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A SECURITY POLICY FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION

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1. Introduction.

This short paper will outline some thoughts on: (i) the new short-term risks affecting European security; (ii) the attitude of the European countries toward those risks, as indicated by their response to the crisis in the former Yugoslavia -- the first post-Cold War and post-Communism crisis; (iii) the prospects for a true European Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP); (iv) the special burden and requirements that future crises affecting European security impose on European governments, military forces, political parties and public opinion; (v) the repercussions that the foreseen EC enlargement is bound to have on the overall issue of the CFSP, with specific reference to security aspects.

The paper is not meant to be anything more than a collection of notations and considerations based mainly on the recent evolution of the European and international security situation.

2. The new security risks.

It has become a truism to say that the fall of the Communist regimes in Central-Eastern Europe, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the German reunification and the disintegration of the Soviet Union have drastically changed the European strategic picture, opening a whole range of new risks -- and imposing new requirements related to their possible impact on European security interests.

Today, the "threat from the East" has dissolved together with all its military scenarios. There is no longer an enemy on the other side of the dismantled Iron Curtain. NATO's flexible and graduated response doctrine, with its concepts of forward deployment and defence, nuclear first strike option and escalation ladder, has been thoroughly reviewed. The new emphasis is on crisis management and the creation of smaller, multinational and very mobile units with a high level of operational readiness, capable of rapidly reacting to any crisis situation.

European security has never depended only on the elements of military preparedness, even though these were determining factors in the Cold War period. But a credible defence posture, albeit necessary, is not sufficient to cope with today's complex security risks or to confront crises which are likely to occur outside NATO's traditional area of responsibility. Today, European security encompasses a larger set of values and increasingly depends on the synergetic use of military, diplomatic and economic instruments, within the framework of a clear crisis management strategy.

During the Cold War, Europe was able to respond to the Warsaw Pact military threat with a sound defence strategy. Behind the strategy and military planning, there was a firm collective willingness of all NATO members -- even those not directly participating in the integrated military structure of the Alliance -- to respond to any aggression. The elements of the European security picture were clear, as was NATO's political and military posture.

Today, Europe is confronted with a series of new issues: the remaining uncertainties of Russia's move toward democracy and a market economy, and the possibility of a further deterioration of the ethnic conflicts in the former Soviet Union; the prospect of a Balkanization of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia involving the intervention of other regional and extra-regional actors; the risks of new crises in the Gulf; the possible regional repercussions of the still unresolved Arab-Israeli conflict; the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, long-range ballistic missiles, and high-tech weapons systems; the eventual spreading influence and access to power of Islamic fundamentalist movements in North-Africa; the growing social disruption potential and security repercussions of widespread migration to Europe as a result of domestic political instabilities, bleak economic prospects and ethnic tensions in the South and East; the deepening of the international connections and the spread of cooperation among mafia-type criminal organizations; the prospect of nuclear blackmail and terrorism.

These new security challenges and a readiness to play a more visible role in international affairs have pushed Europe to address the problem of a European security identity (eventually including defence) within the context of its move toward Political Union.

The Maastricht Treaty has broadly indicated the way, the instruments and the organization (the Western European Union)   responsible to reach that goal.

Today, the new risks to European security are epitomized by the Yugoslav civil war. The breaking down of a country because of deeply felt internal divisions and the eventual eruption of nationalistic and ethnic violence is an event which could occur in other parts of the European continent, potentially involving the use of nuclear weapons.

3. The EC's attitude and responses.

The Yugoslav crisis has clearly shown the failure of a European CFSP, no matter how the overall score of the European action on the crisis may be eventually judged. The divisions among the Twelve on the political and military strategy to be followed, the lack of a clear and common policy, the unwillingness to use military force as an instrument of pressure and coercion at the early stage of the crisis, the constant delay in deciding and taking further and tougher actions were all elements which contributed to that failure. As the crisis progressed, becoming even more complex and difficult to manage, the possibilities of low-cost intervention decreased together with the weakening of the European capacity to shape a CFSP. The EC was

able to take a common policy line only on the basis of the lowest common denominator, adopting the line of least resistance and agreeing only on what all its members had decided they were not willing and ready to do.

The prospect of a CFSP received a further significant blow in May 1993 when, without previous coordination within the Community, France, Spain and the United Kingdom agreed with Russia and the United States on a "Joint Action Plan" to stop the fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

4. The need for a different assessment of peace-keeping and a change in mentality.

There is a strong need for a different evaluation of the risks to European security and the instruments the EC could use to confront them.

The concept of peacekeeping should be fully reviewed. The crises of the future will be similar to that of Yugoslavia, that is they will be characterized by: an emphasis on nationalistic sentiments and ethnic differences which are deeply rooted in the past; an unwillingness to find a diplomatic solution unless it fully meets the established goals of all parties involved; and the crucial role of military force. The actors of the future European crises will remember the lesson of the former Yugoslavia i.e. the persistence in the divisions and the lack of resolve of the European institutions (from the EC to the WEU and the CSCE) will be likely to block any meaningful and effective intervention, and in the end military victory on the ground will dictate the shape of an eventual political solution. The role of UN forces for peacekeeping will be less and less similar to that performed in Cyprus, or in the Sinai, and increasingly like that played in the former Yugoslavia and in Somalia.

The EC countries and the European Parliament should drastically change the attitude, traditional dogma and "forma mentis" with which they assess the issue of re-establishing peace in regions torn by nationalistic and ethnic conflicts.

Peacekeeping, as it is usually defined and as it has been carried out to date, is bound to be replaced in many cases by peace-enforcing which, by definition, will envision the use of military force. The peacekeepers cannot be seen almost exclusively as relief workers, whose primary mission is to deliver humanitarian aid, but who can do nothing to stop the conflict and the resulting carnage. The Yugoslav war amply demonstrated that even the humanitarian mission was only partially fulfilled because of the opposition of Bosnian-Serb troops and the unwillingness of the UN contingent to adopt "all measures necessary" for humanitarian aid to reach their destination, as mandated by Security Council's Resolution 770 in August 1992.

The role of the UN as the sole organization capable of providing the legal and institutional framework for the intervention should also be reconsidered. Again the Yugoslav crisis demonstrated the slow pace of UN diplomacy and the time needed for the appropriate resolution to be approved and enacted, and for the UN forces to be finally deployed where needed. Moreover, there could be cases in which the UN decision-making mechanism might be blocked by an opposing veto.

Now, there could be crises directly affecting vital European security interests which should be dealt with without uncertainty and delay. In these cases, the future EU should be prepared to act independently under its own mandate. But this would be possible only if the EU is capable of shaping a real CFSP.

Both re-evaluations require a strong political will and the support of public opinion, two elements which are presently lacking in all EC countries and which are unlikely to be created in the near future. In fact, it will take a long time to change the concept, which has long been ingrained in the political parties and public opinion, that "peace missions" should be conducted without the use of force -- regardless of the situation on the ground -- and that humanitarian goals should be paramount in defining the missions, even if they do not solve the problem of stopping the bloodshed and re-establishing peace and stability.

The alternative to true peacemaking is either the political and military impotence seen in the past two years in Bosnia, or the creation of a "cordon sanitaire" around the crisis area, in the hope that instability will not spill over and involve other national or international actors.

5. The need for a precise assessment of the requirements of a European security and defence identity.

There is a certain degree of confusion and a danger of costly duplication in the present European military posture: NATO has reviewed its strategy and changed the shape and posture of its forces and is presently performing out-of-area missions within a UN crisis management framework; the WEU, which is expected to become the military arm of the future EU, is struggling for a credible military role and trying to build its own force around the core of the Franco-German Corps. But it is still unclear how the European common security and defence identity should be eventually shaped and what it will encompass in terms of changes in the present European security and defence structures. There are ambiguities in the role and functions of the WEU as defined in the Maastricht treaty and different expectations among the Twelve. The potential repercussions of those developments on the trans-Atlantic relationship are still to be closely analyzed and assessed.

The problem has several aspects.
(i) The European countries are not in a position, now or for in the foreseeable future, to earmark and eventually assign forces to both NATO and the WEU, in particular those forces which in terms of equipment and training are best suited to perform the tasks needed for crisis management.
(ii) The WEU will be capable of "securing" specific European political and economic interests in an area of responsibility that will be forcefully circumscribed by the limited WEU military capabilities. Europe will not be capable of confronting alone an out-of-area crisis far away from its borders. Another conflict similar to that which occurred in the Gulf after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait will require the determinant involvement of the United States and the crucial participation of its armed

forces. In fact, Europe does not possess, or possesses only to a limited extent, those military capabilities (large volunteer army, widespread and real-time intelligence information, strategic airlift and sealift, JointSTARS aircraft, modern electronic warfare systems, high-tech precision guided systems, stealth fighter-bombers, sophisticated C3I systems) needed to intervene effectively in distant out-of-area crises. Europe does not seem ready today -- and may not be ready tomorrow -- to acquire the military capabilities which would permit it to act autonomously in such contingencies.

(iii) The Yugoslav crisis demonstrated NATO's readiness and willingness to expand its traditional security role and to perform specific military missions under a UN mandate in out-of-area crises.

(iv) NATO still represents the main security reference for Central-Eastern countries and the essential political and military links between Europe and the United States. In this framework, the maintenance of a significant American military presence on the European continent is of paramount importance. Even though it appears unlikely that in the foreseeable future Europe will need the defence system of the size and type built during the Cold War, it would be risky to dismiss as obsolete the elements of deterrence and defence present in the strong security relationship provided by NATO.

(v) The United States will not accept marginalization within the Atlantic Alliance or the relegation of NATO to an "alliance of last resort". On the other hand, the demise of NATO will certainly have an impact on the construction of a European security and defence identity. The eventual disappearance of NATO would not necessarily be detrimental to European security if strong trans-Atlantic links are maintained and new security arrangements and structures between the U.S. and Europe will be created. However, the potential danger is an ominous trend toward a re-nationalization of the European defence policy and the potential reversal of the efforts toward a coordinated restructuring of the armed forces and a more cooperative arms production and acquisition process .

All these aspects should be taken into consideration while proceeding toward the establishment of a European common security and defence policy, which "might in time lead to a common defence".

6. The need for an adequate military posture and training.

The need to confront crises in which the requirement of the re-establishment of peace and stability is often tightly intertwined with the need to protect the population from starvation and violence in the face of opposing military forces requires the employment of specifically trained ground troops. Furthermore, the necessity to respond quickly to the crisis situation demands the capacity to deploy military forces with little advance warning.

The majority of the European countries are creating rapid reaction forces, fully equipped and combat ready, capable of being deployed in a short period of time. But not all of them would be fit to be employed in peacemaking missions. Moreover,

those European countries which possess small armed forces, with a large percentage of conscripts, would find it difficult to provide little more than a token or symbolic force to peacemaking missions.

There are other problems.

The European countries, with the only exception of the United Kingdom, which has an all-volunteer force, and Belgium, which will reportedly abolish conscription by 1994, rely mainly on draftees who serve for periods ranging from 8 to 19 months. For domestic political reasons, European governments are very reluctant to use conscripts in operations abroad, which, even though defined as peace missions, entail the risk of human losses. It is rightly felt that public opinion will react strongly against such a dangerous employment.

Thus, in the majority of the European plans to reorganize and reduce the strength of the armed forces the trend is toward an increase in the number of volunteers in the high-readiness brigades. But the all-volunteer formations which can be effectively employed in peacemaking are few and their equipment and armaments are often ill-suited for peacemaking missions.

Moreover, the environment of the peacemaking missions, with its blend of elements ranging from interposition to active participation in military operations, from escort tasks of humanitarian convoys to deterrence and response to terrorist attacks, from monitoring to direct control of roads, areas and people, is such that traditional military training appears inadequate. What is needed for the forces earmarked for employment in peacemaking missions is military training which would mix tactics on the use of force to reach specific military goals with the basics of SWAT, anti-terrorist and special police enforcement teams, and a good deal of psychological warfare instructions.

Finally, Germany should resolve the constitutional impasse regarding its participation in military operations outside NATO's area of responsibility. The line has already been partially crossed with the presence of German airmen aboard the AWACS aircraft which help NATO fighters to enforce the "no-flight zone" over Bosnia, and with the deployment of a small contingent to Somalia. However, Germany should be able to participate fully not only in the political but also in the military crisis-management process conducted by the European Community.

7. The issue of enlargement

Let us now analyze the impact of EC enlargement on the CFSP and on the response to international crises affecting European security.

The first question relates to the clear possibility that the enlargement will make the prospect of a true CFSP even more difficult and aleatory than it is today. The Yugoslav crisis demonstrated the failure of the CFSP. This was mainly the result of the EC's inability to agree on the use of force. The crisis was constantly seen as a peace-making and not as a peace-enforcing mission; only in its final phases was the threat of air raids for a political goal.

Now, it is logical to assume that when Austria, Finland and Sweden -- all countries with a traditionally strong policy of neutrality -- join the Community it will be even more difficult to shape a CFSP, in particular in relation to a common crisis management involving the potential use of force. The three countries have been involved in the past (and still are today) in UN peacekeeping missions and have provided troops for UN forces. But one could argue that these countries have even more traditional views and domestic reservations than do the EC countries about: (i) the issue of European stability and security in this era of new world disorder; (ii) the EC, CSCE, NATO and UN role in dealing with international crises; (iii) the policy to be adopted and the most effective course of action to re-establish peace; (iv) the methods, modes and means of intervention is a crisis and the eventual need to move from peacekeeping to peace-enforcing. This is bound to create problems for the elaboration of a European CFSP, in particular if, as it is now, decisions can be made only when full consensus is reached among members (except when adopting "joint action"). Furthermore, the people of the future EC member countries still maintain a strong belief in the virtues of an independent foreign policy, an autonomous and, as far as possible, self-sufficient security and defence policy and a general concept of active neutrality. Finally, the employment of conscripts, albeit under a UN mandate, in operations with high military risks would be opposed even more strongly than in other EC countries.

The problem is likely to become more complex if the WEU is eventually merged with the EU and all EU members, including the new ones, are to become members of the WEU. It is easy to predict that in this case the present, already limited, WEU flexibility of decision in the employment of military force will be further constrained.

8. An alternative

The prospect that the enlargement would further aggravate the quasi paralysis of the present European CFSP is far from being the unbalanced view of a Euro-pessimist. But the EC incapacity to forge a common policy to confront today's world instability will diminish its possible international role and enhance the trend to adopt policies outside the Community decision making process. In other words, it may result in an effort to find solutions in a more restricted framework, or one which is firmly based on the trans-Atlantic link -- a trend already evident in recent positions taken by the major EC countries. Europe as such would then disappear from the group of the main actors in the international scene.

The alternative involves two main principles:

(i) Changing the rules in accordance with which the CFSP is presently supposed to be elaborated and adopted. This change should permit those countries willing to take different and perhaps stronger actions than the majority (presumably the EC core countries) the possibility to do it. Thus, those actions would not be construed as a break in the EC cohesion and considered abroad as the sign of an EC division, which ultimately would weaken its credibility and role.

(ii) Developing the WEU as an autonomous organization instead of merging it with EU. In this way, the WEU would become both the "European pillar" of NATO and the "European pillar" of the EU, responsible for dealing with specific European security and defence issues, which would not or could not be dealt with by NATO.

The Maastricht Treaty establishes that the WEU will act in conformity with the positions adopted in the Atlantic Alliance, which will remain the essential forum for consultation amomg its members and the venue for agreement on policies bearing on the security and defense commitments of Allies under the North Atlantic Treaty. This statement contradicts another Maastricht Treaty assertion stating that the WEU will formulate and implement a common European defence policy as well as decisions and actions of the Union which have defence implications.

It seems that it will be difficult for the WEU to be integrated into the European Union, and eventually to become Europe's "military arm", while serving as the "European pillar" of NATO, strengthening the European presence and responsibility in the Alliance. It will not be easy for the WEU to respond to both the Atlantic Alliance and the European Union.

One could argue that at present the problem is more theoretical than real because all the major EC states are also WEU and NATO members. The position of France, which is in the Alliance but ouside NATO's integrated military structure, does not seem to represent a real problem either, since European security issues connected with the management of out-of-area crises are bound to be discussed and dealt with by the Alliance's political bodies, in which France participates. Moreover, if the present French political trend continues, Paris is likely to rejoin the NATO Defense Planning Committee (DPC) and perhaps also the NATO Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) in the near future. Finally, France's air and naval forces are presently operating under NATO command and control arrangements in performing UN missions in the Adriatic and in the Bosnian skies.

The problem is not about the illogical eventuality of the major European countries adopting diffent positions in NATO, the EC and the WEU; it is about the possibility that the overall European position might diverge from that of the United States as expressed within the Atlantic Alliance framework. This situation already occurred when the Western countries addressed the latest phase of Bosnian war in the summer of 1993. Moreover, the problem is that of the relationship between enlargement of the WEU and the related loss of effectiveness, as in the case of EC enlargement.

Autonomy, with continued strong political and operational links with both NATO and the EC, will enhance WEU's freedom of action and add to the flexibility of employment of its military means. Obviously, the links with the EU would be more comprehensive and direct because the WEU would maintain its special responsibility in expressing the "European" security and defence positions and policies in the face of international crises. Furthermore, autonomy and limited membership (since the latter will not come automatically with EC membership) is likely to facilitate the decision making process and the assumption of responsibilities.

9. Conclusions

Let me conclude with some final considerations.

The achievement of EU and the shaping of a true CFSP, which will also include a common defence in the end, is a long-term prospect, a goal to be reached through a gradual step-by-step process which is expected to be very difficult. The impact of common autonomous security and defence on NATO and the trans-Atlantic relationship should be closely considered throughout the whole process.

It is likely that the evolution of the international situation will not proceed at the same pace as Europe's institutional development. In the near future, European security will be challenged by other crisis situations, which will require important political and military decisions and a strong political will. The desire to operate within the framework of a CFSP at all costs is bound to be detrimental to the credibility of the EC diplomatic and military posture and the effectiveness of its initiatives. In the end, the goal of a CFSP could become an excuse for EC passivity and inertia. Enlargement will further dilute the EC willingness to act, which is already scarce, as the Yugoslav crisis has clearly shown.

There could be cases in which the UN or the CSCE machinery may prove inadequate (in particular in terms of reaction times) to cope with the crisis situation; thus the EC, and the future EU, should be ready to operate under its own mandate, at least initially. It is recognized that this would be a momentous decision, difficult to be shared by all EC members, and capable of raising international criticism and provoking international reactions. EC enlargement plus CFSP will again constitute a constraining element, capable of blocking all decisions.

The EC countries should learn to understand that the traditional concepts of crisis management and peacekeeping require a thorough revision. If the EC wants to confront present and future crises endangering European security it should re-assess the use of military force in international relations and the role of the armed forces in peacekeeping and peacemaking. In particular, the role of ground troops should be reconsidered, avoiding the mistake of being mesmerized by the sheer power and technological edge provided by the air force.

Rome, August 1993