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EUROPEAN SECURITY AFTER MAASTRICHT: THE INSTITUTIONAL BUILD-UP SOME BASIC CRITERIA AND MODELS

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In his last main speech to the Storting, the 25th of October 1993, Jorgen Holst stated the urgent need to see "Europe assume a greater share of the burdens and responsibility and a more clearly defined European Defence Identity emerge". "This - he continued- involves a strengthening of the Western European Union (WEU), which has been conceived as a defence component of the EC". In fact, after the first difficult period of implementation of the Maastricht Treaty, two critical dates will determine the future shape of the security and defence policy of the European Union: 1996, when the Revision Conference of the Treaty is scheduled, and 1998, when the WEU Treaty expires. The latter will be significant only if the WEU does not become an "integral part of the European Union" already in 1996, that is, if the WEU continues to be parallel to (meaning institutionally separate from) the EU - a scenario which would not fully respect the original spirit of Maastricht, as stated in art. J 4, comma 2 of the Treaty.

The post-1996 security and defence posture of the Union should in principle take account of certain basic factors which have recently clearly emerged:
- the growing diversity of risks and challenges against which nations and institutions must be prepared;
- the need to tackle new crisis with a comprehensive approach which uses a full combination of diplomatic, economic and military means;
-the question of the legitimacy of the use of force outside EU territory, not just for peacekeeping purposes;
- the increasing need for economising in view of diminishing resources (which implies a division of labour and transfers of sovereignty);
- the imperative for multinational structures as a hedge against renationalisation;

More in general there is, in terms of the Union's interests, a mix of endogenous and exogenous factors pushing towards a common defence, of whom the most pertinent are as follows: 1) the growing role of regionalism in global affairs; 2) the progressive US disengagement from Europe; 3) the new concept and instruments of comprehensive security; 4) the qualitative different meaning of any future enlargement of the Union with respect to a reinforced foreign and security policy of the Fifteen and; finally, 5) the new role that the concept of integration is bound to play in the future pan-european architecture.

If an agreement can be reached on the validity of these new factors, the next question is how should the Revision of Maastricht be oriented to achieve an effective defence policy for the European Union.

A precondition for improved prospects for a common defence is a strong political will to rebalance the process of European integration in the direction of foreign policy and defence by putting less emphasis on economic integration (which has been considered a priority since the establishment of the Community); politics must be brought into the forefront once again. This assumption is fully in line with the spirit of Jorgen Holst's analysis on the future of Europe, as he

used to combine the request for stronger **defence identity** with the expression "**European Political Union**" (in "European Security in the Era of Ambiguity", Norwegian Atlantic Committee, Security Policy Library, No. 5, 1993).

A second essential orientation is that of strengthening the trend towards a progressive communitarization of the institutional procedures in the defence field, through joint actions by majority voting, a greater role for the European Parliament, common budgetary procedures, etc. It is clear that the "communitarization" of European Union policies, both old and new, remains an open question for now. Maastricht represents a clear example of the difficulty of applying the concept of "communitarization" to a variety of different fields of action and common policies, that is, the difficulties in the progressive passage from a functional integration in the economic field to a similar form of procedure in the foreign and security policy (CFSP) camps. In fact, Maastricht continues to maintain a different legal approach in the two fields, essentially leaving the CFSP in the realm of the classical intergovernmental approach (albeit with some minor concessions to the communitarian method). The risk is that of creating competitive decision-making processes in the two fields of cooperation and weakening the efficacy of the Union's external role, as has largely been demonstrated in the case of the ex-Yugoslavia.

A third initiative should be that of improving the operational capability of common defence through the creation of a European WEU Command, the full integration and multilateralisation of the Eurocorp, the setting up of a European Armament Agency. In other words, there is a need for machinery capable of responding effectively to the new security and military engagements.

Fourthly, the Union should play an international role in the security field through the WEU, by promoting a policy of regional alliances with countries or groups of countries (e.g. the "group to group" policy of the EU and CFSP). Alliances could be formed with the Maghreb, Russia, the Gulf Council, Egypt, etc. Essential here is the role of external projection of a common defence policy, aiming to create confidence and cooperation among groups of countries.

Fifthtly, formal and effective linkages with the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC's) should be established with the aim of proceeding towards full membership into the Union.

Finally, the relationship between Europe and United States, a special concern in Holst's entire political and academic analysis, should be transformed into a new kind of special partnership both outside and within NATO (a "hard core" of WEU members and the US within NATO, the appointment of a European Permanent Representative for security policy to the White House). In particular the following should be ensured when reforming NATO: a) a high degree of cooperation between Europe and the US, b) status as the privileged Atlantic interlocutor of Russia and the CIS; c) logistic infrastructure for common out-of-area operations.

These transformations call for a strong reinforcement of the political character of the future European Union and could have a negative impact on the process of Union enlargement and even on the Union's present composition. Many countries would not accept the practical consequences of such a Union.

There are essentially two possible scenarios: (i) the Fifthteen will try to consolidate the Treaty in its present form; (ii) the text will go through a quick and sharp revision.

Scenario 1: the incremental rationalization of Maastricht.

Under this scenario the Treaty would again be the legitimate point of reference for European Union initiatives. While a redemption would certainly not dispel doubts about the limitations and intrinsic weaknesses of the text, the revision process would probably be required to follow the foreseen time schedule and procedures. In other words, it is unlikely that the process of integration would be accelerated or that the Treaty would be superseded by the formal creation of a "hard core", such as the one around Economic and Monetary Union. This would only be possible during the third phase (in 1997 or 1999), as foreseen by the Treaty itself.

Defence policy will remain necessarily intergovernmental and therefore subject to initiatives of the individual states, as foreseen by the Maastricht text. The WEU may have an increased role, as is already the case today, but without a specific institutional framework within the European Union, even though events are of an urgency and nature requiring increasingly complex and unitary interventions in local crises.

Thus, Maastricht would leave the main issues that had emerged with the first reading of the text unresolved.

The main question, whose answer will determine everything else, pertains to the institutional framework (whether it is strengthened or not). In other words, the problem is how to deal with the following issues within the current institutional framework: the general nature of the integration process, the maintenance of a functioning and effective decision-making system, the nature of relations with other candidates for EU admission (from full membership to super-association). If the reinforcement of institutional mechanisms will not be immediately planned, there is a real risk of not even being able to ensure the maintenance of the current institutional framework during the planned revision of Maastricht in 1996, particularly in an Union at Fifthteen, a factor which will undoubtedly complicate the process toward rationalization of the Treaty, at least due the increased number of national actors.

Add to this that the Maastricht reforms should address both foreign policy and defence aspects of the CFSP. The dominant issue in this case is the inter-relations between other policies and institutions. In this case account must be taken not only of relations among the institutional mechanisms of the European Union (i.e. the progressive "communitarization" of procedures in all fields of the Union, the meaning of the so-called common actions, etc.), but also the strengthening of links with related institutions such as the WEU, and completely external institutions such as NATO, the CSCE, etc. In more general terms, attention must be given to the extent to which integration in the field of security and foreign policy in the near future will serve as the engine for a more accelerated process of unification.

Scenario 2: a sharp revision of Maastricht.

Should the first scenario fail to become reality, there will be several options to take into consideration because, as the solidarity of the Fifthteen crumbles, some governments and the Union organs (Council, Commission and Parliament) will have more freedom to imagine new models of integration, provided the Maastricht Treaty remains the common basis for all countries.

In this case, the process of integration is resumed on a completely different basis. The scenario is necessarily one which has been receiving increasing attention in Europe, that is, one which is centred around the idea of a "hard core". But this scenario may be subdivided into at least three sub-options:

- "Hard core Europe": a single, homogeneous nucleus of an extremely limited number of participants. The only possible group of countries which could be envisioned in this context is the Group of Five: the three Benelux countries, France and Germany. As the original Schengen group and as an area of monetary stability, these five countries may easily constitute a markedly homogeneous nucleus. Military integration based on the Eurocorp could also become a reality in a short time. While formally a group of five, it would actually be little more than a cosmetic variation of the Franco-German duo as the main engine of a new and different process of integration. It is thus an extreme case which would be difficult to actualize for obvious political reasons, not to mention that it would be highly destabilizing for a large number of excluded countries. This option would be pursued only in the event of a serious disintegration of the Union - one in which the countries of the South would diverge not only in economic terms, but also in terms of political stability; and the countries of the North would become increasingly unwilling to commit themselves to concerted efforts toward integration. In other words, this scenario would serve to maintain the prospect of integration at least in "hard core" Europe at a time of serious crisis at the periphery.

- "Concentric Circles Europe": a broader group than the "hard core" described above, encompassing countries which, propelled toward an accelerated integration by France and Germany, have demonstrated the greatest willingness to pursue integration, both by accepting without reservation (that is not requesting opting-out clauses) the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty and by making domestic policy decisions on the basis of Union priorities, even at the cost of further sovereignty concessions. Natural candidates for such a coalition include Italy and Spain. In this scenario, the strongest countries in the group should set less stringent macroeconomic criteria in order to accommodate the weakest divergent countries. Priority could thus be placed on political obligations, on military issues and foreign policy, while de-emphasizing monetary and economic aspects. Enlargement to the East to include a large number of candidates would thus be possible, though they would be "placed" within the framework of the Maastricht Treaty, as this would continue to be a legally valid treaty to which both Britain, Denmark and, may be, some of the new members would still adhere. This is the classic "concentric circles" proposition, in which each "circle" would be a homogeneous group of member states having equal rights and obligations.

- "Ellipsis Europe": a constellation of several groups forming an ellipsis around a strong nucleus. In part, this is what was described in the preceding scenario, which essentially attributes a specific role to a strongly integrationist political nucleus--the Group of 5 plus Spain and Italy. In this scenario, the core of seven would be surrounded by various ellipses: one of countries with convergent economies (therefore excluding Italy); one of countries which would take on the

responsibility of defence (this could partially coincide with WEU countries); one of countries adhering to the Schengen agreement; etc. Though theoretically conceivable it is difficult to envision the implementation of the ellipsis model, as it remains unclear what role the formalization of a central political nucleus would have with respect to the peripheral ellipses - particularly in the case of the one based on economic performances and criteria, which would continue to play a central role in Union life. In fact, the EU, as it now stands, was almost entirely built on the concept of economic integration in which the major role and responsibility was attributed to those countries which best conformed to Union discipline. It would be difficult for those countries not partaking in the economic ellipsis to interact as equals with those countries which also meet the criteria for being part of the other ellipses - unless of course the basis for integration were shifted from the economic sphere to the military and foreign policy dimension. This would require communitarization in both fields, making the latter less national and bilateral than they are today. In other words, this scenario also involves the question of having a strong political core which corresponds to an economic and military nucleus of equally strong members as coordination and consistency between the various fields of action is of crucial importance to the international credibility of the EU and of the nucleus itself. Enlargement to the East is also an issue in this scenario, and it is even more complex and variegated here because of the presence of different ellipses which are not necessarily linked.

In conclusion, the future of Europe will be the result of an *ad hoc* combination of different criteria. Different combinations will lead to completely different outcomes. To choose the appropriate strategy is an open task for politicians: the urgency is clear and the risk of fragmentation still present. As Jorgen Holst used to say, "uncertainty has become the new threat": in this totally new geostrategic situation the Community has to remain a point of stability on the Old Continent and an example of integration for the rest of the world.