relaxed. EU governments were moreover slow to second staff that would have been able to address these procurement problems (Interviews with MS officials). This in turn would feed into a vicious circle where other international actors started to discount the mission, lessening the incentive for EU governments to send staff to EUPOL rather than deploy it on a bilateral basis (cf. ICG 2008d: 10; Buckley 2010: 5).

### *The Drivers behind EU Crisis Management Operations*

One touted added value of the mission over the more limited German engagement was supposed to be its deployment across the entire country rather than just a few provinces. Given the security situation in Afghanistan, this outreach depended on protection and support by NATO. Yet drawing up the necessary arrangements proved very burdensome as Turkey blocked official EU-NATO contacts outside the framework of 'Berlin Plus', an arrangement excluding Cypriot representation which the EU therefore does not accept but in narrowly defined circumstances (cf. Bacia 2007; Dempsey 2007b; ICG 2007e: 8).<sup>36</sup> This deadlock implied that the EU had to set up arrangements with every Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) whose region it wanted to take up work in 'for information exchange, medical, security and logistical support including accommodation by Regional Commands and PRTs' (Council of the EU 2007a: art. 5, 2). Although NATO had in principle been eager for the EU to come in, this did not necessarily translate into EUPOL being given priority within PRTs – the military often had more pressing tasks at hand. This would further slow down EUPOL's deployment and negatively affect the EU's perception in Afghanistan (cf. Gross 2009: 31).

Apart from the difficulties associated with operating in Afghanistan, EU-internal issues also proved challenging. Just at the time when the mission was to take off, the Council Secretariat was undergoing a process of reorganization, with the introduction of a civilian planning and conduct capability (CPCC). Whereas this reorganization was undertaken specifically with a view to the upcoming, more challenging civilian ESDP missions such as in Kosovo and Afghanistan, the temporal overlap proved damaging because an existing if inadequate structure was broken up just when support was most needed (Interviews with MS officials). Moreover, the embryonic new structures were lacking leadership for some time (Interview with MS official; cf. Bundestag 2008a: 11.). These shortfalls proved particularly severe given the inter-institutional problems that were hampering progress: the European Commission insisted on implementing time-consuming EU tender procedures, and could enforce its vision in this respect due to the financial oversight it has over civilian ESDP missions (see e.g. Council of the EU 2007a: art. 6, 5). In the absence of thorough planning in the Council Secretariat and continuous high-level pressure on the Commission to deliver, administrative support for the mission in Brussels was inadequate (Interview with MS official; cf. Dempsey 2008a). Moreover, nobody was eager to start new turf fights with the Commission over these issues in mid-2007 as the Lisbon Treaty's ratification seemed impending, with officials hoping that its

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<sup>36</sup> For a more comprehensive discussion of the issues surrounding 'Berlin Plus', see chapter IV on operation Althea.

implementation would quasi-automatically improve inter-institutional issues (cf. Bundestag 2008a: 11.).

A further difficulty related to inter-institutional intricacies was EUPOL's inability to directly finance projects – such as housing, infrastructure or equipment for Afghan police – as this fell under the Commission's prerogative (Interviews with COM and MS officials; cf. Peral 2009: 335; Kempin and Steinicke 2009: 161; Gross 2009: 33-34). Since the mission could not offer material incentives to Afghan counterparts, it found itself in a difficult position to compete for their attention, particularly in a situation where the US was in a rush to spend (cf. ICG 2007e: 9). EUPOL's inability to finance 'goodies' due to legal constraints moreover implied that a number of member states remained active with bilateral programmes carrying out such projects (cf. MFA/MOI 2007: 8.). While these programmes could in principle have supported the mission's standing, keeping different chains of accountability undermined EUPOL's added value in streamlining European efforts (cf. Peral 2009: 334-5). Yet as the next section will detail, EUPOL's shortcomings were most visible with respect to the gap between the EU's announcements regarding staffing and the numbers it actually managed to deliver.

## **D. IMPLEMENTING EUPOL AFGHANISTAN**

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Due to the challenges enumerated above, EUPOL Afghanistan got off to a rocky start. As one analyst summarized it, 'EUPOL has suffered from a lack of consensus in Brussels, delayed deployment and recruitment shortages, and a challenging mandate' (Peral 2009: 335). Its first head of mission resigned after only 3 months, reportedly in response to the numerous problems the mission faced and after a fall-out with the EU Special Representative (cf. Dempsey 2007a; Busse 2007b; Perito 2009: 10). By December 2008, the International Crisis Group concluded that EUPOL was 'widely regarded as a disappointment' (ICG 2008d: 10). How can we explain this development in view of the central role that Afghanistan played regarding Western security policy priorities?

Many observers of EUPOL Afghanistan have criticised the mission's small size as well as member states' failure to provide sufficient staff (cf. Vorsamer 2009; Dempsey 2008a; Kempin and Steinicke 2009; ICG 2008d). With a target of 195 international personnel, originally for November 2007 and later extended to the end of March 2008, 80 were in theatre by the end of September 2007 and 95 by early March 2008 – among them disproportionately many Germans and Scandinavians (Interview with GER official; cf. Bundestag 2007b: 1; 2008a: 3; Busse 2007b). The first year thus saw only a slow expansion where even 'Atlanticist' governments such as the UK and the Netherlands dragged their feet. By the end of December 2008, the

*The Drivers behind EU Crisis Management Operations*

mission was still below its initially targeted strength. While 15 out of 27 member states had seconded personnel, only Germany, the UK, Denmark and Italy had contributed police officers in double digits (CGS 2008b). France, on the other hand, is listed with just one officer, and numerous other countries also remained at the margins. These numbers, 18 months into the mission, show just how slow many EU governments were in responding to repeated calls for contribution that the mission sent out to fill its gaps – 14 calls by the end of 2008 (Korski 2009: 9). They also roughly confirm governments’ preferences as expressed in earlier phases – although they are underwhelming even for the missions supporters:

TABLE 7. NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO EUPOL AFGHANISTAN<sup>37</sup>

	10/ 2007	03/ 2008	06/ 2008	07/ 2008	12/ 2008	12/ 2008	2/ 2009	3/ 2009	10/ 2009	11/ 2010
Germany	33	27	40	31	31	41	37	44	45	48
UK	4	4	12	9	14	22	14	15	21	28
France	3	3	4	3	1	2	3	6	12	7
Austria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	n.s.	7
Belgium	1	1	2	-	-	3	-	-	n.s.	6
Bulgaria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	n.s.	2
Cyprus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	n.s.	-
Czech Rep.	5	5	6	5	2	5	3	3	n.s.	8
Denmark	1	2	8	7	12	13	15	14	19	17
Estonia	-	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	n.s.	4
Finland	8	9	10	4	3	13	2	7	24	37
Greece	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	n.s.	4
Hungary	-	3	5	3	3	5	1	1	n.s.	12
Ireland	2	2	3	-	-	5	-	-	n.s.	14
Italy	5	15	22	16	12	18	12	11	31	16
Latvia	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	2	n.s.	2

<sup>37</sup> Source: Compiled from German and British parliamentary inquiries (Columns 2-4, 7: Bundestag 2007b: 3; 2008a: 4; 2008b: 1; House of Commons 2009: Ev. 98.), EU official documents (Columns 5, 6, 8, 9: CGS 2008c, 2008b; EUPOL Afghanistan 2009b, 2009a), and secondary literature (Column 10: Peral 2009: 328; Column 11: ISIS 2010). Columns 5, 6, 8 and 9 refer to police officers only whereas in columns 2-4, 7, 10 and 11, numbers refer to police officers **and** (contracted) international civilian experts – compare columns 6 and 7.

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Lithuania	3	2	3	3	2	2	2	3	n.s.	4
Luxemb.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	n.s.	-
Malta	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	n.s.	-
Netherl.	2	2	5	4	3	4	4	11	16	27
Poland	-	1	3	3	3	4	3	3	n.s.	5
Portugal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	n.s.	1
Romania	1	2	3	4	5	5	5	5	n.s.	22
Slovakia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	n.s.	2
Slovenia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	n.s.	-
Spain	5	7	12	11	9	11	10	12	n.s.	3
Sweden	3	4	10	3	4	8	3	4	19	21
Canada	1	1	3	11	8	8	8	4	12	9
Croatia	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	n.s.	2
New Zealand	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	n.s.	5
Norway	1	-	2	2	6	2	6	6	n.s.	12
Internat. Civilian Experts	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	49	58	n.a.	60	65	98	n.a.
Total	80	95	157	171	179	174	193	222	268	325

DOUBLING EUPOL'S SIZE

The fact that EUPOL did not live up to expectations did not escape the mission's principals. In May 2008, the Council concluded that 'the EU is committed to substantially increase its efforts through EUPOL Afghanistan, with the aim of doubling the original number of experts working in the mission' (Council of the EU 2008b: 13.). Concurrently, the Council also committed to full deployment for June 2008, an objective it was bound to miss given the mission's history thus far. Yet the EU found itself under German pressure to raise its ambition regarding EUPOL Afghanistan (Interviews with CGS and MS officials). One Secretariat official laconically remarked that doubling was 'a unilateral decision by the German foreign minister' (Interview). In fact, the initiative can be traced back to February 2008, when the German ministers for foreign and home affairs jointly called for doubling EUPOL's size in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (F.A.Z.), Germany's leading establishment daily (Steinmeier and Schaeuble 2008). This call reflected impatience at the political level with bureaucratic squabbling and was based on the correct assessment that EUPOL Afghanistan needed a boost to be taken seriously in Kabul, Washington and EU capitals. By pushing the EU to raise EUPOL's level of ambition,

the German government evidently hoped to focus EU partners' attention on the mission, but why did it insist on this initiative in the face of near-certain failure?

Berlin's insistence on greater efforts regarding EUPOL was a consequence of domestic political calculations. Asked about the motives behind the initiative, a German official commented that 'one thought one could save the ISAF mandate with one F.A.Z. article. [...] It was only about the ISAF mandate, not even EUPOL' (Interview). The German government was anxious about the parliamentary mandate needed for its military deployment in Afghanistan in the context of domestic perception that Germany drifted too much towards the 'militarized' approach of ISAF (cf. Kaim 2008). It thus sought to show that it took a balanced stance. The logic behind this link can be glanced from the arguments brought forward by the opposition Green party: it chastised the government in November 2007 for a 'fundamental deficit in terms of security policy priorities' since the latter allegedly managed to proffer 500 soldiers for a contentious increase in the national ISAF mandate, but was unable to provide 500 undisputedly needed police officers (Bundestag 2007a: 2.).

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#### THE REACTION TO THE GERMAN INITIATIVE

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In view of EUPOL Afghanistan's record of staffing and logistical troubles, many other EU governments and particularly the Council Secretariat stood aghast at the newly raised expectations that the EU was sure to disappoint (Interviews with CGS and MS officials). All interviewed officials criticized the way in which the mission's expansion was brought about, even though they shared the assessment that EUPOL Afghanistan needed to be strengthened (Interviews with CGS and MS officials). As one put it, 'basically everyone' in Brussels opposed the idea of 'doubling', arguing for 'substantially increasing' instead (Interview with MS official). The focus on doubling not only put politics ahead of policy against the advice of the operational planners, but also meant that the EU asked to be measured against these numbers rather than the work it was doing (Interview with MS official). Even the UK, though keen on EU engagement in Afghanistan, initially resisted the initiative and only agreed after several phone calls at ministerial level (Interview with MS official). The Council Secretariat also opposed the idea because of the expected practical problems, despite its general eagerness to promote ESDP. As one diplomat noted, 'it was totally pointless, the CPCC refused, and it is headed by a Dutch, and the Deputy is British, so not exactly some anti-Americans, and they warned, warned, warned – nothing, run over' (Interview with MS official).

The reluctance of EUPOL's erstwhile promoters, the UK and the Council Secretariat, shows that the drive to expand the mission came what may was not simply a function of US pressure, but related to the domestic political incentives in Germany.

Berlin's fixation on increasing the mission's level of ambition suggests that it believed that it could achieve one of two results: either pressure partners into greater efforts and thereby live up to its promise to take responsibility for police-building, or at least show that the EU rather than Germany was to blame. In fact, one German official privately argued that the objective in setting up the mission had been to enable Germany to say two years later that 'bilaterally we are providing good training, but the EU's coordination, well, difficult' (Interview). While an EU success was the preferred option, Berlin at a minimum wanted to make clear that it had done its part and that potential blame lay with the EU and other member states. Despite virtually unanimous opposition, the German government thus insisted on the objective of doubling EUPOL's size, and EU partners subsequently gave in to German pressure. France, formerly the most outspoken critic of this engagement, was just about to start its Council presidency and, to avoid trouble, eventually adopted the position of 'whatever comes is fine for us' (Interview with GER official).

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#### CONTRIBUTIONS V. IMPACT

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The debate about doubling EUPOL's size continued the dubious focus on numerical input which tends to emphasize demonstrating commitment over achieving impact. With a view to the latter, EUPOL Afghanistan could have represented a major improvement even in the absence of significant expansion, by better coordinating (non-US) international police actors. Most of these actors were in fact European, but given EUPOL's constraints due to its botched start and its inherent limitations regarding project work, streamlining proved difficult. On the one hand, the mission's struggle with administrative hurdles and its pre-occupation with 'force protection' kept it from focusing on its key task, i.e. strategy development (Interview with CGS official; cf. Buckley 2010: 4). On the other hand, with major EU countries maintaining national police support projects, EUPOL continued to face difficulties to achieve recognition as the actor responsible for coordinating international strategy in the field of policing (cf. ICG 2008d: 10; Peral 2009: 334-335). Furthermore, the mission was not helped by the fact that the US all but ignored its efforts. Whereas EUPOL notably aimed at strengthening the Secretariat underpinning the International Policing Coordination Board, the intended mechanism for greater coordination among donors and Afghan authorities, the US did not assign any permanent staff to this Secretariat until the end of 2008 (cf. ICG 2008d: 11).

Whereas a number of observers have compared EUPOL's numbers with the 2500 police trainers the US is using to train the police's rank and file (cf. Boege 2009; Dempsey 2008a), this is somewhat misleading. It is plainly more difficult to enlist suitably experienced police officers which can credibly mentor the higher echelons of the Afghan police hierarchy than to procure military police to offer courses in

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survival training to police recruits. The latter are pivotal given the security situation in Afghanistan, but such training simply makes for more impressive numbers and draws on resources that are far more easily available. Moreover, EU member states also contribute hundreds of personnel to such basic training, but on a national basis or in the framework of NATO's training mission. Clearly, it would not have been helpful to subsume them under EUPOL's umbrella simply to increase EU numbers, and it is to the EU's credit that it has not attempted to do so.

The above caveats notwithstanding, the EU has to accept some blame for the mission's flawed perception. First, by focusing on numerical benchmarks only to miss them later on, the Union invited observers to measure the mission's performance against these. Secondly, despite the specific quality the mission sought to deliver, it could have used more people. While the required capabilities were limited in supply, their availability for this mission was at least partly a function of incentives for the relevant domestic authorities as the differences across EU member states and comparisons to other civilian missions show. Although the rule of law mission in Kosovo faced recruitment problems of its own, it attracted far more secondments than EUPOL Afghanistan. Moreover, the EU's efforts are not *inherently* limited to the strategic level; the mission's focus on contributing to effective civilian policing arrangements could logically also be supported by monitoring and mentoring at lower levels. While there is no point in duplicating US and NATO work, Afghanistan offered sufficient opportunities for greater contributions. Most importantly however, as a consequence of the emphasis on demonstrating commitment, the mission initially lacked a clear sense of purpose and thus failed to engage its partners in Afghanistan.

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### WHITHER EUPOL AFGHANISTAN?

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Most interviewed officials emphasized that EUPOL had had a false start but expressed cautious optimism for the future. They assigned the mission's problems mainly to overly rushed planning, lack of inter-institutional coherence at the time, and the inherent difficulties of entering Afghanistan at such a late point of the international intervention. As the importance of these problems has come to recede over time, they argued that the mission's outlook was improving. Many of the mission's bureaucratic hurdles simply needed time to be addressed. While the mission continued to fall short of the targeted 400 police officers, it had grown by early 2011 to incorporate more than 300 international staff, with contributions coming from 23 EU countries as well as 4 'third states' (CGS 2010; Gros-Verheyde 2011b). The old cleavages haunting the mission, i.e. the debate on whether EU support for NATO and US policy was appropriate, appeared to have subsided. Moreover, the mission managed to create a somewhat broader sense of shared

responsibility among international police-building actors in Afghanistan (cf. Bundestag 2008c: 37; Islam and Gross 2009: 3; Buckley 2010: 5).

The prolongation of EUPOL's mandate in May 2010 for another 3 years also addressed some of the issues that had troubled EUPOL: the assistance for the Afghan government has been specified; a project cell has been created to coordinate and facilitate projects in the police sector even though the latter are still carried out under third parties' responsibility; and the mission's ability to reach down to the operational level has been codified (Council of the EU 2010: art. 3-4 ). However, significant challenges remain, both regarding the weakness of the Afghan side as well as with a view to commitment and coordination within the EU and regarding other international actors. Most important among them is that the mission is operating in the broader context of a justice system which – at the end of 2010 and thus 9 years after the original intervention – was still judged to be 'in a catastrophic state of disrepair' and where the International Crisis Group saw the need to urge Western governments once again to '[r]elocate rule of law support at the centre of the counter-insurgency strategy' (ICG 2010b: i; iii).

## **E. PROXIMATE DRIVERS BEHIND EUPOL AFGHANISTAN**

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As this chapter has detailed, EUPOL Afghanistan was the result of a number of overlapping but partly contradictory factors. The idea for EUPOL initially arose out of the perceived need to give support to NATO in Afghanistan, promoted in particular by the UK as well as the Netherlands and Finland. This rationale triggered the opposition of France – but also of other member states such as Austria and Greece – that resented ESDP's agenda being set by NATO and the US or regarded Afghanistan as none of their business. The question of support to NATO however became intertwined with two other drivers: first, an EU institutional interest in sharpening the Union's profile in Afghanistan. This led the Commission to explore options for greater EU engagement, and the Council Secretariat to join the latter's assessment mission. This visible display of interest in turn helped set in motion a process which created significant expectations and momentum regarding an eventual ESDP engagement. Secondly, ideas about setting up an ESDP mission in Afghanistan interacted with considerations in Rome and Berlin as to how to address their 'lead nation' status in Afghan policing and justice. Initially both governments did not display a clear preference as to whether to 'Europeanize' their respective tasks. In the wake of the momentum for an ESDP mission, the German government however decided that a European operation presented an opportunity to infuse police-building with renewed vigour and to deflect future criticism whereas opposition would have entailed considerable risks with respect to the government's ability to justify its Afghanistan policy.

In view of these overlapping processes, it is difficult to deduce straightforward theoretical conclusions from EUPOL Afghanistan's early phase. While several EU actors were interested in making a stronger and more visible European contribution to state-building in Afghanistan, the reasons for this impetus varied: they related to security policy priorities, the constraints arising from the existence of an 'ESDP machine', and the attempt to strike a balance between the needs of the situation in Afghanistan, alliance politics, and the constraints of domestic politics. Although these motives were reflected across EU governments, their relative weight and specification differed. Both the French and the British government viewed the mission primarily in terms of their relationship to the US and NATO. Whereas London sought the EU's support for the latter, France insisted that the EU not be instrumentalized for helping NATO. This discrepancy was in line with traditional differences in security policy, i.e. the British desire to keep America involved in European security affairs versus the French championing of European 'autonomy' (see e.g. Howorth 2000; Stahl et al. 2004; Schoutheete 2004: 51-57). This tension however came to be overshadowed by Berlin's role.

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#### THE GERMAN PREDICAMENT

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As in the case of Britain and France, the German government was influenced by NATO's interest in a stronger civilian partner. Berlin's position however came to be formulated primarily with a view to addressing two criticisms the government faced: on the one hand, it sought to avoid blame for its relatively limited engagement in Afghanistan, including in building an Afghan police force. This was to reassure the public that the government was not sacrificing the longer-term national interest of good relations with NATO allies and Washington in particular. After all, a close transatlantic relationship forms a key aspect of German strategic culture (cf. Giegerich 2006: 133-136; Harnisch 2010: 62). For this purpose, Berlin needed to show that it was constructive and responsible, doing its share for the wider Western project of stabilising and transforming Afghanistan. On the other hand, the German government hoped to contain domestic criticism of an 'overly militarized' approach by NATO in Afghanistan. Emphasizing civilian engagement served to comfort the public that the government did not sell out to a US agenda, and that it attempted to shape international events in line with domestic values. For this purpose, Berlin attempted to keep its distance from America's war-waging in Afghanistan and to emphasize the importance of police-building. In short, the German government sought to demonstrate that it effectively defended domestic preferences in keeping military engagement limited, yet without giving allies justified grounds for criticism.

Given this objective, the most direct criticism the German government needed to address related to its prior efforts in building the Afghan police. The leading German

daily claimed in November 2007 that the German police-building project in Afghanistan was changing into a 'heap of embarrassments which damage Germany's standing' (Carstens 2007). Although generally close to the Christian Democrats to which both the chancellor and the responsible minister of home affairs belonged, the paper went on to argue that the credibility of the chancellor herself was now at stake. The parliamentary opposition also focused on the shortcomings in this sector and, between 2007 and 2010, made no less than 7 written inquiries that focused on police-training in Afghanistan. Criticism was even voiced by the German military, with one general publicly referring to the German police training scheme in Afghanistan as 'a miserable failure' (Loewenstein 2008; Dempsey 2008b). This domestic criticism was partly a consequence of the international one. It was however the latter's domestic reverberation that was awkward for the government insofar as it potentially undermined trust into its competence in foreign policy matters, in particular regarding Germany's self-conception as a useful and reliable Western ally.

Such criticism may seem to be of limited relevance. It was threatening however insofar as it undermined the government's narrative that presented its police-building efforts in Afghanistan as a substantial and recognized contribution. This in turn served to rebut both Anglo-American allegations that Berlin was shirking its responsibilities, reproaches which also reverberated domestically, and domestic criticism that the government simply followed the 'militarized' US strategy. EUPOL's success was thus needed to underline domestically and internationally that Germany's emphasis on civilian policing had been right all along, that German efforts had been effective, and that greater efforts in this domain were what was needed (cf. Bundestag 2007c: 13008 (D); 13014 (D); 13015 (B)). Demonstrating credible civilian engagement was moreover necessary for ensuring continued parliamentary support for Germany's military engagement in Afghanistan (cf. Kaim 2008: 616; Harnisch 2010: 64-7). As a security policy expert noted, 'German political elites continue to be fundamentally sceptical about the usefulness of force. The broad consensus is that the war in Afghanistan cannot be won militarily but that it must be won by civilian means only' (Kaim 2008: 617). It was for catering to this domestic constituency that Germany insisted on doubling EUPOL's size.

Promoting stronger engagement in police-building as a better alternative to military action was not limited to German opposition politicians: in the run-up to the 2009 federal elections, a parliamentary spokesman for the Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU) also demanded a doubling of police trainers for Afghanistan (again) in order to shift priority from military to police engagement and allow for early withdrawal (cf. F.A.Z. 2009). This demand rings rather populist in view of the fact that CSU-ruled Bavaria agreed to send its first police officers to Afghanistan only in November 2009 (cf. Vorsamer 2009; Bundestag 2008a: 24.b)). Yet it shows that demanding greater

efforts at police-building was seen as domestically appealing in Germany. That the political risks of taking police off the street at home and endangering them abroad were simultaneously shunned as long as possible underlines that politics rather than policy informed such demands.

By focusing on police-building, Berlin attempted to balance the need of appearing to be a responsible ally and of containing any potential fallout from the military operation in Afghanistan. Under these two conditions, both too much and too little support to NATO's ISAF mission entailed domestic political risks for the government: to appear either as too subservient to an unloved US administration or as recklessly opportunistic by endangering a pivotal foreign policy relationship. The easiest way of containing both risks consisted in arguing that increasing civilian engagement was what Afghanistan (and hence the US) truly needed. The chancellor, visiting Afghanistan in November 2007, thus underlined that military, police and civilian reconstruction were equally important and that 'if there is one area where Germany should do more, then it is for the time being in police-building' (Bundeskanzleramt 2007).

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## THE ROLE OF ESDP STRUCTURES

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Whereas the debate over the desirability of an ESDP mission in Afghanistan was decided among member state governments, the Council Secretariat also weighed in. According to several interviewees, it actively supported the idea for a mission in Afghanistan, despite some internal criticism (Interviews with GCS and MS officials). The latter was partly due to the fear that the EU might overreach. In the absence of a proper civilian headquarters capability, was Afghanistan not too challenging a theatre? Other Council Secretariat officials, however, saw these internal challenges precisely as a means to push and test the new structures (Interview with FRA official), and the external challenges as an enormous opportunity for the EU: with a military solution in Afghanistan increasingly questionable, the EU could demonstrate its value-added (Interview with CGS official). Raising the stakes for ESDP moreover fitted the Secretariat's general interest in proactively 'always hunting for more' (Interview with COM official). Both French and German sources thus described the Secretariat as 'fully in line with the UK position' of promoting EUPOL, adding that the responsible director in the CGS 'had listened well to London' (Interviews).

The Secretariat was able to help push EUPOL Afghanistan onto the ESDP agenda by invoking outside expectations. The perception of institutional pressure, of the need to come up with something, probably helped to convince the German government that Europeanization was hard to avoid (Interviews with CGS and GER officials) – although this was partly a consequence of German collusion. Similarly, when the Fact-Finding Mission on the feasibility of an ESDP mission came back with its report,

the Council Secretariat explicitly argued that ‘now that the EU had climbed up the diving board with everybody captivated, it also had to jump’ (Interview with FRA official). In other words, once the prospect of an ESDP intervention in Afghanistan had been raised, it was difficult to put the genie back into the bottle. This put pressure on EU governments to agree on something and to avoid giving the impression of obstructionism lest their limited national contribution in Afghanistan attract blame. While it is difficult to gauge the exact impact of the Secretariat’s engagement, the latter’s interest apparently helped in bringing about a shift in the need for justification from those who wanted to do something to those who did not. This institutional bias for action combined with the importance of preference intensity, i.e. that those who wanted to do something were more committed than those who preferred inaction (and remained free not to contribute), may explain why ‘doing something’ was the ESDP default mode once a government had brought an idea to the table.

The fact that EU governments committed to an endeavour they proved insufficiently dedicated to might also indicate functionalist pressures arising out of the existence of the ESDP framework. The latter may have led them to arrive, by default, at a decision they in fact had not supported but only insufficiently opposed. Indeed, such pressures played a role in creating momentum once the talk of the town had led to expectations of action. As a counterfactual, the mission would hardly have taken place in the absence of an ESDP institutional structure geared towards taking the subsequent step – those unconvinced of the mission’s merits would likely have ‘opted out’ early on, thereby casting doubt on Berlin’s precondition of significantly enhanced engagement. The ESDP framework thus proved instrumental in overcoming a certain level of inertia and opposition when it came to authorizing a mission. However, it was not decisive, and EUPOL’s subsequent development showed that these pressures were much less effective in ensuring commitment to a mission that has not enjoyed fully-fledged support. The EU institutions’ limited influence was also underlined when the decision was taken to double the size of the mission against its pleading, and despite significant support for the Council Secretariat on the part of other member states.

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### TRIUMPH OF A LACK OF WILL?

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To many observers, EUPOL’s relative lack of resources – especially compared to US numbers – underlined that EU governments’ political will was very limited (cf. Vorsamer 2009; Dempsey 2008a; Kempin and Steinicke 2009). The International Herald Tribune underlined that whereas EU countries had more than 2 million police officers, ‘even after much cajoling and shaming by the United States and NATO, they have still managed to muster only 150 to send to Afghanistan’ (Dempsey

2008a). This criticism was also mirrored on the other side of the Atlantic, where German newspapers compared EUPOL's 151 police officers with the 2500 US police trainers (cf. Boege 2009; see also Blechschmidt 2008; Loewenstein 2008; Vorsamer 2009). This ostensible lack of effort comes into even sharper relief once we consider that much of the early contributions did not involve extra personnel, but came down to 're-hatting' officers already on the ground in a national capacity (cf. ICG 2007e: 8).

The principal problem that all EU governments faced was the mobilisation of national bureaucracies which are not *per se* foreign policy oriented, such as police officers. Few EU member states have structurally addressed this issue yet, making quick contributions dependent on sufficient incentives for the line ministries in each case (cf. House of Lords 2008: Q335). Apart from the specific difficulties EUPOL Afghanistan faced, governments cannot command police officers to go on a mission the way troops can be deployed, but rather need to persuade them. The structural nature of this hurdle (as well as the institutional difficulties described above) implies that it is a bit too easy to deduce from EUPOL's failings that EU governments simply lacked the political will to act, as a number of observers have argued or implied (cf. Kempin and Steinicke 2009; Dempsey 2008a; Buckley 2010; Vorsamer 2009). Yet EU governments could have surmounted many of these obstacles in a shorter time span by rapidly seconding personnel, instructing national PRTs to quickly sign agreements with EUPOL and making crucial equipment available on a bilateral basis – in short, by prioritising support for the mission within domestic bureaucracies.

Their reluctance to cut corners revealed that many EU governments did not in fact attach utmost importance to this mission, despite official proclamations to the contrary. EUPOL Afghanistan simply did not command sufficient political attention outside of Brussels and Berlin, a self-reinforcing process when the mission failed to impress its mark. As one Kabul observer commented, '[t]he military mission commands most of the governments' attention, and drives their national priorities; the EU is fighting a losing battle for the attention of European capitals' (Buckley 2010: 3). This is hardly surprising given that, as one diplomat put it, '[m]any member states regard the mission as a possibility to accommodate US pressure without having to send troops' (Interview with GER official).

The absence of urgency in many EU capitals regarding EUPOL's development was rational insofar as the blame for EUPOL's failings was likely to fall on the EU as an entity and/or Germany, rather than on individual EU governments. The rush to establish the mission under the German presidency likely contributed to a perception in EU capitals that EUPOL Afghanistan essentially was a German mission. This lack of wider ownership was reinforced by German insistence on the close link between the mission and the earlier national project. One interviewee thus emphasized that 'once Germany agreed to the mission, it became very German'

(Interview with CGS official). Another concurred that ‘the challenge for the EU was to ensure this was an EU mission, not just a German mission’ (Interview with CGS official). Whereas such a strong German imprint had been necessary to build support within the German MoI, it likely encouraged other governments to see primary responsibility for mission success as incumbent on Berlin. The EU official in charge of civilian operations warned that such a lack of responsibility might actually become symptomatic for the latter: ‘[t]here is a danger that we will see the great number of civilian missions that we have now embarked upon as nice things, nice to have, nice to show, but not as something very important for either ourselves or for the countries concerned, more a political gesture’ (House of Lords 2008: Q308). Apparently, many EU governments regarded EUPOL Afghanistan as just such a gesture, giving them little reason to press domestic bureaucracies for prioritizing its support.

## **F. CONCLUSION**

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What does the above melange of factors suggest with respect to the mission’s underlying drivers? The differing motives and strenuous consensus that was eventually achieved make it clear that there was no collectively shared impetus behind EUPOL Afghanistan. To the extent that the mission’s genesis responded to pressures from the international level, it served to accommodate US and NATO concerns about a lack of progress in building the Afghan police necessary for an eventual withdrawal of Western troops. Although there is no direct evidence that the US instigated the mission, the latter was clearly seen by many EU governments as a gesture towards NATO and the US. As one diplomat put it, ‘even those who wanted to go wanted it to be nice to the Americans, or because one does not wish to be in Iraq – so the motives were not honest motives, we do something sensible for Afghanistan, but it was, we have to do this mission, full stop’ (Interview with MS official). Not surprisingly, the mission was therefore primarily supported by countries with a particularly transatlantic outlook – and most interviewed officials remembered the UK as the most vociferous by far in arguing for EUPOL Afghanistan.

The pro-American orientation of this mission was reflected in French and British governments’ positions, which mirrored the broader attitudes the two countries have taken vis-à-vis ESDP. Whereas Britain wanted to use the ESDP for supporting NATO and the US, France was interested in keeping the former away from the latter. The French position of ‘unconstructive abstention’ could thus be taken as an indication of balancing intentions although this reluctance may equally have been a way of signalling at home that France continued to pursue an independent foreign policy. After all, any balancing intentions would sit uneasily with France’s continued participation in the US-led NATO operation in Afghanistan. Moreover, the French

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government decided not to prevent EUPOL Afghanistan. Instead, it allowed the EU to embark on this mission whose purpose was in part the hope that this would please Washington. Even if that impetus turned out to be limited insofar as it did not translate into political will to undertake much additional effort, the fact that the Atlanticist position prevailed contradicts the proposition that ESDP can be characterized as a Gaullist instrument for balancing against the US.

By contrast, there is some evidence for the second proposition, that EUPOL Afghanistan served to promote the EU's liberal values. A liberal aspiration underpins the mission's objective, namely to contribute to 'effective civilian policing arrangements [...] within the framework of the rule of law and respect[ing] human rights' (Council of the EU 2007a: art. 3). Moreover, it also follows from the explicit embrace of a 'civilian policing model' as opposed to instrumentalizing the police as auxiliaries against the insurgency (cf. Wilder 2007: x; Gross 2009: 13-14; Grono 2009: 3-4; Friesendorf 2009; ICG 2007e: 7-9). However, the targeting of the police was primarily the result of a political opportunity due to Afghan needs in this sector and the previous German lead in this area. More importantly, the political rationale focused on demonstrating engagement in Afghanistan and avoiding blame, and it featured only limited efforts to put these high-minded objectives into practice. The invocation of liberal values thus rings somewhat hollow against the backdrop of the limited efforts EU governments devoted to strengthening rule of law – especially if compared to their significantly greater investments into stability in the form of ISAF contributions. In short, it was opportunity and convenience more than liberal impetus that shaped the Union's intervention in Afghanistan.

The third proposition suggested that EUPOL Afghanistan may have been part of a larger strategy to advance European integration by way of strengthening the EU's visibility on the global stage. Indeed, the search for an 'EU security identity' played some role insofar as the EU institutions were aiming for greater EU visibility in Afghanistan. Joining the Commission in its assessment mission with a view to acquiring a new sphere of activity, the Secretariat subsequently gave political support to the Finnish and German Council presidencies against French opposition and widespread scepticism. It also helped to create the perception of inevitability that the diving board analogy evoked. Yet whereas this aspect played a role in limiting some member states' resistance, the decisive factor for France to give up its opposition was its decision not to veto a project that Germany evidently supported. Similarly, the Secretariat would hardly have pressed its case had Germany voiced clear opposition. In other words, the European institutions were important in shifting the incentive structure between action and inaction at the EU level, but this was decisive only to the extent that EU governments acquiesced or avoided taking decisions. As to member states' own motivations, there is little to suggest that they saddled the EU with this mission so as to enhance the latter's security brand or even

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to increase the appeal of European integration. For this to be plausible, the Union would have had to give proof of far greater unity of purpose – and member states far more willing to solicit publicity for this mission rather than their national projects. Instead, EU governments never allowed the Union to take centre-place in Afghanistan and did not go out of their way to ensure the latter's success.

This brings us to the fourth proposition, namely that EU governments may have sought to leverage EUPOL Afghanistan for domestic political ends. There is only limited direct evidence for this proposition, but national positions correlated with domestic preferences – from Britain's interest in leveraging the EU for support of British foreign policy priorities and its special relationship to France's insistence on decision-making autonomy. In particular, German policy with respect to EUPOL Afghanistan was informed by the attempt to reconcile two conflicting emphases of its 'national security culture' – being a reliable ally while avoiding the use of force to the extent possible (cf. Giegerich 2006: 137-140; Meyer 2006: 69-71; similarly, Kaim 2007: 200). By transforming its national police project into a European mission, Berlin solicited implicit international legitimisation for its earlier work, flaunted its willingness to bear a greater share of international responsibility, and emphasized the civilian character of its Afghanistan engagement. It thereby demonstrated its conformity with domestic expectations regarding foreign policy behaviour, and reduced the political risks that could have arisen from the perception that it shirked responsibility or aligned itself with the strategy of an unpopular American president. Europeanization moreover allowed it to share the costs and blame for potential future problems.

The German position was thus driven by the objective to illustrate its contribution to stabilising Afghanistan while remaining in sync with society's preference for civilian action. This can plausibly be explained as a function of domestic politics, but the emphasis on policing could also be interpreted as an attempt to defend 'the national interest' by minimizing national costs under the constraints of superpower expectations. EUPOL would then primarily have served to fend off US pressure for costlier military engagement in (Southern) Afghanistan. It thus comes down to the question whether the German government primarily attempted to convince Washington or its domestic public of the value of its police-building efforts. Given the mission's relative lack of impact, the latter is the more plausible intended audience. The indifference the US showed towards EUPOL also indicates that it did not consider this mission an important strategic asset in stabilising Afghanistan (cf. ICG 2008d: 11). If the US all but ignored EUPOL, how would Germany hope to get credit for the mission in Washington? It is admittedly risky to deduce from a policy's ineffectiveness that there was no serious commitment to the latter. After all, the German government did invest into the mission, not just by being the biggest contributor in terms of staff and resources, but also by pushing for the mission's

### *The Drivers behind EU Crisis Management Operations*

expansion and repeatedly affirming its responsibility. Yet the fact that these efforts were undertaken primarily with a view to domestic debates about ISAF indicates that, for the German government, domestic politics was the primary consideration. Moreover, the fact that most other EU governments felt less compelled to act although they were likely subject to comparable US pressure indicates that the explanation resides in the particularities of how US expectations came to impact on German politics.

In sum, the mission is easiest to square with the proposition that it served to respond to domestic expectations. Governments tailored their positions according to what seemed easiest to defend domestically, and the intergovernmental conflicts regarding EUPOL that this chapter detailed mirrored these diverging societal expectations. The German government as the crucial player in this mission sought to limit the domestic political risks its engagement in Afghanistan engendered, i.e. it used its emphasis on police-building as a shield against the anticipated potential criticisms that it was too close to the unpopular US counter-insurgency or too coward to carry its fair part of the burden of international security. As for the French and British governments, the audience of their positioning is less clear, but the discussion chapter will argue that their 'geo-strategic' motives also relate less to relative power than to domestic expectations. Before we turn to that issue, however, the following chapter will address the fourth and final case of this study: the EU's intervention in Chad and the Central African Republic.

## CHAPTER VII: EUFOR TCHAD/RCA

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On 28 January 2008, the European Union initiated an ESDP military operation which would deploy more than 3000 troops to eastern Chad and the northeast of the Central African Republic (RCA). EUFOR Tchad/RCA was tasked to ‘contribute to protecting civilians in danger’, to ‘facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid’, and to ‘contribute to protecting UN personnel, facilities, installations and equipment’ (Council of the EU 2007b: art. 1; UNSC 2007b: art. 6).<sup>38</sup> Described by a global security think tank as the ‘EU’s most taxing mission yet’, the operation was framed as part of a wider ‘regional approach’ to the crisis in neighbouring Darfur and served to complement the UN – African Union operation UNAMID in Darfur as well as the UN’s ‘multi-dimensional presence’ in Chad and RCA (IISS 2008a: 1; Council of the EU 2007b: para. 3; UNSC 2007b: art. 1). In examining the drivers behind EUFOR Tchad/RCA, this chapter once again takes as its analytical starting point the four propositions developed in chapter II. It will thus investigate to what extent motives related to relative external power, the EU’s own role conception, the goal of European integration and domestic expectations impacted the Union’s decision-making with respect to EUFOR. What provoked the EU to mount its biggest ‘autonomous’ military operation yet in this peripheral region?

### A. BACKGROUND

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The European Union consciously framed EUFOR Tchad/RCA as a contribution to helping alleviate the crisis in Darfur. The preamble of the Joint Action authorizing the operation thus starts out by pointing to the international community’s efforts in Darfur and continues by causally linking the situation in Chad to the crisis in adjacent Sudan, stating that ‘[t]he Council further emphasized the regional dimension of the Darfur crisis and the urgent need to address the destabilizing impact of the crisis on the humanitarian and security situation in neighbouring countries’ (Council of the EU 2007b: para. 3). The ‘factsheet’ on EUFOR Tchad/RCA on the Council’s website similarly presented the operation as a consequence of the EU’s efforts to address the situation in Darfur, claiming the EU thereby ‘stepped up its longstanding action to tackle the crisis in Darfur, as part of its regional approach

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<sup>38</sup> In conformity with official documents and most analysts, I use the French acronym for both the operation and the Central African Republic. Moreover, the shorthand EUFOR in this chapter refers to this particular operation.

to the crisis' (CGS 2009b). Darfur is hence presented as the cause of a regional crisis and the ultimate rationale behind the EU's intervention.

Darfur has been the site of one of the deadliest conflicts of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (cf. UNSG 2006b: para. 3). Long-standing local grievances and violence in Darfur erupted into full-scale civil war after February 2003 when attacks by rebel groups were answered by a brutal counter-insurgency campaign (cf. UNSG 2006b: para. 3; de Waal 2007a: 1039-40). At the same time, Darfur is only one of several violent conflicts convulsing Sudan. A combination of the 'hyperdominance' of Sudan's capital region vis-à-vis exploited peripheries, elites' lack of internal cohesion, and their manipulation and militarization of tribal identities has driven various local conflicts and insurgencies (de Waal 2007b: 4-5). Evisceration of state structures and constant realignments among competing factions in both centre and periphery have led to a deeply dysfunctional state constantly engaged in crisis management, but with 'literally nobody' in control (de Waal 2007b: 23).

What distinguished Darfur from other crises in Sudan or Africa however was the attention the conflict received in the West: '[t]he war, destruction, massacre, and mass displacement in Darfur over recent years is *unprecedented only in the international attention it has gained*. Sudan's peripheries have experienced similar disasters over recent decades, some of them just as horrific, many of them more protracted' (de Waal 2007b: 35, emphasis added). Yet there has been a remarkable advocacy movement around Darfur's predicament that has raised the political stakes for Western governments as they perceived themselves under pressure to prove that they were working hard to 'save Darfur' (cf. Hamilton and Hazlett 2007; Gabrielsen 2009).

In 2004, the African Union fielded a peacekeeping mission (AMIS) to monitor a rushed and sketchy ceasefire agreement in Darfur, but under difficult circumstances mostly outside the mission's control, that task proved beyond its capacity (cf. de Waal 2007a: 1040-41). To demonstrate their commitment, Western governments started pushing for a UN takeover of AMIS from 2005 onwards, an initiative that was vehemently rejected and obstructed by the Sudanese government (cf. de Waal 2007a: 1042; ICG 2006c: 1). Sudan was eventually pushed into tolerating a 'hybrid' UN-African Union operation (UNAMID). Before the latter got off the ground, however, more than 200.000 refugees from Darfur had crossed into eastern Chad, and further geographic expansion of the conflict seemed a worrying possibility (cf. UNSG 2006b: para. 39; 122-123; 2006a: para. 27). It was against the background of this situation as well as Western governments' frustration over their inability to achieve demonstrable effect in addressing the conflict in Darfur proper that the plan for an intervention in Chad emerged. To fully understand the plan's potential

motives and implications, however, it is necessary to also take a look at Chad, the intended beneficiary of an EU intervention.

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### CRISIS IN CHAD AND RCA

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A former French colony, Chad's history since independence in 1960 has been one of recurrent and often violent conflict – and one without a single constitutional transfer of power as yet (UNSG 2006a: para. 7; Ayangafac 2009: 1; see also Handy 2007: 2-5; Prunier 2007; ICG 2006b: 2; 2008a: 7). As elsewhere in Africa, colonial borders hardly reflected historical ties, and the new-born state lacked the material and ideational means to fully impose its authority. Numerous cleavages at the local level combined with corruption, authoritarianism, militarization and oppression of political opposition at the national level to result in quasi-intractable political crisis (cf. Ayangafac 2009: 1; ICG 2006b: 2; Tubiana 2008: 57; Handy 2008: 5; 2007: 3-7; ICG 2008a: 2-8; de Waal 2008). Since control of political power also implied exclusive access to the most important sources of wealth, no ruler risked a fair political process, but instead sought to destroy or buy off opposition that became too threatening (cf. ICG 2008a: 3-5). The foreclosure of constitutional means to challenge the ruler in power however made armed rebellion the most plausible way to address grievances. The latest round of military confrontations within Chad was triggered by the decision of president Déby, in 2004, to change the constitution in order to allow himself a third presidential term (cf. Handy 2008: 4). Against the backdrop of rising government resources as Chad became an oil exporter in the early 2000s, this alienated important constituencies, including from within his own camp (cf. Handy 2008: 4).

Waning legitimacy, militarized factional rivalry and state fragility combined to result in a serious challenge to the rule of president Déby (cf. Handy 2007). Chad is not only one of the world's poorest countries, but also tails the UNDP's Human Development Index and features consistently among the frontrunners on Transparency International's corruption index. The situation is not much different in the Central African Republic (RCA), the second host nation of EUFOR Tchad/RCA and an even weaker 'shadow state' than Chad (cf. ICG 2007b: 1; Berg 2009: 63; Marchal 2009: (1); Prunier 2007). Yet the RCA played only a secondary role in the operation with just 200 soldiers stationed there, and their contribution to fulfilling the operation's mandate was limited (Interview with MS official). That the country had been added to EUFOR's area of operations was related more to the situation in Chad than in RCA itself: with RCA's north-eastern part protruding in between Chad and Sudan, that region has been crossed by various rebel movements on their way (cf. Berg 2009: 63).

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LINKING CHAD TO DARFUR

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The EU was not alone in claiming that the situation in Chad was a consequence of the conflict in Darfur. The view that the latter was ‘spilling over’ the border was shared by many media and humanitarian organizations and promoted by Chad’s president Déby in an effort to deflect attention from Chad’s domestic political crisis (cf. Handy 2007: 1; Prunier 2007; see also UNSG 2006a: para. 81; ICG 2006c: 2; 2006b: 25). The conflict in Darfur has indeed not only led to more than 200.000 refugees, but also to cross-border incursions by the *Janjaweed*, militia armed by the Sudanese government whose attacks had contributed to almost 200.000 Chadian internally displaced persons (IDPs) in addition to the refugees from Darfur by the end of 2007 (UNSG 2007c: para. 11). Yet Chad’s instability was not simply a consequence of the violence in Darfur. Instead, the region is host to a number of conflicts which partially stem from Chad’s own governance crisis, but which have become closely intertwined (cf. de Waal 2008). The International Crisis Group thus opined that the ‘political and security crisis Chad faces is internal, and has been exacerbated rather than caused by the meddling of its Sudanese neighbours’ (ICG 2008a: 1).

To keep himself in power, Chad’s president Déby relies mainly on his own ethnic group, the Beri (cf. Tubiana 2008: 14). The group’s settlements straddle the border region of Chad and Sudan, and, as non-Arabs, the Beri have been in open conflict with the Sudanese government in Khartoum since 2003 (cf. Tubiana 2008: 26). In order not to lose his clan’s crucial support, Déby eventually had to offer some assistance to Darfurian rebels by tolerating rear bases on Chadian soil, earning him the wrath of the Sudanese government (cf. Tubiana 2008: 26-27; Lacey 2006). In response, Khartoum has supported Chadian rebels with the objective of toppling president Déby (Tubiana 2008: 27-46; Prunier 2008). Both governments thus slid into a proxy war that fed on domestic political grievances they sought to exploit, but which they failed to fully control (cf. Tubiana 2008). The fact that the crisis was rooted in this proxy war and Chad’s own political situation rather than simply the conflict in Darfur raised questions as to whether the EU was honest in its self-ascribed objectives of alleviating human suffering by deploying a temporary protection force while steering clear of Chad’s political crisis – questions that came to inform the subsequent decision-making process.

The primary reason for widespread scepticism over the motives that had led the EU to engage in an operation in Chad was the role of France, Chad’s former colonial master and the main proponent of an ESDP engagement in that country. Since decolonisation, Chad has remained under considerable French influence. In various military cooperation agreements, France received a military base and automatic transit and over-flight rights in Chad in return for which it was to provide for external defence and, upon request but at its own discretion, support against

internal threats (cf. Tartter 1988). In the context of armed conflict between Libya and Chad, Paris in 1986 installed Operation *Epervier* (Sparrowhawk) in Chad, which has since remained there. Meanwhile reduced to 950 soldiers, this military presence is tasked to protect French residents in Chad and to provide logistical and intelligence support to the Chadian armed forces as well as medical support to the local population (cf. MoD 2010). Military cooperation however did not imply that Paris would always support the Chadian government. It has in fact allowed for several coups in the past, and its assistance can thus not be taken for granted (cf. ICG 2006b: 17). When it comes to the current president Déby, however, *Epervier's* support has several times proven critical to his regime's survival (ICG 2006b: 19; Handy 2007: 8-9; Marchal 2009: (1); Berg 2009: 67; Helly 2009: 343). In April 2006, just one year before France proposed EUFOR Tchad/RCA, *Epervier* had thus helped Déby repel a rebel incursion into the Chadian capital (cf. ICG 2008a: 17-18; The Economist 2008b; Charbonneau 2010: 223). Given this history, it is easy to imagine that a French initiative for an EU operation in Chad would raise eyebrows in other capitals.

## **B. PUTTING EUFOR TCHAD/RCA ON THE ESDP AGENDA**

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It was on 21 May 2007 that EU foreign ministries received notice from Paris which suggested an ESDP military intervention in the Darfur region (cf. Mattelaer 2008: 10; Helly 2009: 340). A few days before, on 16 May 2007, Nicolas Sarkozy had been inaugurated as France's new centre-right president. Two days later, Sarkozy appointed the centre-left politician and humanitarian activist Bernard Kouchner his foreign minister. The very next day Kouchner called a meeting with 'Urgence Darfour' and other NGOs engaged in advocacy over Darfur, and two days later he sent a cable to the other EU foreign ministries which included suggestions to establish militarily secured humanitarian corridors from Chad into Darfur (cf. Marchal 2009: (3); Le Figaro 2007; Berg 2009: 65; Mattelaer 2008: 14). Visiting Sudan two weeks later, however, Kouchner learned that the Sudanese government was adamant in its refusal to accept European military in Darfur – and that humanitarian organizations on the ground questioned the wisdom of such an approach as humanitarian access was not the problem in Darfur (Interviews with CGS and MS officials; Marchal 2009: (3)). Rather, any militarized humanitarian intervention in Darfur proper threatened to provide Sudan with a pretext to block the UN's hopes of taking over the AMIS operation (Interview with CGS official; Helly 2009: 340). Thus thwarted in his original plans, Kouchner decided to focus on protecting Darfurian refugees across the border in Chad (Interview with FRA official).

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The reaction that Paris received from other EU capitals upon its proposal for military intervention in eastern Chad was decidedly unenthusiastic. As many officials from all sides underlined, French diplomats struggled enormously to overcome suspicions regarding unsavoury French motives, disbelief into the alleged links between Chad and Darfur, and indifference (Interviews with MS and CGS officials). Asked what he thought were the circumstances that led France to propose the operation, a Dutch official summed up the feeling in Brussels by saying 'France wanted the operation, so they invented a context in which for it to take place, the context of the "Darfur region"' (Interview). The first response to the French initiative thus consisted in many critical questions. Since the French administration was still sorting itself out, such resistance by procrastination helped the German EU Council presidency to keep the operation more or less off the official ESDP agenda until the presidency changeover to Portugal in July 2007 (cf. Mattelaer 2008: 14; Berg 2009: 65).

The French government however kept pushing for its idea. Kouchner, upon taking office, had almost immediately called for a high-level international conference on Darfur. It took place one month later, 25-26 June 2007. What helped the French government push the issue was that the US administration was also under significant domestic pressure from advocacy groups to do something about Darfur (having labelled the conflict a 'genocide' early on), but quite unwilling to consider serious punitive measures (cf. Hamilton and Hazlett 2007). Therefore, in the words of one (European) official, they 'were going to embrace whoever would come through the door and say, we'll do something. [...] So they immediately said, "yes, Ms Rice will attend the conference in Paris"' (Interview with MS official). One EU official even claimed that the US State Department considered participating in the planned operation, only to be stopped by 'Ayatollahs in the Pentagon' who opposed US participation in EU military operations on grounds of principle (Interview with CGS official). Although the conference addressed Darfur more widely, France also used it to keep eastern Chad on the agenda, and Paris succeeded, on 23 July 2007, in having the Council of the EU give planning authority to the Council General Secretariat (CGS) for an operation (cf. Berg 2009: 65; Mattelaer 2008: 14). This begs the question what induced the French government to press so hard for an ESDP operation in Chad.

As the eponymous title of an essay by a French expert on the region points out, understanding French policy toward Chad and Sudan is a difficult task (Marchal 2009). French officials interviewed for this study insisted on the importance of the humanitarian dimension coupled with France's singular situational awareness due to its close ties with, and presence in Chad (Interviews). Most interviewees also stressed the personal interest the new foreign minister took in the dossier (similarly, Mattelaer 2008: 10; Marchal 2009: (2)). With Kouchner's background as a humanitarian activist – e.g. co-founding Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) as well as

advocating a 'right to interfere' ('droit d'ingérence') – and French public opinion concerned about Darfur, humanitarian impetus met French domestic political expediency. Moreover, the situation in Darfur had figured prominently in the preceding election campaign (Interviews with MS officials; Marchal 2009: (2); Berg 2009: 64-5).

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### INTERVENING IN CHAD – AN OLD UN DEMAND?

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In light of this French domestic political constellation, the official reasoning of a humanitarian impulse is certainly not implausible. EU official discourse as well as a good number of interviewees further bolstered this case by claiming or implying that the United Nations had also pushed for this intervention in eastern Chad (Interviews with CGS and FRA officials; Council of the EU 2007b: para. 1; Solana 2009; Mattelaer 2008: 8-9). Underpinning this logic, the EU operation was characterized as a 'bridging operation' for the UN, and Javier Solana described it as an exclusively humanitarian operation deployed '[a]t the request of the UN Security Council' (Council of the EU 2007b: art. 1; Solana 2009). Yet this is putting the cart before the horse. Whereas some UN officials had indeed had suggested an international force in Chad as early as May 2006 (cf. Hancock 2006), the UN Secretariat was rather reluctant. After a technical assessment mission, the UN's report contended that '[t]he conditions for an effective United Nations peacekeeping operation do not, therefore, seem to be in place' (UNSG 2006a: para. 84). The UN Secretariat feared that, in the absence of a credible political process, there was no exit strategy (cf. UNSG 2006a: para. 84).

The UN Secretariat's reluctance does not only show in a series of reports that underlined the risks and limited utility of such a peacekeeping operation (UNSG 2007b: para. 89-91; 2008e: para. 52). Several analysts also asserted that it was in fact the French government that had repeatedly pushed the UN Secretariat to explore the possibilities of a peace support operation in Chad (Marchal 2009: (3); Berg 2009: 63-4; 74; Gowan 2008: 44; Helly 2009: 344; Charbonneau 2010: 224). This interpretation is supported by the fact that, according to the minutes of the UNSC meeting in which resolution 1706 – which first tasked the UNSG to explore a potential presence in Chad – was adopted, France was the only Security Council member to invoke the situation in Chad and RCA (cf. UNSC 2006). It is further corroborated by the fact that several French officials privately underlined that the idea for such an operation had been circulating in Paris for some time (Interviews with FRA officials). One of them declared that France had already in June 2006, i.e. before the respective UN reports, presented the idea for such an operation in the EU's Political and Security Council, but had been turned down due to other member states' suspicions of a 'hidden agenda' (Interview). In view of the above, the

suggestion by French and EU officials that the UN Secretariat was (critical) among those pushing for an international peace support operation in eastern Chad carries little plausibility. Since the decisive impetus came from Paris, we cannot deduce a humanitarian agenda from UN ownership but instead have to evaluate the motives that the French government had in taking this initiative.

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### THE DEBATE WITHIN THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT

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When it comes to agenda-setting within the French government, EUFOR Tchad/RCA has usually been described as the result of a personal initiative of Bernard Kouchner, if against the backdrop of longer-standing French interests (Mattelaer 2008: 10; Marchal 2009: (3); Dijkstra 2011: 192). This was the reasoning most of the interviewed French officials privately stressed, too (Interviews). Yet these interviews also revealed fissures within the French government. The speed by which Kouchner went into action on Darfur surprised everyone, including the French Ministry of Defence (MoD), which at first hesitated (Interviews with CGS and FRA officials; cf. *Le Figaro* 2007). This was partly due to the fact that Kouchner's original idea had been to use Chad as a basis for humanitarian corridors into Darfur, an idea that military experts considered hardly feasible and very dangerous (Interviews with CGS and MS officials; cf. Mattelaer 2008: 14; Marchal 2009: (3)). Moreover, the military felt overstretched, and the MoD somewhat miffed at having been ignored in the decision-making process (Interviews with FRA officials; *Le Figaro* 2007). As one official involved put it, 'the cabinet and political structure in the MoD were simply sidelined' (Interview with MoD official).

Yet the MoD was not the only one hesitating. Even the Elysée, which had supposedly 'fixed Darfur as a priority for Kouchner' (cf. *Le Figaro* 2007), was cautious. After all, Nicolas Sarkozy had campaigned on the promise of a 'break' with the past, including with respect to French politics on Africa (cf. Holm 2009: 18-26; Prunier 2008; Gowan 2008; McDougall 2007; see also Sarkozy 2008). In particular, Sarkozy had declared in 2006, on tour in Africa, that 'we have to free ourselves from the networks of another time', and his state secretary responsible for cooperation and Francophonie, Jean-Marie Bockel, further specified his intentions with respect to the secretive networks of political and economic influence embodied in the term 'Françafrique' by asserting 'I want to sign the death certificate of Francafrigue'<sup>39</sup> (cf. Beuret 2008; Boisbouvier 2008). Finally, Sarkozy had also specifically propounded military disengagement from Africa in his election campaign (Gowan 2008: 44;

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<sup>39</sup> The translation (as well as subsequent ones) is provided by the author to his best ability.

Boisbouvier 2008; Beuret 2008). His credibility was thus potentially at stake with an operation that might, intentionally or otherwise, bolster an African president that in many ways embodied the bad old ways (cf. *Le Monde* 2008d; Gowan 2008: 43-44).

The hesitation of significant parts of the French government over an ESDP operation in eastern Chad suggests that it was indeed Kouchner's personal initiative and thus humanitarian concerns and/or their echo in the French media that stood at its inception. However, this explanation was viewed with suspicion in many EU capitals. While interviewed officials accepted that Kouchner's personal interest had played an important role, almost all of them suspected that Paris (also) had ulterior motives. Most noted among those alleged intentions was Paris' desire to stabilize a critical client in Africa, variously linked to the suspicion that Paris wished to reduce the costs of regional stabilization by multilateralizing France's bilateral engagement, to foster the advancement of military ESDP, or to reinforce the latter's ties to African scenarios (Interviews with MS and CGS officials; see also Mattelaer 2008: 15; 24; Marchal 2009; Gowan 2008: 44; *The Economist* 2008a). These widespread misgivings beg the question how plausible the 'neo-colonial' motive is.

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#### FRENCH MOTIVES: STABILIZING DÉBY?

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Many EU capitals feared that the operation might primarily serve to underpin an unsavoury autocratic French client. To counter this impression, the French government kept stressing the link to Darfur as the reason for the intervention. At a press conference for the EU-Africa summit in December 2007, President Sarkozy thus defended the operation on the grounds that 'Darfur here, Chad there [...] It's the same region. It's the same victims. It's the same people who pass from one country to the other. Explain to me the implausible logic which would consist in saying, yes, we need the hybrid force in Sudan, in Darfur, and not the European force. It's the same people. We have the right to be coherent, after all that's not forbidden. [...] But to say: We have to put into Darfur and not into Chad, that's incoherent' (Sarkozy 2007). Simultaneously, the French president conceded that engagement with Chad helped the regime in place, but argued that this also benefited the local population: 'It is true that operation Epervier, in an indirect fashion, helps Chad. This is perfectly true. I would be a hypocrite to deny it, so I will not deny it. At the same time, is it our role to contribute to the destabilisation of a state in a region where there is really no need for destabilisation because, mind you, on the other side there is Darfur, so see? [...] So we also let them collapse. Like that, we have Darfur east of the border; let's make a new Darfur in the West! Who will suffer first? It's the inhabitants of these villages' (Sarkozy 2007).

Other French politicians stressed Chad's strategic importance. A parliamentary report thus argued that France had 'a strategic interest in the stability of Chad

situated at the heart of the arc of crisis, defined by the white book on defence and national security, which stretches from Mauritania to Pakistan. It is also situated at the heart of another zone of crisis: sub-Saharan Africa and, especially, at the borders of Niger and the Sahel zone where Islamist organizations close to Al-Qaida are installing themselves' (Sénat français 2009). The report further stressed the stability that president Déby represented, and even implied that he stood for democratic legitimacy. The ambiguity of Paris' stance in weighing stability against local accountability became even clearer when Bernard Kouchner justified French support to Déby against a rebel attack in February 2008 by stating that 'we have simply chosen to support a legitimate and democratically elected president' (AFP 2008c).

In private conversations, some French officials also explained that the government's fears for regional stability played a role in bringing about EUFOR (Interviews with FRA officials; cf. Vincent 2008). Alexander Mattelaer thus quotes a French diplomat as stating '[w]hat we want in Chad is stability. The rebels aren't any better than Déby, we simply wish to avoid a situation of continuous warfare affecting the broader region' (Mattelaer 2008: 15). French officials also echoed Déby's claim that the problem was primarily the Sudanese government. Asked about the circumstances leading France to propose the mission, one French officer argued that 'Sudan is a rogue state. So the international community has a role in this region to avoid that this country becomes a source of radicalization and terrorism. Déby has always said he was the last barrier to the Islamization of Africa. And he is right. And we have to take care of that. And that is why he is very free in his actions – because all the other African countries support him, because they are all afraid of that' (Interview). Other French officials however denied that this motive played any important role, arguing not implausibly that France could have helped Déby more easily on a bilateral basis, and that the push to involve partners rather served to demonstrate that the government was 'doing something' in the face of the crisis in Darfur (Interviews).

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## THE REST OF THE UNION

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Most EU governments were anything but eager upon being confronted with French suggestions for an operation in eastern Chad. Their lack of enthusiasm was connected to two main themes that interlinked with each other: apprehensions regarding French special interests and lack of interest in involving themselves into a conflict that they had hitherto had little knowledge of. British diplomats in particular suspected that the operation was to serve 'to demonstrate that ESDP is alive' (Interview with UK officials). This suspicion was mixed with, and partly due to, a lack of conviction regarding the objectives of the proposed operation: 'it's not gonna

help solve the problem in Sudan, and what's the strategic gain? It's like sticking a plaster to make it stop bleeding for a bit until the plaster falls off, but you haven't cured anything' (Interview with UK official). Moreover, they resented the distraction from other operational theatres that they considered far more important: 'actually EUFOR did not achieve a fundamental change in the security situation, and meanwhile it distracted forces from UNAMID, and from Afghanistan as well, so I mean, helicopters that went to Chad didn't go to Afghanistan or Iraq, so you got to ask yourself questions about what your strategic priorities are. [...] If you have other theatres which are obviously critical, it's not obviously the best time to create a new ad hoc operation that does not even solve its own problems' (Interview with UK official).

The idea's reception was similar in Berlin, albeit based on a slightly different fear. The German government had two main concerns, which again were linked: those handling Africa issues were mainly afraid to be pulled into supporting an unsavoury regime whereas those dealing with security policy (a community quite apart from the first in Germany) were mainly afraid to repeat the experience of EUFOR RD Congo, an ESDP military operation in 2006 where France had managed to push Germany into a lead role (Interviews with GER, FRA and CGS officials; for Germany's role in EUFOR RDC, see e.g. Schmidt 2006). Even in the case of EUFOR RDC, where the mandate had been quite appealing in terms of domestic political opportunities and risks – temporary support to the UN in a pivotal step towards putting one of the world's basket cases on course to democracy, but without responsibility for the more troublesome tasks and regions – the German government had experienced significant domestic headwind (cf. Schmidt 2006). The main domestic counterargument had been that this was none of Germany's business as there were hardly any German interests involved. Given the feeling, in the case of Chad, that there were good arguments against the operation on its own merits, doing another such operation just to please France seemed a hard sell (cf. Tull 2008; Ward 2008; Tkalec 2008).

In the idea's early days, other EU capitals were similarly cautious. Lack of knowledge on the Chadian situation mixed with concerns about French special interests and colonial baggage. The Economist likely summed up a majority view in Western foreign policy circles when it opined that 'Chad is one of Africa's poorest and least stable countries and Mr Déby one of the continent's worst presidents' (The Economist 2008b). There was hence significant anxiety over the scale and length of the EU engagement that would be required, as well as the potential consequences (Interview with FRA officials). How would the operation influence dynamics in Darfur? Would creating 'safe zones' across the border perhaps even abet ethnic cleansing, as it did in Bosnia? What consequences would such an operation have on Khartoum's position with respect to the envisaged changeover from AMIS to the

hybrid UNAMID operation? And how would it influence the willingness of Darfurian rebels to join the halting political process? With limited knowledge on regional dynamics and no convincing strategic objectives for the proposed operation, EU governments were hesitant to commit to military intervention. In hindsight, French officials self-consciously blamed these ambiguities partly on the 'quite French approach' of announcing the need to do something and of starting to consider the details only subsequently – an attitude that, given France's past role in the region, was bound to create confusion if not suspicion (Interview with FRA officials).

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### MOTIVES FOR CONSENSUS

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Given member states' widespread reservations, why did the European Union eventually agree to collectively intervene in eastern Chad? Two general motives stand out: the desire to be perceived to be doing something for Darfur, even if at the conflict's periphery, and the unwillingness of any government to spoil the new French administration's declared policy objectives (Interviews with MS officials; see also Mattelaer 2008: 15-6; Berg 2009: 67-70). The latter was probably more important in the early days of the operation's planning, and for those merely 'tolerating' rather than actively supporting the operation, in particular Germany and the UK (Interviews with UK and GER officials). However, the first element came to gain increasing purchase with some EU governments because they came to perceive an opportunity to demonstrate that ESDP was about peace-keeping and supporting the UN and thus very much in line with the foreign policy traditions of the 'formerly neutral' countries – Ireland, Austria, Sweden and Finland –, all of which ended up contributing quite meaningfully (Interviews with CGS officials; Mattelaer 2008: 15-6).

For a number of EU governments, it was frustration over the EU's inability to meaningfully contribute to addressing the conflict in Darfur proper that led them to consider helping outside Darfur's borders. The previous EU support had involved diplomacy in various settings, the training of African Union police (AMIS) in Darfur by an ESDP support mission, and the support of the military part of AMIS in terms of financing and logistics. It is testimony to the political attraction that Darfur had for Western policy-makers that the EU and NATO actually came to fight over who would provide support to AMIS (Interview with MS official). With AMIS visibly failing, however, and Sudan largely refusing European capabilities for the 'hybrid' AU-UN operation (UNAMID) supposed to replace it, there was little left to contribute in terms of security. Hence there was a certain readiness in some EU capitals to do something in neighbouring Chad, especially since there was some hope that UNAMID would profit from a stabilizing presence across the border.

Yet probably the most important reason for agreeing to EUFOR Tchad/RCA was that no government wanted to take it upon itself to stop it. This was partly based on a *quid pro quo* attitude whereby EU governments avoid outright opposition to each others' pet projects wherever possible, in the expectation of reciprocity. As one EU official put it, 'with ESDP operations, I have rarely seen member states stand in the way as long as it does not affect them' (Interview with CGS official). One official even characterized this operation as a 'dower' to the new French administration (Interview with MS official). The main arguments against this operation were that it would be tokenistic and potentially harmful in the regional context and with respect to the EU's standing as an independent crisis manager. Yet these risks seemed insufficiently compelling to warrant public opposition, particularly once a number of safeguards regarding the EU's impartiality had been agreed. With neither London nor Berlin willing to fight with Paris over an issue that they considered secondary, the French government was able to secure the EU's consent to the operation.

### C. PREPARING EUFOR TCHAD/RCA

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Securing consensus, i.e. avoiding any EU government's veto against EUFOR Tchad/RCA, was only part of what the French government wanted to achieve. It was also keen to initiate a 'truly European' operation, notably one where French forces would make up a maximum of one third of the force's overall size (Interview with FRA official). There were three major arguments for Paris to limit its national contributions: first, the operation's legitimacy would partly hinge on its 'European nature' – as opposed to French domination – since France was not only a former colonial power, but also still perceived to be taking sides in inner-Chadian conflicts. A 'Franco-French' force would therefore have faced great difficulties in claiming impartiality and convincing third parties of its humanitarian motives. A European force, by contrast, would be much more acceptable. As one commentator noted, 'no one is fighting in Chad to keep the Irish out' (cf. Gowan 2008: 44). Secondly, it was obvious from the start that the operation would be anything but cheap. Since the greatest part of the costs for European operations tend to stick to the most important troop contributors (given the rule of 'costs lie where they fall'), there was an obvious incentive to try to get other countries to contribute as much as possible. The alleged French motive of multilateralizing its bilateral stabilization assistance would similarly have increased the appeal of substantial involvement on the part of other European nations (cf. Dijkstra 2011: 197). Last but not least, mounting a truly multi-national operation was a way to strengthen ESDP by underlining its relevance and capacity. Although this motive was not pivotal at the operation's inception, it subsequently became more important as EUFOR's repercussions on ESDP were considered more closely.

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These three obvious motives, however, made other EU governments reluctant to contribute massively, if for different reasons. The case is clearest with costs, which were treated like a zero-sum game: there is little incentive for any government to give more than absolutely necessary lest it wants to (be seen to) contribute. Since there was a widespread perception that France had imposed this operation on many other member states, the latter already saw it as a concession to agree to it and did not want to pay on top of that. Moreover, there was some suspicion that the military infrastructure that would need to be created for a European force to be effective (airstrips, hangars, roads, barracks, deep boreholes etc., whose provision in a region without transport infrastructure were key to driving up costs) would mainly benefit France in the longer run as the country most interested, knowledgeable and influential in Chad (Interviews with GER and UK officials; Mattelaer 2008: 16; see also Ayangafac 2009: 8-9; Dijkstra 2011: 197). It thus seemed only fair to France's EU partners to impose a large part of the costs on the suspected main beneficiary.

The second motive, providing legitimacy, was similarly unattractive to other EU governments. Before agreeing to participation, France's partners therefore insisted on a mandate that ensured the operation's impartiality and limitation to a one-year 'bridging operation' (cf. Mattelaer 2008: 15; Berg 2009: 66; Dijkstra 2011: 201). Stressing impartiality was seen as a *sine qua non* in order not to have the EU act or appear as a stooge for French interests. While this concern reflected the EU's premeditation not to become a party in inner-Chadian conflicts, it also served to signal its moral claim to the public at home. As one official from a 'post-neutral' country put it to the author, 'we were then particularly difficult in the decision-making, but only to hedge our bets' in terms of pre-empting a potential domestic backlash because 'had something gone wrong with the operation, both ministers [foreign and defence, BP] would probably have had to go' (Interview).

Apart from safeguarding the operation's impartiality, France's EU partners also insisted on limiting its duration from the start. The mission was therefore framed as a 'bridging operation' that would be handed over to the United Nations after one year. This served to limit risks and costs for EU governments by preventing a potentially open-ended engagement, but also to signal the operation's impartiality by presenting it as a measure on behalf of, and in line with the peace-keeping traditions of the UN. Déby had earlier refused a UN force, supposedly out of fear that a UN military deployment would bring political conditionality and intrusive obligations with it as it had in Congo (cf. UNSG 2007b: para. 33; ICG 2008a: 32). Some positive influence on Chadian politics was precisely what many EU capitals likely privately hoped for, of course, but did not want to take responsibility for themselves.

The third motive for 'Europeanizing' the emergent force, strengthening ESDP, met a more mixed reception. Whereas it irked British officials, it tempted some smaller EU member states, particularly those not in NATO. The operation promised to allow them to gain visibility in ESDP and to get some experience with 'serious' military operations, but above all it helped them to present ESDP as a means for humanitarian ends and for supporting the UN, which was appreciated domestically (Interviews with MS and CGS officials; see also Mattelaer 2008: 32). This was particularly important for the Irish government, which in the context of the upcoming referendum on the Treaty of Lisbon in June 2008 reportedly wanted 'to show the Irish that ESDP is not a European army, but that it acts to support the UN and humanitarian purposes' (Interview with FRA official). It hoped to thereby drive home the point that ESDP was an extension of, rather than a break with, the cherished Irish tradition of neutrality and support to the UN. The Irish Chief of Defence accordingly captioned an advocacy newspaper article for this operation 'Irish soldiers deploying to Chad will continue our proud tradition', underlining the operation had 'a clear UN mandate' and addressed 'one of the world's most acute humanitarian crises' (Earley 2008).

It would be cynical, however, to describe the Irish position as a result merely of domestic political calculation. Under the condition of EUFOR's impartiality, a number of EU governments also came to see opportunities for contributing to refugees' well-being. This desire was a function of the humanitarian concerns over Darfur that were present not just in France, but also in most other EU member states. In an opinion piece for an Austrian newspaper, Javier Solana built on these concerns, entitling his advocacy for the operation '[Let us] not acquiesce into suffering without taking action' (Solana 2008). Whereas societal expectations that EU governments help 'save Darfur' should not be overstated, the operation provided them with an opportunity to demonstrate their willingness to do something about Africa's most mediated conflict. Asked why many of the smaller EU countries eventually participated in the operation, one EU official emphasized that 'it needs to be sold domestically. And with all the refugee pictures on TV, it was easy to sell' (Interview with CGS official). Some EU governments saw an opportunity for promoting a humanitarian agenda even if they had residual doubts about French motives. Alexander Mattelaer thus quotes a representative from neutral country arguing: '[w]e know the French have certain national interests in Chad and that they are in it with a somewhat different agenda. But without the French nothing would happen at all. By and large, we believe the French are honest about this and trying to do the right thing' (Mattelaer 2008: 15-6). French officials similarly underlined that, after an EU process in which all planning documents had to be agreed at 27, 'it was not possible anymore to accuse France of neo-colonialism' (Interview with FRA officials). They also stressed that there was a contradiction between EU partners'

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professed wish to distance EUFOR Tchad/RCA from French national policy and their lack of readiness to send troops and expect France to fill up the gaps, thereby undermining the very distance they wished to create (Interview with FRA officials).

Yet beyond such humanitarian motives, contributing countries also had idiosyncratic reasons for participating. Sweden was reportedly very interested in using the so-called Nordic Battle Group, an ESDP crisis management reaction force led by Sweden that was scheduled to be on stand-by during the first half of 2008 (Interviews with MS officials; cf. Dijkstra 2011: 204-5). As Stockholm had significantly invested into the Nordic Battle Group, it felt under pressure to demonstrate the instrument's utility to its ministry of finance, parliament and public opinion (Interview with MS official; see also Berg 2009: 69-70). As one official reminisced, 'Sweden asked France whether there was a possible intervention scenario for the battle group as that would be important for public opinion and the parliament, which had started asking questions about the costs of having the obligation of having these units on alert. France told Sweden they had a solution: namely Chad' (Interview with FRA official). While this 'solution' eventually foundered on a number of technical and political problems, Sweden still participated with around 200 soldiers at the beginning of the operation. A Swedish official by contrast argued that Stockholm had early on discarded the battle group option, but that France and the Council Secretariat had misinterpreted Swedish insistence on a proper crisis management concept as evidence of Stockholm's eagerness to participate at a more important scale (Interview with SWE official; cf. Dijkstra 2011: 204-5).

When it came to Austria, its decision to participate was partly informed by strategic considerations of getting serious military experience at a discount. However, the Austrian government reportedly also wanted to show off its credentials as a security provider at a time when it geared up for a UN Security Council seat from 2009 onwards – and when it contributed exactly one staff officer to ISAF in Afghanistan (Interview with MS official). Some officials voiced suspicion that this motive may have played a role for other governments, too: 'for some countries, it is also about not dealing with the hard things by keeping themselves busy with such operations' (Interview with UK official). Poland, the remaining big contributor, was reportedly particularly interested in burnishing its credentials as a big EU member state and important player in the ESDP (Interview with POL official; see also Berg 2009: 68).

Frequently, however, motives were mixed, as in the case of the Netherlands. As a Dutch official put it, 'we did not want the operation, but at some point the damage of not contributing would have been greater than the costs of doing so – plus, the Marine Corps had not had a mission since Iraq. [...] The purpose of military these days are operations. Use it or lose it. This is why Afghanistan is now an existential fight for NATO' (Interview). Another added that, while the Dutch government at

large had been unconvinced, the labour party and development minister Bert Koenders in particular were eager to show engagement in Africa (Interview; cf. Tweede Kamer 2008: 69-4831). An opposition leader in parliament even suggested ‘that the support of the PvdA [labour party, BP] for the mission in Uruzghan is connected to the deployment of Dutch troops in Africa’, thereby insinuating that Dutch participation in Chad helped the labour party underline its humanitarian credentials in the context of increasing internal criticism of the party’s support for the Dutch contribution to ISAF in Afghanistan (Tweede Kamer 2008: 69-4823).

In short, EU governments had a range of idiosyncratic motives for contributing to EUFOR Tchad/RCA. On the one hand, they had limited interest in providing material support to what they suspected might continue France’s traditional Africa policy. On the other hand, they hoped that their participation might help to provide for an impartial intervention – with some added benefits such as demonstrating active support for international security, humanitarian purposes and the UN as well as gaining military experience, and limited risks and costs as France effectively underwrote the endeavour. Moreover, once it had become clear that no one would veto the initiative, most EU governments were keen to prevent the damage to ESDP that might have resulted from an operation publicly announced but cancelled for lack of capabilities. The subsequent section will detail how these conflicting interests played out in the force generation process.

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### THE FORCE-GENERATION PROCESS

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The well-documented difficulties of the force generation process could be interpreted as a sign of the EU’s inability or unwillingness to put capabilities where its mouth is (cf. Mattelaer 2008: 24; Helly 2009: 341; Berg 2009: 70; The Economist 2008a). After all, it took the EU until March 2008 to declare EUFOR’s Initial Operating Capability whereas the humanitarian emergency had been identified in May 2007. However, such a verdict would not be entirely fair: the first months were spent on questioning the wisdom of the operation rather than on how to generate the necessary forces – and it were the perceived shortfalls in the former that strained the latter.

After the Council had given the Secretariat planning authority on 23 July 2007, the latter produced a ‘crisis management concept’ – a strategic political and military assessment of the situation as well as the different EU instruments’ potential contribution – on which ‘military strategic options’ were based. The latter in turn formed the basis for the Joint Action, the operation’s legal basis which designates a headquarters (due mainly to British opposition, the EU does not have a standing headquarters), appoints an operation commander and establishes a financial framework regarding shared ‘common costs’ (cf. Mattelaer 2008: 12). In principle, it

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was thus only after the Joint Action's approval on 15 October that the commander could start planning and producing a 'concept of operations' on which specific military requests for the force generation process would be based.

With the troop generation process officially starting around October and taking until January 2008, several officials pointed out that, in comparative perspective, three months were actually not a very long period (Interviews with CGS and MS officials). Given that the most important shortfall concerned helicopters, they argued, this lead time should be compared to those within NATO which, frequently in vain, keeps requesting additional helicopters for Afghanistan – or with various UN operations, which often simply have to do without them. The UN successor operation to EUFOR in Chad, MINURCAT, was a case in point, as was the 'hybrid' UNAMID across the border in Darfur, where, one year into the operation, none of the 18 requested helicopters had been committed (Withington 2008). Officials thus blamed problem perception with the EU partly on differences in procedures compared to NATO or the UN: there, the planning is done by the respective Secretariats and subsequently publicly declared – at which point public attention wanes (Interview with CGS official). The EU, by contrast, would only approve the final step in the process, the operational plan, once the necessary assets were available, thereby inviting public scrutiny of a messy process.

It was on the day after the concept's approval at ambassadorial level, on 9 November, that the first official force generation conference took place (Mattelaer 2008: 14). The subsequent process has been described as a 'game of poker' (cf. Mattelaer 2008: 24). Negotiations were complicated by two factors: France's intense lobbying for the operation, which raised expectations that France would be the default provider of lacking capabilities, and the prior announcement of both Germany and the UK that they would not participate with 'boots on the ground' (cf. Mattelaer 2008: 24). The latter enhanced suspicions in other EU governments, as officials asked themselves whether the bigger powers knew some dirty little secret that kept France's main collaborator in the previous ESDP operation in Africa, Germany, from participating this time around. According to French officials, this counter-argument made it more difficult to get other governments to commit (Interview).

It did not take exceedingly long to generate the necessary troops though. The first conference reportedly saw France, Ireland, Sweden and Austria offer substantial contributions (Interview with CGS official). The only significant contributor that was still missing at this point was thus Poland, which committed at the second conference but had bilaterally told Paris before that it would be interested in participating (Interviews with CGS and FRA officials). Thus, the operation basically had enough troops after two force generation conferences. What remained missing

however were 'critical enablers', namely aircraft, helicopters, reconnaissance assets, and a field hospital (Interviews with CGS and MS officials). Not coincidentally, these are the capabilities that are expensive and generally in short supply since they are in high demand for practically all overseas operations. In the end, most of these capabilities were offered by France after the 5<sup>th</sup> and final force generation conference on 11 January 2008 (Interviews with MS and CGS officials; Mattelaer 2008: 24). Until then, the government in Paris had in vain attempted to convince other EU governments to provide enablers but, faced with the risk that the operation may actually fail for lack of a few helicopters, brought itself to provide them (Interviews with CGS and MS officials).

The debate on how to share costs was exemplary for the general predicament of the operation. France argued that it was unfair that those states that carried the main burden in terms of providing soldiers should also be made to provide the largest part of the financial costs. Germany and the UK on their part argued that their concession consisted in not standing in the operation's way despite their doubts, of allowing France to 'Europeanize' a national priority – and that they would not, in addition, also pay for the latter (Interview with MS official). Putting up 90% of the necessary logistics by its own estimate settled France with the largest part of the operation's cost as it failed to convince its EU partners to establish a high financial reference amount for the shared 'common costs' (Interviews with FRA officials).<sup>40</sup> Whereas the EU Military Staff had initially proposed to put these common costs at 420 million Euros, negotiations reduced this to 99,2 million, with the final count at 120 million (Mattelaer 2008: 18). This means that the costs to France as logistics framework nation will easily have been at the scale of several hundred million Euros (cf. WEU 2008: 1).

In the end, 23 out of 27 EU members states (all but Denmark, Estonia, Latvia and Malta) participated in the operation (CGS 2009b; Helly 2009: 340). However, only 14 sent soldiers to the field, and their composition was heavily skewed towards France, which provided around 55% of the operation's personnel, peaking at around 1.700 out of 3.300 soldiers (Interviews with FRA officials; see also IISS 2009: 294; Ehrhardt 2008: 1). The next biggest contributors were Poland and Ireland with around 400 personnel, followed by Austria, Sweden, and several smaller

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<sup>40</sup> 'Common costs' are shared according to a scale based on Gross National Income. All other costs are financed by member states according to the principle of 'costs lie where they fall'. According to a June 2007 estimate by the Council Secretariat, the percentage of commonly financed costs is generally less than 10% (CGS 2007).

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contributors with (far) fewer than 200 soldiers in the field.<sup>41</sup> Neither the UK nor Germany contributed any soldiers in the field. On the one hand, this still implied that the operation was the ‘most highly representative multinational’ ESDP operation in Africa so far (Nash 2008). This was true especially for the operation’s ‘face’ on the ground whose three battalions were dominated by Polish, French and Irish soldiers respectively. On the other hand, earlier ESDP African ventures were a low hurdle to take in terms of representativeness, and the operation nonetheless heavily dependent on France: of the critical helicopters, 9 out of 13 were French (Interviews with FRA and CGS officials; cf. Air & Cosmos 2008). And whereas both Ireland and Poland contributed 2 helicopters respectively, these were exclusively for the transport of their own troops (Interview with FRA official).<sup>42</sup> By implication, the operation’s ability to intervene in a situation, i.e. to fulfil its mission objective of contributing to creating a safe and secure environment in an immense region without transport infrastructure, was largely contingent on French capabilities.

The lock-in effect of having authorized the operation also tapped a new source of pressure for additional contributions. Appointing an Irish general as operational commander made him formally responsible for planning the operation as well as for vouching for its military integrity, i.e. its ability to achieve the operation’s objectives with the given capabilities. This put part of the burden for ensuring that the operation could take place on Ireland. Consequently, the Irish government came to send suppliant letters to its EU counterparts, arguing that the Union’s inability to raise a few thousand soldiers undermined its credibility in view of the EU ‘Headline Goal’ of having 60.000 soldiers ready for crisis management (Interview with MS official). This logic probably contributed to convincing a few member states to make some additional assets available – as indicated by a Dutch official when he argued that ‘at some point, the damage of not contributing would have been greater than the costs of doing so’ (Interview).

Yet as the above shows, it was the political wrangling over the operation’s expediency rather than a general lack of capabilities that impeded the force generation process. Contributions simply reflected the (intensity of) preferences

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<sup>41</sup> The approximations above are based on overviews previously put onto the Council website but meanwhile taken off, as well as data published in secondary literature (WEU 2008: 8; ICG 2008a: 32; IISS 2009: 294). The estimates above provide an average over the year and have been cross-checked in several interviews.

<sup>42</sup> Later into the operation, Russia was to provide four further helicopters under slightly embarrassing circumstances for the EU, but highly appreciated by the forces on the ground (Interview with FRA official; cf. Mattelaer 2008: 25; Marlowe 2009b).

that different EU governments had with respect to the operation – and most were unwilling to make a substantial contribution into an endeavour whose benefits seemed opaque and/or limited. Whereas French pressure had been sufficient for other capitals not to oppose the operation, it was insufficient to attract enough positive support. At the same time, once the French government had invested so much prestige, the opportunity costs for providing missing enablers became negative – and the French government finally obliged. All EU governments were aware that France carried the ultimate responsibility. As the International Crisis Group argued, '[i]f EUFOR Chad/RCA is a success, it will be a success for Europe. If it fails, more than anything else, it will be a French failure. The Elysée and the Quai d'Orsay know this. It is this lever that the member states of the EU must pull to get France to fulfil its commitment to changing its policy in Africa' (ICG 2008a: 34).

#### **D. IMPLEMENTING EUFOR TCHAD/RCA**

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Not least due to the insistence of France's EU partners, EUFOR Tchad/RCA was conceived as part of a broader international effort to tackle the humanitarian and security situation in the region. A UN operation, MINURCAT, was tasked by the UN Security Council to train and advise a Chadian gendarmerie force which would guarantee law and order within the camps, but under Chadian command and control (UNSC 2007b: art. 2). EUFOR in turn would protect Minurcat as well as the UN and NGO humanitarian efforts (funded substantially by the European Commission). Implementing such a concept was clearly challenging because it made all actors depend on each other: the UN needed the EU military force to be able to deploy its police trainers whereas the latter's efficiency depended on help on the policing side since a military force would be unable to tackle the main problem for the displaced, namely criminality. As one officer put it, '[e]verybody forgot and underestimated the dangers posed by banditry, and overestimated the dangers posed by the rebels' (Interview; see also Oberlé 2008).

The problems of these multiple interdependencies were manifold: with the main threat to civilians emanating from bandits rather than organized rebel attacks, EUFOR could only provide a certain deterrent, but hardly tackle the source's problem as it lacked the mandate (and trained personnel) to investigate crimes and arrest bandits – apart from missing a justice and correction service to whom it could potentially have turned them over (Interview with EUFOR member; cf. Oxfam 2008). The operation equally lacked the resources to tackle pervasive crime and impunity: 'had you wanted to put troops into every IDP camp, it would have sucked up more than what was available' (Interview with CGS official). The mandate of creating a 'safe and secure environment' was thus compromised by the lack of a sufficiently large and mobile contingent of troops to deter attacks (cf. Mattelaer 2008: 17). The

biggest issue EUFOR had to contend with, however, was the strategic ambiguity that arose as a result of France's 'double role' of protector of Déby and linchpin of an impartial European operation (cf. Mattelaer 2008: 9).

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### MAINTAINING IMPARTIALITY

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The operation's inception did not bode well. Just after EUFOR's formal launch on 28 January 2008, a rebel attack against the Chadian capital N'djamena took place. With the very first EUFOR troops holed up in their hotel upon arrival and the rebels in control of significant parts of the capital, the operation was put on hold and appeared to be in serious peril: if Déby was to fall to a movement with close ties to Khartoum, the host nation's consent would likely be retracted as the Sudanese government saw the European troops at its border as a direct threat (cf. Bernard and Nougayrède 2008a; Prunier 2008; Natsios 2008). If on the other hand France was to intervene forcefully, EUFOR could hardly have pleaded impartiality henceforth (Interview with FRA official). The French government thus had to tread carefully. It first declared that it would not intervene militarily, but nonetheless warned the rebels ominously that 'if France has to carry out its duties, it will' (cf. AFP 2008a; Bernard and Nougayrède 2008b). It also secured a Security Council presidential statement to this effect (UNSC 2008b).

Paris disputed allegations that French troops intervened directly in the conflict, claiming they only defended themselves at the airport to allow for evacuations to proceed (cf. Reuters 2008c; d'Ersu 2008; AFP 2008b). A few days later however, the French government admitted that this airport was also (and crucially) used by Chadian helicopters as well as for re-provisioning Chadian tanks with ammunition from Libya (cf. Le Monde 2008b; AFP 2008b; see also Bayart 2008; Prunier 2008). Moreover, in the days immediately following the repulse of the rebels and after a stopover by the French minister of defence, Déby suddenly announced his willingness to pardon six French nationals sentenced to an 8-year prison term for having attempted to abduct 103 children, raising suspicions of a *quid pro quo* (Reuters 2008a; Le Monde 2008c; Bayart 2008). When Déby, only one day later, publicly and 'solemnly' requested the EU to install itself as soon as possible to 'rescue Darfurians who are threatened in their existence', this obviously raised doubts about the EU's intentions and potential effects in the region (Thomson 2008).

Many observers assumed that the attack was explicitly targeted at keeping EUFOR Tchad/RCA from deploying (cf. Prunier 2008; Tubiana 2008: 54-56; Berg 2009: 72; Tull 2008: 2-3; Bernard and Nougayrède 2008a). Some also suggested that the rebels had received the necessary armoury and directions from Khartoum (Prunier 2008). Nicolas Sarkozy's equivalent of a chief of staff thus accused Khartoum of attempting to 'liquidate' the regime of Déby (AFP 2008d). Tensions were also

evident when a French soldier was killed one month later after having crossed the border into Sudan, reportedly accidentally (CGS 2008f; IISS 2008a: 2). Last but not least, even months later the operation reported that Sudanese helicopters had attacked a EUFOR patrol in Chad, destroying two vehicles (cf. UNSG 2008d: para. 14). All these incidents indicate that Khartoum perceived the EU operation as a threat. French officials however insisted that EUFOR was 'not a Déby-related operation', claiming that even forces under French national command did not intervene directly although they 'could stop the columns of the rebels in one hour' – as shown in 2006 (Interviews).

In contrast to Sudanese fears, EUFOR likely remained impartial indeed. As one official explained, there was 'no natural opposition' between the operation and the rebels because the latter had no problem with crossing EUFOR's area of operations when they went organized to N'djamena; the problem only started once they had been defeated, returned without their leaders or sufficient provisions and retaliated against the local population (Interview with CGS official). Similarly, the force commander argued that '[m]y mandate is very clear. From the moment where someone [misguided soldiers, rebels or bandits] exerts a military threat against the population, attacks NGOs, Minurcat, or my men, I have to act. As long as they pass on their way, I am not concerned' (cf. Gros-Verheyde 2008; Mattelaer 2008: 27). When the next major rebel attack occurred in June 2008, Déby reacted furiously to EUFOR's inaction, claiming it was part of an 'international conspiracy' to push Chad into civil war (Interview with CGS official; cf. Reuters 2008b; Helly 2009: 344; La Croix 2008). The rebel attack in June 2008 in fact presented an 'opportunity' for EUFOR to fight back since the rebels had stolen humanitarian workers' equipment and vehicles (cf. Le Monde 2008a; La Croix 2008). That EUFOR chose to limit its activities to inviting humanitarian workers into its camp suggests that support to Déby can hardly have been pivotal to its agenda.

Whereas the operation's behaviour was thus impartial, the evidence is more ambiguous when it comes to French intentions. In an interview after the end of the operation, the Irish commander ominously remarked that '[o]n three occasions, I had to make a very firm stand', revealing only that it was 'in the area of impartiality and interference' (Marlowe 2009b). Several interviewed officials also denoted that Paris attempted to interfere with the operation on Déby's behalf, e.g. by promising the latter that the operation would (not) be in certain areas at certain times (Interviews with MS officials). This was suggested by Roland Marchal too, who claimed that the operation's French force commander 'intended to behave as an European and was heavily criticized by the French Embassy in N'djamena to the extent that in September 2008 many observers thought that he would be recalled' (Marchal 2009: (3)). He was not, but this suggests that (parts of) the French

government tried to leverage the operation in favour of Déby – and at the same time that they did not succeed.

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### EUFOR'S EXIT

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EUFOR's mandate had explicitly foreseen for the operation to be a 'bridging operation' for the UN (Council of the EU 2007b: art. 1). Specifically, this meant that Minurcat was to grow a military arm once the EU operation would leave in order to replace it. This was what some EU governments had demanded in return for agreeing to the operation – and what the EU Council Secretariat had more or less promised (Interview with CGS official; cf. Berg 2009: 66; Dijkstra 2011: 201). In reality, however, it was anything but granted that the UN would take over – 'we were all big liars' as a CGS official put it (Interview). Another summarized the situation by stating that '[t]he United Nations spent all its time trying not to take over the operation' (quoted in Dijkstra 2011: 215). The UN Secretariat had good reasons: without a political mandate, the operation could hardly be expected to help bring about a sustainable solution to the humanitarian crisis. Yet Déby managed to keep a political mandate for Minurcat at bay – supposedly with the help of the French government (cf. Marchal 2009: (3); Berg 2009: 74; UNSC 2009: art. 6-7). As the Secretary-General wrote in a report to the Security Council, 'the mandates of MINURCAT and EUFOR limit the role of the two missions to addressing only the consequences and not the issues underlying the conflict in Chad' (UNSG 2008e: para. 52). The International Crisis Group concurred, arguing that 'the peacekeeping missions are only a dressing on a wound and do nothing to treat the illness' (ICG 2008a: 33). In other words, the international intervention was not designed to sustainably help the local population.

As a result of the reluctance of both Déby and the UN Secretariat, the handover did not go well. Continuity was only salvaged by 're-hatting' more than half of EUFOR to Minurcat, with EU forces initially making up 80% of Minurcat (Interviews with CGS officials; cf. Helly 2009: 345). Most of these were however eager to leave, and the crucial helicopters went home (Interview with CGS official). A number of officials involved in EUFOR poured scorn on the UN's inability to take effective control of a mission handed to it on a plate – with one of them even remarking sarcastically that the handover to the UN was 'like a de-colonization process: you know they will do the job less well' (Interview with EUFOR member). Yet fairness demands to point out that the UN never considered that operation viable and faced far greater political and resource constraints than the EU. Most notably it cannot cherry-pick the operations it might like to take on and, as the default institution, tends to be left with the more desperate cases that no one else wants to touch. What the handover gone awry instead showed was that the EU contended itself with starting to tackle a newly

discovered ‘hobby horse’ and left it to the UN to try to find a longer-term solution. EU governments thereby arguably showed that, collectively, their interest in the operation had primarily been to do something in response to media attention to Darfur, in the symbolic gesture rather than a responsibility for addressing the crisis in eastern Chad. This emphasis on avoiding blame is also suggested by Dijkstra’s conclusion that ‘[i]n Brussels, however, a critical Oxfam report (2008) on the lack of the UN deployment was well-received. One observer notes that diplomats were pleased that the European Union at least did not receive the blame’ (Dijkstra 2011: 211).

## **E. PROXIMATE DRIVERS BEHIND EUFOR TCHAD/RCA**

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EUFOR Tchad/RCA came about as the consequence of the initiative of one member state, France, whose newly elected government was eager to demonstrate its commitment to helping alleviate Darfurians’ plight. At the same time, this operation was in conspicuous alignment with a number of alleged French strategic interests, such as giving a new impetus to military ESDP and lending support to a regime France considered important for regional stability as well as its own influence in Africa. Although this gamut of motives induced other EU governments to provide less than enthusiastic support to EUFOR, as notably the difficult force generation process showed, they assented to the operation because no one wanted to be the one to say no to the new French administration. Moreover, some EU governments also saw potential benefits in the operation, from the ability to do something to alleviate human suffering and to demonstrate support to the UN to the possibility of fostering the development of ESDP, gaining valuable experience for their militaries, and stabilizing a potentially dangerous region. This mix of motives indicates that the range of drivers underpinning EUFOR Tchad/RCA mostly stemmed from the idiosyncratic national priorities of its member states rather than any shared logic. The subsequent paragraphs will discuss the most important of these in turn.

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### **TRADITIONAL FRENCH INTERESTS?**

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France’s sponsorship of the operation puts the motives of the French government at the centre of any analysis. Four of them stand out: the first two relate to external power, namely the desire to promote ESDP and/or to strengthen a post-colonial client; the other two to humanitarian motives and/or the domestic expectations that the government do something to help Darfur. With respect to the first alleged objective, it was especially British officials who harboured the suspicion that France mainly wanted this operation to ‘glorify ESDP and show the world that Europeans are serious’ (Interviews). Yet ‘glorifying ESDP’ is unlikely to have been a major motive behind the operation. The French MoD was initially reluctant regarding the

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Chad operation precisely because they 'were afraid that this could hinder, or have bad consequences for ESDP if there was an impression that France was forcing other member states to participate. It could be interpreted as a "retour en arrière" vis-à-vis EUFOR RDC or even Artemis' (Interview with FRA official). As the official underlined, the political structure in the ministry considered their objective to be 'pushing ESDP as such, on a permanent basis rather than a particular operation' (Interview). In other words, the French constituency particularly concerned about ESDP saw the operation as risky for the broader policy.

More generally, there is little evidence that the desire to promote ESDP informed Kouchner's initiative, or indeed that the new French president and foreign minister were committed to ESDP. True, France's simultaneous reintegration into NATO was presented as a means to strengthen ESDP by transcending Anglo-Saxon fears over French ulterior motives. It is however just as likely that this rationale was primarily propounded to ensure domestic assent to the new president's wish for closer transatlantic relations, i.e. to reassure French foreign policy elites steeped in Gaullism (see also Marlowe 2009a). Indeed, one official involved in EUFOR claimed outright that neither the French president nor his foreign minister believed in ESDP (Interview with FRA official). Yet, a French academic explained, ESDP was perceived in France as one of the successes of the EU, and after the failed referendum on the European constitution in France there was political will to show that the new slogan of an 'Europe des projets' worked (Interview). Another twist of this argument was given by an EU official who surmised that the 'purpose of the operation was to show the French political elite that, despite France's return to NATO, ESDP is still in the cards. It served to convince domestic foreign policy elites' (Interview with CGS official). Rather than showing the *world* that the EU was serious, it is thus more plausible that the French government coveted the symbolic value of an ESDP operation for domestic consumption.

Whereas it is unlikely that Paris primarily sought to promote the ESDP, the evidence is more ambiguous regarding second imputed, external power-related motive of stabilizing a French client. Although it was Kouchner's activism over Darfur that led to France's proposal, the operation was also in alignment with Paris' wish to prevent further destabilization in the region as well as its desire to spread the burden for underpinning this stability. France's historical role in Chad and the manifest concerns in Paris over regional stability thus likely explain why Kouchner was successful in convincing the traditional French security policy establishment to support his ideas (cf. Marchal 2009: (2)). Still, the operation was more likely intended as a means to palm off some French responsibilities rather than to strengthen French influence (cf. Marchal 2009: (3); Tubiana 2008: 53; Ayangafac 2009: 8-9; Gowan 2008: 44). Such an interest in sharing out responsibility for Chad is also suggested by France's earlier attempts to put eastern Chad onto the UN's

and/or EU's agenda, as well as by the government's quasi-simultaneous strategic review with its recommendation for reducing military engagement in inner Africa (cf. Commission du Livre Blanc 2008: 156-7).

Whereas it is likely that Chad's stability informed Paris' calculus, it is less clear that it sought to leverage the EU to (indirectly) support Déby. By pushing for a European operation, the French government invited European scrutiny into a region where it had previously enjoyed a quasi-monopoly on information. EUFOR's Irish commander thus 'nodded in agreement' when confronted with Marchal's analysis that the only positive result of the operation was that Europeans would 'no longer have the stereotype of the wicked Sudanese. Now they know we are dealing with bad guys on both sides of the border' (Marlowe 2009b). This result may have been unintended. The hypothesis that Paris set up EUFOR for neo-colonial purposes however implies that the French bureaucracy was so skilled as to have been capable of convincing all the other EU capitals into supporting an operation serving a narrow French agenda. Under these assumptions it is difficult to believe it would not have foreseen this in-built threat to such an agenda. Dismissing EUFOR Tchad/RCA as simply a post-modern form of implementing the old politics of 'Françafrique' thus seems too easy (for a similar conclusion, see Marchal 2009: Marchal Responds 1.; Charbonneau 2010; and Berg 2009: 67 conclude the opposite). Rather, the French government's inconsistency seems to have resulted from vacillation between its overall wish to 'break' with its Africa policy of the past and the exigencies of the moment, i.e. its habit and interest in keeping a close relationship with Déby.

In short, it is possible but not very plausible that EUFOR Tchad/RCA was a smokescreen behind which France conducted traditional power politics. Evidence for such an interpretation would be the long-standing support France has provided to Déby and the signs that France sought to nudge the operation towards accommodating the Chadian dictator. Yet this narrative would not only run against the public and private claims of French and EU officials. It is also contradicted by the crucial role Bernard Kouchner played in bringing it about. It was the 'newcomer' and humanitarian activist who set the agenda, partly against the wishes of the security policy establishment. A 'neo-colonial explanation' thus supposes that Kouchner had been duped, or had acquiesced into such an undertaking. Moreover, it supposes the same for the UN Security Council and other (participating) EU governments. The required cunning on the part of French diplomats again sits uneasily with the predictable scrutiny of Déby and the constraints on French bilateral action that the operation brought about. The inherent contradictions in the alleged strategic agenda behind EUFOR Tchad/RCA hence suggest that we look at the nexus between humanitarian concerns and domestic politics rather than French power politics.

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## THE DOMESTIC POLITICS OF HUMANITARIAN IMPETUS

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If France's strategic interests provided a facilitating backdrop to its initiative for intervening in eastern Chad, how about French officials' claim that the main impetus had come from the 'need to do something' in the face of a mediated crisis? At face value, explaining the French government's initiative by domestic expectations is plausible because the plight of Darfur had indeed figured prominently in the French presidential election campaign preceding the initiative. Well-known media personalities had highlighted this conflict, and, as several interviewees stressed, their advocacy was perceived by politicians as considerable pressure from public opinion (Interviews with academic observer and MS officials; see also Hamilton and Hazlett 2007; Gabrielsen 2009). By way of example, one interviewee pointed to Hollywood actor George Clooney who was seen to command a huge following in France. Addressing the UN Security Council, Clooney had argued that '[i]n many ways, it's unfair, but it is, nevertheless, true that this genocide will be on your watch. How you deal with it will be your legacy, your Rwanda, your Cambodia, your Auschwitz' (Clooney 2006; cf. Linton 2006; de Waal 2007a: 1043).

This type of rhetoric came to reverberate in the French political arena. Under (perceived) pressure from civil society during the campaign, the key contenders in the French presidential race undertook to help protect Darfurian refugees. All mainstream candidates thus publicly signed a pledge on 20 March 2007, i.e. one month before the first round of the elections, which read: 'I pledge: [...] In collaboration with the states concerned, to mandate the French forces garrisoned in Chad and the Central African Republic to effectively protect the refugees, displaced persons, and members of humanitarian organizations who operate in these countries [...] To use all influence to make possible a European action to protect the civilian population of Darfur, notably to put into place humanitarian corridors' (Urgence Darfour 2007a). Kouchner was among those present and expressed his passionate support. According to the event's host, 'Bernard Kouchner, overcome by emotion, exclaimed enthusiastically: "This evening, a fire has been lit in the plains. This evening, a trigger has clicked. This evening, Darfuri, is the beginning of victory."' (Urgence Darfour 2007b). The civil society network organizing the meeting summarized the spirit of the day by claiming that 'one felt that a new page of the history of French humanism was being written under our eyes' (Urgence Darfour 2007b).

The French presidential election campaign had thus created rather far-reaching expectations as to the efforts the incoming administration would undertake. Not only was the new president personally committed to the issue, his foreign minister-to-be had vocally promoted taking action in Darfur and his appointment, according to one observer, 'was marginally dictated by this single issue' (Marchal 2009: (2);

see also Le Figaro 2007). Moreover, as a former Socialist minister and adviser to Sarkozy's electoral rival Ségolène Royal, Kouchner had to justify joining a conservative administration, which implied an enhanced need to demonstrate that such a move would advance humanitarian and NGO agendas (cf. Berg 2009: 65). There were thus domestic political incentives for the Sarkozy administration to push for EUFOR Tchad/RCA.

Whereas the above considerations suggest that humanitarian concerns as well as their reverberation in French domestic politics may have played a role in the operation's inception, these two follow potentially different logics. Was it thus normative impetus or political opportunity that moved the French government? In the end, circumstantial evidence is insufficient for conclusive judgment. On the one hand, Kouchner's personal history clearly lends credence to his concern for humanitarian crises. On the other hand, Paris' readiness to shift attention from Darfur to Chad coupled with its unwillingness to push Déby to address the Chadian sources of this crisis throw doubt on the sincerity of French concern over human rights abuses in the region. The French government's insistence on a military operation that brought domestic visibility – but only temporary respite for the displaced rather than an attempt to address the underlying problems – suggest a preoccupation with domestic political gain. As Roland Marchal opined, '[t]o a large extent, Eufor was a public relations success for the French. The mission despite its cost (between 900 million-1 billion) did not face major casualties and offered to the European public the well appreciated pictures of European soldiers bringing peace and aid to destitute people' (Marchal 2009: (3)). A French official gave a similar reasoning, explaining that, with pictures of people suffering on TVs and Darfur high on the agenda, the idea to do nothing was not very comfortable for French politicians (Interview). That does not mean that humanitarian concerns did not play a role in triggering Paris' initiative. However, the latter were selective and embedded into a political setting where inaction on Darfur may have implied significant domestic opportunity costs – whereas action in eastern Chad delivered a visible proof of French alignment with a noble cause against a brutal dictator in Khartoum (but not N'djamena).

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## THE ROLE OF THE OTHER EU GOVERNMENTS

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France was decisive not only for bringing the operation onto the EU's agenda, but also for implementing it, as evidenced by the scale of French contributions. The contribution of the other EU governments consisted in tolerating this initiative and in providing sufficient support so that it was not simply a French operation painted blue. Whereas tolerating the French initiative was above all a consequence of the unwillingness of any government to stop Paris, the contributions followed a more

positive logic. Much civil society advocacy on Darfur had aimed at bringing in UN peacekeepers (cf. de Waal 2007a: 1043-45). Deploying troops in Chad thus represented a measurable if second-best result, particularly since it was touted as a measure of support for the UN presence in Darfur. Moreover, this context implied that 'it was very hard to say anything against that operation' (Interview with UK official).

The fact that, apart from France, it was particularly the 'neutral' countries with their tradition of support for UN peacekeeping which carried a disproportionate share of the contributions strengthens the case for humanitarian motives vis-à-vis any putative geopolitical agenda. After all, these countries hardly had an interest in supporting France's alleged strategic interests, but rather an international reputation of impartiality to defend. What led their governments to eventually contribute were reassurances about the operation's impartiality as well as their own interest in a humanitarian mission that reassured voters about their militaries' and the ESDP's purpose. With the potential exception of Poland, partners' objectives thus also suggest an emphasis on humanitarian concerns and/or domestic expectations. Yet distinguishing between the two is again difficult because they imply similar behaviour – national self-conceptions of doing good might directly inspire policy-makers or lead them to assume that living up to such images was good politics.

Both Irish and Swedish officials made credible arguments that humanitarian motives had been pivotal for them, though the latter also stressed that Sweden had participated in every single ESDP operation so far as an expression of its general interest in the policy (Interviews). Yet that humanitarian concerns were qualified for most EU governments is suggested by two factors: first, many of them limited their contributions out of domestic political convenience. This is particularly true for the German government's reluctance to participate, but also for the unwillingness of most countries to make expensive enablers available. Second, EUFOR's limited mandate suggests that the EU was less keen on taking responsibility than on showing that it was active and responsive to the domestic foreign policy concerns of the day.

Collectively, the EU thus created an occasion to congratulate itself on a humanitarian intervention while minimizing the risks attached to political responsibility, risks which consisted in getting caught in a long-term project whose demands in terms of resources would likely not be matched by domestic political support over the longer run. As notably Ireland's (and Finland's) commitment to staying on under MINURCAT's successor mission showed, this was not true for all governments. Yet collectively the Union managed that risk by pushing in an unwilling UN as an exit strategy. Javier Solana would summarize the operation's accomplishments in an editorial that underlined 4 points, namely that EUFOR 'demonstrated how the EU

has become a global provider of security and stability', 'proved itself a valuable partner for stability for the UN', 'affirmed the credibility of our military capacity' and has 'given further substance to [Europe's, BP] commitment in the joint EU-Africa Strategy' (Solana 2009). In other words, the operation had demonstrated EU governments' ability to count in matters crisis management.

## **F. CONCLUSION**

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What does EUFOR Tchad/RCA tell us about the strength of our four propositions regarding the drivers underlying ESDP operations? Regarding balancing behaviour, the operation arguably represents the most likely case among all ESDP operations: it constituted the most important display of EU hard power so far, it took place at French insistence, and it was conducted 'autonomously', i.e. without involving NATO's command structures and thereby the US. Yet there is nothing to indicate that the operation served to constrain the US in any way. Despite their critical stance, not even British diplomats suggested that this may have been a French motive. The US also did not express any reservations vis-à-vis this operation; at the time, the Congressional Research Service rather mentioned Congress' concern for the humanitarian situation in eastern Chad and noted that 'despite concerns regarding poor governance the Bush administration considers the Déby government an ally in the war on terror' (Ploch 2008: 6). This makes it unlikely that the US had any objections against the operation, but instead indicates that it likely welcomed it – whether due to shared interests in propping up Déby or shared concerns over the humanitarian situation at the border to Darfur (see also Prunier 2008; Charbonneau 2010: 225). The only, and rather limited way in which 'balancing' may have occurred resides in the fact that the EU managed to do a logistically challenging operation on its own, i.e. by relying on France – and that the enablers that went into Chad could not be used in Afghanistan, as British officials noted with regret. Concluding that it was therefore about 'balancing' the US however implies stretching that concept.

More generally, considerations of relative external power were remarkably limited. Whereas a case might be made that Paris proposed the operation for such reasons, the underlying rationale does not apply to other EU governments. The fact that EUFOR maintained its impartiality even in the face of an 'opportunity' to impose itself vis-à-vis the rebels demonstrates that, at least at the collective level, the EU was determined not to be drawn into taking sides. Moreover, the operation's self-limitations in terms of mandate, time and exit strategy made it unfit to change the balance of power on the ground. EUFOR was simply not designed to not impose its will on anyone save some bandits in eastern Chad, and thereby evinced a lack of strategic aspiration. Whereas one might surmise that regional stability in Northern Africa could have represented a shared objective for EU governments, it is difficult to

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see why those governments that contributed would have had a greater stake therein than those who did not – with the obvious exception of France. Finally, French sway over Chad would likely grant fellow EU governments greater influence than the likely alternatives, i.e. the US or China. However, there are no traces of such arguments being employed or having an impact, and they sit ill with the fact that Ireland and Austria rather than Britain and Germany would have embraced this logic.

As their overall reluctance showed, EU governments also did not see the operation as a convenient means to promote the EU or the ESDP – nor did the European institutions play an important role in bringing it about. With the benefit of hindsight, it is possible to conceive of EUFOR Tchad/RCA as one more step of raising the stakes for ESDP, in the service of the project itself rather than the particular operation. Yet the process leading up to the latter also showed the limits of such an explanation: the objective of strengthening ESDP hardly played a role at the operation's inception, actually argued against the latter from the French MoD's perspective, and could not convince EU governments to pledge significant capabilities, despite the questions that this raised about European capabilities. Finally, there is little to suggest that the motivation of those EU governments who joined the operation related to promoting European integration at home – though the Irish and perhaps the Swedish government admittedly sought to use it to justify past steps towards European integration.

This leaves us with two propositions, namely that EU governments acted out of ethical conviction or to respond to domestic expectations. To be sure, beyond France and Germany officials did not invoke domestic politics as a reason for intervening or otherwise even if they pointed to the importance of being able to justify any action domestically. This raises the possibility that normative concerns may provide a sufficient explanation of the operation. The fact that several EU governments apparently felt a certain 'responsibility to protect', and that others at least did not dare to openly oppose this logic, goes some way to explaining the operation's genesis. For some EU governments at least, it is plausible that the desire to help refugees was an important driver in its own right, albeit in a domestic political setting where such undertakings were likely to be viewed benevolently.

Yet these motives also have to be weighed against the results that EUFOR could reasonably be expected to bring about. Here, the operation's features suggest a preoccupation with minimizing risks that qualifies concern for refugees as the overwhelming motive behind the operation. The timing of the operation (4 years after the conflict escalated), its geographical flexibility (Chad rather than Darfur), and the unwillingness to address the structural causes of refugees' suffering (or at least not to arbitrarily limit the EU's responsibility for protecting them to one year)

cast some doubt on an explanation that would equate the main driver behind the operation with the EU's role conception as an 'ethical power' (cf. Toje 2008). This does not belie humanitarian motives: some governments likely grasped an opportunity to do something when it finally presented itself. Moreover, the EU can only decide by unanimity, and under these conditions the choice was between this operation or none whatsoever. Yet at the collective level the operation was informed by both the impulse to help and a reticence to truly commit.

The EU's conflicted stance regarding this operation shows that EU governments were torn between normative concerns (and the arising political opportunities) and the political risks resulting from engagement in a politically difficult region. It thereby highlights the fact that policy-makers depend on domestic political will in order to be able to act on ethical considerations (cf. Power 2002: 509). This (anticipated) domestic will varied across member states, and humanitarian motives thus prevailed or otherwise. Rather than being a direct cause, ethical considerations thus informed a calculation in which governments weighed them against other concerns, such as the risk to be perceived to act on a French agenda and/or to engage in useless symbolism, and reluctance to take responsibility for addressing another difficult conflict.

In sum, the motives for EUFOR Tchad/RCA were a mix of humanitarian concerns, perceived domestic political constraints and, less importantly, strategic considerations regarding Chad. Yet the outcome was an operation that did not decisively change the situation on the ground in terms of either relative power or humanitarian objectives. Due to the compromise that it represented, its mandate and implementation turned it into a gesture which was better suited to impress European audiences than to impact on relative power or to help refugees beyond the short term. On the one hand, this shows that the sum of national objectives can also be less than its parts, in contrast to the Union's aspirations. On the other hand, most interviewed officials saw their (national) position vindicated even with the benefit of hindsight, which suggests that most governments were happy enough with the operation's (non-)results and their role therein. This in turn brings us back to the overarching question guiding this study, namely the generic objectives EU governments pursued via ESDP operations. The subsequent, final chapters will address this question.

## **CHAPTER VIII: THE CASE STUDIES AND NATIONAL PREFERENCES**

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This chapter compares the preferences of the French, British and German governments across all four operations, investigates the objectives they pursued throughout all of them, and discusses in how far they fit into more general features of their foreign policies. It thereby attempts to synthesize the motivations of key individual governments with the results they were willing to settle for in order to allow for a first assessment of the putative drivers underlying ESDP action. In a second step, these aggregated governmental preferences will serve to help examining, in the subsequent conclusion, the extent to which the drivers behind these operations collectively reflect the propositions put forward in chapter II.

### **A. FRENCH PREFERENCES**

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The French government has played a pivotal role in ESDP, and in many of the operations that the EU has deployed in this framework. This in particular applies to ESDP's military arm. When asked about the most important booster behind the policy and its operationalization, most interviewed officials – both French and otherwise – have pointed to Paris. Yet whereas numerous academic analysts have taken Paris' investment into an EU security identity as proof of France's misgivings about US power and a wish to constrain the latter, the preceding case studies have shown that other motives played a significant role as well. The mere fact that France was perhaps the most significant supporter of ESDP thus does not, by itself, prove that balancing was a (important) motive for, much less an outcome of EU crisis management action. In quickly reviewing the four individual cases, we will see that French objectives related more to the symbolic domain of demonstrating an ability to act autonomously than any anti-American agenda.

When it came to operation Althea, the French government actively supported the transition from NATO to EU lead in Bosnia. Its primary motive lay with enabling the EU to become a credible actor in the domain of international security, and in operationalizing the fledgling ESDP. That objective was shared with London and Berlin as well as other EU capitals, but the French government was more vocal than most in arguing for the greatest possible EU 'autonomy' from NATO. The tug of war over and between the two organizations could be described as a power struggle between Paris and London regarding the strategic orientation of the EU, and thus over the degree to which the latter would engage in balancing the US. The differences between the two sides were however primarily symbolic rather than

substantive, wrangling over the fact whether NATO enjoyed formal primacy vis-à-vis the EU rather than whether the latter would threaten US interests. In other words, it was much ado about rather little. After all, had the US truly feared any balancing intentions, it could simply have prevented the handover by continuing SFOR as before.

With respect to the second Balkan mission, EULEX Kosovo, France similarly played a role of active support. Like other EU capitals it was primarily interested in preventing any loss of control over the situation in the region and the blame that this might engender. In the French case this was complemented by a strong desire to push ESDP one step further, by underscoring the EU's ability to undertake a strong executive mission. Less visibly, this was flanked by bilateral attempts to build support for replacing the NATO-led military operation with an ESDP one (Interviews with MS officials). Whereas this effort failed because other EU governments saw the US as a useful troop contributor due to its leverage over Kosovo Albanians, it underlines that the French government was not only interested in finding a feasible exit strategy for NATO from Kosovo, but also wanted the EU in as a tool for promoting ESDP. EULEX Kosovo thereby provides more evidence for Paris' desire to see the EU become a more important security actor. However, this does not imply balancing in either intention or outcome. Rather, the handover to the EU was explicitly desired by Washington. To the extent that the French position may have had an anti-NATO bias in that it suggested sidelining or replacing KFOR, it did not succeed.

In contrast to these Balkan missions, the French position on EUPOL Afghanistan was decidedly reserved. Paris reluctantly tolerated this project which it considered as inserted on behest of the US and thus as a threat to EU autonomy. Its dislike for seeing the US set the agenda of the EU is again a clear reflection of the properties generally attributed to French strategic culture with its insistence on independence and great power status, but it is harder to judge whether that stance is rooted in geopolitical objectives or domestic expectations regarding an 'autonomous' foreign policy. What militates for the latter is the fact that France was at the time (and still is) participating in NATO's campaign against Afghan insurgents, which makes it less conceivable that it was truly seeking to undermine that effort. Notwithstanding this caveat, Paris may have aimed to limit its support – and the implication of the ESDP – in order to narrow Washington's leeway for unilaterally determining Western security policy priorities rather than just in order to play to domestic foreign policy elites. Ultimately, the French government however decided to drop its reservations and agree to the mission, attesting to the fact that any anti-NATO motive, if existent, was secondary to other considerations.

France's position with respect to its partners was almost the opposite regarding EUFOR Tchad/RCA where Paris was the sole initiator of that operation within the EU, with both the UK and Germany following only reluctantly. The operation's impetus derived primarily from the newly elected French government's promises to do something for Darfur. At the same time it played to the theme of French leadership in the EU, a theme whose domestic popularity can be gauged from the fact that president Chirac generally portrayed ESDP 'as an extension of French policy that others like Britain and Germany and then the rest of the European Union joined' (cf. Giegerich 2006: 116; Macleod and Voyer-Léger 2004: 84; Irondelle 2008: 156). Pursuing an ESDP operation moreover had the benefit of reassuring French foreign policy elites that the new president would defend traditional Gaullist objectives. As a senior EU official put it, 'the purpose of the operation was to show the French political elite that, despite France's return to NATO, ESDP is still in the cards; it served to convince domestic foreign policy elites' (Interview with CGS official; cf. Marlowe 2009a). Whereas the co-benefit of supporting a French client in Chad likely facilitated Paris' decision to initiate, crucially support, and largely fund the operation, the most consistent explanation for its stance is that of a 'public relations' stunt rather than a continuation of the old politics of *Françafrique* (cf. Marchal 2009: (3)). It thereby fits into a logic outlined by David Chandler, who argued that 'interventionist ethical foreign policy can be a powerful mechanism for generating a sense of political purpose and mission' (Chandler 2003: 299).

Comparing the French government's perspective across the above four cases, three elements stand out: the first is the importance that it attached to EU-NATO relations, and thus to the role of the United States in the European security architecture. This component was most salient in the case of Bosnia, but it also played a role for the missions in Afghanistan and Kosovo. The French positions in the decision-making surrounding these operations thereby provide some evidence that Paris sought to increase the EU's relative influence at the US' expense. The invocation of 'multipolarity' by French politicians at the beginning of the millennium was not so much an expression of balancing intentions and 19<sup>th</sup> century power politics as an insistence on multilateral decision-making in the context of a particularly unilaterally-minded US administration (cf. Heumann 2005: 118; Macleod and Voyer-Léger 2004: 89; Owen 2001: 143). At the same time, the symbolic competition with the US also provided domestic political opportunities related to France's self-image as a significant power and the engrained culture of autonomy in security policy. French identity, in particular in the security sphere, has long been linked to a discourse of 'grandeur' as much as one of autonomy from the United States (cf. Meunier 2000; Macleod and Voyer-Léger 2004; Giegerich 2006: 109-117; Mérand 2006: 143; Holm 2009: 2-4).

Insisting on that tradition followed a domestic political impetus as much as it represented a tool for exerting external influence. Frédéric Mérand thus quotes the Hubert Védrine, France's foreign minister at the time of ESDP's birth, with the words that 'European defence – *and that's its main virtue* – provokes cheers at any political rally' (quoted in Mérand 2006: 138; emphasis added; cf. Irondelle 2008: 160). These domestic incentives – and the extent of shared objectives, collaboration and joint Franco-American participation in three out of the four mission areas – suggest that the domestic image may have been more important than the power-political consequences. France's extensive engagement in NATO crisis management operations before and after the 'Berlin Plus' agreement – from Bosnia via Kosovo to Afghanistan (cf. Irondelle 2008: 164) – despite its public misgivings over the organization thus arguably shows that Paris did not so much pursue different foreign policy objectives, but sought to make visible that it had a distinctive position. This emphasis on conspicuity suggests a preoccupation with domestic politics, although there remains the possibility that even extensive Franco-American cooperation may only have been epiphenomenal, hiding long-term competition for leadership and international influence underneath. Should this have been the case, however, one cannot fail but notice that none of the potentially anti-American French positions prevailed at the level of the EU as a collective actor.

A second recurring element is the importance the French government attached to promoting ESDP as such. Again this was clearest in Bosnia, but it also informed the position on Kosovo and Chad and even in Afghanistan insofar as protecting ESDP against the risk of a likely failure played a role. This objective can of course be related to the first component and the attendant explanations focusing on relative power and domestic preferences, but it does not by itself furnish evidence for either interpretation. Whereas an EU security identity may only provide an intermediate objective, it is one whose influence on French ESDP policy can be established with greater certainty than the afore-mentioned geopolitical or domestic goals. Yet at the same time there is little indication that, for the French government, this EU security actorhood served to promote European political integration: to the contrary, European integration was rather used to promote French national objectives, whether they pertained to international or domestic politics (cf. Holm 2009: 12).

The third and last element is the importance of domestic politics. The evidence is strongest in the case of Chad, where the French government sought to demonstrate its ability to 'do something' to respond to domestic indignation over Darfur, and thereby its ability to count internationally. But the domestic politics of foreign policy grandstanding arguably also showed in stressing French independence from the US that formed a backdrop to EU-NATO tensions, in harking back to Gaullist rhetoric about French glory and its special civilizational mission. Addressing his home audience, a former foreign minister (and Sarkozy rival) had summarized France's

self-perception of its foreign policy role with the words: ‘throughout history, our nation has felt itself entrusted with a special mission on the global stage, carrying values which it wanted to share with the other peoples. Today, our unique and generous vocation to universality constitutes our trump card and our opportunity’ (de Villepin 2002). In his first presidential address to French ambassadors in August 2007, Sarkozy similarly played to French exceptionalism and de Gaulle’s famous *dictum* by stating that he ‘had always held a high idea of France and hence of its role in today’s world’ (cf. Holm 2009: 3-4). His emphasis on international crisis management also appeared to go down well with the broader public, with ‘The Economist’ noting that ‘the more he globe-trots, or is seen to be dealing with world affairs, the more his popularity rises’ (The Economist 2010; cf. The Economist 2011). In other words, France’s self-conception as a consequential power serves a domestic as much as an international political function. Paris’ insistence on (independent European) foreign policy action is thus not necessarily a function of considerations of relative international power, but also of a political culture that values international visibility.

In sum, the French positions in the four cases revealed some evidence that supports the first, third and fourth proposition. The French government sought to limit and at times constrain US influence – although this related primarily to the rhetorical and ‘scholastic’ rather than the substantive domain. It also sought to showcase the EU’s ability and maturity in contributing to international security albeit hardly with the objective of furthering European integration as such by means of defence policy. Rather, promoting ESDP seems to have been a means for demonstrating that France’s government, and thus French values and interests, mattered and had an impact on the EU as well as in certain crises. From the perspective of the French government, European crisis management operations were thus done to promote the EU as an influential actor in international security, both in order to obtain some influence vis-à-vis Washington (and potentially other powers) as well as to appear influential and consequential at home.

## **B. BRITISH PREFERENCES**

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Whereas France has likely been the most important supporter of a European Security and Defence Policy, the British government arguably played the pivotal role in bringing it about. It was Tony Blair after all whose 1998 turnaround on this question enabled the EU to venture into security policy. Yet the UK’s stance on ESDP has at the same time remained ambiguous, and the country generally is still, in the words of one of its former ambassadors to the EU, ‘a stranger in Europe’ (Wall 2008). This crucial yet ambiguous role begs the question what motives the UK had for supporting or tolerating the operations examined in this study.

The British government actively supported operation Althea in Bosnia. One official even claimed that the transfer to the EU was a British idea, and another stressed that London was 'perfectly enthusiastic' about the operation (Interviews). This support also showed in the fact that the UK initially provided the force commander and the second biggest contingent (Koops 2011: 344). Yet its motives diverged from those of its French counterpart: for the UK, the operation in Bosnia was about helping the United States and demonstrating the viability of the 'Berlin Plus' framework that tied the ESDP to NATO. London also appreciated the opportunity to demonstrate the EU's capacity to act, but certainly not with any ulterior motives as to furthering European integration. It rather valued the opportunity to demonstrate the pragmatic benefits of this framework – that it had helped bring about – for British (and transatlantic) interests. The degree to which Bosnia was and remained instrumental to British objectives in terms of keeping close security policy ties to the US is also visible in the subsequent shifts of the British position: in 2006 it decided to effectively withdraw from the operation as a result of serious overstretch (cf. Self 2010: 180-6) – an overstretch caused primarily by Britain's vigorous support for US-led interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Some two years later, however, the UK was decisive in keeping Althea running as an executive operation, presumably in part because the new American administration expressed renewed interest in this instrument. It was thus the 'special relationship' with the US that co-determined the UK's policy vis-à-vis Althea.

In the case of EULEX Kosovo, the British government also provided active diplomatic support even if its subsequent contributions were limited. As in the case of France, this stance was primarily motivated by the perception that a combination of Kosovar independence and international oversight was the best exit option – and in addition the one that was pushed by the US administration (cf. Ker-Lindsay 2009b: 7; 24). It hence combined a desire to maintain close transatlantic ties with the wish to prevent a domestically embarrassing foreign policy failure. As one observer concluded, because 'it would have been difficult for those leaders who had advocated intervention just five years earlier to explain to their electorates why the very people they had saved were now shooting at them [...], [t]he international community needed to be able to declare victory and leave Kosovo to run itself, as its inhabitants wanted' (cf. Ker-Lindsay 2009b: 109). The most vocal proponent of that intervention had of course been Britain's Tony Blair – and the latter's foreign policy credibility was already under duress by the time of the riots in March 2004 due to his questionable advocacy for the war against Iraq on account of the mirage of weapons of mass destruction. By contrast, there is less evidence for the British government being driven by either normative reasoning or a particular attachment to European unity: as others, the UK consciously eschewed any attempt to justify this solution with reference to cosmopolitan norms (cf. Noutcheva 2009: 1073; Ker-Lindsay

2009b: 189; Webber 2009: 455). Moreover, once the diplomatic battle had been fought and the mission established, the British government also limited its support to the mission. In short, it adopted a very pragmatic stance, interested above all in getting the Kosovo issue off the agenda without any disruptions.

In the case of ESDP engagement in Afghanistan, the British government predictably took a very supportive line. If it did not initiate the mission, London certainly embraced the proposal and argued forcefully in its favour. Transatlantic considerations again played an important role, but due to the existing British commitment Afghanistan has also become increasingly significant in domestic politics in its own right. The decision for an ESDP engagement in Afghanistan was forged in late 2006, just when the British military pressed the government to withdraw from Iraq – a conflict it considered unwinnable – in order to allow for a reinforcement of British detachments in Afghanistan (Self 2010: 245). In such a context there was evidently an incentive for the British government to be able to point to a success in getting European allies to do more to support stabilization (for the broader argument, cf. Oliver and Allen 2006: 199). At the same time, the UK engaged only modestly in EUPOL since British distrust into the EU's ability to deliver prevented it from 'uploading' tasks for which it wanted support, especially on counter-narcotics (Interview with UK official). In short, while there is little evidence that the impulse to spread liberal values or an interest in a strong ESDP role informed London's stance (both of which would have implied a greater national commitment), the British position was driven by a combination of domestic political focus on Afghanistan and its geopolitical search for proximity to US preferences.

When it comes to EUFOR Tchad/RCA, the British position by contrast was one of 'reluctant toleration'. This might seem somewhat surprising given New Labour's promotion of the 'ethical dimension' of foreign policy, not least in the ESDP framework (cf. Aggestam 2004: 20; Self 2010: 216-220). Wouldn't Blair's doctrine of international community, spelt out in the context of the Kosovo war of 1999, equally apply to Darfur and, by extension, eastern Chad? Privately, British officials argued that the Chad operation did not have a credible strategic purpose beyond 'glorifying ESDP' (Interviews). Without a plausible strategy for sustainable humanitarian gains, they explained, the EU should not distract attention and resources from Afghanistan. This again underlines the importance of transatlantic relations even though the US had no objections against the operation. Given Britain's military overstretch however, its domestic audience would likely have questioned any diversion of resources to a potentially pointless operation, all the more if the latter was French-inspired and carried out in an EU framework. As one Council official reasoned, public opinion in Europe wanted the focus on humanitarian aspects that ESDP delivers; 'not even the UK is against that, they are just against the EU doing it' (Interview; cf. Giegerich 2006: 171). What London's position reveals is that it neither intended to

bolster the ESDP as such – a motive British officials imputed to the French government, and which, they insinuated, constituted one reason not to participate – nor that humanitarian considerations played a decisive role. Rather, the British position was taken with a view to the national strategic outlook, whether caused by external or domestic political motives.

In analyzing the British government's stance across all four cases, two features thus are particularly salient: first and similar to their French counter-parts, British policy-makers were very preoccupied with the ESDP's relationship to the US and NATO. This element played a significant role in all case studies with the exception of EUFOR Tchad/RCA, and even London's reluctance to engage in Chad was partly justified with reference to the desire not to see any resources diverted from the NATO mission in Afghanistan. Contrary to the French position, however, London supported the US position and priorities in all cases, countervailing any potential pressures for balancing behaviour vis-à-vis the latter on the part of the EU as a collective. This emphasis clearly reflects Britain's transatlantic 'strategic culture', but in parallel to the French case it is less clear whether acting in accordance with that culture reflects primarily a geopolitical strategy or domestic politics, in particular a kowtow to Britain's Euro-sceptic public and published opinion (cf. Oliver and Allen 2006: 192-3).<sup>43</sup> Britain's EU ambassador at the time of ESDP's emergence described Tony Blair as weighing two arguments with respect to this policy: that he 'believed that the EU's perceived failure to match up to its responsibilities in Bosnia had seriously undermined its credibility with its own citizens', but that he 'proceeded with great caution' as he 'did not want to risk a perception that New Labour was unsound on defence (an accusation that had dogged the Party in the early 1980s) or a [sic] disagreement with the United States' (cf. Wall 2008: 169).

The reasons for the British position in ESDP thus certainly chime with domestic political incentives regarding ingrained Euro-scepticism as well as being seen to maintain the 'special relationship' and a Britain punching above its weight (cf. Self 2010: 172). As a senior British diplomat put it, 'being the closest friend of the United States was good politics in the UK' (Wall 2008: 178). This closeness was consequently emphasized by the British government time and again, 'accented in every single major strategic document produced by the FCO and the MoD' and very much in contrast to 'British foreign policy-makers unwillingness to identify with their European partners in strategic terms' (Gaskarth 2010: 90). Ironically, 'New

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<sup>43</sup> Stephen Wall gave an interesting example for the interplay between the two when he praised the Bush administration for its stance on the compromise regarding a European headquarters: 'the US administration backed Britain and resisted all efforts from the British media to persuade them to rubbish what had been done' (Wall 2008: 175).

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Labour asserted an explicitly normative basis to Britain's relations with the US' even though 'the normative goals it promoted as examples of UK leadership in world affairs were either ignored or actively opposed by the US' (Gaskarth 2010: 90-1). These objectives, such as active opposition to the death penalty and torture, tougher criteria for arms sales or advocacy for the International Criminal Court, brought it much closer to its EU rather than transatlantic partners (Gaskarth 2010: 91), but the 'special relationship' was electorally more promising than the EU. This was of particular concern to Tony Blair, who saw Labour's traditional 'weakness' on defence and opposition to US foreign policy as a pivotal reason for its earlier election losses: '[c]loseness to the US therefore became a symbol of electability-proof' (Phytian 2010: 193). Blair's preoccupation with domestic perceptions was likely complemented by geo-political considerations, but it is far from clear that the latter were more important than the quest for domestic credibility.

Domestic ambiguity vis-à-vis the EU also explains the limited and pragmatic support the British government afforded ESDP operations. Differently from France, ESDP does not provoke any cheers at political rallies in Britain but, to the contrary, the negatively connoted image of a 'Euro army' has become a favourite shibboleth of politicians seeking to draw on Euro-sceptic attitudes (cf. Giegerich 2006: 154; 159; Howorth 2007: 39-42). Consequently, the British government has opposed anything suspected to aim at bolstering an EU security identity for its own sake (not to speak of European nation-building). One observer reported that, apart from the problem of negotiating the exact arrangements of 'Berlin Plus', the second of the two difficult tasks [sic] facing the EU Military Committee was to decide whether the soldiers of the very first European operation in Macedonia would wear EU badges – due to British resistance to such a symbol (Mérand 2006: 135-6).

By pushing for, if not initiating ESDP action, the British government could claim to have got the EU to magnify British influence in the world both in Kosovo and in Afghanistan (cf. Miliband 2009). At the same time, it managed to limit its own exposure as shortcomings could be blamed on the EU, and as British interests in terms of limiting the input of national resources had been safeguarded. Britain's comparatively big investment in international crisis management instils 'a certain degree of apprehension about doing more than a fair share' (Giegerich 2006: 169). Stretched in terms of available troops, police officers and pre-allocated financial means, the British government rather avoided making the case for a greater effort at home as long as it concerned EU operations, even at the expense of being able to shape them. A British official freely admitted the discrepancy, pointing out that in 2009 the UK seconded around 70 people into civilian ESDP missions as compared to approximately 250 for France, Germany and Italy respectively (Interview). The contributions the UK made to the four operations thus confirm that, for the British

government, ESDP was primarily something for others to do in order to match UK efforts elsewhere (cf. Giegerich 2006: 169-170; Mérand 2006: 139).

In sum, the British stance provides support primarily for the external and domestic power proposition. While there is little evidence that London conceived of or supported ESDP operations primarily in order to promote liberal values or even an EU security identity, the UK did attempt to use the policy as a means to exert external influence – albeit not according to the balancing logic captured in the first proposition. Instead, the British government sought to harness EU means in support of foreign policy goals shared with the US: its (relatively) biggest contribution was for the operation in Bosnia, which it pushed as a way to exonerate US troops. The other two missions it actively supported, in Afghanistan and Kosovo, also coincided with US priorities, whereas – in the face of US indifference – the UK was least enthusiastic about Chad. However, as this section has shown, this stance is just as congruent with domestic political incentives, notably the wish to demonstrate London's proximity to Washington combined with a Euro-sceptic audience at home.

### **C. GERMAN PREFERENCES**

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While Germany is habitually included as one of the 'big three' in analyses of European foreign policy, its position on defence issues has generally been less proactive than those of its two partners analysed above. This has often been ascribed to a 'culture of reticence' that has led German policy-makers to be cautious about an assertive definition of security policy interests and particularly reluctant to deploy armed force for purposes beyond territorial defence (cf. Malici 2006; Giegerich 2006: 148; Rudolf 2005: 145; Duffield 1999; Berger 1998). At the same time, Germany is generally held to be the most enthusiastic among the three when it comes to pooling sovereignty in foreign, security and defence policy (cf. Koenig-Archibugi 2004b). How have these seemingly contradictory pressures impacted on the government's position regarding the four case studies?

When it came to the Bosnian operation, the German government actively supported the transition from NATO to EU command just as its French and British counterparts did. In terms of its motivations it falls somewhere in between the two: like their British colleagues, German officials stressed that their enthusiasm partly stemmed from the perceived ability to please the US administration. They similarly underlined German eagerness to demonstrate the usefulness of the 'Berlin Plus' framework, and thus the compatibility of ESDP with NATO (Interviews; cf. Giegerich 2006: 133-6). While this partly reflected practical considerations, this stance also mirrored domestic expectations that transatlantic relations remained important: according to a poll in November 2003, i.e. when Althea's transition was being discussed and just

after the bitter disagreements over Iraq, 85% of Germans saw NATO as important, with two thirds preferring the EU to rely on NATO in its security policy (IPOS 2003: 12-13; cf. Rudolf 2005: 140). Yet at the same time, and closer to French preferences, German officials also made clear that they welcomed the opportunity to strengthen the EU's standing as a security actor in its own right (if perfectly compatible with and supplemental to NATO). Again this corresponds to domestic expectations: in the above-cited poll, more than 80% considered a united European stance as more important for German foreign policy than agreement with the US (IPOS 2003: 5; see also Eichenberg 2003). Public opinion is unlikely to impact on such policy choices directly, but this poll illuminates the domestic political backdrop and thereby shows that the government acted according to what passed as common sense domestically. In Berlin's case its preference for an EU security identity was also coupled with an interest in closer European integration: as Bastian Giegerich argued, in Germany '[s]upport for ESDP as a comprehensive framework was tied to the initiative being about progressing European integration' (Giegerich 2006: 148; cf. Mérand 2006: 136).

Secondly, the active support that the German government provided for EULEX Kosovo mirrored the motivations of its EU partners: the desire for an exit strategy (which also responded to US pressure to 'finish business in the Balkans'), the need to keep a modicum of influence on regional developments, and the wish to avoid predictable domestic blame for potential loss of control over the regional situation (cf. Ker-Lindsay 2009b: 109; 123). There is little evidence that the German government agreed to Kosovo's independence because it believed that this constituted a 'just' solution. To the contrary, various reports indicate that it felt decidedly queasy about recognizing independence without a UN Security Council seal of approval, but eventually accepted it as inevitable (cf. ICG 2007a: 13; Spiegel Online 2007; Der Spiegel 2008; Ker-Lindsay 2009b: 122). In fact, an article by a senior German diplomat claimed the bracketing of normative questions and the reign of pragmatism along with its focus on minimizing risks as a major success for European diplomacy (cf. Haber 2009). Yet beyond a focus on pragmatism the German government also expressed particular interest in achieving a unified EU position (cf. Spoerl 2007: 116; Ker-Lindsay 2009b: 121-2). This was partly a consequence of the debatable legitimacy that any rule of law mission would have enjoyed in Germany absent an EU decision. Based on an interview with the German diplomat heading the ultimate 'Troika' talks on Kosovo independence, James Ker-Lindsay argued that 'his appointment was quite clearly intended to ensure German support for the independence' (Ker-Lindsay 2009b: 242; 122). However, it also reflected German aspirations for a demonstrably united EU as a goal in itself. Emily Haber's article thus expresses pride in having defied experts' dire predictions of European inability and disunity in managing the transition (Haber 2009: 83).

Berlin's position regarding EUPOL Afghanistan was characterized by preoccupation with domestic politics, if refracted through international demands. By promoting a civilian policing mission in Afghanistan, the German government above all attempted to keep a balance between contradictory expectations (cf. Kaim 2008): on the one hand, it was under pressure from NATO partners to enhance its engagement in Afghanistan. This pressure also had a domestic face in that German security policy elites remain quite transatlantic in outlook, creating 'domestic demand' for good relations with the US (cf. Rudolf 2005: 137; Busse 2003). One German official recalled how criticism of Germany's national police mission in Afghanistan by the US administration found its way via Anglo-Saxon newspapers into the influential German daily F.A.Z., suggesting this domestic reflection of US criticism played a part in convincing the German government that it needed to respond (Interview). On the other hand, the German government needed to stave off domestic criticism of NATO's 'militarized' approach and put some distance between itself and the unloved Bush administration (cf. Rudolf 2005: 139; Kaim 2008). As a result, it did not want to fuel the impression that it was simply reproducing US policy in Afghanistan and accepting increased risks for German soldiers as a side effect. Faced with this dilemma, an insistence on greater police engagement seemed a promising cure because it justified placing greater emphasis on civilian means and objectives, set Germany apart from the US' 'militarized' approach, and provided an additional engagement to prove Germany's good faith regarding the stabilisation of Afghanistan and transatlantic relations.

In the case of eastern Chad, the German government adopted a stance of reluctant toleration much like its British counterpart. The motivations for this position were partly shared: German media and foreign policy experts doubted French motives, seeing the initiative either as an overly ambitious and ill-conceived expression of humanitarian impulse or as a smokescreen for traditional, unpalatable French interests in Africa (cf. Tkalec 2008; Spiegel Online 2008; Tull 2008). At the same time, and differently from Britain, German reluctance was due not to Euro-scepticism but rather disinclination to become militarily involved in Africa. With the experience of the German-led – and domestically controversial – Congo mission still fresh, several officials testified to an attitude of firm rejection in Berlin when it came to renewed French ideas for German participation in such operations (Interviews). Moreover, the German government would have needed an explicit parliamentary mandate for participation in a political context where parliament was instead looking for ways to decrease German military responsibilities abroad. Yet although this operation was not well-received by the German government, officials were more positive about its effects with respect to the EU's security identity. The operation was welcome – *ex post* – to the extent that it helped the EU to reinforce its identity as a consequential military actor (Interviews). Since the German government was

however unwilling to invest into this result, its interest in strengthening ESDP was clearly secondary to its desire to avoid the domestic backlash that participation in this mission could have engendered. Considerations of external power also hardly figured: one German official pointed out that, as a trading nation, Germany should have a greater interest than its European partners in stability and the resulting trade and investment opportunities in Africa – but that such reasoning was rarely broached in internal debates. Rather, ‘Germany’s security community remains stuck in the perception that there is no point for us to be in Africa, that it is all a post-colonial playing field and, if we go there, then only because Belgians, Brits or French, or all together, had screwed us over. See Congo’ (Interview). The German government’s position was thus crafted first and foremost with a view to the domestic political consequences of its stance.

When comparing Germany’s stance across all four cases, three features stand out: as in the French and British case, the impact that ESDP operations would have on NATO, and the position that the US took, played an important role in Berlin’s decision-making – albeit a lesser one than for its European partners since domestic aversion to assertive security policy abated strategic considerations generally. While US interest in seeing the EU engage motivated the German government to support the transition in Bosnia and encouraged it in Afghanistan and Kosovo, it was less than decisive in the latter cases and played hardly any role in Berlin’s thinking on Chad. This lesser import was linked to a substantive position which fell in between those of Paris and London although it was clearly closer to the latter: in each case where that link was made, it was a (perceived) US preference *for* the respective mission that led Germany to support it. In no case was there any evidence of Germany deliberately impeding US foreign policy choices. What distinguished Berlin’s from London’s stance was that the US/NATO relationship was not automatically the first consideration, and that German policy did not follow US priorities in Kosovo and Afghanistan as quickly as British policy did. Moreover, Berlin’s stance on a distinctive EU security identity was not as much a reflection of strategic relations with the US as it was for its partners, but rather of its aspirations for European integration.

Berlin’s endorsement of ESDP formed the second salient feature. Whereas the German government was sometimes less excited than its French counterpart about having the EU act for the sake of ESDP, it clearly expressed contentment at being able to contribute to crisis management in the Balkans in the framework of the European Union (Interviews). German participation, one official argued, came down to two facts: ‘we have an interest in solving these conflicts, we have an interest in enhancing and operationalizing ESDP, let’s bring it together’ (Interview). In Berlin’s case this was linked to some evidence that ESDP was also intended to advance European integration. Another German official thus invoked the ‘self-evident,

emotional relationship of Germany towards the European Union' which, he reckoned, still included the 'idea of a finality of Europe to the point of an integrated system' that in turn would naturally need to include a security policy instrument (Interview). Such ideas notably show in the favourable disposition Germany has shown towards an (integrated) 'European army', a project embraced by the chancellor on the occasion of the festivities of 50 years of European Union (Merkel 2007; cf. Kaim 2007: 202). Though hardly backed up by specific policy proposals, it forms part of a broad effort to embed German foreign policy in multilateral settings as a means of 'self-containment' and renunciation of earlier great power politics (cf. Kaim 2007: 200; Hanrieder 1989). A foreign minister neatly summed up this stance once by arguing that 'the answer to almost any international question is: Europe' (Fischer 2001). Or, as Mérand summarized it in his comparative study, 'when they utter the words 'European defence policy', UK representatives will stress *policy*, the French will underscore *defence*, and the Germans will emphasize *Europe*' (Mérand 2006: 144; emphasis original).

The third feature which characterized German decision-making regarding ESDP operations was the significance of domestic political considerations, which formed an important element in all four operations. In the case of the two Balkan missions, this element was indirect and consisted primarily in the wish to avoid the risk of having to make stark choices which would reveal the government's helplessness and expose it to similar problems as it faced in the 1990s: as one observer argued with respect to the 1999 Kosovo war, 'German military participation was not born of assertiveness, but helplessness: Berlin did not want to bear the blame for the failure of NATO's coercive diplomacy' (Rudolf 2005: 140). Whereas back then the German government saw itself forced to risk domestic survival over a contentious intervention, the EU operations undertaken a few years later allowed Berlin to demonstrate that it was able to contribute to preventing renewed crises in line with domestic expectations rather than see its hands forced and risk blame for whichever decision it might (not) take in reacting. In the case of Afghanistan, the domestic considerations similarly consisted in managing the conflicting domestic expectations of proving international reliability and an aversion to the use and risks of military force (cf. Kaim 2007: 203-4; Giegerich 2006: 148). In the case of eastern Chad finally, it was primarily for domestic reasons that the German government decided not to engage – irrespective of potential international or European benefits.

In sum, the German position provides some evidence for considerations of external and domestic power, but also for the promotion of ESDP for the sake of European integration. When it comes to international considerations, there is however no evidence of any desire to balance the United States – to the contrary, German officials evoked US wishes as reasons why they undertook and supported the operations in Bosnia and, to a lesser extent, Afghanistan and Kosovo. At the same

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time the German government repeatedly expressed its interest in a capable ESDP, not least as a means for furthering European integration. Both these objectives interacted with the third and, certainly in the German case, most important driver, that of responding to domestic expectations. The latter were at times conflicting: expecting the government to keep transatlantic relations in good order while marking an independent stance; demonstrating the ability to contribute to the transformation of the Balkans while eschewing being drawn into faraway conflicts whose significance could not easily be explained to a German audience; and resisting an overly 'militarized' approach to foreign policy while proving a reliable ally (cf. Kaim 2007: 223; 226; Rudolf 2005: 145; Giegerich 2006: 148; Malici 2006: 58; Matlary 2009: 149-159). More than any external objectives, the German position on the different operations reflected these diverse domestic pressures and incentives.

## **CHAPTER IX: REVISITING THE PROPOSITIONS**

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After reviewing the diverse motivations that underpinned key national approaches to the four operations, it is now time to assess the extent to which these operations, in their objectives and effects, collectively confirm or contradict the propositions formulated in chapter II. The subsequent four sections will discuss the pertinence of each of them. To this end, each section will start out by shortly recalling the proposition and attendant empirical expectations and then summarize the evidence for each of the four operations. This in turn will be followed by a broader argument as to how each driver related to ESDP action. The fifth and final section will then conclude by examining their interdependence and discussing this study's contribution.

### **A. ESDP AND THE QUEST FOR EXTERNAL POWER (I)**

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The first proposition had suggested that ESDP operations were driven by the quest for external power on the part of the EU and/or its most important member states. This 'geo-political' explanation had further been specified to imply that these missions would primarily have served to counter-balance the US' influence. From this idea it deduced that we should find that EU decision-makers were primarily focused on the power-political consequences of their activities, that EU decisions and operations were based on a strategy which could credibly result in an increase in relative power vis-à-vis the US, and that the US would disapprove of, if not oppose these operations.

The analysis of the four cases under review in this study showed that there is only very limited evidence for any 'balancing' of the US on EU governments' part. As we saw, three out of those four operations were undertaken at least in part at the instigation of the US administration. In the case of Bosnia, there had been a perception in European capitals that Washington had wanted the EU to take over the mission, as well as public statements by US officials that warranted such a perception. As the preceding chapter highlighted, both British and German officials cited these US wishes as major reasons why their governments supported such a transition. The desire to please Washington continued to have an impact on Althea later on: as one official put it, some partners quit the operation because 'they could only win brownie points with the Americans for engaging in Afghanistan' (Interview with MS official). Whereas French objectives may have differed, they did not hold sway insofar as Paris consented to a 'Berlin Plus' operation, i.e. an operation conducted through NATO's headquarters. In other words, the intention of pleasing,

not of balancing the US proved to be the motive that won out at the EU level. Moreover, Washington evidently did not feel worse off with an ESDP takeover because it could otherwise simply have prevented it in NATO.

The same is true for the second Balkan operation, Kosovo. The EULEX mission served as a tool for implementing the solution of 'supervised independence'. That solution, in turn, was above all formulated and pushed by Washington (cf. Ker-Lindsay 2009b: 115-6; 123). This does not mean that Washington imposed it on reluctant EU governments: the US rationale was almost identical to those of its European allies. The latter, however, were slower to face up to what they eventually accepted as inevitable. As one official summed it up, 'the path of independence was decided in Washington, [but] with good arguments' (Interview with MS official). Moreover, Washington even decided to participate in this ESDP operation under the 'political control and strategic direction' of EU governments, something it would hardly have agreed to if it felt that the EU attempted to constrain its influence. In short, in Kosovo the EU again did not balance against but facilitated and, to some extent, followed US policy.

The third mission under focus in this study, EUPOL Afghanistan, also dovetailed with US foreign policy priorities. Although there is no evidence that Washington directly instigated the mission, its launch was clearly seen by many EU governments as a friendly gesture towards NATO and the US. Not surprisingly, the mission was therefore primarily supported by countries with a particularly transatlantic outlook. EUPOL admittedly turned out to be only marginally supportive of US policy insofar as the EU's investment into the mission remained limited. This caveat notwithstanding, EU governments have further increased their military contributions in Afghanistan since the mission's inception in 2006, and there is widespread consensus across the Atlantic that the training of local security forces, including the police in particular, needs to be enhanced. Even if EUPOL did not deliver as much as Washington may have hoped for, there is no doubt that the mission is on balance supportive of US foreign policy (cf. Nuland 2008).

Finally, there is the military operation in Chad. This operation arguably represents the most likely case among the four for any balancing intentions since it was initiated by France, has not buttressed or shadowed a US initiative, has been militarily the most ambitious operation undertaken by the EU so far, and has been conducted 'autonomously', i.e. without giving the US a formal seat at the decision-making table via official consultations with NATO. Yet the US indicated no qualms, and allegedly even considered participation. The only indication for 'balancing', then, could lie with EU-NATO relations, and in particular with the question whether 'autonomous' operations present a threat to NATO. Yet at the time when EUFOR Tchad/RCA was initiated, US fears that ESDP might undermine NATO had largely

subsided. This was partly a result of the absence of notable EU efforts in the realm of military integration during ESDP's first decade and partly in response to the new French president, who set out to fully re-integrate France into NATO military structures. In fact, just as the operation in Chad was starting, the US ambassador to NATO commended the operation in Paris and proclaimed that 'one of the most important things French leaders can do for global security is to strengthen and build the capacities of the EU', that 'Europe needs a place where it can act independently' and that '[a]n ESDP with only soft power is not enough' (Nuland 2008). As Nuland's above-cited speech indicates, the main US fear had shifted from Europeans consolidating military power outside of NATO to Europeans giving up on military power. Because the force generation process for EUFOR Tchad/RCA had demonstrated Europeans' limited military capabilities, even British officials valued the operation in that '[i]t was a good learning experience that Europe is at risk of becoming a paper tiger' (Interview).

In short, none of the four operations provides support for the proposition that ESDP might serve to counter-balance US influence. Whereas French rhetoric has sometimes been interpreted as balancing behaviour, it is not only dubious whether Paris has truly sought to constrain US power rather than play to domestic yearning for international visibility and purpose. Such aspirations were also explicitly opposed by London and Berlin, and are belied by US advocacy for ESDP action. The primary point of contention across the Atlantic had been the vexed question of EU-NATO relations, but this question divided Europe as much as (if not more than) the two continents, and its importance has been declining. That makes it noteworthy that this debate has nonetheless had an impact on all operations: British officials enlisted the priority that Afghanistan should enjoy as an argument against the operation in Chad, and French officials were suspected to have opposed the policing mission to Afghanistan on account of their purported willingness to showcase NATO's inaptitude. Yet in both cases these motives did not lead them to veto the respective mission. There is so little policy substance to this symbolic 'competition' that it is more plausible that the intended audiences were domestic, so as to gain and maintain their trust via the continuation of established foreign policy traditions. Even if the French government were to truly have wanted to balance against the US, that intention can hardly be described as a significant driver given that the US failed to oppose any of the operations, and that both the British and German governments professed to have been inspired in the most contentious EU-NATO case, Bosnia, by the perception of an opportunity to help the US. Last but not least, none of the operations led to increased EU influence at the expense of Washington.

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THE ROLE OF EXTERNAL POWER BEYOND BALANCING THE US

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If ESDP does not serve to balance the US, does it represent a means for enhancing EU governments' geopolitical power in other ways? One potential target of pooled power could be Russia: the EU's most powerful direct neighbour has pursued security policies at odds with those of the EU, and at least some member states in the Union's east perceive Russia as militarily threatening (cf. e.g. *The Economist* 2009). There is little to indicate, however, that ESDP missions have served to balance against Russia. Any full assessment of Russia's relationship to ESDP operations would certainly need to include those missions deployed in the borderlands between the two blocks, notably in Moldova and Georgia. Yet the decision-making surrounding EULEX (as the one mission under review here where the Russian position has played a palpable role) showed that non-recognizing EU governments priced their idiosyncratic national interests higher than countering what was widely perceived as Russian mischief-making. There is hence no evidence for balancing intentions – nor any convincing logic to that effect: NATO would provide a far more powerful instrument for containing Russia, and the US has taken a more critical stance towards Russia than have some of the EU's major powers.

Could ESDP conceivably fulfil a power-strategic purpose without being directed against powerful third parties? Some realists have argued that it (also) constituted a means of 'binding' Germany (cf. Jones 2007; Rynning 2011: 27). More generally, it might serve as an institution which channels balancing behaviour between the EU's major powers. Again, this study has not systematically assessed this potential explanation. Notwithstanding this caveat, whereas we saw that ESDP operations partly represented compromises between diverging national preferences, calling this an act of balancing would stretch that concept: the occurrence of ESDP operations is an expression of collective purpose, albeit not necessarily equal enthusiasm. While the operations in Chad and Afghanistan took place on the back of conflicting preferences, their opponents did not counter-balance but rather chose to limit their own engagement. Moreover, both cases were shown to have resulted less from a search for international power, but rather an attempt to leverage the EU for national priorities borne out of domestic political constraints and opportunities. In the case of the Balkan missions, on the other hand, there was little disagreement in the first place: when it came to the question of whether to intervene, all three member states discussed here (as well as others) were united in their willingness to act, and to act in the ESDP framework.

If ESDP's functioning cannot plausibly be portrayed as a power struggle with the EU's powerful neighbours or between EU governments, could it be interpreted as a collective exercise of power vis-à-vis weak states, a cooperative search for stability in Europe's neighbourhood reminiscent of the 19<sup>th</sup> century 'Concert of Europe'? In

some ways, this interpretation fits the operations analyzed in the preceding chapters. Through ESDP, EU governments have been pursuing ‘milieu goals’, i.e. non-exclusionary objectives in the Union’s environment (cf. Hyde-Price 2006: 222; 226-7; Wolfers 1962: 73). However, this shared interest in ‘stability’ is more coherently linked to domestic political concerns – whether fears over crime and migration, or particular concern about human rights violations on the European continent – than to concerns about states’ external power position. Their pursuit certainly indicates that EU governments were not primarily concerned about their relative power. Otherwise, the UK might have welcomed trouble in the Balkans for the reason that any negative spill-over would impact much more on Germany than Great Britain and thereby improve the latter’s relative position. Yet with respect to ESDP operations there are simply no indications for these kinds of calculations. Instead, EU governments cooperated to attain collective benefits which, at least in the Balkan cases, accrued to locals as much as foreign principals. Moreover, the multilateral way in which these missions are undertaken, e.g. by giving every EU government a veto, undermines the comparability with the earlier ‘Concert of Europe’. Whereas the pursuit of ‘milieu goals’ thus provides a link between ESDP and the search for international influence, it is not rooted in international security competition. It is instead an expression of shared responsibility embedded in converging domestic national views as to how regional conflicts should be addressed.

In sum, this section concluded that the operations under review can hardly be squared with the proposition that ESDP served to balance the United States. Not only did key member states explain their support for these operations with references to US wishes, the US partly instigated and generally welcomed them. Beyond that specific finding we also saw that considerations of external ‘hard’ power generally played a limited role in these operations: to the extent that the Union credibly sought to influence foreign events, it built primarily on the goodwill of host nations and offered them support for goals the latter ostensibly embraced themselves. Whereas these operations may partly have been conceived to gain influence in Washington or to adjust local incentives towards European preferences, they were rather inconsequential in Chad and Afghanistan. Their impact was more substantial in the Balkans, but served partly to extricate Western governments from unwelcome responsibilities they had incurred in the 1990s. There is hence little evidence for any claim that ESDP has been used as a voluntaristic means for increasing international influence – at least when it comes to competitively defined influence. Indeed, a number of ESDP scholars have recently called for the EU to adopt a ‘grand strategy’ that would include concrete objectives and priorities for the Union, calls that imply the absence of a discernible strategy so far (cf. Biscop 2009; Biscop and Coelmont 2010). This begs the question whether ESDP operations have perhaps instead served to expand European influence in a more indirect and veiled manner – by

promoting a liberal international order which concurs with European values and domestic order insofar as it advances human rights and the rule of law.

## **B. ESDP AND 'NORMATIVE POWER EUROPE' (II)**

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The second proposition had suggested that ESDP operations served primarily to promote collectively held liberal values. Accordingly, the principles laid down in the EU treaties such as advancing democracy, the (international) rule of law, and fundamental human rights would have to take precedence over other considerations in the decision-making surrounding an operation. From this proposition the second chapter deduced that EU decision-makers, in designing and directing foreign policy, were primarily concerned over the effective promotion of such principles; that the quest for improving the world proved more important than narrow self-interest; that EU decisions and operations were based on a strategy to this end, and that their design reflected it; that EU governments were willing to take a risk and/or pay a price for their promotion in terms of power and/or welfare; and that the US would tend to support these operations due to a professed interest in similar liberal values.

The analysis of the four operations under review here showed that there is some evidence that normative motives played a role in getting EU member states engaged in ESDP operations. Yet whereas some aspect of the promotion of liberal order formed a declared objective in each mission, it was often subordinate to other goals EU governments wanted to achieve. In Bosnia, the transition from NATO to EU command was primarily undertaken to demonstrate the EU's ability to act in the military domain, not because an ESDP operation would be better placed to advance liberal norms. The West's overall intervention in Bosnia was however designed to defend liberal values insofar as it aimed to suppress further human rights violations and to draw the country into the 'Atlantic' community of liberal states (cf. Daalder 2000: 165; 173-8; Duke 2000: 223). Since the EU has participated in attempting to re-shape the country into a non-sectarian polity, it has also been accused of (and praised for) trying to impose a liberal peace (cf. Merlingen and Ostrauskaite 2005; Cooper 2004; Paris 1997). Thus, whereas the installation of operation Althea did not follow a specifically liberal impetus, it formed part of a wider effort (albeit not one restricted to the EU) which can be characterized as liberal and ethically inspired.

A similar assessment applies to EULEX in Kosovo: whereas the mission was not primarily driven by a selfless desire to expand the benefits of liberal order into Kosovo, EULEX has been part of a broader Western intervention that was significantly inspired by concern over human rights violations. Indeed, it was arguably embarrassment over the 'triumph of the lack of will' in Bosnia which got the West into Kosovo in the first place (cf. Ker-Lindsay 2009b: 1; Judah 2008: 87;

Wall 2008: 169; Gow 1997). Yet when it came to the deployment of the ESDP mission, the original Western goals of establishing a liberal multi-ethnic entity had subsided in favour of a narrower focus on stability and face-saving extrication from a difficult project. Neither the recognition of Kosovo's independence by most EU governments nor its rejection by five among them came down to normative deliberation, but to the consequences they expected regarding their national polities. Still, the wider context and the mission's focus on strengthening local rule of law show that the EU's decision-making on Kosovo was embedded into a wider response to the wars of Yugoslav succession which was significantly motivated by liberal aspirations.

When it comes to the EU's mission in Afghanistan, the impact of ethical considerations was more limited. The mission's objective, contributing to 'effective civilian policing arrangements [...] within the framework of the rule of law and respect[ing] human rights', clearly linked up to liberal values (Council of the EU 2007a: art. 3). Yet EU governments' efforts to achieve this goal remained relatively modest, especially if compared to the political capital invested into NATO's concurrent military operation. Rule of law for Afghans was decidedly secondary to military stability, even though the absence of the former impacted negatively on the latter. Moreover, the political rationale focused on demonstrating engagement in Afghanistan and on shifting domestic perceptions so as to be able to stress the civilian nature of the project and to dodge the contradicting pressures of showing alliance solidarity and international responsibility while avoiding casualties to the extent possible. The mission's liberal aspirations were thus overshadowed by the politics of blame avoidance.

The operation in Chad and the Central African Republic, finally, was the closest the EU has come so far to a 'humanitarian intervention'. Based on the cosmopolitan notion that vulnerable refugees deserved protection while comprising host nation consent, it might be presented as an archetypal case for 'normative power Europe'. Yet whereas humanitarian concerns played a role in the French initiative as well as for other important contributors, they were in themselves insufficient to trigger the operation. Rather, it was the domestic political interest in being seen to 'do something' for Darfur that was decisive, and domestic political risks that made other EU governments shirk involvement. This shift in perspective also helps to explain why the EU undertook an operation that was inherently unsustainable – limited as it was to treating symptoms of a conflict while restricting the duration of this treatment to one year. Whereas some governments likely acted on humanitarian impetus, the overall project came down to demonstrating solicitousness rather than engaging in a credible strategy of defending liberal values.

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## THE ROLE OF LIBERAL VALUES

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Collating the drivers across all four operations, there is some evidence for concern with promoting liberal values abroad: the operation in Chad aimed to contribute to the protection of basic human rights whereas the other missions were focused on the promotion of a rule of law that took its inspirations from Western institutions. However, these objectives were generally not the *primary* aims of ESDP action, but were usually subordinate to other purposes – be they the avoidance of blame in Afghanistan and Kosovo, the expected benefits of visibly upholding humanitarianism in Chad, or the demonstration of EU governments’ newly won ability to shape events in the Balkans. This assessment follows partly from the motives EU governments had for each mission, but above all from the limited adequacy of the EU’s efforts against the yardstick of a ‘normative power’ seeking to transform the targets of its interventions, if not the nature of international relations. In the case of the Balkan operations, liberal aspirations were mixed with political objectives related to promoting the EU as a security actor and ensuring the region’s stability. The motives for these goals were not limited to concern over liberal values, but also involved the desire not to see governments’ credibility undermined by renewed violence and the concurrent realization in European societies that their investment into a liberal, multi-ethnic Balkan had paid off less than hoped for. In Chad and Afghanistan, the interventions were much more limited in what they achieved than what they insinuated to represent.

In short, ESDP operations were designed to promote liberal values, but not necessarily to do so effectively. This support for liberal order also tended to be in concurrence with rather than in contrast to political self-interest. There is, in particular, little to indicate that EU governments were prepared to pay a (significant) political price for the expansion of liberal norms. This shows, for example, in the divisions on the Afghanistan and Chad operations: whereas both operations purportedly promoted liberal values, Germany and the UK on the one and France on the other hand found themselves on opposing sides – with each supporting one but opposing the other mission. Similarly, despite its profession to shared (liberal) values, the EU could not achieve a collective response to Kosovo’s independence – with each side rather choosing the path of least domestic political risk. In all three instances calculations of perceived political costs and benefits trumped principled policy.

Yet the realization that the EU’s pursuit of liberal order through various ESDP missions was refracted through calculations of political interests should not lead to unrestrained cynicism. The operations’ objectives were generally supportive of liberal values, and there is little indication that governments used them to deceive domestic or international audiences. Rather, such objectives remained expressions

of political aspiration, genuinely wished for but insufficiently backed up with much appetite to face up to (and address) the gap between expectations and capabilities (cf. Hill 1993). That does not mean that normative aspirations did not play a role, but that appearances and symbolic activism were ultimately more important.

In sum, this section argued that there is considerable evidence for the presence, but little for the preponderance of concerns over liberal values in decision-making on ESDP operations. All operations related to ethical concerns which were shared in the West more widely. It is likely for this reason that the US usually supported these interventions instead of regarding them as competition for influence. Yet with respect to liberal values EU governments tended to put the emphasis on their good intentions rather than on output and effectiveness – notably in the two operations outside of Europe. As a consequence, ESDP operations have partly served the purpose of making Europe feel good about itself rather than responding to local needs. European crisis management operations have thus suffered from similar defects as its policies of development cooperation – with governments forming a ‘cartel of good intentions’ (cf. Easterly 2002). Yet demanding that principled selflessness *prevail* over political self-interest implies setting the bar very high. Advocates of a normative power Europe may thus take solace in the fact that liberal norms did play a palpable role in EU foreign policy, even if they served as means for external stability, domestic approval or promoting the EU’s security identity. Most optimistically, the EU’s lack of decisive action could even be justified as an instance of liberal imprudence avoided (cf. Doyle 1986: 1163): the Union offered foreign governments opportunities for drawing closer to the zone of liberal peace but did not attempt to impose its values and preferences.

### **C. ESDP AND THE SEARCH FOR ‘EVER CLOSER UNION’ (III)**

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The third proposition had suggested that ESDP operations may have served as a tool for EU governments in their quest to advance European integration by means of showcasing the Union’s ability of contributing to international security. According to this logic, governments’ pursuit of visibility for the EU as an international security actor would have had to prevail over alternative considerations in the decision-making surrounding an operation. From this proposition the second chapter deduced that we would expect to find an emphasis on ‘flag-raising exercises’; a conscious choice for the EU framework against plausible institutional alternatives (such as NATO or the UN) on the grounds of political visibility rather than functional adequacy; and an emphasis on demonstrating EU unity and EU activity as a goal in and of itself, irrespective of the effect an operation could be expected to have on its target.

### *The Drivers behind EU Crisis Management Operations*

The examination of the four cases confirmed that there was considerable evidence for the promotion of the EU as a security actor, but only modest support for the idea that this in turn served to advance European integration. In other words, the second proposition comprised a composite causal framework which suggested in a first step that operations may have been done for the benefit of EU visibility and in a second step that this visibility was an instrument in the quest for legitimizing integration. The relevance and significance of the first motive can be gauged from the decision-making surrounding the operations. This is however more difficult for the second, ulterior motive because the observable implications of a clandestine integration agenda for any specific operation are limited. This section will therefore start out by establishing the degree to which the promotion of the Union's ability to act for the sake of EU visibility played a role in each operation. It will then return to the question of whether it was plausibly integrationist motives that propelled EU governments to promote such collective activism.

In the case of operation Althea, there is considerable evidence that EU governments pushed for the transition from NATO to EU command in order to demonstrate the EU's ability as a military actor. Not only French and German, but also British officials attested to this motive. While this change to an EU command was helped by the fact that the US wanted to disengage, it was also brought about by a desire within the Union to show that ESDP was 'more than paperwork' – and a feeling that the Western Balkans were a suitable testing ground (Interviews; cf. Andréani 2000). Thus, European institutions, and Javier Solana in particular, pushed for this transition in order to establish the Union's credentials in peace support operations. The added benefit of developing ESDP in the Western Balkans was that the participating forces already knew the environment, that no member state had doubts about the Union's collective interest in south-eastern Europe, and that it offered the chance for a flattering comparison in demonstrating the development the EU had undergone since it last engaged in Bosnia in the early 1990s. Given the limited value-added that Althea provided compared to its NATO predecessor, it is plausible that part of the transition's objective was to provide a symbolic booster for ESDP.

The motive of showcasing the EU's added value played a somewhat lesser role in Kosovo. Although EU governments were originally content at the prospect of taking over from the UN, the choice for the ESDP framework also happened on functional grounds: EULEX' UN predecessor had lost much of its local legitimacy and ability to influence the situation, making a transition more urgent than with NATO's deterrent force in Bosnia. Yet whereas in Kosovo raising the EU flag was less of an end in itself, the mission was consciously used as a tool for demonstrating European unity – and in this sense served the objective of 'ever closer Union'. Aware of the derision that the EU's 'common' foreign policy would be faced with as a consequence of member

states' differing positions on independence, the EU sought to downplay the question of recognition and instead emphasized its unity regarding the practical challenges of state-building which it would address via EULEX (cf. Haber 2009). The objective of demonstrating collective purpose was even shared by those governments which found themselves isolated on the issue of recognition: by agreeing to the mission, they in fact indirectly agreed to implementing the Ahtisaari proposal and thereby tolerated EU supervision of and support for Kosovo independence (Interview; cf. ICG 2007a: 13; 20). The dissenting EU governments arguably would not have taken this step in the absence of a common EU foreign policy, which in turn indicates that they considerably valued this foreign policy. The objective of containing the damage to Europe's common foreign policy evinces the latter's value to EU governments.

When it comes to the policing mission in Afghanistan, the motive of furthering the EU's actorness in international security by raising the Union's flag was again in display, even if it was likely not decisive. A number of observers suggested that part of the reason for this mission was the EU's search for greater visibility in Afghanistan (Interviews; cf. Wilder 2007: 21). Interestingly, the mission's French detractors also invoked the necessity of strengthening ESDP – by protecting it from the overwhelming challenge a commitment in Afghanistan might entail (Interviews). Yet chapter VI also showed the limits of this logic for EUPOL Afghanistan: most officials reasoned that it would likely not have taken place had Germany not decided to support this project – a decision that was largely based on other motives. Moreover, the desire to see the mission, and thereby the ESDP instrument succeed was insufficient to convince a majority of EU governments to undertake greater efforts in providing adequate resources.

With respect to the Union's operation in eastern Chad there is also only limited evidence of acting for the sake of promoting ESDP. Paris' emphasis was more on showing activism than on activating the EU – although the French government certainly appreciated the positive effect that the operation turned out to have on ESDP. The motive of advancing ESDP also came in for some major contributors, notably Poland and Sweden. Finally, and similarly to the mission in Afghanistan, the existence of the ESDP framework facilitated the translation of a French policy idea into concrete collective action: far fewer EU governments would arguably have participated had this operation been undertaken in a different institutional framework, and the German decision to formally support an operation the government felt decidedly queasy about also owed to Berlin's unwillingness to potentially harm future EU foreign policy cooperation.

In bringing together the evidence of all four cases it becomes clear that promoting ESDP has played a distinct if variable role in EU governments' motivations. Whereas it loomed large in Bosnia – and, interviewed officials pointed out, many of the other

early operations, – its import has subsided since. One official even described ESDP's early phase as 'mission shopping [...] for the sake of ESDP being able to prove its capacity to act' (Interview with GER official). Yet several officials also pointed out that by 2009 the EU had started to take a much more defensive stance in terms of accepting new crisis management responsibilities (Interviews with MS officials). Before, the motive of strengthening the EU's standing as an international security actor showed in the widespread unwillingness to openly defy the initiatives and preferences of other member states for fear of hurting the prospects of future collective action. This logic was particularly salient in the case of Kosovo, but also showed up with respect to Afghanistan and Chad.

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### THE ROLE OF INTEGRATIONIST MOTIVES

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If there is evidence that EU governments used ESDP operations to promote the EU's standing in the domain of international security politics, can we in turn infer that this objective was subsidiary to promoting European integration? The idea that ESDP (action) served the ulterior motive of advancing European integration is inherently linked to an element of disguise insofar as the straightforward alternative would be to openly argue for and act towards greater integration rather than having the EU act abroad to bolster its legitimacy at home. Because a degree of deception is thus explicitly assumed in this 'integration by stealth' proposition, this motive cannot follow directly from the circumstances of the decision-making or even simply the fact that the Union acts collectively. After all, such collective action has similarly been taken as evidence of balancing intentions or the convergence of national aspirations for European foreign policy. In determining whether the integration conjecture is plausible we thus need to establish the extent to which undertaking such missions could be instrumental in achieving greater integration, and the extent to which EU governments would credibly have pursued this objective.

The absence of evidence for integrationist motives in the four operations obviously does not imply evidence of absence. It is however matched by important theoretical reasons that militate against such an interpretation. The first reason why interpreting ESDP action as a nation-building exercise is doubtful is that its design is arguably ill fit for this purpose. To the extent that national identity is wedded to security and defence, it is wedded to the notion of an existential threat (cf. Waever 1996). Yet territorial defence, by which such an existential threat would be most palpably addressed, has consciously been bracketed in ESDP (cf. EU 2010: art. 42). Moreover, the potentially powerful tool of building identity through a common (or at least more integrated) army is largely absent, despite potentially significant positive (notably budgetary) side effects (cf. Heise 2006: 5). If nation-building was the true purpose behind ESDP, the path chosen in devising ESDP would thus be a

## *Chapter IX: Revisiting the Propositions*

conspicuously unambitious and rather ineffective one. This should also be evident once we compare ESDP to NATO. No one suspects NATO of pursuing a transatlantic nation-building agenda, but the EU comprises a lower degree of military integration than the Alliance. Obviously, lack of ambition within ESDP might reflect societal opposition to further integration, but accepting this supposition would defeat the logic of using a common foreign policy in order to promote the EU vis-à-vis its citizens.

The second reason to doubt that the pursuit of an EU security identity served to promote European integration as such lies in the absence of a shared interest of EU governments in pursuing this aim. As we saw in the last chapter, of the three major EU members surveyed in this study only the German government professed a preference for pursuing greater integration in the area of defence policy – and Berlin has been the least proactive of the three in the field of ESDP. Whereas the French government also sought to advance the latter, this was usually in pursuit of French national objectives – whether they related to domestic calculations as in the case of Chad or the promotion of European ‘autonomy’ in the case of Bosnia. For the British government, promoting further integration has been anathema – and to the extent that considerations of integration have impacted on the British position, they have consisted in attempting to prove that no such thing was or would (ever) be occurring.

The purported goal of strengthening integration by means of foreign policy collaboration not only sits uneasily with the professed objectives of the British government, but also with the widespread practice of EU governments to ostentatiously defend national identity and lay blame for domestically troubling policies at Brussels’ doorstep. This obviously does not prevent them from cooperating in the European framework. However, the changes applied to the Constitutional Treaty in its makeover as the Treaty of Lisbon – i.e. the scrapping of the most symbolic provisions reeking of nation-building such as the title of European ‘foreign minister’ or the designation of a European anthem – suggest that governments are aware and wary of societal opposition to further integration in this domain. That does not mean that integrationist calculation is entirely absent from the ESDP’s inception and development: progress to that effect may indeed be welcomed by some actors, but hardly constitutes the main (much less shared) driver.

In sum, this section demonstrated that the examined ESDP operations provide substantial evidence for EU governments’ interest in promoting an EU security identity, but that this interest did not amount to a disguised agenda for deeper integration. Neither the UK nor France evinced much interest for a greater pooling of sovereignty in the area of foreign policy. Moreover, while we saw some emphasis on

'flag-raising exercises' in the early stages of ESDP, this has subsided with the maturation of the policy. There has also been some commitment to the objective of demonstrating European unity as an end in itself, notably over Kosovo, but that very case also showed the limits of European foreign policy solidarity. The following section will explore the roots of the continuing diversity in unity.

#### **D. ESDP AND DOMESTIC POLITICS (IV)**

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The fourth and last proposition had suggested that ESDP operations served above all to safeguard or improve governments' domestic political position by advocating popular causes, dodging domestically difficult foreign policy issues, or perhaps even by diverting attention from other contentious issues. Accordingly, the decision which missions to embark on, the scale of every country's participation, and the conditions it may formulate for support or toleration would be made by each government with an eye towards showing responsiveness to societal priorities and keeping potentially risky issues at arm's length. For this proposition to be vindicated, chapter II deduced that national positions on these missions be tailored with a view to the respective societal preferences and priorities rather than target needs; that policies would diverge from what would constitute 'effective solutions' with respect to enhancing external power and/or promoting liberal values; that these policies would lack a credible strategy with respect to these goals as the latter would be secondary to domestic politics; that the emphasis would be on activities that domestic audiences would feel good about while avoiding risks and deflecting potential blame; and that debate between EU governments reflected differing domestic political priorities.

Across the four case studies the impact of domestic expectations was arguably most limited when it came to the operation in Bosnia. The threat of bloodshed in, and the associated media attention for Bosnia had largely receded by the end of 2004, thereby limiting opportunities for taking credit. Yet the deployment of EU peacekeepers has to be contrasted with the potential domestic liability of a situation where Washington might publicly call on Europeans' inability to relieve them of simple peace-keeping duties, or where a unilateral US drawdown would even result in renewed instability. EU governments thus likely valued the opportunity to show that they were able to collectively take responsibility for a country where they had conspicuously failed a decade before, with the international community and European publics aghast at their inability to impose an end to the violence. Moreover, the differing preferences regarding the relationship between the EU and NATO that dominated much of the discussions on Althea in Brussels can be linked to domestic politics as much as geo-strategic considerations. However, neither of these links was direct. Domestic expectations thus led to certain dispositions which

shaped decision-making on Althea rather than explaining those decisions themselves.

The case of Kosovo reveals both similarities and differences as compared to Bosnia. Similarly to Bosnia, EU governments shared an interest in presenting themselves as capable of contributing to a solution for the regional situation – again in stark contrast to their earlier reliance on US power. In contrast to Bosnia, the potential downsides of a failure to achieve a transition away from the UN lead, i.e. the threat of violence and the concomitant problems of justification at home, were greater in Kosovo. Decision-making on EULEX also featured a different conflation of ‘national interests’ and domestic politics: whereas the EU-NATO cleavage had much receded, it was replaced by a new divide regarding the question of Kosovo’s independence. Although it is possible to deduce the interests of the five countries unwilling to recognize the latter directly from their national predicament of housing restive minorities or feeling close to Serbia, linking them to domestic politics is more convincing. The threat to all governments was domestic backlash against the perception that they would risk the ‘national interest’ of upholding the principle of territorial integrity, not any actual threat to their national polity. Whence came the lament of a Spanish official that ‘our position on Kosovo is extremely contradictory between our goal to strengthen EU foreign policy on the one side and the fact that we contribute to weaken it on the European continent itself. In the government everyone is aware of this contradiction, *but we cannot change our position for the moment*’ (ICG 2010a: 2; emphasis added). In other words, foreign policy goals were subordinate to domestic political calculations.

The police-building mission in Afghanistan was also influenced by domestic political considerations insofar as it was designed to appeal to publics’ preferences for a distinctive European and less militarized approach. This was particularly evident in Germany, where the need for greater policing resources was explicitly invoked to rebut US demands for greater military engagement (cf. Bundeskanzleramt 2007; Jung 2006; Kaim 2008). For this reason German politicians also pushed through a (virtual) doubling of EUPOL’s size against the advice of EU planners. The importance of domestic political considerations was far less in evidence for the UK and France, except insofar as the traditional foreign policy postures they took – sceptical towards the US and NATO for France, and supportive of the US while reluctant to fully engage with the EU for the UK – also correlated with domestic political convenience. Yet insofar as Berlin played a decisive role in the crucial decisions regarding EUPOL, the latter’s motives were critical in determining the drivers behind the EU as a collective.

Domestic expectations and their anticipation finally played an important role when it came to EUFOR Tchad/RCA. The operation’s instigator, the French government,

was in search of a means of 'doing something' to show that it would honour its electoral promise of addressing domestic indignation over Darfur. While many analysts presumed that this coincided with French strategic interests in the region, chapter VII demonstrated that the latter are unlikely to have been the primary cause of the operation – a reasoning that ostensibly convinced numerous other EU governments with no interest in being perceived as a side-kick to French neo-colonialism. Their reactions also reveal a preponderance of domestic political considerations of their own. Those that perceived an accommodating domestic political setting, notably in Ireland, Sweden and the Netherlands, eventually made (limited) contributions whereas those who felt at risk of domestic backlash, as in the UK and particularly Germany, stood apart. By contrast, this pattern of participation cannot directly be linked to the intra-EU cleavages regarding geopolitical outlook, support for an EU security identity, or national levels of support for liberal interventionism.

Comparing the relative influence of domestic calculations across the four cases, their role in explaining both the fact of cooperation in the ESDP framework as well as its inherent limitations seems substantial if indirect. EU governments' interests converged where they all faced incentives to display their ability to act consequentially, as they notably did in the Balkans. They were more diverse with respect to the two operations outside of Europe because domestic perceptions of the wisdom to act in these places, and the price a particular public would be willing to pay, varied more widely. This in turn defined the prospective political costs and benefits for the respective governments, and influenced their willingness to initiate, support, tolerate or oppose a certain measure: with respect to Chad, the French government counted on net public relations benefits from its grand-standing whereas neither its British nor its German government could expect them; with respect to Afghanistan, the German government sought to downplay the predominantly military nature of the West's engagement and to avoid the political costs of increased military engagement without risking the charge of ignoring its international responsibilities whereas France did not feel similar pressures. Although there was greater unity of purpose with respect to the Balkan missions, the cleavages that did arise in the respective intergovernmental debates also reflected domestic national priorities at least in part: in Kosovo, most EU governments were above all interested in extricating themselves from an increasingly thankless and risky responsibility whereas five of them were more afraid of the potential domestic repercussions of Kosovar independence; and in Bosnia, the differences between 'Atlanticist' and 'Gaullist' preferences related to dearly held traditions that had become engrained in the self-images of national foreign policy elites.

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## THE ROLE OF DOMESTIC CALCULATIONS

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The import of domestic political calculations did not only show from the fact that national positions on the four ESDP operations corresponded to domestic considerations and priorities. It arguably also transpired from the emphasis on doing *something* irrespective of whether an operation amounted to a credible strategy for the issue at stake: the greater the gap between aspirations and plausible outcomes, the more likely it is that an operation's objective was about demonstrating good intentions for the benefit of domestic audiences rather than actual achievements in the field. Asked about the logic behind ESDP operations, one interviewee thus explained that 'typically it is preceded by an outcry in the media [...] and then Solana says his famous words, "but we have to do something". [...] Why? [...] Because we want to be a global player. In principle, we want to jump on every additional new topic, no matter where it takes place, just to show how important we are' (Interview with CGS official).

As the preceding case studies showed, this element of grandstanding was greater for the operations in Chad and Afghanistan than for those in the Balkans – although the lack of unity on Kosovo and concomitant pretences suggest that even there at least some member states ranked domestic political convenience above foreign policy coherence. The fact that such discrepancies between genuine action and purported political objectives rose with geographical and mental distance bolsters the proposition that foreign policy action was in fact targeted at domestic audiences. EU governments face greater incentives for investing into sustainable results in their neighbourhood than they do in faraway places. Not only are changes in Afghanistan or Chad – for better or worse – much less palpable for European publics, they are also not as easily imputable to EU governments' activities than comparable changes in Bosnia or Kosovo. A focus on domestic expectations is thus consistent with this study's finding that the operations conducted outside of Europe were less consistent with either any power-political or value-driven strategy.

Whereas the importance of domestic politics has plausibility with respect to societal clamour for doing something about Darfur or pursuing a less militarized approach in Afghanistan, this is more debatable when it comes to domestic demand for foreign policy credibility or for continuity in traditional foreign policy stances. The reason lies in the difficulty of distinguishing between two potential causal chains. On the one hand, a government might embrace a (traditional) foreign policy role because it believes that this best serves the national interest – and this perception might well be shared by domestic foreign policy elites in the media, bureaucracy, civil society and academia whose judgment influences the public's view of a government's foreign policy competence and legitimacy. This is the view that tends to characterize much of the work undertaken under the banner of strategic or political culture. On

the other hand, the government may adopt a (traditional) foreign policy role as the path of least resistance because it assumes that this would most easily convince relevant societal actors of the government's competence and thereby improve its chances of remaining in power. This view would tend to take prevalent domestic conceptions and the resulting foreign policy traditions – such as a preference for close ties with the US, a belief into the importance of embedding external action into multilateral frameworks, pacifism-induced antipathy to military intervention, or similar dispositions – as variables to be weighed by governments against each other and against the policy's prospective political costs, i.e. the risk of casualties and visible policy failure. Accordingly, governments' guideline would not be 'the national interest', but society's perception thereof, with a view towards eliciting approval, limiting criticism, and avoiding future blame.

Since decision-makers' motives are ultimately unobservable, it is impossible to know for sure to what extent governments 'honestly' seek to distil 'the national interest', however defined, or whether they take their clues from opinion-makers' expected response. Divergences between a government's actions in the field and the discourse it embraces might provide indications however: to the extent that a government *de facto* abets Kosovo's independence while ostentatiously combating it; substantially contributes to NATO operations while publicly distancing itself from the organization; takes part in military counter-insurgency in Afghanistan while insisting on the humanitarian nature of the operation; or contributes to a humanitarian operation that is inherently unsustainable, analysts may suspect that domestic political calculation trumped foreign policy strategy. At the same time, such discrepancies can of course also be the result of mistaken beliefs on the part of decision-makers. This study did not offer conclusive evidence that domestic political calculations rather than the beliefs of diplomats and politicians were generally decisive for policy-making, but only showed that national positions were in accordance with domestic incentives.

If it is true that domestic politics took precedence in defining EU foreign policy, this begs the question why governments engage in ostensibly unpopular operations. For example, how come Germany is not withdrawing from ISAF in the face of domestic opposition to the operation? Why would France participate in NATO operations, and why would the UK allow any EU foreign policy in the first place? Is such behaviour not an indicator that countries' 'real' foreign policy is determined by power-political considerations, if perhaps hidden behind the smokescreen of a public relations-inspired EU foreign policy that focuses on secondary normative objectives? Whereas these questions necessarily go beyond the research question at hand because they demand an analysis of countries' overall foreign policies, part of the answer might lie in the diverging exigencies governments and their societal counterparts face in terms of consistency. Governments frequently need to take quick decisions in the

face of crisis and later have to face up to those decisions' unintended consequences without undermining the public's confidence into their competence and foresight. They therefore need to hedge their bets and ensure some continuity. With respect to Germany's continuing military engagement in Afghanistan, the explanation may thus lie in the contradictory risks and opportunities that the government faces: any quick withdrawal would be risky because, in the absence of an improved situation in Afghanistan, it would beg the question as to why the government invested so much in the first place. Moreover, such a move might easily backfire if it was perceived to result from political opportunism rather than deeply held convictions. This makes any turn-around difficult in the absence of a cataclysmic event. Similarly, the perception of opportunistic behaviour in foreign policy could easily be interpreted as a lack of statesmanship and a threat to long-term German interests of being perceived as a reliable and responsible ally. There is finally also an opportunity for politicians in presenting themselves as leaders rather than followers of public opinion by ostentatiously upholding the national over the electoral interest in specific cases.

In short, the quest for domestic political benefits does not equal following public opinion. It instead consists in finding a balance between appealing to wider public sentiment and convincing foreign policy elites that the policy is neither rudderless nor damaging to longer-standing national interests. The easiest way to do so, in turn, is to discursively embed foreign policy in respected traditional national security cultures. The fact that national positions on ESDP operations largely correlated with these traditions also implies that this study did not contradict the results of the literature on 'national strategic cultures'. Rather, it complemented their findings by putting greater emphasis on the trade-offs that governments had to make in each case, and by providing an explanation for why national dispositions were translated into less than coherent foreign policy behaviour: because the expected political price for living up to national self-conceptions differed in response to various other factors such as concerns over cross-national burden-sharing, diverging geographic priorities, or the perceived likelihood of success.

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#### THE LIMITS OF THE DOMESTIC POLITICS EXPLANATION

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As the preceding chapter showed, there are good reasons to conclude that key national dispositions evident in intergovernmental debates on ESDP operations – emphasis on *grandeur* and strategic autonomy for France, proximity to NATO and Euro-scepticism for the UK, and aversion to military force projection for Germany – were nods towards domestic sensibilities as much as expressions of geopolitical strategy. Yet the above also makes clear that the explanatory power of domestic expectations owed considerably to its ambiguity. It appeared as a generally plausible

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explanation which however could not account for the 'agency slack' that the four ESDP operations featured: EU governments, third parties, or even individual politicians or bureaucrats chose to promote various actions, autonomously though not independently from the examined underlying drivers. Many aspects of the EU's engagement came down to individuals' political initiatives and ideas for action rather than inescapable structural pressures. For example, it is unclear that the EU would have intervened in Chad in the absence of Kouchner's appointment and preoccupation with Darfur. Although the resulting operation fit into a logic of domestic grandstanding, the latter does not explain the former's ideational origins.

Explanations which assign policy some underlying political rationale may thus miss the point. This idea has also been conceded by one of the founding figures of modern IR who otherwise insisted on the necessity of the rationality assumption for giving meaning to international politics: Hans Morgenthau suggested that the explanation for U.S. behaviour in the Vietnam War may lie in a 'counter-theory of irrational politics, a kind of pathology of international politics' (Morgenthau 1978: 7). For illustration, he went on to cite a 1970 *Wall Street Journal* article arguing that 'the desire to "do something" pervades top levels of Government and may overpower other "common sense" advice that insists the U.S. ability to shape events is negligible. The yen for action could lead to bold policy as therapy' (Morgenthau 1978: 8). Put somewhat less radically, a theoretical framework focusing on underlying drivers cannot account for the 'white noise' of foreign policy ideas and initiatives that were introduced for addressing particular problems rather than pursuing grand political objectives – even if the former were often formulated so as to appeal to (or at least fit into) such a political logic.

The comparison across both the case studies and the preferences of pivotal actors showed that ESDP operations were driven by an amalgam of different motivations. Interviewed officials frequently explicated their countries' preferences with reference to practical foreign policy objectives: enhancing the effectiveness of security sector reform in Afghanistan by ensuring coordination among European partners, or protecting refugees in Chad because Western forces would not be accepted in Darfur itself. The Balkan missions were likewise often characterized by interviewed officials as 'natural developments' stemming from the Union's increasing engagement in this region and the resultant effectiveness gains related to organizing international involvement through the EU. In applying the theoretical framework developed in chapter II, domestic politics constituted the most credible of the four putative drivers by comparison. There was however only limited evidence that domestic expectations had a verifiable direct impact on foreign policy decision-making, much less one that was independent of the other drivers. The analytical framework thus proved too broad to allow for more than a comparison of the plausibility of different classes of reasons. In particular, it fell short in specifying

when and how exactly (anticipated) domestic expectations would lead policy-makers to propose, tolerate or oppose specific actions. This lack of a direct link between the diplomatic history of ESDP operations and overarching political purposes suggests that theory-driven analysis will continue to face well-founded challenges from those promoting the advantages of inductive historical analysis over attempts to identify dominant underlying drivers. This is in part because such deeper drivers constitute amorphous and indeterminate reasons rather than direct and active causes. In turn, this implies not only a need for further research as to how exactly domestic expectations come to shape national foreign policy dispositions and specific actions, but also begs the question of how domestic expectations may interact with the search for external power, the quest to spread liberal values, and the objective of closer European integration. The following, final section will address this issue.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

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The quest for external influence was the first putative driver behind ESDP that this study analyzed. As we concluded earlier in this chapter, this search was characterized by support for rather than balancing against the preponderant power. To the extent that ESDP operations reacted to US foreign policy preferences, it was by taking up suggestions of how the EU could be helpful for broader Western objectives – although this did not necessarily imply interchangeable aims or hugely resourced efforts. This collaboration can be (and has been) interpreted as a geopolitical strategy targeted at keeping the US engaged on international security issues and thereby securing some influence on US policy. Yet the impact of US expectations on EU action also relates to domestic expectations: in all the cases evoked – Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan – it was Western governments collectively who intervened, to an important extent as a consequence of domestic indignation over the violation of norms that Western societies considered non-negotiable.<sup>44</sup> Their collaboration reflected shared domestic expectations that Western peace-building would entail more than a collective geopolitical interest in lording it over three poor mountain regions. Western governments subsequently shared an interest in managing, and extricating themselves from, these situations in a way that they would not become political liabilities at home. Insofar as this logic holds, the

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<sup>44</sup> This arguably pertains to Afghanistan as well when it comes to the state-building exercise (rather than the terrorist hunt) into which the EU has become engaged: whereas the original intervention followed a logic of national security, it was quickly enhanced by humanitarian and liberal motives designed to appeal to domestic audiences (cf. Bellamy and Wheeler 2008: 532; Blair 2001).

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question whether these operations were triggered by domestic or US expectations becomes somewhat spurious because they blend into transnationally shared expectations of Western societies. These did not follow geopolitical *diktat*, but were rooted in a shared sense of purpose.

The domestic dimension of transatlantic cooperation moreover related to the degree to which good relations with the US means good domestic politics for many EU governments: insofar as the US is seen as providing an ultimate security guarantee (and as representing a kindred Western power), European societies expect their governments to maintain good relationships with Washington – even if self-esteem demands that this relationship be characterized by friendship, not subservience. EU sensitivity to American preferences finally reflected a desire of being able to show that the respective country was contributing to defending Western interests and values: (most) European governments can profit domestically from being perceived as close to the leader of the ‘free world’, and one way of procuring invitations to the White House is by giving support to US foreign policy. In short, the close collaboration with the US suggests that the EU’s quest for external influence via ESDP operations is linked more with domestic expectations regarding the purpose of such influence – largely shared with the US – than any intrinsic need for balancing influence.

The second driver that this study analysed was the idea of a ‘normative power Europe’, a power driven in its external interaction by the constitutive liberal values that define it internally. The impact of such values was visible if limited because it expressed itself in demonstrating concern over the expansion of liberal values rather than in committing to a credible strategy to that end. While these findings may seem disillusioning to advocates of a normative or ethical power Europe, they imply an inherent possibility of progress: if governments react to domestic political incentives, their commitment to expanding liberal values will be a function of societal insistence on real results rather than placebos. EU governments ostensibly tried to ‘do good’ in the case studies surveyed, but faced disincentives to take bigger political risks. Therefore, the EU’s pursuit of liberal values in its crisis management operations has sometimes bordered grandstanding and self-deception.

Yet in both their rhetoric and (in-)action, EU governments simply anticipated what they thought that their societies would appreciate. Held to higher standards domestically, they may well take the courage of investing more into expanding liberal order. It is ultimately societal debate that determines what the ‘national interest’ is, and to what extent it is to include the welfare of foreigners (cf. Rathbun 2004). Any aspirations to that effect obviously come with important caveats, relating above all to the difference between good intentions and good results. In all four cases – Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Chad – the question whether Western

intervention, and the shape in which it took place, was on balance reasonably well executed measured against the benchmark of spreading liberal order remains debatable. This caveat notwithstanding, the drivers of 'normative power' and domestic expectations are not antithetical. Instead, they were only partially aligned because European societies were simultaneously worried over the risks and costs of foreign engagement, and because they seemed ready to accept policies designed to assuage lingering guilt over earlier Balkan failures and colonial pasts rather than to hold their governments against higher benchmarks.

The third examined driver behind ESDP operations was a shared interest in creating an EU security identity for the purpose of advancing European integration. Objectives in this regard diverged across the Union, and there was little evidence for any hidden integration agenda – though this does not exclude additional integration pressures as a result of the unintended consequences of increasingly acting collectively. Instead, EU governments' interest in an EU security identity seemed to be linked to the concurrent ability to act and take credit for foreign policy successes while avoiding or at least sharing blame that may have resulted from an inability to act or any action gone wrong. Kent Weaver identified various forms of a voluntary shrinking of discretionary power such as agenda limitation and 'passing the buck' as well as scapegoating as a political strategy for avoiding blame (cf. Weaver 1986; Matlary 2009). It follows that 'outsourcing' crisis management to a jointly controlled entity such as ESDP can be rational for EU governments even in the absence of an hidden integrationist agenda. This applies in particular if governments retain the ability to upload national preferences that are less than fully shared among EU partners, as France and Germany managed with respect to the operations in Chad and Afghanistan (and others did with respect to national priorities of their own). The main threats, from a government's perspective, are then twofold: one is linked to generic domestic unease over shrinking national discretionary power, as evident in the UK. The second stems from the tendency to find oneself pushed into responsibilities that the public rather not shoulder, as manifest in the German response to French enthusiasm for intervening in Africa (cf. Schmidt 2006; Brummer 2012). Yet as long as the political benefits outweigh the costs, a condition that national vetoes and the possibility of non-participation usually imply, support for an EU security identity is perfectly compatible with an emphasis on the explanatory power of domestic politics.

Whereas the quest for an EU security identity can be linked to domestic politics, it also relates to the other two examined drivers, liberal values and external influence. With respect to the latter, an (autonomous) European institutional platform gives many governments the opportunity to participate in foreign policy activities where neither their influence nor the overall outcomes are necessarily marginal. For most EU governments, unilateral action has become too costly, and the alternative

institutional venues are inhibited by significant disadvantages: within NATO, public perceptions of an over-emphasis on military tools and one overbearing partner make it difficult for most EU governments to play (and be perceived to play) a consequential role – and not every EU member is in NATO; within the UN, the same lack of visibility and influence results from the Secretariat's greater autonomy, perceived lesser effectiveness, and the key role for the Security Council. Thus, ESDP operations offer many governments a prospect for wielding influence. As the operationalization of this framework shows, however, ESDP has served less as a vehicle for accumulating power, but primarily as a means for contributing, however narrowly, to advancing a liberal order. By creating a more effective outlet for such aspirations, EU governments have also created an institution that has come to place additional demands on them for contributing to collective endeavours. The promotion of an EU security identity can thus be interpreted as a means of 'self-binding' regarding the pursuit of liberal objectives – although the limits of this logic showed in all four case studies insofar as personnel contributions were concerned.

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#### CONTRIBUTION AND REMAINING CHALLENGES

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The above conclusion challenges the prevailing view among traditional international relations theorists, who tend to emphasize systemic pressures and assume the primacy of foreign policy over domestic politics. Offering a framework that directly compares the two, this study showed that considerations of relative external power were largely absent from the EU's decision-making on crisis management operations, or at least subordinate to other considerations. This may be due to the exceptional geopolitical context in which ESDP has so far operated, with no clearly preponderant external threat to concentrate minds, as well as the fact that the ESDP constitutes only one subset of the foreign policy conducted by its members. At the same time, this finding is partly contingent on the conceptualization of external power as primarily a means for balancing. Instead, the ESDP's actions were embedded into a larger aspiration that Europeans shared with North Americans: the stabilization if not the expansion of an international liberal order based on individual rights and the rule of law. Although partly self-serving, this shared objective was rooted more in national role conceptions than geopolitical constraints. The pursuit of liberal order was however constrained by its very source; whereas it fed on domestic expectations that European governments do something to improve the world, it was also hampered by a lack of trust on the part of governments that the public would (continue to) support ambitious foreign policy objectives. What the EU did (and did not do) in the framework of ESDP was above all what EU governments believed their societies expected from them in terms of international security policy – under the constraints that institutionalized multilateral cooperation entail.

This interpretation of the ESDP's record raises interesting questions that international relations theory generally, but also the analytical model employed in this study has not solved satisfactorily as yet: namely how and when (anticipated) domestic expectations trigger action by policy-makers. Part of the reason for this gap lies with the fact that underlying political purposes are ultimately unobservable. In the end, diplomats or ministers themselves may not know why, deep down, they pursued a certain policy. The introductory citation of a political science classic, *Essence of Decision*, thus quotes president Kennedy with the words that '*the essence of ultimate decision remains impenetrable to the observer – often, indeed, to the decider himself*' (Allison and Zelikow 1999, emphasis original). In other words, the decision-making even by those in the highest echelons of power, and at the most critical junctures, may be far less conscious and rational than the public or indeed political scientists assume in their search for patterns in political behaviour – and these patterns a product of hazard and contingency rather than deliberate calculation. Speculating on this subject, Dutch novelist Harry Mulisch conceived the neat metaphor of a 'Golden Wall' that the public sees and behind which it assumes a controlled, reliable and virtually all-knowing power, an image 'confirmed by the dark suits, the silent limousines, the guards, the protocol, the perfect organization, the velvety calm in the palaces and ministries. But anyone who's actually been behind the Golden Wall, like you and me, knows that it's all sham and that in there, where decisions are made, it's just as improvised a chaos as in front [...] Should anyone discover how a policy is made – which is virtually impossible – he will spend the rest of his life with a fundamental feeling of insecurity' (Mulisch 1996: 554). This study is thus also a reminder of the challenges IR theory as a whole continues to face in integrating different structural pressures, their reception by policy-makers, and perceived opportunities for remedial action into an explanation that is at once meaningful and parsimonious. What precisely triggers the perception of a 'need to do something', and what determines the shape of the latter? Further research into these questions will not only be interesting for those seeking to understand the dynamics of international relations, but also for those attempting to influence foreign policy in the interest of the 'better world' that the title of the EU's security strategy evokes.

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## SUMMARY

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The notion that European states might devise a framework for institutionalized cooperation in the realm of foreign, security and defence policy is surprising in view of their antagonistic history and the traditional role of foreign policy for national identity and sovereign status. And yet the governments of the European Union (EU) have recently created such a framework. The primary result of the establishment of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) has been some 20 crisis management operations that the EU has carried out on three continents. This book seeks to identify the main drivers underlying this development. It does so by studying the diplomatic history behind four operations that have been undertaken in the ESDP framework, and by assessing against this record the relative plausibility of different explanations for the intensification in EU foreign policy cooperation. It thereby contributes to the academic literature in two ways: on the one hand, there is as yet little systematic research into the proximate reasons for the Union's bout of activity regarding crisis management operations. On the other hand, this focus on what the EU *does* through ESDP also allows us a new perspective for evaluating what ultimate purposes the policy framework could plausibly serve. This study thereby also weighs in on the theoretical debates that seek to understand and explain why EU governments have chosen to institutionalize their attempts to coordinate security policy, as well as on the question as to what drives European foreign policy-making at the start of the new millennium.

In investigating the causes underlying the ESDP, this book categorizes the explanations prevalent in international relations theory into four categories. Specifically, it distinguishes between potential policy objectives that the ESDP's principals, EU governments, may have pursued in terms of whether these goals were primarily external or internal to the EU, and whether they were driven mainly by power-political or ideational considerations. Linking this heuristic framework with the existing theory-driven literature on ESDP results in four propositions: that EU governments may have attempted to counter-balance the influence of the world's preponderant power, the United States (I); that they may have sought to promote collectively held liberal values (II); that they may have attempted to advance integration within the Union by means of the symbolic power of a common foreign policy (III); or that they used the latter to safeguard or improve their domestic political position (IV). Clearly, these objectives are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but this study seeks to evaluate how much the EU's actions in the ESDP framework, i.e. its crisis management operations, were influenced by these respective underlying drivers.

## *Summary*

In order to understand the logic behind ESDP, this book looks at the ESDP output in terms of operations. It particularly focuses on four cases of ESDP action: the military operations in Bosnia and Chad/Central African Republic, and the civilian missions in Kosovo and Afghanistan. This selection mirrors the spread of ESDP operations in terms of their nature, objectives and geographical dispersion. At the same time, it retains what arguably amounted to the most significant ESDP efforts to date in terms of operation size, cost and political risk. While this study seeks to illuminate the positions of whichever actor was particularly important for the decision-making process of each operation, it also systematically gathered those of the three players generally suspected to wield the greatest influence in EU foreign policy: the British, French and German governments. Beyond their alleged influence, these governments also cover the range of what are arguably the most important cleavages dividing national security policies in Europe: their respective preferences for or against association with Washington by default; their relative enthusiasm for robust interventions beyond Europe's borders; and their diverging willingness to see the EU take a greater role in foreign policy-making. Through more than 60 interviews in Brussels as well as in Berlin, Paris and London, this study reconstructs national preferences regarding ESDP operations and analyses how they impacted on EU decision-making processes. These cases are subsequently used to assess the relative explanatory power of the four propositions as to what the most plausible underlying drivers of the larger policy were.

The first case study examines the EU's biggest ESDP military operation thus far, EUFOR Althea. In late 2004, the Union took this operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina over from NATO, a transfer of responsibility that was shaped by two factors: US ambivalence regarding its preferred role in Bosnia and its degree of involvement into the security architecture of post-Cold War Europe more generally; and European governments' wish to collectively play a greater role in Bosnia and international security policy. Regarding the latter, EU governments' preferences largely overlapped. They differed however with respect to the desired degree of attachment to the United States, resulting in complex institutional struggles between the EU and NATO and those governments championing one organization over the other. In the context of the simultaneous transatlantic divisions regarding Iraq, the tug of war between these two institutions has attracted a lot of attention, thereby giving some face-value credence to the balancing proposition. Yet its importance is easily overestimated at the expense of the basic agreement that existed between European governments: namely their shared desire to establish the EU as a potential security provider, with an ability to influence its own security environment. Against the backdrop of the miserable failure of European governments in the Bosnia of the 1990s, Althea served to demonstrate to anxious electorates and the international

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community at large that the Union was now in a position to take responsibility in the realm of security.

The second case study analyses the genesis of the EU's rule of law mission in Kosovo, EULEX Kosovo. It argues that the mission was conceived as part of an exit strategy for the international community from Kosovo in the wake of the problems that the UN and NATO faced in administering the territory. The idea underlying the mission, which emerged from 2004 onwards and was largely undisputed across most EU capitals, was that Kosovo's status as an international protectorate had become unsustainable and that the territory's prospective independence needed new and credible international supervision. For a number of reasons, Western capitals agreed that the EU would be best placed to provide that oversight. When the negotiations on Kosovo's status reached a dead end in 2007, EULEX acquired an additional rationale: it also came to serve as a mechanism for managing and attenuating EU disunity and for allowing the EU to remain engaged despite governments' differing views on status. The Union thus emphasized its shared commitment to mentoring and supervising Kosovo's institutions regarding the rule of law even though it remained ambivalent as to what exactly Kosovo was, with 5 EU governments refusing to recognize independence. By weakening the EU's position, this lack of unity betrayed that national political concerns ultimately won out over aspirations for foreign policy coherence. At the same time, the Union's ability to assume responsibility for a process whose finality was harshly contested within the EU attested to its remarkable skills in pragmatically muddling through.

The third case study investigates the drivers behind the EU's police mission in Afghanistan. EUPOL Afghanistan was initiated in response to (perceived) US pressure vis-à-vis EU governments to increase their efforts in stabilizing Afghanistan. In particular, some governments came to see this mission as a means of 'compensating' for their hesitation regarding Iraq and/or enhanced military engagement in Afghanistan. EUPOL Afghanistan was moreover used to legitimate the preceding German engagement in this sector and avoid impending blame for insufficient progress in police training, as well as to carve out a distinctive and visible role for the EU in Afghanistan. While this rationale proved sufficient to prevail over considerable EU-internal reluctance, it fell short of generating the level of active political support that would have been necessary to overcome the many obstacles the mission came to face. EUPOL in particular found it hard to get EU governments to provide for sufficient numbers of suitable personnel, suggesting an emphasis on signalling rather than initiating substantially greater engagement. In fact, EUPOL has been significantly influenced by the exigencies of German domestic politics, in particular the need to avoid the anticipated potential criticisms that Berlin was too close to the unpopular US counter-insurgency campaign on the one

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hand, or too coward to assume its fair part of the burden of international security on the other.

The fourth and final operation analyzed in this book took place in eastern Chad and the north-eastern Central African Republic, EUFOR Tchad/RCA according to its French acronym. This operation was the consequence of the initiative of one member state, France, whose newly elected government was eager to demonstrate its commitment to helping alleviate the plight of refugees from Darfur. At the same time, it was in conspicuous alignment with a number of alleged French strategic interests, such as giving a new impetus to military ESDP and lending support to a regime France considered important for regional stability as well as its own influence in Africa. Although this gamut of motives induced other EU governments to provide less than enthusiastic support to the operation, as demonstrated by the difficult force generation process, they eventually agreed on EUFOR Tchad/RCA because no one wanted to be the one to say no to the new French administration. Moreover, some other EU governments also saw potential benefits in the operation, from the ability to do something to alleviate human suffering and to demonstrate support to the UN to the possibility of fostering the development of ESDP and gaining valuable experience for their militaries. The decision-making process in Paris, the predictable scrutiny of the Chadian political economy that the operation brought about, and its lack of value added in bolstering the regime compared to existing bilateral French support all suggest that French neo-colonialism is unlikely to have been a crucial driver behind the operation. This interpretation is further bolstered by the eventual support that the operation received from 'post-neutral' member states such as Ireland, Sweden and Austria, all of whom had little incentive to become a side-kick to unsavoury French policies and to lose their image of embodying impartial UN peace-keeping. The pattern of contributions across the EU moreover indicates that domestic political convenience rather than any geo-political strategy informed this operation. On the whole, the French government sought to visibly 'do something' for the victims of Darfur and was joined by those who could also hope to gain domestically from such an endeavour whereas those at risk from a domestic backlash did not participate in, but only tolerated the operation.

This book then compares the results of these four case studies along two dimensions. The first assessment evaluates the motives of the French, British and German governments respectively across all four operations in order to identify the logic that underpinned pivotal national approaches to ESDP. The preferences it identifies largely concur with those familiar from the literature on their national foreign policies and 'strategic cultures' even as this study interprets them somewhat differently. It finds that Paris was particularly concerned both about operationalizing the ESDP and about keeping it distinct from NATO, a motive particularly strong with respect to the operation in Bosnia, but with repercussions

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for Kosovo and Afghanistan as well. This concern over the transatlantic security architecture has traditionally been linked to French objectives of balancing the US, but can just as plausibly be traced to the government's interest in playing to domestic expectations regarding France's specific role in the world. Such an interpretation is suggested not only by the substantial agreement and collaboration between Paris and Washington regarding international objectives in all three cases, but also by the role that domestic politics played with respect to the operation in Chad. British objectives by contrast featured substantial efforts to leverage the EU's emerging security arm in support of US foreign policy, and to keep ESDP as closely tied into, if not as dependent on NATO as possible. Underlying the transatlantic bias was a strategy for wielding influence internationally, albeit one in direct contrast to the balancing proposition: instead, London systematically sought proximity to Washington. Beyond this geopolitical logic, such proximity was however also linked to domestic political incentives, which had New Labour embrace the 'special relationship' as a means of signalling electability. At the same time, London's support for ESDP remained ambiguous in that its investment into ESDP operations was limited even where the latter clearly had a pro-US orientation. The British government thus followed a strategy of exhorting the EU to become more active internationally while not fully engaging – an approach that chimed with the Euro-sceptic disposition of its electorate. Finally, the German government also used ESDP operations to demonstrate its willingness to support US foreign policy, if with lesser enthusiasm than its British counterpart. Simultaneously, it sought to further ESDP for the purpose of European integration more broadly. When political risks beckoned, however, it has subordinated both goals to the (perceived) exigencies of domestic politics.

The final chapter addresses the plausibility of the four putative explanations for ESDP action. With respect to the first, it concludes that ESDP operations were not used to balance the US (1). To the contrary, three out of the four operations covered in this book coincided with US interest in ESDP action, none was opposed by Washington, and none conceivably led to greater EU influence at the US' expense. Both British and German officials moreover cited US expectations of EU engagement as major reasons for undertaking ESDP action. The US even joined one operation, under the EU's political direction, an undertaking hard to imagine were Washington to have seen ESDP as a balancing mechanism. Lastly, whereas French politicians have at times used rhetoric critical of the US, their actions in the ESDP context revealed partial reluctance in actively supporting US objectives rather than intentions of counter-balancing the latter. Paris moreover never saw its preferences realized where the latter were perceived by London (and, to a lesser extent, Berlin) to be targeted against Washington. In fact, the ESDP record surveyed in this book suggests that balance-of-power considerations more generally were notable in their

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absence. Considerations of external influence did not relate to relative power, but consisted in the EU's collective quest for stability in its environment and limited contributions to support the prevailing liberal global order.

With respect to the second explanation, that the EU may have used ESDP operations to promote liberal values, this study concludes that the latter had some influence on ESDP action, but that this objective was usually secondary and qualified (II). All four operations were embedded into broader Western foreign policy projects that sought to either promote the rule of law, including for the benefit of local populations, help the latter towards their professed goal of integration into the Euro-Atlantic liberal community, or at least protect vulnerable individuals. Yet in no case were these objectives directly responsible or decisive for the launch of the respective operation. Rather, they were instrumental for regional stability and EU governments' foreign policy credibility. EU governments were overall unwilling to invest significant political capital for the promotion of liberal values, unless and to the extent that they could expect to reap domestic political endorsement. The EU's self-conception as a 'force for good' thus played a role, but was refracted through calculations of anticipated political costs and benefits.

Regarding the third putative driver, this study found considerable evidence that EU governments pursued the creation of an EU security identity as an objective in itself, i.e. that they engaged in ESDP operations for the purpose of showing that the EU was able and willing to act in the domain of international security (III). Whereas not all governments were equally enthusiastic about having the EU act for the sake of flaunting its newly won instrument, the ESDP's early phase was marked by 'flag-raising exercises' and interest even from the British government in showing that the framework worked. However, this study also concludes that the operationalization of ESDP was not primarily driven by the suggested ulterior motive of furthering European integration. Not only did London actively oppose the use of ESDP for anything that smacked of EU nation-building, other governments equally did not expend notable efforts to underscore the Union's contribution to international security. Thus the idea that they sought common foreign action to convince their publics of the benefits of integration does not add up. Moreover, the operations carried out by the EU did not fundamentally differ from those that member states undertook in other institutional settings, indicating that there is little reason to believe that they would generate strong integrationist effects. There are finally only very limited hints that furthering European integration may even have been a motive for EU governments to engage in ESDP. Even the German government, most committed to this objective among the three assessed here, has hardly pursued European integration via ESDP action. In short, whereas the hope for greater European integration may have motivated some politicians, EU action in the ESDP framework was not primarily driven by a European nation-building agenda.

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Finally, this book concludes that, of the four proposed drivers, domestic politics provides the most plausible explanation for the ESDP record so far (IV). The objectives of the various operations, and the pattern of contributions that various member states made, were generally in accordance with what EU governments could expect to be domestically palatable while demonstrating adequate international engagement. At the same time, there was only very limited evidence for active societal 'demand' for specific foreign policy measures. National positions rather tended to echo national role conceptions and strategic cultures although the latter were qualified by the specific trade-offs that EU governments faced in each case. Thus, decision-making was characterized by substantial voluntarism on the part of governments, if against the backdrop of perceived domestic political constraints. What the EU did (and did not do) in the framework of ESDP was above all what EU governments believed their societies would accept and expect from them in terms of international security policy – under the constraints that institutionalized multilateral cooperation implied.

In theoretical terms, the results of this study challenge the gist of much traditional international relations theory with its emphasis on systemic pressures and assumptions about the primacy of foreign policy over domestic politics. Offering a framework that directly compares the two, this book shows that considerations of relative external power were largely absent from the EU's decision-making on crisis management operations. This may be due to the exceptional geopolitical context in which ESDP has so far operated, with no clearly preponderant external threat to concentrate minds, as well as the fact that the ESDP constitutes only one subset of the foreign policy conducted by its members. At the same time, this finding is partly contingent on the conceptualization of external power as primarily a means for balancing. Instead, the ESDP's actions were embedded into a larger aspiration that Europeans shared with North Americans: the stabilization if not the expansion of an international liberal order based on individual rights and the rule of law. Although partly self-serving, this shared objective was rooted more in national role conceptions than geopolitical constraints. The pursuit of liberal order was however constrained by its very source; whereas it fed on domestic expectations that European governments do something to improve the world, it was also hampered by a lack of trust on the part of governments that the public would (continue to) support ambitious foreign policy objectives. This interpretation of the ESDP's record finally raises some conceptual challenges that international relations theory generally, but also the analytical model employed in this study still has not solved satisfactorily: namely how and when exactly (anticipated) domestic expectations trigger action by policy-makers. Crucial as it seems for (contemporary) foreign policy-making, this relationship certainly deserves further research.

## NEDERLANDSTALIGE SAMENVATTING

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Het idee dat Europese landen een institutioneel kader voor samenwerking op het gebied van buitenlands, veiligheid- en defensiebeleid zouden ontwikkelen is verrassend gezien hun historische vijandelijkheden en het traditionele belang van het buitenlands beleid voor nationale identiteit en soevereiniteit. Toch hebben de regeringen van de lidstaten van de Europese Unie (EU) onlangs een dergelijk kader opgericht, het Europees Veiligheids- en Defensiebeleid (EVDB). De meer dan 20 crisisbeheersingsoperaties die de EU op drie continenten heeft uitgevoerd, vormen daarvan het belangrijkste resultaat. De voorliggende studie analyseert welke drijfveren ten grondslag liggen aan deze ontwikkeling. Zij doet dit door de diplomatieke voorgeschiedenis van vier operaties te onderzoeken die in het EVDB-kader zijn ondernomen. Daarnaast beoordeelt deze studie de relatieve plausibiliteit van diverse theoretisch geïnspireerde verklaringen voor de intensivering van samenwerking in het buitenlands beleid van de EU. Zo vult deze studie twee lacunes in de wetenschappelijke literatuur: aan de ene kant is er nog weinig systematisch onderzoek gedaan naar de precieze redenen voor de toename van crisisbeheersingsoperaties door de EU. Aan de andere kant maakt de focus op wat de EU precies *doet* met EVDB-operaties ook mogelijk beter inzicht te verwerven in de doelen die dit kader dient. Deze studie draagt zo dus bij aan de theoretische debatten die proberen te verklaren waarom de EU-regeringen hebben gekozen voor een geprononceerder gemeenschappelijk veiligheidsbeleid, evenals de vraag welke drijfveren achter het Europees buitenlands beleid aan het begin van het nieuwe millennium steken.

Het tweede hoofdstuk van deze studie identificeert binnen de theoretische literatuur over internationale betrekkingen vier categorieën van verklaringen die ook relevant zouden kunnen zijn voor het voeren van EVDB-operaties. Daarbij is een onderscheid gemaakt naar de potentiële beleidsdoelstellingen die de EU-regeringen beoogd kunnen hebben met die operaties. Dat betreft achtereenvolgens de vraag of deze doelstellingen voornamelijk op effecten buiten of binnen de EU gericht waren, en daarnaast of vooral machtspolitieke of ideële overwegingen eraan ten grondslag lagen. In combinatie met bestaande, meer specifieke verklaringen van het bestaan van het EVDB, resulteert dit in vier stellingen: EU-regeringen hebben met EVDB-operaties gepoogd een tegenwicht te bieden aan de invloed van het machtigste land ter wereld, de Verenigde Staten van Amerika (I); zij hebben het EVDB ingezet om onderling gedeelde liberale waarden wereldwijd te bevorderen (II); de EU-regeringen hebben de integratie binnen de EU willen stimuleren door ook samen te werken op het vlak van het symbolisch belangrijke buitenlands beleid (III); ze hebben het EVDB gebruikt om hun politieke positie in hun eigen binnenland te

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versterken (IV). Het is duidelijk dat deze doelstellingen elkaar niet noodzakelijkerwijs uitsluiten. Deze studie probeert daarom vooral te bepalen in welke mate elk van de vier drijfveren de EVDB-crisisbeheersingsoperaties heeft beïnvloed.

Het derde hoofdstuk begint met een kort historisch overzicht van het EVDB en een introductie van het institutionele kader waarin dit beleid is ingebed. Daarna wordt de onderzoeksopzet van deze studie uiteengezet. Dit onderzoek richt zich op vier gevallen van EVDB-operaties: de militaire operaties in Bosnië en Tsjaad/Centraal Afrikaanse Republiek, en de civiele missies in Kosovo en Afghanistan. Deze selectie weerspiegelt de variëteit in aard, doelen en geografische spreiding van EVDB-operaties. Tegelijkertijd bevat deze selectie de belangrijkste EVDB-inspanningen, gelet op de kosten, de grootte van de operatie en de politieke risico's. Deze studie heeft allereerst getracht de posities te belichten van alle actoren die een belangrijke rol in de besluitvorming aangaande een operatie hebben gespeeld. Daarnaast zijn de posities van de Britse, Franse en Duitse regeringen systematisch onder de loep genomen, omdat algemeen wordt aangenomen dat zij de grootste invloed op het buitenlands beleid van de EU hebben. Die regeringen vertegenwoordigen bovendien uiteenlopende posities op de belangrijkste scheidslijnen op het vlak van veiligheidsbeleid in Europa: voorkeur of afkeer van een automatische nauwe samenwerking met Washington; meer of minder enthousiasme voor forse interventies buiten de grenzen van Europa; en een uiteenlopende bereidheid om de EU een grotere rol in het buitenlands beleid te geven. Meer dan 60 interviews in Brussel alsmede in Berlijn, Parijs en Londen vormen de basis voor een reconstructie van nationale voorkeuren ten aanzien van EVDB-operaties en de impact van die voorkeuren op de Europese besluitvorming. Op grond van de vier bestudeerde gevallen is vervolgens bepaald of en in welke mate elk van de vier stellingen over de onderliggende drijfveren van het EVDB opgeld doet.

Het vierde hoofdstuk onderzoekt de grootste militaire EVDB-operatie tot nu toe, *EUFOR Althea*. Eind 2004 heeft de EU deze operatie in Bosnië-Herzegovina van de Noord-Atlantische Verdragsorganisatie (NAVO) overgenomen. Twee factoren bepaalden de keuze verantwoordelijkheid over te dragen: ambivalentie van de Verenigde Staten (VS) over hun rol in Bosnië in het bijzonder en in de Europese veiligheidsstructuur na de Koude Oorlog in het algemeen, alsmede de wens van Europese regeringen om gezamenlijk een grotere rol te spelen in Bosnië alsook in het internationale veiligheidsbeleid. Op dat laatste punt bestond grote overeenstemming tussen de EU-regeringen. Verschil van mening bestond echter met betrekking tot de gewenste mate van verbondenheid met de VS. Dit resulteerde in een complexe institutionele strijd tussen de EU en de NAVO en tussen de regeringen die de éne dan wel de andere organisatie prefereerden. Het getouwtrek tussen de twee organisaties kreeg veel aandacht in het licht van de toenmalige trans-

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Atlantische meningsverschillen over de oorlog in Irak. Op het eerste gezicht kon de EVDB-operatie daardoor wel als een Europees tegenwicht voor de Amerikaanse invloed worden beschouwd. Het belang van de bovengenoemde meningsverschillen moet echter niet worden overschat, want alle Europese regeringen deelden de wens om de EU in staat te stellen zelf veiligheid te leveren, mede in haar eigen regio. Tegen de achtergrond van de mislukte interventie van de Europese regeringen in het Bosnische conflict in de jaren '90, diende Althea vooral om de eigen kiezers en de internationale gemeenschap te bewijzen dat de EU nu wel haar verantwoordelijkheid kon nemen op het vlak van externe veiligheid.

Hoofdstuk vijf analyseert het ontstaan van de EU-rechtsstaatmissie in Kosovo, *EULEX Kosovo*. EULEX is ontwikkeld als onderdeel van een exitstrategie voor de internationale gemeenschap uit de problemen waarmee de Verenigde Naties (VN) en de NAVO te maken kregen bij het beheer van het Kosovaars territorium. Vanaf 2004 ontstond het (ook onder EU-regeringen) weinig betwiste idee dat de status van Kosovo als internationaal protectoraat onhoudbaar was geworden, en dat de verwachte onafhankelijkheid een nieuw en geloofwaardig internationaal toezicht vergde. Om een aantal redenen kwamen Westerse hoofdsteden overeen dat de EU het beste in staat zou zijn dat toezicht uit te oefenen. Nadat de internationale onderhandelingen over de status van Kosovo in 2007 waren doodgelopen kreeg EULEX bovendien een aanvullend doel. Vanaf dat moment diende de missie ook de onenigheid binnen de EU over Kosovo's status het hoofd te bieden, en ondanks die interne verdeeldheid betrokken te blijven bij Kosovo. De EU benadrukte zo de gezamenlijke inzet ten behoeve van de rechtsstaat in Kosovo, ook al bleef ze ambivalent wat Kosovo precies was, omdat vijf regeringen binnen de EU weigerden om diens onafhankelijkheid te erkennen. Dit gebrek aan eensgezindheid verzwakte de EU en toonde aan dat nationale politieke belangen uiteindelijk belangrijker waren dan de wens een coherent Europees buitenlands beleid te voeren. Tegelijkertijd bewees de bekwaamheid waarmee de EU haar verantwoordelijkheid nam voor een proces waarvan het einddoel krachtig betwist werd, haar opmerkelijke vaardigheden om pragmatisch door te modderen.

Het zesde hoofdstuk onderzoekt de drijfveren van de EU-politiemissie in Afghanistan. *EUPOL Afghanistan* werd gestart in antwoord op de (gevoelde) druk van de VS op de EU om zich meer in te spannen Afghanistan te stabiliseren. Sommige EU-regeringen zagen deze missie zelfs als een middel ter 'compensatie' van hun aarzelingen ten aanzien van Irak en / of groter militair engagement in Afghanistan. EUPOL Afghanistan werd bovendien gebruikt om de resultaten van de voorafgaande Duitse inspanningen in de Afgaanse politiesector alsnog te legitimeren en om dreigende beschuldigingen voor onvoldoende vooruitgang op de politieopleiding te vermijden. Bovendien was de EU op zoek naar een zichtbare rol voor zichzelf in Afghanistan. Hoewel deze redenen voldoende bleken om de aanzienlijke weerstand

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binnen de EU te overwinnen, ze bleken te weinig om toereikende actieve politieke steun te verwerven die nodig was om de vele obstakels die de missie tegenkwam te overwinnen. EUPOL kampte vooral met de onwilligheid van EU-regeringen voldoende aantallen geschikt personeel te sturen. Dit suggereert dat de regeringen meer geïnteresseerd waren in het afgeven van een politiek signaal dan in een substantiële invulling van hun betrokkenheid bij Afghanistan. EUPOL bleek uiteindelijk vooral beïnvloed door de eisen van de Duitse binnenlandse politiek. De missie diende vooral om binnenlandse kritiek op de Duitse regering te bezweren. Deze kritiek hield enerzijds in dat Duitsland te nauw zou zijn verbonden met de impopulaire Amerikaanse campagne tegen het Afghaanse verzet, anderzijds dat het te laf zou zijn om een evenredig deel van de lasten van internationale veiligheid voor diens rekening te nemen.

De vierde en laatste operatie die deze studie onder de loep neemt, in hoofdstuk 7, vond plaats in het oosten van Tsjad en het noordoosten van de Centraal-Afrikaanse Republiek. *EUFOR Tchad/RCA* (volgens het Franse acroniem) was het resultaat van het initiatief van één lidstaat, Frankrijk. Een pas verkozen president wilde graag zijn inzet tonen voor de vluchtelingen uit Darfur. Tegelijkertijd bleek deze operatie samen te vallen met een aantal vermeende Franse strategische belangen, zoals het geven van een nieuwe impuls aan een militaire EVDB en het steunen van een regime dat Frankrijk belangrijk achtte voor de regionale stabiliteit en de eigen invloed in Afrika. Deze motieven maakten andere EU-regeringen minder enthousiast om steun aan de operatie te verlenen, hetgeen bleek uit het moeizame proces om voldoende troepen te werven. Overeenstemming over *EUFOR Tchad / RCA* werd uiteindelijk bereikt omdat niemand degene wilde zijn die nee zei tegen de nieuwe Franse president. Bovendien zag een aantal EU-regeringen ook potentiële voordelen van de operatie: van de mogelijkheid om menselijk lijden enigszins te verlichten, steun aan de VN te verlenen en het EVDB te ontwikkelen, tot een manier voor hun krijgsmacht om waardevolle ervaring op te doen. De besluitvorming in Parijs, de aandacht voor de Tsjadische politieke economie die de operatie met zich mee bracht, en het gebrek aan toegevoegde waarde van *EUFOR* om het Tsjadische regime te versterken (in vergelijking met de bestaande bilaterale steun van de Fransen) wijzen erop dat het onwaarschijnlijk is dat Frans neokolonialisme het cruciale motief achter de operatie was. Deze interpretatie wordt verder onderbouwd door het feit dat ook 'postneutrale' lidstaten zoals Ierland, Zweden en Oostenrijk uiteindelijk de operatie ondersteunden. Om hun imago als onpartijdige VN-vredeshandhavers niet te verliezen, hebben deze landen immers weinig animo als handlangers van 'smerig' Frans beleid op te treden. In plaats van geopolitieke strategie bepaalde vooral binnenlands politiek voordeel welke EU-lidstaten deelnamen. De Franse regering probeerde dus zichtbaar 'iets te doen' voor de slachtoffers van Darfur, en kreeg het gezelschap van regeringen die in de binnenlandse politiek munt dachten te slaan uit

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hun steun aan de operatie. Regeringen die een binnenlands risico voorzagen, namen niet deel. Zij tolereerden de operatie slechts.

Vervolgens vergelijkt de voorliggende studie de resultaten van deze vier *case studies* aan de hand van twee dimensies. De eerste dimensie, besproken in hoofdstuk acht, beoordeelt de motieven van de Franse, Britse en Duitse regeringen met betrekking tot alle vier operaties om de logica achter deze drie cruciale nationale benaderingen van het EVDB te identificeren. De zo geïdentificeerde nationale voorkeuren komen grotendeels overeen met wat bekend is in de academische literatuur over hun respectievelijk nationaal buitenlands beleid en 'strategische culturen', ook al interpreteert deze studie die voorkeuren iets anders. Hoofdstuk acht laat zien dat Parijs vooral gebrand was op het operationaliseren van het EVDB en het op afstand houden van de NAVO. Dat motief klonk vooral sterk door in de operatie in Bosnië, maar speelde ook bij de operaties in Kosovo en Afghanistan. Dit motief wordt traditioneel verbonden met de Franse doelstelling om tegenwicht te bieden aan de VS in de trans-Atlantische veiligheidsstructuur. Het kan echter even zo geloofwaardig worden teruggevoerd op het belang van de Franse overheid te voldoen aan binnenlandse verwachtingen ten aanzien van de specifieke rol van Frankrijk in de wereld. Een dergelijke uitleg wordt niet alleen ondersteund door de (in de dagelijkse *praktijk*) grote overeenstemming en samenwerking tussen Parijs en Washington inzake internationale doelstellingen in alle drie bovengenoemde gevallen, maar ook door de rol die de binnenlandse politiek heeft gespeeld met betrekking tot de operatie in Tsjaad.

In tegenstelling tot Parijs spande Londen zich vooral in om het nieuwe EU-veiligheidsbeleid in te zetten voor het Amerikaanse buitenlandse beleid en het EVDB zo nauw mogelijk te verbinden met, zo niet afhankelijk te maken van, de NAVO. Aan de ene kant vormde deze trans-Atlantische voorkeur een strategie om internationale invloed te verwerven door juist niet een tegenwicht aan de VS te bieden. In plaats daarvan zocht Londen systematisch de nabijheid van Washington op. Afgezien van deze geopolitieke logica hing een dergelijke nabijheid echter ook samen met binnenlandse politieke prikkels. New Labour omarmde het idee van een 'special relationship' om zo aan de kiezers serieusheid en verkiesbaarheid te signaleren. De steun van Londen voor EVDB bleef echter aarzelend, zodat investeringen in EVDB-operaties beperkt bleven zelfs wanneer deze een duidelijk pro-Amerikaanse oriëntatie hadden. De Britse regering volgde derhalve een strategie om de EU aan te sporen om internationaal actiever te worden terwijl ze zelf weinig meedeed – een benadering die tegelijkertijd aan de Eurosceptische houding van vele Britse kiezers tegemoetkwam. Ook de Duitse regering heeft van EVDB-operaties gebruik gemaakt om haar bereidheid te tonen om de Amerikaanse buitenlandse politiek te steunen, hoewel met minder enthousiasme dan haar Britse tegenhanger. Tegelijkertijd streefde zij ernaar het EVDB te versterken om daarmee de Europese integratie te

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bevorderen. Zodra dit thuis een politieke risico werd, maakte Berlijn echter beide doelen direct ondergeschikt aan de (gevoelde) eisen van de binnenlandse politiek.

Het laatste hoofdstuk vergelijkt de vier *case studies* aan de hand van de tweede genoemde dimensie. Teruggrijpend naar de vier theoretische verklaringen voor EVDB-operaties uit hoofdstuk twee wordt hier, met inachtneming van de tussenliggende hoofdstukken, hun relatieve plausibiliteit vergeleken. Met betrekking tot de eerste interpretatie concludeert deze studie dat EVDB-operaties niet werden gebruikt om een tegenwicht aan de VS te bieden (I). Integendeel, drie van de vier operaties die onderzocht werden, vielen samen met een Amerikaans belang in een EVDB-actie. Tegen geen enkel van de vier operaties toonde Washington substantieel verzet. Daarnaast zou ook geen van deze operaties tot grotere invloed van de EU ten koste van de VS zouden hebben geleid. Zowel Britse als Duitse ambtenaren noemden bovendien als belangrijke redenen voor het uitvoeren van EVDB-operaties juist verwachtingen in Washington dat de EU iets zou doen. De VS hebben zich zelfs aangesloten bij een van deze operaties onder de politieke leiding van de EU, een stap die moeilijk voorstelbaar was als Washington het EVDB zou hebben gezien als een manier om tegenwicht aan de VS te bieden. Weliswaar bezigden Franse politici herhaaldelijk retoriek die kritisch was ten aanzien van de VS. Hun daadwerkelijk gedrag in de EVDB-context toonde echter slechts gedeeltelijke terughoudendheid in het actief ondersteunen van bepaalde Amerikaanse doelstellingen, in plaats van het tegenwicht bieden aan de VS. Parijs had bovendien nooit zijn voorkeuren kunnen realiseren wanneer die volgens Londen (en in mindere mate Berlijn) gericht zouden zijn tegen de NAVO. Een overzicht van de EVDB-operaties die in deze studie onderzocht werden, suggereert bovendien dat buitenlandse machtsoverwegingen in het algemeen opvallend afwezig waren. Waar overwegingen van externe invloed toch een rol hebben gespeeld, hadden ze nauwelijks betrekking op relatieve macht, maar bestonden ze uit een collectieve zoektocht van de EU naar stabiliteit in haar directe omgeving en in het ondersteunen van de heersende liberale wereldorde, met overigens beperkte bijdragen.

De tweede stelling luidde dat de EU gebruik heeft gemaakt van EVDB-operaties om liberale waarden te bevorderen. Met betrekking tot die stelling komt deze studie tot de conclusie dat dergelijke waarden wel invloed op EVDB-acties hadden, maar dat dergelijke doelen over het algemeen een secundaire en beperkte rol speelden (II). Alle vier operaties waren ingebed in breder Westers beleid dat tot doel had om de rechtsstaat internationaal te bevorderen, ook ten behoeve van de lokale bevolking, een bepaalde regio te integreren in de Euro-Atlantische liberale gemeenschap, of op zijn minst kwetsbare individuen te beschermen. In geen enkel geval waren deze doelstellingen echter direct verantwoordelijk of bepalend voor de lancering van een van de operaties. Integendeel, zij waren allereerst bedoeld de regionale stabiliteit en de geloofwaardigheid van het buitenlands beleid van de EU-regeringen te

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beschermen. EU-regeringen waren over het algemeen niet bereid om aanzienlijk politiek kapitaal te investeren voor de bevordering van liberale waarden in het buitenland door EVDB-operaties, tenzij en voor zover zij konden verwachten dat er binnenlandse politieke steun voor te verkrijgen was. Het zelfbeeld van de EU als een 'kracht ten goede' heeft dus indirect een rol gespeeld, maar werd gezien vanuit de verwachte binnenlandse politieke kosten en baten.

Aangaande de derde stelling vond deze studie aanzienlijk bewijs dat de EU-regeringen de oprichting van een EU-veiligheidsidentiteit als een doel op zich nastreefden. Dat wil zeggen dat zij EVDB-operaties uitvoerden met het primaire doel te bewijzen dat de EU ook in staat en bereid was om te handelen in het domein van internationale veiligheid (III). Hoewel niet alle EU-regeringen even enthousiast waren over EU-acties puur om het nieuwe EVDB-instrument ten toon te stellen, werd de vroege fase van het EVDB daardoor toch gekenmerkt. Zelfs de Britse regering bleek geïnteresseerd te zijn te bewijzen dat dit EU-kader kon functioneren. De voorliggende studie concludeert echter ook dat de operationalisering van het EVDB niet primair gedreven werd door het motief Europese integratie te stimuleren. Niet alleen verzette Londen zich actief tegen enig gebruik van het EVDB voor *EU-nation-building*, andere Europese regeringen deden ook geen opmerkelijke inspanningen om thuis de bijdrage van de Unie aan de internationale veiligheid te onderstrepen. Het idee dat EU-regeringen gemeenschappelijk buitenlands beleid zouden hebben verwezenlijkt om hun nationaal publiek van de voordelen van Europese integratie te overtuigen is dus niet uitgekomen. Bovendien verschillen de EVDB-operaties niet fundamenteel van operaties die de lidstaten met behulp van andere internationale instellingen hebben doorgevoerd. Dit suggereert dat er weinig reden is om te geloven dat dergelijke operaties sterke integrerende effecten zouden genereren. Er zijn uiteindelijk dus slechts zeer beperkte aanwijzingen dat het bevorderen van de Europese integratie een motief voor de EU-regeringen is geweest om deel te nemen aan het EVDB. Zelfs de Duitse regering, die zich van alle drie hier onderzochte regeringen het meeste voor dit doel inzette, heeft nauwelijks geprobeerd via EVDB-actie diepere Europese integratie te bereiken. Kortom, terwijl de hoop op diepere Europese integratie sommige politici zou hebben gemotiveerd, waren de acties van de EU in het EVDB-kader niet primair gedreven door een Europese *nation-building* agenda.

Ter afronding concludeert dit onderzoek dat de stelling over de eisen van de binnenlandse politiek de meest plausibele uitleg biedt voor het patroon van EVDB-operaties (IV). De doelstellingen van de verschillende operaties, de steun voor deze operaties en de wijze waarop de verschillende lidstaten eraan bijdroegen waren meestal in overeenstemming met wat de EU-regeringen verwachtten in eigen land te kunnen rechtvaardigen. Ook waren deze operaties in overeenstemming met wat de EU-regeringen dachten te moeten doen om thuis een adequate internationale

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betrokkenheid te kunnen demonstreren. Er is echter slechts zeer beperkt bewijs gevonden voor een actieve maatschappelijke 'vraag' naar specifieke buitenlandse activiteiten. Nationale standpunten weerspiegelden eerder nationale rolopvattingen en strategische culturen, hoewel EU-regeringen in elk geval specifieke afwegingen maakten. Zo werd de besluitvorming gekenmerkt door substantieel voluntarisme aan de kant van regeringen, ofschoon tegen de achtergrond van gepercipieerde binnenlandse politieke beperkingen. Wat de EU wel (of niet) in het kader van het EVDB deed was dus in eerste instantie hetgeen de EU-regeringen meenden dat hun samenleving verwachtte of zou accepteren op het gebied van het internationale veiligheidsbeleid – zij het onder de beperkingen die geïnstitutionaliseerde multilaterale samenwerking met zich meebrengt.

Theoretisch gezien vormen de bevindingen van deze studie een uitdaging voor de kern van veel traditionele theorieën van internationale betrekkingen die een nadruk leggen op de prikkels van het internationale systeem en ervan uitgaan dat het buitenlands beleid voorrang heeft boven binnenlandse politiek. Door het opstellen van een heuristisch kader dat binnen- en buitenlandse doelstellingen direct vergelijkt, kon de voorliggende studie aantonen dat overwegingen van relatieve externe macht grotendeels afwezig waren in de EU-besluitvorming over crisisbeheersingsoperaties. Dit zou mogelijk te wijten zijn aan de uitzonderlijke geopolitieke context waarin het EVDB tot nu toe heeft geopereerd. Hierbij ontbrak het vooral aan duidelijke externe dreigingen die een tegenwicht vergden. Daarenboven vormt het EVDB slechts een onderdeel van het buitenlands beleid van de EU-leden. De interpretatie van deze bevindingen hangt bovendien mede af van de vraag of het verwerven van externe macht primair wordt gemotiveerd door het bieden van tegenwicht. De EVDB-acties waren namelijk ingebed in een streven dat de Europeanen met de Noord-Amerikanen deelden: stabilisatie, zo niet uitbreiding van een internationale liberale orde op basis van individuele rechten en de rechtsstaat. Hoewel deze gezamenlijke doelstelling ook een eigenbelang weerspiegelde, bleek zij meer geworteld in gedeelde nationale rolconcepties dan in geopolitieke noodzaak. Het streven naar deze liberale orde werd echter evenzeer beperkt door zijn eigen bron; hoewel het leunde op binnenlandse verwachtingen dat de Europese regeringen 'iets doen' om de wereld te verbeteren, werd het ook belemmerd door een gebrek aan vertrouwen van de kant van regeringen dat hun maatschappijen ambitieuze doelstellingen inzake buitenlands beleid zouden (blijven) steunen. Deze interpretatie van het EVDB als resultaat van binnenlandse politieke berekeningen werpt tenslotte conceptuele uitdagingen op voor de theorieën van internationale betrekkingen in het algemeen, maar ook voor het analytische model dat in dit onderzoek wordt gebruikt: namelijk hoe en wanneer precies (gepercipieerde) binnenlandse verwachtingen beleidsmakers in actie

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brengen. Aangezien dit verband cruciaal lijkt voor het (hedendaagse) buitenlandse beleid, verdient het verder onderzoek.

## **CURRICULUM VITAE**

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Benjamin Pohl was born in 1979 in Dresden, Germany. After completing secondary school at St. Benno-Gymnasium Dresden, he went on to obtain a BA in International Relations at Technische Universität Dresden. In 2005, he earned a Master's degree in Conflict, Security and Development at King's College London, and in 2006 a Master's in European Economic Studies at the College of Europe in Brugge. From July 2006 until December 2007, he was a desk officer at the German Federal Foreign Office, working in the division on European Security and Defence Policy. Thereafter, he worked as a PhD candidate at the Institute of Political Science at Universiteit Leiden until 2011. Since 2011 he is a research fellow at the University of Aberdeen.