



SECURITY AND ORDER IN EUROPE – THE PROBLEMS OF NON- OVERLAPPING MEMBERSHIPS

By: Bjørn Olav Knutsen, political analyst, Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI)

*This script was used as background for a lecture given in Belgrade organised by AAYPL
17 June 2006.*

The EU-NATO relationship: A Fragile Marriage?

The problems connected to the non-overlapping memberships in the European construction is leading to some paradoxical situations which could infuriate the ability of both NATO and the EU to handle the most pressing security challenges as of today. The EU has been seeking and achieved assured access to common NATO capabilities for its operations, which is labelled Berlin-plus among the insiders. The modalities for this assured access, however, depend to some extent on the unresolved issue of what role the non-EU NATO members should be allowed in the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) in return (Tofte 2004: 135).

In NATO, you will find non-EU members as Canada, Bulgaria, Iceland, Norway, Romania, Turkey and not least, the world's sole superpower - the United States. In the EU you will furthermore find non-NATO countries like Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Ireland, Malta and Sweden. With the exemption of Cyprus and Malta, these countries are all members of NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme. As we shall see, the non-membership of these two countries in PfP has contributed to an aggravation in the institutional relationship between the EU and NATO. Firstly, these problems would of course not have risen if the memberships in these two institutions were the same. Secondly, the problems we now are facing would not have risen if NATO on the one hand only dealt with questions connected to military matters with special focus upon Article V, the self-defence clause, while the

EU on the other hand only dealt with questions connected to economic co-operation and growth.

However, we live in a post-Cold war period where new global threats and challenges are facing us. Both the United States as well as the EU defines terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), failed states and organised crime as our greatest security challenges. Therefore, NATO has reformed itself and is at present playing a significant role in the nation-building processes in Afghanistan as well as in Kosovo-Metohija. NATO, we could say, has since the Prague summit in November 2002, become a security- and defence organisation with global responsibilities even though its memberships is (at present) confined to the Euro-Atlantic area only.

The EU on the other hand has since the Maastricht Treaty from 1992 tried to develop its own security and defence policy. This Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) has blossomed in recent years and the EU is today one of the most important security actors on the world stage. The development of a common defence policy (ESDP) has been a little bit more cumbersome due to the fact that the EU member states have been somewhat reluctant to delegate security and defence competencies to the EU institutions. Anyway, the ESDP is up and going where the EU via its ESDP project has and has had operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Democratic Republic Congo (DRC), Georgia etc. All in all, 15 operations have been taking place or is taking place within the frameworks of the ESDP since ESDP was declared



operative in January 2003 (Hansen 2006).

Therefore, there is an ever increasing demand for a close partnership between NATO and the EU. Even though a close partnership between these two Brussels-based institutions are needed, we must also take into consideration the differences between these two organisations. NATO is first of all a military organisation, where Article V still is the Alliance's core function. NATO is furthermore dominated by one country – the United States – and it is still correct to argue that NATO is a “hegemonial alliance” as Harvard professor Stanley Hoffmann once pointed out. So, NATO is definitely not an organisation of equals but an organisation where its dominant member is defining the relevance of the organisation.

The EU is quite new on the security arena. Even though the EU has been somewhat “militarised” in recent years it is still important to point out that it is first of all a civilian organisation with a civilian purpose. Therefore, we could argue that the EU is a comprehensive security actor, characterised by its ability to mobilise a vast range of measures, civilian as well as military, to address our most pressing security needs. Therefore, a broad approach to security is taken, a broader perspective than in NATO and in the US for that matter. In that connection we can refer to a statement made by the present Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi while he still was president of the European Commission: “Europe needs security. External security must be achieved by reducing unrest and tension on our borders. Internal security must be achieved by combating crime, including organised crime. Crime needs to be tackled at its source which often lies in institutional disorder, poor education, social injustice and the soullessness of inner cities and suburbs. Security should also mean a safe environment and safe consumer products, in particular safe food” (quoted in Rieker 2006: 39).

Hence, what we are witnessing is a blurring between internal and external security where we have to address the root causes of a security problem if we want to tackle it in a successful way. Due to this blurring of security challenges and to the fact that we are witnessing a globalisation of these challenges, it is even more pressing to reach a

common understanding and what has been called a “fusion” (see e.g. Ojanen 2006) between the security tasks of the EU and NATO respectively.

Nevertheless, as pointed out by Daniel Keohane at the London-based Center for European Reform (CER), there is something rotten in the state of EU-NATO relations (Keohane 2006). The problem we are talking about is first of all due to the lacking of membership overlap between these two organisations. What we in this connection are witnessing stems from the fact that Turkey is in NATO but outside the EU, and Cyprus and Malta which is in EU but not in NATO. Turkey objects in particular to Cyprus sitting in on EU-NATO meetings because, unlike most other non-NATO EU members, its is not a member of NATO's PfP arrangement. As Keohane further points out, the Turks are strictly speaking right. According to a December 2002 agreement, EU governments that are not members of NATO must be members of the PfP programme to attend EU-NATO meetings. That arrangement worked well at first. It allowed the then four EU non-aligned countries (Austria, Finland, Ireland and Sweden) to sit in on these joint meetings, since they are members of PfP. Ankara, annoyed that the Cypriots rejected a UN peace plan in a referendum in April 2004, started blocking Cypriot (and Maltese) participation in EU-NATO meetings. The Cypriots argue that they should be treated the same as other EU members, with the right to sit in on such meetings.

Therefore, meetings between EU and NATO takes place with only 23 EU Ambassadors present. In addition, they are only allowed to talk about joint operations and military capabilities. As we know, there is only one joint EU-NATO operation taking place, in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This is a paradox since prior to the EU- and NATO enlargements, NATO and EU discussed a whole range of security challenges, comprising terrorism, the situation in Darfur and the Iraq-question. Today however, we are witnessing that countries like Belgium, France and Luxembourg are arguing that common problems like terrorism and proliferation issues should not be discussed within the format of 23 but in the 25 format. Additionally, France is also arguing that NATO should not become



a forum where global security challenges are being addressed. The main reason, according to the French, is that a too close security partnership between these two organisations could lead to a situation where the United States gained too much influence upon the formulation of the foreign- and security policies of the EU.

The Transatlantic Relationship – Not a Partnership between Equals

A situation in which the United States gains too much influence upon the CFSP, is according to some EU-members, an unfortunate development. This is first of all due to the developments in the transatlantic relationship in recent years where we have witnessed a United States, which, on the one hand, pursues its national interests in an ever more unilateral manner. On the other hand, the European Union is developing an autonomous foreign and security policy. The Euro-Atlantic struggle over Iraq in 2003 was the worst crisis in NATO ever and the EU too was deeply split on the issue.

Hence, as the neo-conservative American political analyst Robert Kagan has pointed out, the United States is from Mars and Europe is from Venus (Kagan 2002). Accordingly, the Americans and the Europeans do not occupy the same world anymore and therefore, the old alliance between Europe and America is gone. A major point in Kagan's analysis is that Europe has left the realm of high-politics and devoted themselves to the uniting of Europe based upon Kantian principles. The United States, however, has remained in the Hobbesian world of international anarchy and conflict where the balance of power dynamics reign. Therefore, Kagan argues, the main reason why Europe could have turned Kantian is that the United States remains Hobbesian. Hence, the United States is strong and Europe is weak.

Even though Kagan has received a lot of criticism of his analysis, he is, in my view, on many points correct. You can of course argue that his argument on the alleged European weakness is based upon a very narrow understanding of the concept of power. However, he is right when he argues that the terrorist attacks on the US on September 11 2001 has turned the United States away from Europe where the present American admin-

istration is pursuing a foreign policy which is both unilateral as well as transformative. It is unilateral in the sense that international institutions shall not weaken the United States' ability to pursue its national interests. It is furthermore transformative in the sense that the US is pursuing a policy of international system change.

It is within such a context we must see the aim of the US, which is to contribute to "democratic revolutions" in several parts of the world and the Middle East in particular. The argument was that a democratic transformation in Iraq would contribute to democratic transformations in other parts of the region too and, hence, contribute to increased regional political and economical stability. The making of democratic institutions in the countries in the region promotes, according to the arguments, enhanced political as well as economic stability, which is of course extremely important due to the high oil and gas reservoirs in the region.

Even though the relationship between the United States and several European countries has improved considerably in recent years, it is in my view, important not to underestimate the tectonic changes, which is taking place between Europe and the United States. It is no secret that NATO, which has been the core institution in the transatlantic relationship, has been weakened in recent years. In stead, we have witnessed a so-called bipolarisation of NATO in which the North Atlantic Council (NAC) loses its core function and where the political dialogue goes between the United States and the EU. We are, so to say, witnessing a de-politisation of NATO. Such a development was described by the former German minister of defence, Dr. Peter Struck at the so-called *Wehrkunde* seminar in Munich in 2004. Such a bipolarisation of NATO in combination with enhanced American unilateralism and the continuing strive for European autonomy, makes NATO very vulnerable indeed. NATO must so to say prove its usefulness. The litmus test is, according the prevalent views in the United States, the European ability to contribute to international military operations. The usefulness of NATO is therefore explicitly linked to the ability of the Europeans to conduct the necessary defence reforms, which in NATO terminology is labelled

Prague Capabilities Commitments (PCC).

Another main question is whether the European countries will take part in America's grand design and on American premises. The prevalent view in the United States is still the same as it was in 1973 when the then US Secretary of State Dr. Henry Kissinger stated that the United States have global responsibilities while the Europeans have regional interests only. Therefore, it is still correct to argue that the US is regarding the Europeans to be junior partners. From a European perspective, this is of course correct when we look upon military capabilities. However, when one looks upon other power variables as economic strength and so-called soft power for that matter, we are not living in a unipolar world, but in a more multipolar one.

Some Concluding Remarks

As lined out at the beginning of this short paper, different memberships in EU and NATO has contributed to several problems in the bilateral relationship between these two organisations. As it has showed up, the EU is today the strongest of these two security-providing organisations. When the EU in the not so distant future takes over the responsibility of KFOR in Kosovo-Metohija, the EU is at the same time taking over the real responsibility for European security at large. NATO is therefore an organisation in the gravity field of the EU integration process.

For the Balkan countries, I think it is important to be aware of these developments. It is important because these countries will enter the Euro-Atlantic institutions on a later stage and hence on other power premises as compared with the other Central- and Eastern European (CEE) countries. This argument also goes for Bulgaria and Romania, which, probably, will enter the EU in January 2007. While the other CEE-countries

started out with a very Atlantic perspective on European and Euro-Atlantic security and first now is turning more European in their perspectives on the organisation of European security, the Balkan countries should take into considerations some of the problems I have tried to address in this paper. The most important one, however, has not been addressed explicitly but is strongly connected the norms underlying both EU and NATO as of today, namely democracy, respect for human rights, and a non-corrupt social market economy.

References

- Hansen, Annika S. (2006): *The Turtle and the Hare – The Evolution of Planning for ESDP Operations. Civilian Crisis Management from EUPM onwards*. Analyse 02/03 Zentrum für Internationale Friedenseinsätze.
- Keohane, Daniel (2006): *Unblocking EU-NATO Cooperation*, CER Bulletin, June/July. http://www.cer.org.uk/articles/48_keohane.html
- Kagan, Robert (2002): *Power and Weakness*, *Policy Review*, No. 113, June/July.
- Ojanen, Hanna (2006): *The EU and NATO – Two Competing Models for a Common Defence Policy*, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, (44), 1, (57-76).
- Rieker, Pernille (2006): *Europeanization of National Security Identity. The EU and the Changing Security Identities of the Nordic States*. Routledge. Taylor&Francis Group.
- Tofte, Sunniva (2004): *Non-EU NATO Members and the Issue of Discrimination*, in Jolyon Howorth & John T.S. Keeler (ed.): *Defending Europe: The EU, NATO and the Quest for European Autonomy*, Palgrave-Macmillan (135-156).

DNAK Security Brief:

The DNAK Security Brief series aims to present current topics in foreign and security policy in a succinct way. The series was first published in June 2001.

Editor: Marit Rye Ramberg
ISSN: 1502-6361