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

Pohl, B.

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Author: Pohl, Benjamin
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

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).[1]

A. THE RESEARCH PUZZLE

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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[1] 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.

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.[2] 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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[2] 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.

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

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.[3] 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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[3] 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.

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

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.[4] 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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[4] 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.

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

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.

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.