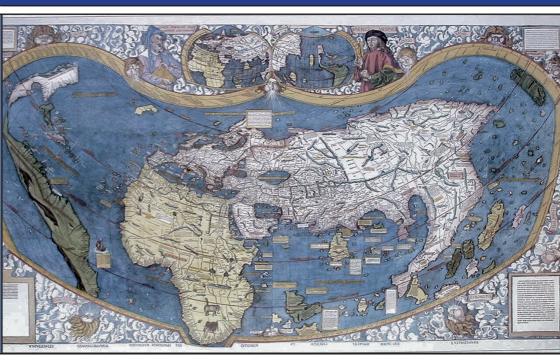
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I Quaderni di Scienze Politiche dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore

I *Quaderni di Scienze Politiche*, la cui pubblicazione è iniziata nel 2011 sotto la denominazione di *Quaderni del Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche*, si ispirano ad una tradizione scientifica orientata allo studio dei fenomeni politici nelle loro espressioni istituzionali e organizzative a livello internazionale e, in un'ottica comparatistica, anche all'interno agli Stati. Essi sono promossi dal Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, costituito nel 1983 e interprete fedele della tradizione dell'Ateneo.

Il fondatore dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Padre Agostino Gemelli, affermava nel 1942 che diritto, storia e politica costituiscono «un tripode» sul quale si fondano le Facoltà di Scienze Politiche, delle quali difendeva l'identità e la funzione. Circa vent'anni dopo, Francesco Vito, successore del fondatore nel Rettorato e già Preside della Facoltà di Scienze Politiche, scriveva: «Noi rimaniamo fedeli alla tradizione scientifica secondo la quale l'indagine del fenomeno politico non può essere esaurita senza residui da una sola disciplina scientifica. Concorrono alla comprensione della politica gli studi storici, quelli filosofici, quelli giuridici, quelli socio-economici». Per Gianfranco Miglio, Preside per trent'anni della Facoltà di Scienze Politiche dell'Università Cattolica e per otto anche Docente di Storia dei trattati e politica internazionale, la storia è il laboratorio privilegiato della ricerca politologica.

Come immagine caratterizzante della vocazione internazionalista dei *Quaderni*, è stata scelta la mappa disegnata nel 1507 dal cartografo tedesco Martin Waldseemüller (1470-1521), di grande importanza storica essendo la prima nella quale il Nuovo Continente, scoperto da Cristoforo Colombo, è denominato "America". Nel 2005 tale mappa è stata dichiarata dall'UNESCO "Memoria del mondo".

La frase *Orbem prudenter investigare et veraciter agnoscere*, che esprime lo spirito di libera ricerca ispirata alla vocazione cattolica, utilizza alcune espressioni della seguente preghiera di San Tommaso

d'Aquino: «Concede mihi, misericors Deus, quae tibi placita sunt, ardenter concupiscere, prudenter investigare, veraciter agnoscere, et perfecte adimplere ad laudem et gloriam nominis tui. Amen». Tale preghiera, «dicenda ante studium vel lectionem», a sua volta forma la prima parte di una più lunga orazione: «Ad vitam sapienter instituendam».

Pubblicati sia a stampa sia *online* sul sito internet www. quaderniscienzepolitiche.it, i *Quaderni* ospitano articoli soggetti a *Peer Review* anonima.

Il presente numero 13 pubblica alcune relazioni presentate al seminario scientifico sul tema *La Rivoluzione russa del 1917 e le Chiese*, organizzato nel maggio 2016 dal Pontificio Comitato di Scienze Storiche con la partecipazione anche di storici russi. Inoltre, questo numero dei *Quaderni* ospita una selezione delle relazioni al convegno sul tema *Il rapporto transatlantico dalla storia all'attualità: fasi e compiti della NATO*, organizzato nel maggio 2017 dal Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, nonché un articolo sulla Dottrina Sociale della Chiesa.

The *Quaderni di Scienze Politiche* follow a scientific tradition of multidisciplinary study of politics based on history, political science and law. International history, international relations and international law are the fields covered. This internationalist approach is reflected by the cover image: the map of 1507 by Martin Waldseemüller, the first in which the New Continent discovered by Cristoforo Colombo is called "America".

The European Security and Defence Policy of the EU and NATO

di Antonio Marquina Barrio

Abstract — This paper will try to address the evolution of the EU-NATO relationship after the Cold War, in order to give some insight into the most pressing problems to be dealt with today to strengthen the transatlantic link. The reason is clear: the relationship has to be reconstructed avoiding approaches and policies that have been detected leading to failure and squandering money in the past decades. As far as NATO is concerned, we can also detect the underlined philosophy that has prevailed in the last decades, implicitly revised during President Obamá's Administrations and, in particular, in a more explicit way, after the nomination of President Trump. Thus, the essay analyses the origins and trajectory of the EU-NATO relationship, focusing only on selected topics, in order to understand their complex relationship, the reasons and the dynamics of change, the present situation and the lessons learned on the approaches and policies adopted in the last decades.

The European integration and the beginning of transatlantic misunderstandings

Starting briefly with the Cold War, the fist statement we can make is that the United States supported the European integration during this period. However, once the countries of the European Economic Community (EEC) consolidated themselves economically, some competition and disagreements began to appear between the EEC and the United States. I can mention in particular the area of the foreign and security policies after the introduction of the European Political Cooperation, that took place in the 1970s.

Regarding NATO, the United States insisted that Europe should contribute more to NATO expenses, maintaining the principles of their American leadership in the Alliance. For Kissinger there was a clear differentiation of interests and tasks: the United States had global

responsibilities and a global interest, while European interests were and could only be regional¹.

In response, on 14 December 1973, the EEC Foreign Ministers, meeting in Copenhagen, adopted a "Declaration on European Identity" («a distinct and original entity»), which stated in the very beginning that «The Nine Member Countries of the European Communities have decided that the time has come to draw up a document on the European Identity. This will enable them to achieve a better definition of their relations with other countries and of their responsibilities and the place which they occupy in world affairs». The document established the principles for common policies in relation to third countries, as well as mentioning a development aid on a worldwide scale, with regard to the Mediterranean and African countries, the Middle East, the United States, Japan and Canada, the USSR and the Eastern European countries, China and other Asian countries, and Latin American countries. The EEC was thus addressing all the world, as a global actor.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the United States and the nine EEC Members increased their disagreements in a set of foreign policy issues, while Washington was pressing for a stronger and more united European pillar within NATO. The disagreements and transatlantic misunderstandings gained more strength under President Carter, when the United States lost its traditional hegemonic stability, and even under President Reagan. Thus, the idea emerged to revive the Western European Union (WEU)², a defence organization, as a forum for discussing the shared and distinct European security interests. Simultaneously, the political and economic aspects of security were also discussed and developed, and the Single European Act came into effect on 1 July 1987.

¹ F. Bindi, European Union Foreign Policy: A Historical Overview, in F. Bindi – I. Angelescu (eds), The Foreign Policy of the European Union, Washington, DC, 2012, p. 21.

² See Western European Union at www.weu.int. See also A.J.K. Bailes – G. Messervy-Whitting, *Death of an Institution. The end for Western European Union*, Egmont Paper n. 46, May 2011.

After the Cold War: the EU wanted to become a political and security power, but some EU Member States and the United States were not convinced

The Maastricht Treaty created the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and the WEU was closely associated with the CFSP, acting as a bridge to NATO. The CSFP finally allowed to address the previously taboo question of "defence", with the possibility of gradually moving toward a common defence system.

On 10 December 1991, at Maastricht, the WEU Member States adopted a declaration concerning the decision to develop the WEU as the defence component of the European Union and as the means to strengthen the European pillar of the Atlantic Alliance. On 19 June 1992, the WEU Council of Ministers, convened in Bonn, declared their readiness to make military units from the whole spectrum of their conventional armed forces available to the WEU, but also to NATO and the EU. Moreover, the Council approved the operational capability of the WEU, the so-called "Petersberg tasks": humanitarian and rescue, peacekeeping, and crisis management including peacemaking (in case of small crisis, if NATO did not want to intervene). In other words, the EU was intended to deal only with soft security issues³. The Brussels NATO summit of 11 January 1994 fully supported the development of a European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI), compatible with that of the Atlantic Alliance. The ESDI had to strengthen the European pillar of the Alliance, through the WEU, while also reinforcing the transatlantic link.

However, the WEU had to develop its military capabilities. The EU experience in managing the conflicts in the Balkans was not satisfying: indeed, in the end, NATO had to intervene, in compliance with UN Security Council resolutions. Later, the military operation in Kosovo showed how weak the military contribution of the WEU countries could be⁴. Thus, military capabilities became the main topic in NATO and the EU.

³ The 2009 Lisbon Treaty further expanded these tasks to include: humanitarian and rescue tasks; conflict prevention and peace-keeping tasks; tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking; joint disarmament operations; military advice and assistance tasks; post-conflict stabilization tasks.

⁴ P.E. Gallis, Kosovo: Lessons Learned from Operation Allied Force, CRS Report for Congress, November 19, 1999. C. Grant, European Defence post-Kosovo? CRS Report

The EU Amsterdam Treaty, signed on 2 October 1997 and entered into force on 1 May 1999, included the Petersberg tasks (even if neutral Member States opposed the inclusion of mutual defence guaranties). In June, during the European Council held in Cologne, the European Heads of State and Government apparently gave a boost to common defence. They agreed that the Union should have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, and provided the Union with the necessary means and capabilities to assume its responsibilities regarding a common European policy on security and defence. Later, the decisions taken by the European Council in Helsinki on rapid deployment forces and the Laeken Declaration gave the impression that the EU was acting beyond the framework agreed at Brussels NATO summit in 1994 and reiterated during the NATO Ministerial meeting held in Berlin in 1996. In other words, a greater EU military autonomy, the ESDP, implied a redefinition of the former ESDI in NATO. The ESDP appeared as something possible, but this was a mirage. The EU emancipation was a dream. The EU needed NATO. A key development in this regard was the Berlin Plus Agreement of December 2002, which, under certain conditions, was giving the EU access to NATO assets and capabilities for crisis management and conflict prevention operations. Thus, NATO was reassured that the EU could launch operations only after "NATO as a whole" had decided not to be engaged⁵. Later, the American interest in a division of labour fade away, given the new Bush Administration approaches and philosophy. For the Rumsfeld team, indeed, NATO was only a toolbox, and it was the mission to determine the coalition, eliminating a key aspect in any military alliance: solidarity. As a matter of fact, the American intervention in Iraq created a profound division between the "New" and "Old" Europe and on the meaning of NATO as an alliance.

Nevertheless, the position of the United States was understandable, given the limited and insufficient military contribution of the European pillar to the Alliance and the American new focus on the war on terror. However, the expansion of the NATO area was important, and it is in this perspective that one shall read the invitation to

for Congress, June 1999, available at www.cer.eu/sites/default/files/publications/attachments/pdf/2012/cerwp3-5671.pdf.

⁵ See also EU-NATO Declaration on ESDP, 16 December 2002, available at www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_19544.htm.

Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia to begin accession talks at the NATO Prague summit of November 2002; this was done notwithstanding one of the conditions set by the Membership Action Plan (MAP), regarding the capacity of to provide military contribution to collective defence. Again, one of the issues at stake in the summit was the «adoption of measures to improve military capabilities». In this context, the EU was not an exception, the target of the EU headline goal for developing a rapid deployment force (50.000-60.000 soldiers, around fifteen brigades) set for 2003 was not achieved (the EU was the second world military budget).

The Secretary of the Council and High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy accepted and developed Kantian, postmodern, normative and human security approaches in line with the traditional neutral European States (a division of labour with NATO) and, in 2002, Robert Cooper (a Kantian) was nominated Director General for External and Political and Military Affairs. In this vein, the first EU Strategy, "A Secure Europe in a Better World" adopted by the European Council on 12-13 December 2003, provided the conceptual framework for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, but focusing on global governance and soft security issues.

Thus, the level of ambition clearly diminished. In 2003 (30 May to 1 September) the first EU autonomous soft security mission, Operation Artemis, was launched and implemented. Based on the experiences of this operation, two other new initiatives were approved: the "Battlegroup Concept", setting a new level of ambition, less important than the 1999 initiative (with a decrease from 15 brigades to 15 Battlegroups), and a new 2010 Headline Goal. This time, the full operational capacity of the Battlegroups was reached on 1 January 2007. Nevertheless, the Battlegroups have never been deployed for an operation.

⁶ See European Security Strategy – A Secure Europe in a Better World, 12 December 2003, at https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/en/european-security-strategy-secure-europe-better-world.

⁷ This first operation minimised the previous consultation in NATO and created a precedent. See, *inter alia*, S. Jubelirer, *Divided Responsibility: NATO, the European Union, and European Defence After Cold War*, Claremont-UC Undergraduate Research Conference on the European Union, vol. 2009, article 8, March 2012, available at http://scholarship.claremont.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1032&context=urceu.

In order to maintain the agreed framework under control, avoiding bad surprises, after taking into account the EU military capabilities, in 2005 a NATO permanent military liaison team at the EU Military Staff was established, to facilitate cooperation at the operational level, and, the following year, an EU Cell was set up at SHAPE.

All this framework was developed for an international system in which the United States was the only superpower (or hyperpower), but the first signals for the world reconfiguration appeared during the second Bush Administration and, in particular, later, during Obama Administration. This process of change was not properly analysed in Brussels nor in the EU Member States capitals, and the EU maintained the same approach. In December 2008 the European Council confirmed the enduring validity of the EU Strategy, and the adopted revision was purely cosmetic⁸. The EU lack of vision was colossal. Moreover, in 2009 Catherine Ashton was nominated as High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, as well as first Vice President of the European Commission. Her principal task was the development of the Lisbon Treaty⁹, but she was not interested in developing the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and her expertise on security and defence was minimal.

In a very short period, the EU would suffer the consequences of this lack of vision, the internal disagreements among its Member States, in particular the role of the UK in limiting the objectives and achievements of the European defence, the long-established NATO division of labour, pushing the EU in line with the European traditional neutral countries, and the trivialization of nominations in the area of security and defence in the EU.

⁸ Report on the implementation of the European Security Strategy – Providing Security in a Changing World, 11 December 2008, available at https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/en/report-implementation-european-security-strategy-providing-security-changing-world.

⁹ In December 2009, the Lisbon Treaty entered into force, introducing some important elements for the future EU security and defence that was renamed as Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). In particular, some innovations are worth mentioning: the creation of the post of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who will also hold the post of Vice-President of the Commission; the establishment of the European External Action Service; the introduction of Permanent Structured Cooperation; the mutual assistance in the case of armed aggression and the solidarity clause.

Even Washington, though not satisfied with the EU goal of some autonomous defence, considered the European approaches to security and defence inappropriate. The US Secretary of Defence, Robert Gates, on 23 February 2010, in a speech at the National Defence University, dealing with the new NATO Strategic Concept which was then under discussion, after emphasizing the systemic problems of the Alliance (such as the low military budgets and insufficient military capabilities), added the following:

These budget limitations relate to a larger cultural and political trend affecting the alliance. One of the triumphs of the last century was the pacification of Europe after ages of ruinous warfare. But, as I've said before, I believe we have reached an inflection point, where much of the continent has gone too far in the other direction. The demilitarization of Europe – where large swaths of the general public and political class are averse to military force and the risks that go with it – has gone from a blessing in the 20th century to an impediment to achieving real security and lasting peace in the 21st. Not only can real or perceived weakness be a temptation to miscalculation and aggression, but, on a more basic level, the resulting funding and capability shortfalls make it difficult to operate and fight together to confront shared threats¹⁰.

Nevertheless, these issues of budget limitations and the European pacifist approaches had no salience in the new NATO Strategic Concept of 2010¹¹.

¹⁰ Remarks by Dr. Robert M. Gates, U.S. Secretary of Defence, Fourth Seminar on NATO's Strategic Concept – Transformation: structures, forces and capabilities, 23 February 2010, available at www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/events_61583.htm.

¹¹ See Active Engagement, Modern Defence, 19 November 2010, available at www. nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_68580.htm. In paragraph 32 it was stated: «We are determined to make our contribution to create more favourable circumstances through which we will: fully strengthen the strategic partnership with the EU, in the spirit of full mutual openness, transparency, complementarity and respect for the autonomy and institutional integrity of both organisations; enhance our practical cooperation in operations throughout the crisis spectrum, from coordinated planning to mutual support in the field; broaden our political consultations to include all issues of common concern, in order to share assessments and perspectives; cooperate more fully in capability development, to minimise duplication and maximise cost-effectiveness».

The experimentum crucis for the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP): the Arab Revolutions, Russia meddling in Syria, Ukraine and the Balkans

The events which go under the name of the so-called Arab Spring started to arise on 17 December 2010. The role of the EU in this process of political change was reduced, while the authoritarian Gulf countries played the key-role in the Mediterranean political transformation – a tremendous contradiction. In the Libya crisis, the EU was deeply divided regarding the military intervention. The British and French leadership soon showed their weakness, not being able to agree on a common position in the EU framework. Alain Juppè, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, showing a clear dissatisfaction, affirmed that the CSDP was dead. For this reason, the United States, albeit stating from the beginning that the situation in Libya did not affect its national interest, was forced to make an additional military effort, given the military weakness shown by the European States participating in the operations.

The fact that the CSDP was considered dead was mainly due to the roles assigned to the EU in the Petersberg tasks and the European Security Strategy, all focused on soft security. Again, the US Secretary of Defence, Robert Gates, was accurate in his analysis:

In Afghanistan, the ISAF mission has exposed significant shortcomings in NATO - in military capabilities, and in political will. Despite more than 2 million troops in uniform – not counting the US military - NATO has struggled, at times desperately, to sustain a deployment of 25 to 40,000 troops, not just in boots on the ground, but in crucial support assets such as helicopters, transport aircraft, maintenance, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, and much more. [...] Turning to the NATO operation over Libya, it has become painfully clear that similar shortcomings – in capability and will -have the potential to jeopardize the alliance's ability to conduct an integrated, effective and sustained air-sea campaign.[...] Libya mission did meet its initial military objectives – grounding Qaddafi's air force and degrading his ability to wage offensive war against his own citizens. And while the operation has exposed some shortcomings caused by underfunding, it has also shown the potential of NATO, with an operation where Europeans are taking the lead with American support. However, while every alliance member voted for Libya mission, less than half have participated at all, and fewer than a third have been willing to participate in the strike mission. [...] Frankly, many of those allies sitting on the sidelines do so not because they do not want to participate, but simply because they can't. The military capabilities simply aren't there¹².

However, he did not mention an important aspect: the division of functions between NATO and the EU was deactivating the Europeans. It was an incentive for inaction. The Atlantic Alliance once again appeared as the only credible military actor in Europe and in its periphery. Burden sharing between NATO and CSDP was an illusion, given the *de facto* division of labour between NATO and the EU.

The EU is powerless and reacts slowly. The money spent in the CSDP was squandered

In the following years, the decisions of the Obama Administration to withdraw from several important places in the European periphery created gaps that other non-European States would quickly fill. As a consequence, the EU had to react, but this was not the case: indeed, the Syrian conflict was worsening the lack of EU leadership. Moreover, other situations influenced this scenario: the return of Russia in the Mediterranean; Russian intervention in Ukraine, with the occupation of Crimea and support to pro-Russian separatists in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions (which raised wider concerns about its intentions elsewhere in Eastern Europe); and, finally, Russia meddling in the Balkans. The EU failure to predict Russian actions, the increasing divisions between the EU and the United States on policies to be implemented, and the weakness of CSDP were all catastrophic for the Union.

If in the war in Syria the EU was almost absent, in the uprising in Mali it was acting alone to contain the spread of Islamic terrorism in the Southern European periphery and, at the end, the French had to intervene with the operation Serval, on 11 January 2013. It was not an intervention to be included in the CSDP framework. In the moment of truth, the money spent on the Battlegroups and other military assets was perceived as clearly wasted.

¹² Remarks by Secretary Gates at the Security and Defence Agenda, Brussels, 10 June 2011, available at http://archive.defence.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=4839.

Additionally, at the same time China started to meddle in Central Europe, with the initiative 16+1. On 25 June 2011, the first China-Central and Eastern Europe Business Forum was organized. A year later, on 25 April 2012, the First Minister Wen Jiabao visited Poland and, on 6 September 2012, the Secretariat for Cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries was established as a body of Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thus, while China was encouraging a division between the EU and its Eastern Members, the EU did not react properly, preferring to let go.

As the European Parliament later recognized, «the CSDP did not change substantially in the first few years following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009»¹³; however, it is important to mention the conclusions of the EU Council held in Brussels on 19-20 December 2013, when the Council invited the High Representative, in close cooperation with the Commission, «to assess the impact of changes in the global environment, and to report to the Council in the course of 2015 on the challenges and opportunities arising for the Union, following consultations with the Member States»¹⁴.

In this new context, the NATO summit held in Wales on 5 September 2014 introduced new perspectives for the EU, not stated or explained in previous meetings¹⁵, emphasizing the question of a strong defence and hard security, and highlighting again the traditional aspects to be maintained in the EU-NATO bilateral relationship: complementary and mutually reinforcing initiatives, as well as capability development and interoperability, thus avoiding unnecessary duplication and maximizing cost-effectiveness.

In the common threat assessment, Russia, the Western Balkans, ISIL, Iraq, Syria, Mali, and Libya were mentioned. A reverse in the trend of declining defence budgets was encouraged, agreeing that all Allies had to reach the minimum threshold of 2% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) dedicated to defence within a decade. Regarding the

¹³ European Parliament, *Common Security and Defence Policy*, June 2017, available at www.europarl.europa.eu/atyourservice/en/displayFtu.html?ftuId=FTU_6.1. 2.html.

¹⁴ European Council, *Conclusions*, 19-20 December 2013, Brussels, 20 December 2013, available at www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/documents/sede/dv/sede110914ecconclusionscsdp_/sede110914ecconclusionscsdp_en.pdf.

¹⁵ See for instance the *Chicago Summit Declaration*, point 20, available at www. nato.int/cps/ua/natohq/official_texts_87593.htm?selectedLocale=en.

cooperation between NATO and the EU, the importance of a stronger and more capable European defence was reiterated, together with the European will to strengthen European defence and crisis management, as well as the need for a continuous dialogue, cooperation and consultation to address issues of common concern, including security challenges like cyber defence, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, counter-terrorism, and energy security, together with other aspects such as maritime security, defence and related security capacity building, and addressing hybrid threats¹⁶.

However, the EU response to the challenges and the related defence improvements to prioritize the hard security was slow. According to Eurostat, in 2015 defence expenditure amounted to 1.4 % of the GDP for the EU-28, very close to 2014 level¹⁷. As usual, new documents were approved, the first on capacity building and the second on the changing global environment¹⁸ and, without surprise, the EU Council held on 25-26 June 2015 insisted on the main CSDP targets fixed previously in December 2013:

- 1. the financing of the defence dimension (Member States' expenditure on defence; EU budget to kick-start the work on CSDP-related research),
- the need for defence cooperation to solve the capabilities issue, with EU instruments as a facilitator, the usefulness of CSDP missions/operations in countering hybrid threats,
- 3. and the importance of partnerships with other organizations or countries, including empowering them by capacity-building, in order to prevent or manage crises.

The only novelty was that the High Representative received the mandate to continue the process of strategic reflection with a view to preparing an EU global strategy on foreign and security policy in close

¹⁶ Wales Summit Declaration, 5 September 2014, available at www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm.

¹⁷ Eurostat, *Government expenditure on defence*, available at http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Government_expenditure_on_defence.

¹⁸ Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, *Capacity building in support of security and development – Enabling partners to prevent and manage crises*, 28 April 2015, Report of the Committee of Foreign Affairs, *The EU in a changing global environment – A more connected, contested and complex world*, 18 May 2015.

cooperation with Member States, to be submitted to the European Council by June 2016¹⁹.

The EU Global Strategy on foreign and security policy and EU cooperation with NATO. What is the meaning of strategic autonomy?

The Global Strategy, a legally non-binding document, was presented in the European Council of 28-29 June 2016, which focused its attention on the discussion of the political and practical implications of Brexit. The philosophy of the document²⁰ substantially differed from the previous European Security Strategy. Indeed, the strategy identified several priorities:

- 1. protecting the Union and its citizens;
- 2. responding to external conflicts and crisis in all phases of the conflict;
- 3. capacity building of partners, meaning that the EU needed to invest in the State and societal strength of its partners;
- 4. preventing future crises (indeed, the EU would not manage to end or prevent conflicts if societies and States are not resilient enough);
- 5. need to spend enough on defence and of a truly European defence industry;
- 6. strategic autonomy, combining hard and soft power;
- 7. cooperative regional orders;
- 8. global governance.

In July of the same year, the EU Members stated their readiness to implement these steps, with the first three being the main priorities. Obviously, some of the established priorities implied an adaptation or at least a clarification in the NATO-EU relationship. On 8 July, a joint declaration was signed in Warsaw. The declaration noted that the Euro-Atlantic community was facing unprecedented challenges emanating from the South and East, and expressed the determination

¹⁹ European Council, *Conclusions*, Brussels, 26 June 2015, available at https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/en/european-council-conclusions-june-2015.

²⁰ However, this document was not convincing enough and, in our view, it needed a profound revision in several parts. See A. Marquina (bajo la dirección de), *La Estrategia Global de la Unión Europea. Asomándose al precipicio*, Madrid, 2017.

to give new impetus and new substance to the NATO-EU strategic partnership in light of common difficulties. A tighter cooperation was needed in countering the hybrid threats, in operations including those at sea and on migration, in coordinating cyber security and defence, in developing coherent, complementary and interoperable defence capabilities; in defending industrial cooperation, in exercises, and in building the defence capabilities of partners in the Eastern and Southern flanks.

This emphasis on cooperation did not mention a division of labour that was made clear in the new international environment and the new international priorities as seen from Washington. The EU strategic autonomy could not only be reduced to relatively marginal operations outside of Europe, as was stated when the EU launched the ESDP²¹. In this regard, some duplications, including a General Headquarters for EU operations and previous contingency planning, were required for possible autonomous action in different scenarios against the traditional NATO position of shared planning. Interoperability and burden sharing remained as key points, even if, on the other hand, possible differences in interests survived, as the intervention in Libya demonstrated. The main question was how to fit the involvement of NATO and other European States in the consultation and in the EU decision making, as was advocated in NATO.

On 14 November 2016, the Council gave the green light to the Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, intended to operationalise the vision set out in the Global Strategy on defence and security issues. To satisfy the new ambitions, the Plan sets out thirteen proposals which encompass a coordinated annual review of defence spending, a better EU rapid response, including the use of EU Battlegroups, and a new single Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) for those Member States willing to undertake higher commitments on security and defence.

On 7 December 2016, NATO Foreign Ministers approved a series of 42 measures in agreed areas, to advance the EU-NATO cooperation. The European Council approved the Implementation Plan and the common set of measures endorsed by the EU and NATO Councils. Later, on 6 March 2017, the Foreign Affairs and Defence

²¹ R.E. Hunter, *The European Security and Defence Policy: NATO's Companion – or Competitor?*, Santa Monica, CA, 2002, also available on-line at www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1463.html.

Council announced the establishment of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC), which is not only a General Headquarters but also a new structure for planning and conducting non-executive military missions (missions that do not involve combat and cannot act independently of their host nations). It was the first step in the development of the military planning. They also took note of progress in other topics: the preparations for launching the permanent structured cooperation (PESCO); the possibility of a Member States-driven coordinated annual review on defence (CARD); developing civilian capabilities; implementations in other areas, such as the provision of capacity building, strengthening the EU rapid response toolbox, including the EU Battlegroups, whose deployment had to be paid for out of the EU budget, situational awareness to inform strategic foresight, and the review of the Capability Development Plan.

However, the implementation process was not very fluent. On 25 May 2017, a NATO summit took place in Brussels, attended by Donald Trump. The American position as presented by the new President created a significant uncertainty in the European allies on Washington's commitment to the collective defence. Under this impression, the EU had to work hard in the defence domain, with more uncertainty and unpredictability regarding the American reaction not only in the case of crisis in the European territory but in particular in the European periphery not covered by article 5 of the Washington Treaty.

In June 2017, a report on the implementation of the common set of proposals endorsed by NATO and EU Councils on 6 December 2016 was released and presented by EU High Representative, Federica Mogherini, to EU Foreign Ministers meeting in Luxembourg and by the NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, to NATO Ministers of Defence, promising also to expand the bilateral cooperation. The report gave the impression that the bilateral cooperation progressed smoothly. The European Council held on 22 June again mentioned significant progress in security and defence: this included the Communication by the Commission on a European Defence Fund, a call for the launching of PESCO (finally agreed and signed by 23 Member States on 13 November 2017), and the agreement on common cost in the case of deployment of Battlegroups, which would be managed at EU level through the Athena mechanism on a permanent basis. However, all this was only the beginning of a long process, and key issues still need to be solved in the upcoming years.

Conclusion and recommendations for the EU-NATO cooperation

The main problem in the EU-NATO cooperation is the lack of predictability in the American engagements under the new Trump Administration: indeed, he is emphasising more the bilateral relations with European allies rather than with the EU as a whole ("Brexit is a good thing" but then "wonderful EU"), and also the "America first" motto, protectionism and accusations of "grossly undervalued" euro can be mentioned. In the critical aspect of the bilateral economic relations, TTIP is frozen if not over. All this goes against article 2 of the Washington Treaty ("They will seek to eliminate conflict in their international economic policies and will encourage economic collaboration between any or all of them").

Washington's first priority is the fight against terrorism and managing the new security environment in the Indo-Pacific. But what can the EU do militarily in this regard? The war in Syria and Iraq is almost over and in Afghanistan a new military engagement of the EU-NATO countries going beyond the Resolute Support Mission is almost impossible. The only feasible option is to help building and training the capacity of the national security forces in these countries. In Libya and the Sahel, the EU, not NATO, is on the front line. On the Asian front, the first thing to be mentioned is that the EU is a regional power, with limited capabilities in Asia-Pacific. However, this region can also become a priority for the EU in the case of a crisis, given the European economic interests in the area. What the EU will decide to do still remains an enigma.

Taking into consideration the lack of predictability in the American engagements and the differences between their interests and those of the European side, approaches and even military commitments in the Southern and Eastern European flanks (Russia, the Balkans, Libya, Syria, Sahel, Africa in general), we can foresee:

- an increasing division of labour between NATO and the EU in hard security issues. The question of "NATO first" is clear for Eastern Europe, not for the EU Mediterranean neighbourhood.
- NATO centrality will depend on the subject affecting article 5 and American national interests more narrowly defined. And the key question of solidarity in NATO for out-of-area challenges and threats will become difficult to be maintained or achieved. This also applies to the EU Member States and their operations. This point is crucial both for the Alliance

- and for the EU. Without solidarity in challenges and threats going beyond article 5, NATO and even PESCO would result as useless. This significant point goes against the necessity of a division of labour.
- A difficult transition and accommodation in NATO of new EU proposals, including PESCO. However, an accommodation cannot be properly done if scenarios of possible collaboration are blurred, given Washington's focus on its own interests narrowly defined this narrow definition being not ephemeral nor transient, plus the EU possible negotiations of other ad hoc agreements with third non-NATO countries and their unintended consequences.
- The EU needs autonomous approaches, planning the stabilization of its Mediterranean neighbourhood, relying only on its own military means. More duplication with NATO is inevitable. A new EU general Headquarters is unavoidable.
- As soon as the European countries increase their defence spending, the EU autonomous action will become more credible.
 That is not the case today. And autonomous defence, indeed, implies a more balanced security culture in Europe.
- As a consequence, the EU has to carefully analyse the policies and approaches, including nominations, of the last decades, as well as to try to more accurately predict the changes in the international and regional system, taking care of the money of the European citizens spent on defence (refraining from wasting resources in purely experimental initiatives), and avoiding new blunders. In any case, higher EU common commitments in security and defence are unavoidable. NATO and the EU have to better adapt to the new international environment. It will take time and substantial efforts.

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Il fondatore dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Padre Agostino Gemelli, affermava nel 1942 che diritto, storia e politica costituiscono «un tripode» sul quale si fondano le Facoltà di Scienze Politiche, delle quali difendeva l'identità e la funzione. Circa vent'anni dopo, Francesco Vito, successore del fondatore nel Rettorato e già Preside della Facoltà di Scienze Politiche, scriveva: «Noi rimaniamo fedeli alla tradizione scientifica secondo la quale l'indagine del fenomeno politico non può essere esaurita senza residui da una sola disciplina scientifica. Concorrono alla comprensione della politica gli studi storici, quelli filosofici, quelli giuridici, quelli socio-economici». Per Gianfranco Miglio, Preside per trent'anni della Facoltà di Scienze Politiche dell'Università Cattolica e per otto anche Docente di Storia dei Trattati e Politica Internazionale, la storia è il laboratorio privilegiato della ricerca politologica.

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