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"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 VIII: THE CASE STUDIES AND NATIONAL PREFERENCES

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

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 'multi-polarity' by French politicians at the beginning of the millennium was not so much an expression of balancing intentions and 19th 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 actorness 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

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).[43] 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

[43] 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).

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

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

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.