

Chapter 5

The EU's military dimension: a child of the Kosovo crisis?

One of the most frequently cited 'lessons' of the Kosovo crisis has been the alleged extent to which it spurred West European leaders to address a perceived need for Europe to do more for its own military security. Member states of the European Union decided to establish a 'European Security and Defence Policy' (ESDP) in the months following *Operation Allied Force*. Daalder and O'Hanlon have written that 'the growing consensus on the need for a European defense capability is a direct consequence of the Kosovo crisis'.¹ Others have argued in similar vein.²

The discussions in this chapter will critically examine this view. They will consider the long- and short-term origins of the ESDP and assess the extent to which the Kosovo crisis was the key driver leading to the decisions by EU members formally to create it in 1999.

The long-term evolution of the ESDP

The Cold War years

The most basic of what may be called the 'permissive facilitators' for the development of the ESDP can be found in the nature of the European Union itself. The idea encapsulated in the concept of 'functional integration' (sometimes called the 'Monnet method') has exercised significant influence on political leaders in continental EU countries. The impact has been most especially important in France and the FRG because these two countries have traditionally acted as the main 'motor' driving forward the process of European integration.

Functional integration thinking suggests that the process of 'constructing Europe' is one of continuing forward movement based on the so-called 'spillover effect'. The completion of a major integrative endeavour in one sector opens the way to the launch of new efforts in others. The original Treaty of Rome in 1957 famously did not define an ultimate end-point for what was then called the European Economic Community (EEC). Rather, the stated overall objective was the construction of an open-ended 'ever closer union among the peoples of Europe'.³

The potential for developing a military dimension to the European integration process has been present since the formative decade of the 1950s. Indeed, in the early part of that decade, there was a serious plan to create an integrated military capability by the six states that were later to become founder members of the EEC.⁴ This was the proposed 'European Defence Community' (EDC), first advanced by the French government in 1950. It collapsed in 1954 when the French National Assembly refused to ratify the treaty setting it up. The EDC proposal failed for a variety of reasons including political instability in France, fears about the consequences of German rearmament and American and British ambivalence.⁵ Thereafter, attention amongst 'the Six' shifted to an alternative next step,⁶ the development of a 'Common Market'. The Treaty of Rome initiated this in 1957. For the remainder of the Cold War era, European military integration, other than in NATO, remained off the agenda. The EEC developed a kind of institutional aversion to military issues. As Walter Hallstein, the first President of the European Commission, noted, '[we] don't waste time talking about defence. In the first place we don't understand it. In the second place we'll all disagree'.⁷ Yet the logic of functional integration ensured that the prospect of eventual military integration was never totally lost.

During the early 1980s an attempt was made to 'reactivate' the Western European Union (WEU). At that time the WEU was a grouping of seven EEC members that had originally been established, as the Western Union, back in 1948 as a forum for co-operation in various areas, including military security. Although they had made a start on developing some collective military infrastructure during the early Cold War years, it is doubtful that any of its founding members⁸ really believed that they could mount a credible joint defence effort against the Soviet Union by themselves. Rather, they wished to demonstrate a willingness to make an effort in order to lever the United States into a transatlantic military alliance. This effort proved successful with the

signing of the Washington Treaty in April 1949. Thereafter, the putative Western Union military infrastructure programmes were simply taken over by NATO.

The revived WEU achieved little of consequence in an operational capacity during the 1980s but it did perform one important political role. It became a repository for keeping alive the dream of ultimately adding a military dimension to the process of European integration. In 1987, WEU members issued a *Platform on European Security Interests*, which opened with the statement that ‘we are convinced that the construction of an integrated Europe will remain incomplete as long as it does not include security and defence’.⁹ For as long as the Cold War order remained in place, these words were not likely to produce any kind of action. But change was coming.

After the Cold War: marking time with the WEU

From the early autumn of 1990, following the collapse of Communist rule in Central Europe, the WEU began to assume a more significant status in the plans of some important West European governments. They saw in the strategic upheavals the opportunity to move ahead with the development of a military dimension to the European integration process. In September 1990, the first public proposal was made. Italy’s then foreign minister came forward with a suggestion to prepare the WEU for rapid absorption by the then European Community (EC).¹⁰ This, if effected, would give EC members a mutual security guarantee under Article V of the WEU’s Brussels Treaty. The EC would also acquire a ready-made collective defence infrastructure – albeit an underdeveloped one – based upon the WEU’s political and military consultative committees.¹¹ The Italian proposal was, subsequently, supported by France and the FRG in December 1990.

As for the UK, then Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd gave the first public expression of the view of John Major’s government in Berlin in the same month. Hurd said that his government supported the case for ‘a revitalised WEU’, one which could ‘bring a clear European view ... to discussion within the [NATO] alliance’. He also held out the possibility of European military operations being conducted under the auspices of the WEU; but only in situations when NATO did not or could not act itself.¹² This was a significant qualification on the extent to which the UK was prepared to see things develop, and there was

nothing in Hurd's remarks to suggest that the UK favoured transplanting the WEU into the EC. Yet the British had crossed a Rubicon of sorts. As Ken Booth and Nicholas Wheeler have noted, all WEU member governments by the end of 1990¹³ 'accepted that NATO [would] have to be 'Europeanised' to some degree'.¹⁴

In the autumn of 1991 the Italians and British agreed upon a compromise proposal. This envisaged that the WEU would be established as a kind of 'bridge' between a new European Union and NATO, whilst retaining its own institutional identity. In this way, according to the Anglo-Italian *Declaration on European Security and Defence* issued in October, the WEU could act as 'the defence component of the [European] Union and as the means to strengthen the European pillar of the [NATO] Alliance'.¹⁵

The compromise that was most evident in this joint statement was the Italian one. The Italians had abandoned their previous position supporting the direct development of an EU military component. Instead, under the bridge formula, the EU would need to request an autonomous institution to undertake military operations on its behalf. But the UK had also made important concessions. As suggested by Booth and Wheeler, the Major government had, in effect, conceded that an effective NATO monopoly of European military affairs was no longer tenable now that the Cold War was over. The British accepted in principle that the EU could develop a defence component, albeit indirectly.

Despite the rhetorical posturing of the time, no other member government was *really* prepared to develop a direct EU military component. The Anglo-Italian bridge formula was accepted virtually word-for-word as the basis of the agreements on defence matters reached at the Maastricht summit in December 1991. Overall, the contents of the *Treaty on European Union* (TEU) were a severe disappointment to those who did favour quick or decisive progress on the military front. A declaratory breakthrough was contained in Title V Article J.4, where it was stated that, for the first time, the new Union's 'common foreign and security policy shall include all questions relating to the security of the Union'. Previously, under the terms of the Single European Act of 1987, only the political and economic dimensions of security had been included, with the military element deliberately left out. Yet Article J.4 was vague in the extreme, noting only an aspiration towards 'the *eventual* framing of a common defence policy, which *might in time* lead to a common defence' [emphases added].¹⁶

Nevertheless, after the TEU was signed, moves were quickly set in hand to develop the operational capacity of the Western European Union. It was decided to establish a military planning cell at its headquarters, which was to move from London to Brussels at the beginning of 1993. WEU member states also decided at their meeting in the FRG in June 1992 on potential operational tasks for the organisation. These were in the areas of humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping and 'tasks of combat forces in crisis management'.¹⁷ Furthermore, the WEU was quickly tasked with taking on a real operation, in South East Europe.

In retrospect, the July 1992 decisions to dispatch separate NATO and WEU naval flotillas to the Adriatic, to monitor compliance with UN sanctions against the combatants in the Bosnian civil war, represented the beginning of an ultimately terminal decline in the WEU's reputation. The WEU deployment was a premature attempt, apparently instigated by the Italian government, to demonstrate that there was substance behind the 'Petersberg Tasks' which had been agreed the previous month. Whereas the NATO operation could rely on its established multinational command structures and standing naval forces, the WEU one was an improvised affair which, although under the 'political direction' of the WEU's Ministerial Council, in practice relied on Italian command and control structures. Far from confirming its utility, this only served to demonstrate the WEU's relative *lack* of operational capacity. Moreover, the deployment of two flotillas to do the same job attracted unfavourable media attention suggesting that western governments were more interested in arcane institutional competition rather than in making a serious effort to deal with the developing Bosnian crisis.¹⁸

In 1993 it was decided to fuse the two operations under NATO command. Although in theory they would now come under the political direction of both the NAC and the WEU Ministerial Council, in practice it would be NATO that from now on would call the tune. The 1993 decision was prompted by considerations of operational efficiency and, specifically, by the changing nature of relations between France and NATO. This mattered because hitherto the French government under President François Mitterrand had been widely regarded as the most determined to see the WEU develop real operational capabilities and roles; to the detriment, some suspected, of NATO itself. A developing France-NATO *rapprochement*, begun under Mitterrand but especially evident from 1995 under his successor Jacques Chirac, thus had the consequence of helping to ensure that momentum was lost in the operational development of the WEU.¹⁹

This is not to say that the WEU was simply left to wither and die. However, it was striking that the success or otherwise of efforts to empower it would rest substantially in the gift of NATO, and especially the United States. The first attempt was announced at the NATO summit in Brussels in January 1994. Here member states agreed to create 'Combined Joint Task Forces' (CJTF) with the stated purpose, amongst others, of providing for 'separable but not separate military capabilities that could be employed by NATO or the WEU'.²⁰ The CJTF agreement represented in effect a tacit acceptance by WEU member states (who were also all members of NATO) that further attempts to conduct operations separately from, or even in competition with, NATO were ruled out. If the Brussels agreement were implemented, future WEU operations would take place on the basis of resources and assets provided by NATO.

The adoption of the CJTF concept thus represented a trimming of sails on the part of WEU member states. Reduced ambitions were also evident in their refusal seriously to consider further significant operational commitments. In December 1992, the WEU's then Secretary-General, Willem van Eekelen, suggested possible ground-force deployments in Bosnia.²¹ His suggestion was ignored. Two years later it was the turn of the French to be rebuffed when they reportedly urged their WEU partners to intervene militarily in Rwanda.²² WEU member states were also castigated by the institution's own Parliamentary Assembly, which published a report stating that:

The theoretical framework exists, but apparently the political will among the changing coalitions of member states to implement a policy to which everybody has agreed is still lacking. The reluctance to act, which is particularly manifest in the time-consuming beating around the bush and procedural battles in the Council, is tarnishing the image of the organisation. This is especially exasperating when it concerns limited operations such as [in the Bosnian town of] Mostar where swift action would be possible with a coalition of the willing.

Member state behaviour was, in short, according to this report, characterised by 'shuffling, reluctance, and hesitant, slow actions'.²³

Another attempt was made to sort things out at a NAC meeting in Berlin in June 1996. The Berlin meeting implicitly acknowledged that the CJTF concept had failed to get off the ground. The Berlin statements were thus effectively a reaffirmation, in beefed-up language, of what had already supposedly been agreed. NATO ministers pledged concrete support for the 'development of the European Security and

Defence Identity within the Alliance'. They also stated that 'this identity will be grounded on sound military principles and supported by appropriate military planning' which would 'permit the creation of militarily coherent and effective forces capable of operating under the political control and strategic direction of the WEU'. Furthermore, the ministers promised that they would 'prepare, with the involvement of NATO and the WEU, for WEU-led operations'. There could be a double-hatting of officers within NATO command structures in order that they could quickly take command of WEU-led operations if required. Finally, NATO members pledged to undertake 'at the request of and in coordination with the WEU, military planning and exercises for illustrative WEU missions identified by the WEU'.²⁴

These agreements seemed to hold out the prospect of a solid institutional relationship being developed between the WEU and NATO; one in which the two institutions could function in future division-of-labour operations as two distinct and equal partners. Press coverage of the Berlin meeting was mostly positive. Many reports used phrases such as 'a turning point for NATO' in suggesting that the decisions in some way significantly reduced the role and power of the United States within the institution and concurrently increased the scope and potential for Europe-only military operations.²⁵

Once the dust had settled, however, an equally striking consensus formed amongst academic analysts and observers that Berlin did *not* represent the great 'rebalancing' of US–West European relations that many had at first assumed. Paul Cornish, Philip Gordon and John Ruggie all examined the Berlin decisions and their likely impact on both NATO and the WEU; and all came to the same basic conclusion. By providing for the evolution of a European Security and Defence Identity *within* NATO, dependent upon NATO member states agreeing to 'loan' operational assets to the WEU and release double-hatted personnel, the Berlin decisions guaranteed a *de facto* US veto over future WEU-led military operations. More generally, they made it 'most unlikely that a serious rival to NATO could now develop' as Cornish put it.²⁶

A number of French leaders, including Laurent Fabius, Paul Quilès and Gabriel Robin, were (or claim to have been) aware all along that the Berlin decisions were less radical than they at first appeared.²⁷ However, the Chirac government was prepared to give the US a chance to prove its good faith, although it was disappointed when it became clear that the Berlin decisions might not be all that they had seemed. Although the sense of let-down did not lead the French to

terminate any of the various elements of their 1995–96 *rapprochement* with NATO, it certainly helped to slow down development of the CJTF concept.²⁸

The new push forward, 1998–99

The discussions in the first section here have shown that the idea of a military dimension to the overall process of European integration had never completely died since the failure of the EDC project in 1954. On the other hand, nor had a *decisive* push towards creating one yet been successfully made. Developments in the years 1998 and 1999 were to take matters further than they had ever been taken before in this respect. This time-period, of course, coincided with the Kosovo crisis coming to the boil and the US-led NATO response.

This proximity of timing has, in itself, been sufficient to convince some observers that the crisis must, therefore, have been solely, or at least largely, responsible for the new push towards the ESDP. In order to test and explore this assessment, the discussions in this section focus upon the two EU member states that have been the main movers behind the process. They are the United Kingdom and France. In each case the relative importance of the Kosovo crisis in shaping their attitudes and policy will be determined, *vis-à-vis* other potential causal factors.

The United Kingdom

The most significant catalyst for the new push forward was the change in British policy. This was not immediately apparent after the Blair government took office in May 1997. Initial statements suggested continuity from the previous Conservative administration. One of Tony Blair's first tasks following his election was to attend the EU's Amsterdam summit in June 1997. The resulting Treaty of Amsterdam effectively reaffirmed, using slightly different language, the existing understandings on military issues dating back to the 1991 TEU, including the British-inspired bridge role for the WEU.²⁹ British leaders made it quite clear at that time that they were strongly opposed to any change in the *status quo*. On his return from Amsterdam, Blair told the House of Commons that 'getting Europe's voice heard more clearly in the world will not be achieved through merging the

European Union and the Western European Union or developing an unrealistic common defence policy. We therefore resisted unacceptable proposals from others'. Then Defence Secretary George Robertson was subsequently quoted as saying that it would be a 'Trojan horse in NATO to give the EU a role'. As late as May 1998, Robin Cook stated that 'we do not see the European Union becoming a defence organisation ... we will be working for better co-operation between the EU and the WEU but not for merger between them'.³⁰

The Prime Minister first revealed a willingness to change this line at an 'informal' EU summit meeting in Pörschach, Austria in October 1998. Blair did not unveil a fully formed proposal here. Rather, he signalled a willingness to drop the inflexible opposition to reconsidering the role of the WEU and its relationship with the EU that had characterised British policy since Maastricht. 'I simply want to start the debate,' he said in a press conference after the meeting.³¹

Perhaps the most popular interpretation of Blair's motives for signalling a change in British policy has been that he was seeking to *assert British leadership with regard to EU military affairs in order to compensate for non-participation in the single currency project*. Support for this view can be adduced from the timing. The Pörschach meeting took place just over two months before the EU's single currency was due to be officially launched on 1 January 1999. Minds in London were bound to be concentrated on the potential fall-out from the UK's non-participation in the project of the moment. Taking a lead in revisiting military questions would, on this argument, make sense for the UK, as military matters were things which it was widely regarded as being 'good at' by its European partners. Blair hinted that a compensation strategy was in his mind. At his Pörschach press conference he stated that 'we need to allow fresh thinking in this *and it is important for Britain to be part of that thinking and not for us simply to stand there and say we are not*' [emphasis added].³²

Such a compensation strategy had not seemed necessary before about the middle of 1998. The British had assumed that, despite their refusal to join the single currency at the beginning, they would not lose influence within the EU. This was reflected in the Blair government's expectation that the UK would be a full participant in the institutional structures overseeing the new currency. In the spring of 1998, however, after a sometimes acrimonious debate, the UK had to agree that the key forum for managing the currency on a day-to-day basis – the so-called 'Euro-11' group – would only permit non-participants to attend as observers.

Having been rebuffed in this area, the British government set about, as a matter of some urgency, trying to find a means to shore up its position within the EU and, indeed, provide a foundation for Blair's stated desire to 'lead in Europe'. The timeframe was tight, with 1 January 1999 as an immutable deadline. This may help to explain the impression that the UK was making policy 'on the hoof' for a time during the second half of 1998.³³ There had simply not been time, prior to Pörrschach, to work up a more concrete or detailed policy in an area that would require significant change in the traditional British position.

More flesh was put on the bones six weeks later at an Anglo-French summit in St Malo. Blair and Chirac agreed that:

The European Union needs to be in a position to play its full role on the international stage ... To this end, the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises ... In order for the European Union to take decisions and approve military action where the [NATO] Alliance as a whole is not engaged, the Union must be given appropriate structures and a capacity for analysis of situations, sources of intelligence, and a capability for relevant strategic planning, without unnecessary duplication, taking account of the existing assets of the WEU and the evolution of its relations with the EU. In this regard, the European Union will also need to have recourse to suitable military means (European capabilities pre-designated within NATO's European pillar or national or multinational European means outside the NATO framework).³⁴

This agreement codified and confirmed the nature and extent of the shift in the British position. For the first time, the UK was agreeing to the EU developing its own military dimension, based on concrete planning structures, and to member states assigning armed forces for potential EU military operations. The fact that Blair had chosen to advance matters in partnership with the French was significant and points to a second element in his overall European leadership agenda; *a desire to establish the UK as co-equal with the traditional Franco-German motor within the EU*. Blair had identified a window of opportunity. Not only did the UK have the opportunity to initiate a new proposal, but to do so in collaboration with one of the parties in the traditional EU motor.

President Chirac had provided a *de facto* opening in August 1998. In an address to French ambassadors in Paris, Chirac reiterated that:

For France, [the WEU] is destined to become the European Union's defence agency, progressively integrated into its institutions, while, of course, retaining its links with NATO. In this context, we shall have to see whether we need to establish, when the time comes, a Council of EU Defence Ministers to affirm our solidarity in this sphere.³⁵

In 1998 the WEU's Brussels Treaty in effect reached its expiry date (Article XII stipulated that it was to remain in force for fifty years).³⁶ That year was, therefore, an opportune time to consider once again the future of the WEU and, indeed, whether it should have one as a distinct institution. Chirac's response was to try to revive interest in the incorporation of the WEU into the European Union. In 1990–91, this idea had been set aside chiefly because of British opposition. In 1998, on the other hand, the French revived the notion at precisely the time that the Blair government was looking for a 'big idea' for a potential compensation strategy.

The fact that its treaty ran out in 1998 also drew attention to the extent to which the *WEU had seemingly outlived its usefulness*. It had not developed any significant operational capabilities during the 1990s, following the adoption of the 'bridge' formula in Maastricht. Undoubtedly, the major portion of blame for this failure belongs to the member states. They had not displayed the necessary collective political will to, for example, deploy ground forces in Bosnia, intervene to halt the genocide in Rwanda or deal with the collapse of order in Albania during the spring of 1997. The reluctance to seriously consider a WEU intervention in this last instance was seen as being a particular blow to the institution's credibility.³⁷

The complicated triangular relationship into which the WEU had been bound with the EU and NATO at Maastricht was largely a consequence of British initiative, as noted. Thus, the WEU's perceived lack of utility in places like Bosnia and Albania was an especial embarrassment to the British government and further evidence that the UK was a reluctant, indeed obstructive, European. It could be argued that the UK had deliberately engineered, at Maastricht, the creation of arrangements that it knew all along would prove to be unworkable in practice.

British disenchantment with, and sense of embarrassment about, the WEU was a supporting consideration in inducing the Blair government to become more flexible about its future. At an informal meeting of EU defence ministers in November 1998, Robertson publicly referred to the existing NATO-WEU-EU triangle as 'cumbersome'³⁸ Later, Richard Hatfield, Policy Director at the Ministry

of Defence, told the House of Commons Select Committee on Defence that:

A major part-impetus for [the] developing [British] policy came from the Ministry of Defence because the purely practical arrangements that had been developed did not give us a great deal of confidence. You had a system where the EU, as one political organisation, although a very important one, was going to, if it got into crisis management ... avail itself of another organisation, the WEU, which had a very limited military infrastructure and capability, which, in turn, would turn to a third organisation, which we all think is a very good organisation – NATO. Essentially, the Ministry of Defence started to think about this, and our view was we ought to try and simplify this into a pragmatic arrangement and get a proper relationship between the two big players. That played into a wider debate that was going on inside government and that, in brief, led to the start of the process we have got now.³⁹

In alluding to the 'wider debate that was going on inside government', Hatfield's testimony suggested that the Ministry of Defence had acted opportunistically in seizing a political moment (created by Blair's search for a compensation strategy) to simplify a cumbersome and impractical institutional arrangement. The Defence Committee was somewhat sceptical of this assertion however. It noted that 'Mr Hatfield's attempt to pass off the latest European defence initiative as a purely practical response to some institutional problems seems a (perhaps deliberate) understatement of its significance. No choices about the future of the [NATO] Alliance are made on pragmatic grounds alone'.⁴⁰ The scepticism seems justified. There can be little doubt that the principal underlying reasons for the British policy shift were political rather than pragmatic.

The role of the Kosovo crisis

A number of academic analysts have argued that a further significant source of pressure for change in British policy came from the Prime Minister's alleged dismay at the European Union's impotence in the face of the emerging crisis in Kosovo. This, they note, had begun to move up the agenda during the British Presidency of the EU between January and June 1998.⁴¹

During the UK Presidency, EU members, acting through their Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) mechanism, issued three statements and agreed on two 'Common Positions' with regard to

Kosovo. The purpose of this activity was clear: 'to put pressure on Belgrade to find a peaceful settlement to the Kosovo problem'. This objective was declared in March 1998, when the EU adopted a Common Position imposing a range of military and economic sanctions on the Milosevic government.⁴² Yet this activity did little other than point up the EU's impotence in situations where economic and political pressure was insufficient to change the behaviour of recalcitrant leaders.

Three months later, another CFSP statement conceded that, far from diminishing following the imposition of EU sanctions, Serb activities in Kosovo had reached 'a new level of aggression'. To all intents and purposes EU member states conceded their own inability to do anything further to stop this aggression. They stated that 'the EU encourages international security organisations to pursue their efforts ... and to consider all options, including those which would require an authorization by the UNSC under Chapter VII'. In effect, the EU was inviting NATO to sort things out, by force if necessary.⁴³

One should not underestimate the motivational effects that a blow to the pride, prestige and credibility of leaders on the international stage can have. Alexander Vershbow, the US Ambassador to NATO, subsequently attributed Blair's policy shift mainly to what he called the 'Holbrooke effect':

The Kosovo experience, and the Bosnia experience before that, drove home the harsh reality that, at the present time, only the United States has the ability to marry military power to diplomacy as a means of managing – and resolving – crises. Diplomacy backed by force was the secret to Dick Holbrooke's success.

Vershbow added that 'the lesson for the EU was clear: without more military muscle to back it up, the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy could never duplicate the Holbrooke effect'.⁴⁴

Without using the term itself, senior government ministers in the UK articulated a desire to see the EU develop the means to bring its own version of the Holbrooke effect into play; with the UK naturally playing a leading role. This was clearly expressed by Blair in what was probably the most significant European speech of his first premiership; delivered in Warsaw in October 2000. Having asserted that 'for Britain ... being at the centre of influencing Europe is an indispensable part of influence, strength and power in the world', Blair described the kind of Europe that he had in mind:

In a world with the power of the USA; with new alliances to be made with the neighbours of Europe like Russia; developing nations with vast populations like India and China; Japan, not just an economic power but a country that will rightly increase its political might too; with the world increasingly forming powerful regional blocks ... Europe's citizens need Europe to be strong and united. They need it to be a power in the world. Whatever its origin, *Europe today is no longer just about peace. It is about projecting collective power* [emphasis added].

The Prime Minister went on to offer a sound-bite summary of his core message; 'such a Europe can, in its economic and political strength, be a superpower; a superpower, but not a superstate'.⁴⁵

In summarising the motivations of the British government – the key player in making possible the decisions to finally develop an ESDP during 1998–99⁴⁶ – it can be stated that *influence* and *leadership* were the predominant considerations. This applied in the sense of both British leadership within the European Union, and EU influence in the international arena. Most immediately and particularly, however, the Blair government was concerned to ensure that self-exclusion from the Euro did not lead to a diminution in the UK's status and influence within the EU.

The emerging Kosovo crisis provided the backdrop, during 1998, for the reformulation of British policy. It undoubtedly helped to focus attention and concentrate minds in London. It is unlikely, however, that it was the *decisive* factor for the UK. Given the other, political, pressures on the Blair government it is highly likely that the Pörschach/St Malo initiatives would have been developed anyway.

France

Earlier discussions in this chapter have noted the development of a *rapprochement* between France and NATO under the Chirac Presidency from 1995. This was premised on substantial reforms of NATO's structures and procedures – most especially on the military side. These were not, in French eyes, sufficiently realised in the period following the NATO Berlin meeting in 1996. As a result, the *rapprochement* petered out short of full French reintegration into the NATO military structures from which President Charles de Gaulle had withdrawn in the 1960s.

The issue of 'Europeanisation' in military affairs was very much in play for the French before the Kosovo crisis. Attention during the

period 1995–97 was focused on developing a significant European Security and Defence Identity *within* NATO rather than a military arm for the EU. What changed the focus for France were not any perceived lessons of the Kosovo crisis. Rather, there existed a sense of disappointment, and indeed betrayal, caused by the failure of NATO and the United States, as French leaders saw it, to proceed in the spirit of the Berlin decisions.

Supplementing this, the year 1998 was significant in that, as noted above, the WEU's Brussels Treaty expired. This provided a natural opportunity for reflections on its future and President Chirac had attempted to reopen an old debate in his remarks to the French ambassadors in the summer, where he proposed that the WEU be absorbed into the European Union. Thus, as Chirac stated in June 1999, 'as far as the discussion on the need for a European defence dimension is concerned, it had begun well before the Kosovo crisis'.⁴⁷

This had also been partly due to the influence of the functional integration view on official French thinking. It has long been reflected in official thinking in France to a significantly greater extent than in the UK, with the result that French statements can sound somewhat discordant, or dreamy, to Anglo-Saxon ears. President Chirac provided a good example when addressing the NAC in June 2001. He stated that 'the progress of European defence is irreversible since it is part and parcel of the general and far-reaching process of building Europe. The advent of a European Union, occupying its full place on the international scene, is ordained by history'.⁴⁸

The impending launch of the Euro at the beginning of 1999 produced a key convergence of views between France and the UK. Their two governments were, to be sure, approaching this event from different angles. For the French the Euro's launch created opportunities to consider what the next steps in the 'process of building Europe' should be. For the British, as discussed above, the emphasis was much more on developing a compensation strategy. The convergence found tangible expression at the December 1998 St Malo summit.

The role of the Kosovo crisis

Although the Kosovo crisis was not, therefore, decisive – or even very important – in reviving their interest in what French leaders liked to call 'Defence Europe', it did provide highly useful ammunition against those who argued that France envisaged this developing in opposition

to, or with a view to weakening, NATO. Since 1998 there has been a distinct exemplary dimension to the French approach. In other words, French leaders have consistently and deliberately sought to allay fears and suspicions, in the US and elsewhere, that they are motivated at bottom by an anti-NATO agenda. They have endeavoured to do this not by words alone but by deeds also; and the Kosovo crisis provided important opportunities in this respect.

In an address in Paris in November 1999, then Defence Minister Alain Richard referred to this approach. He spoke of:

The change in France ... which has put to rest the myth that France was seeking to promote Defence Europe in order to weaken NATO. The way we took on our political and military responsibilities, within the Alliance, during the crises in the Balkans, particularly our command of the Extraction Force in November 1998, is obviously contributing to this change in attitude.⁴⁹

On initial deployment XFOR consisted of troops from France, the UK, the FRG and Italy. The US was only minimally involved and contributed no front-line forces.⁵⁰ France had volunteered to be the 'framework nation' for XFOR. This meant that, in exchange for contributing the single largest contingent of troops, the French would command the force in the field. Overall command, however, was vested in SACEUR. Thus, the French had undertaken the lead role in an operational deployment *within the NATO integrated command structures*.

It was not the first time that this had happened since de Gaulle's era, as French forces had been operating under NATO command in Bosnia since 1992. However, the pivotal French role in XFOR was clearly intended to send an important political message, as Richard's subsequent remarks indicated. The signal was twofold. First, the French role in XFOR reinforced the point made in Bosnia that France was prepared to contribute fully to NATO-led operations, even without becoming fully re-integrated into NATO's military structures. In doing so, the French could claim to be acting in good faith within NATO.⁵¹ Second, XFOR was intended to demonstrate that Europeans could manage a significant military mission themselves, with the US sitting 'on the horizon', as Javier Solana put it.⁵²

The French government's political signals did have at least a partially positive impact on its most important target audience – the US. In a widely cited press article published in December 1998 – which was in effect the Clinton administration's public response to

the St Malo summit decisions – Madeleine Albright noted with approval that:

The Kosovo crisis shows how practical European defence capabilities can help fulfil NATO missions. Thanks to the initiative of the French and the contributions of the Germans, British, Italians and other allies, NATO is deploying an all-European ‘extraction force’ for the monitors of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe who are being sent to the troubled province. This force is under NATO command, and is based on solid European capabilities. It shows how European forces can work within NATO to great effect in the real world.⁵³

Given the tenor of these comments it can fairly be argued that the deployment of XFOR did play a role in persuading the Clinton administration to offer conditional support,⁵⁴ rather than outright opposition or hostility, to the St Malo agreements.

Matters did not end with the deployment of XFOR. Apart from the US, France made the most significant contribution to *Operation Allied Force* in 1999. Again, there was an exemplary dimension to this and French leaders were eager to remind others – often in detail – of the scale of their contribution. Richard spent some time detailing the French contribution before an American audience in February 2000, for instance:

French participation in Allied Force was, as you know, quite significant. No other country, apart from the United States, was able to deploy so wide a range of Air Force, Navy and Army military means, notably in areas where few NATO members have any useful capacities, such as intelligence-gathering tools or Search and Rescue capabilities. France deployed 68 combat aircraft (7% of the coalition total), including 51 strike aircraft (8.8%). The total number of sorties of French aircraft put us second only to the United States, and makes our air contribution by and large the leading European one. In particular, French aircraft flew 16.6% of all close air support sorties, 13.8% of all reconnaissance sorties, 11.2% of all electronic intelligence sorties. France was the only European country to deploy a conventional aircraft carrier in the theatre.⁵⁵

Following the Kosovo settlement, the French government suggested that the command element of the ‘Eurocorps’⁵⁶ take charge of KFOR. This was agreed by the NAC in December 1999 and the Eurocorps commander took over on a six-month tour of duty in April of the following year. Criticisms were made of both the nature and extent of the Eurocorps’ actual contribution in Kosovo. Some of these seemed motivated more by crude anti-Europeanism than reasoned analysis.⁵⁷ On the other hand, it was fairly pointed out that the

Eurocorps was only able to contribute some 350 officers to the total KFOR headquarters staff complement of 1,200 during its tour of duty; suggesting that its role was substantially symbolic. But the symbolism mattered. A report published by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in the autumn of 2000 argued that 'the [deployment] decision marked an important stepping stone, demonstrating European readiness to take more responsibility in a crisis management operation. Indeed, it is the first time that a European multinational headquarters is deployed for a peacekeeping operation'.⁵⁸

The French government concurred with this assessment and seemed happy that important facts on the ground had been established. In a speech to the WEU Parliamentary Assembly in May 2000, Chirac stated that:

When, nearly a year ago, I first proposed that the general staff of the European Corps should take over the command of KFOR in Kosovo from NATO, the idea seemed presumptuous and even premature. Yet, this is what has come to pass, thanks to the determination of the five members of the European Corps and thanks to German-French co-operation. The European Corps is becoming a Rapid Reaction Corps and its general staff, headed by a Spanish officer, has provided exemplary command of KFOR for several weeks now.⁵⁹

In summary it can be stated that the influence and impact of the Kosovo crisis on the evolution of the ESDP was somewhat more significant for the French government than for the British. It was certainly not a decisive factor in *initiating* French interest. That interest was, as we have seen, already long-established. The importance of the crisis lay, rather, in the opportunity that it afforded the French government to demonstrate that the development of an EU military component was a natural and non-threatening (to NATO and the transatlantic link) development. France attempted to demonstrate this by its own exemplary participation in the NATO-led operations occasioned by the Kosovo crisis and also by creating precedents for missions and operations undertaken with European countries in the lead and reduced or minimal reliance on the United States.

Conclusions

The *direct* impact of the Kosovo crisis on the evolution of the ESDP has been relatively limited. Attempts to develop it would almost certainly have been made anyway, given the agendas of the two pivotal

European governments whose policies and approaches have been discussed in this chapter.

Kosovo did, however, provide an important part of the ‘atmospherics’; i.e. the backdrop against which moves towards creating the ESDP were set in train. The crisis undoubtedly did help to strengthen the hand of the ESDP’s proponents. It drew attention to EU members’ embarrassing lack of operational military capacity when compared to the United States. It also provided the French government with the opportunity to demonstrate that ‘more Europe’ did not have to mean ‘less NATO’. This has helped to save the ESDP from becoming the target of resolute US hostility and opposition under either the Clinton or Bush administrations to date.

In September 2000, a report published by the WEU Institute for Security Studies warned against the consequences of ‘the petering out of the ‘Kosovo factor’’. It added that ‘as the memory of that episode begins to recede, it is unlikely that public and political opinion will be willing to go through the very real trauma of defence reform without a relatively clear understanding of what it is for and what it entails’.⁶⁰ Although it was not decisive in initiating moves towards the ESDP, receding memories of the crisis may yet contribute to its losing momentum or stalling as European leaders focus their interests and energies elsewhere in the absence of a perceived pressing security threat in their own backyard.

Notes

- 1 I. Daalder and M. O’Hanlon, ‘Unlearning the lessons of Kosovo’, *Foreign Policy*, 116 (1999), 138.
- 2 See, *inter alia*, ‘Consequences of Kosovo’, *The Economist* (6 February 1999), 20–1; E. Pond, ‘Kosovo: catalyst for Europe’, *Washington Quarterly*, 22:4 (1999), 77–92; M. V. Rasmussen, ‘The Phantom Menace: the strategic objectives of the EU’s Rapid Reaction Force’. Paper presented to the annual conference of the British International Studies Association, Bradford, December 2000.
- 3 *Consolidated Version of the Treaty Establishing the European Community*. Website reference http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/treaties/dat/ec_cons_treaty_en/pdf.
- 4 France, the FRG, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg.
- 5 On the proposed EDC see, *inter alia*, ‘Collective defence’, *The Economist* (4 November 1950), 679–80; ‘An army in embryo’, *The Economist* (22 September 1951), 665–6; ‘The Six Power Army’, *The Economist* (22 December 1951), 1531–2; ‘The Six Power Army’, *The Economist* (5 January 1952), 2–4; ‘The European Defence Community’, *The World*

- Today*, VIII:6 (1952), 236-48; H. F. Armstrong, 'Postscript to EDC', *Foreign Affairs*, 33:1 (1954), 17-27.
- 6 The first step had been the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952.
 - 7 Quoted in A. Sampson, *The New Europeans* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1968), p. 192.
 - 8 The UK, France and the Benelux countries.
 - 9 Text reprinted in *The Reactivation of WEU: Statements and Communiqués 1984 to 1987* (London, WEU Secretariat, 1988), p. 37.
 - 10 The EEC had become the European Community upon ratification of the Single European Act in 1987.
 - 11 D. Osborne, 'Rome says EC should consider forming its own "army for defence"', *Independent* (19 September 1990).
 - 12 *European Defence and Security in the 1990s* (London, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 1990).
 - 13 By then the FRG, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece had joined the five founder members.
 - 14 K. Booth and N. Wheeler, 'Contending philosophies about security in Europe', in C. McInnes (ed.), *Security and Strategy in the New Europe* (London, Routledge, 1992), p. 28.
 - 15 *Declaration on European Security and Defence* (London, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 1991), p. 2.
 - 16 *Treaty on European Union* Article J.4 . Website reference http://europa.eu.int/abc/obj/treaties/en/entr2f.htm#Article_J.4.
 - 17 These were outlined in *The Petersberg Declaration*. Website reference www.wcu.int/eng/comm/92-petersberg.htm.
 - 18 See, *inter alia*, A. Savill, 'The games that statesmen play', *Independent* (8 July 1992); J. Dempsey, 'WEU armada "aimed at the wrong target"', *Financial Times* (11/12 July 1992); 'When Europeans unravel', *The Economist* (1 August 1992), 30.
 - 19 There is an extensive literature on France-NATO relations during this period. See, *inter alia*, M. Blunden, 'France after the Cold War: inching closer to the Alliance', *Defense Analysis*, 9:3 (1993), 259-70; M. Meimeth, 'France gets closer to NATO', *The World Today*, 50:5 (1994), 84-6; A. Menon, 'From independence to cooperation: France, NATO and European security', *International Affairs*, 71:1 (1995), 19-34; C. Millon, 'France and the renewal of the Atlantic Alliance', *NATO Review*, 44:3 (1996), 13-16; B. Schmitt, 'France's Alliance policy in a changing world', *Aussenpolitik*, IV (1996), 348-58.
 - 20 *Declaration of the Heads of State and Government*. Website reference www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c940111a.htm.
 - 21 R. Mauthner, 'WEU urged to intervene in Bosnia conflict', *Financial Times* (9 December 1992).
 - 22 C. Masters, 'France calls for Europe to act over Rwanda', *Daily Telegraph* (18 June 1994).
 - 23 *A European Defence Policy* (Paris, WEU Assembly, 1994), pp. 23-6.
 - 24 *Press Communiqué M-NAC-1(96)63* (Brussels, NATO Press Service, 1996).

- 25 For a flavour of the press coverage in the UK see 'NATO acquires a European identity', *The Economist* (8 June 1996), 43; I. Karacs and M. Dejevsky, 'Shedding of US ties satisfies NATO members', *Independent* (4 June 1996); A. Gimson, 'Independent Euro role woos France back to NATO', *Daily Telegraph* (4 June 1996).
- 26 P. Cornish, 'European security: the end of architecture and the new NATO', *International Affairs*, 72:4 (1996), 751–69; P. Gordon, 'Does the WEU have a role?', *Washington Quarterly*, 20:1 (1997), 125–40; J. Ruggie, 'Consolidating the European pillar: the key to NATO's future', *Washington Quarterly*, 20:1 (1997), 109–24.
- 27 Fabius and Quiles: M. Rogers, 'Task force accord opens a new chapter for NATO', *Jane's Defence Weekly* (12 June 1996), 3. Robin: *Defining Moments: Alliance Developments 1996*. North Atlantic Assembly. Website reference www.naa.be/docu/1996/an244pc.html.
- 28 J. Lewis, 'France cools off on full NATO reintegration', *Jane's Defence Weekly* (9 July 1997), 3.
- 29 See *Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union*. Website reference http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/treaties/dat/eu_cons_treaty_en.pdf.
- 30 Blair: *The Future of NATO: The Washington Summit. Report and Proceedings of the Committee with Minutes of Evidence and Appendices*, House of Commons Select Committee on Defence, Third Report, Session 1998–99, para. 63. Website reference <http://parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm199899/cmselect/cmdfence/39/3915.htm>; Robertson: M. Prescott, 'British forces to bear EU stars insignia', *Sunday Times* (19 November 2000); Cook: T. Helm and C. Lockwood, 'EU may be given power over defence', *Daily Telegraph* (3 October 1998).
- 31 See the extracts from the transcript of the press conference, reprinted in M. Rutten, *From St-Malo to Nice: European Defence Core Documents (Chaillot Paper 47)* (Paris, WEU Institute for Security Studies, 2001), p. 2.
- 32 *Ibid.*, p. 2.
- 33 S. Sloan, *The United States and European Defence (Chaillot Paper 39)* (Paris, WEU Institute for Security Studies, 2000). Website reference www.weu.int/institute/index2.html.
- 34 Text reprinted in Rutten, *From St-Malo to Nice*, pp. 8–9.
- 35 Meeting of the French Ambassadors – Speech by M. Jacques Chirac, President of the Republic. Website reference www.ambafrance.org.uk/db.phtml?id=1590anda=1.
- 36 Text of the treaty reprinted in *Western European Union Brussels Treaty* (London, WEU Secretariat, 1969), p. 9.
- 37 See *Public Perception of WEU's Contribution to Stabilising Democracy in Albania*. WEU Assembly. Website reference www.weu.int/assembly/eng/reports/1650e.html.
- 38 T. Butcher, 'Britain leads call for EU defence shake-up', *Daily Telegraph* (5 November 1998).
- 39 *European Security and Defence*, House of Commons Select Committee on Defence, Eighth Report, Session 1999–2000, Minutes of Evidence

- para.17. Website reference www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm199900/cmsselect/cmdfence/264/0021602.htm.
- 40 *Ibid.*, Report para. 25.
- 41 See, *inter alia*, P. Gordon, 'Their own army?', *Foreign Affairs*, 79:4 (2000), 14 and R. Whitman, *Amsterdam's unfinished business? (Occasional Paper 7)* (Paris, WEU Institute for Security Studies, 1999), pp. 7–8.
- 42 *Federal Republic of Yugoslavia/Kosovo/Adoption of a common position (6892/98)* (Brussels, Council of the European Union, 1998).
- 43 *Kosovo: Intense fighting – Ethnic cleansing (9246/98)* (Brussels, Council of the European Union, 1998). The reference is to Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. This deals with action that the international community can take with regard to threats to or breaches of international peace and security. In effect therefore, the EU statement was signalling that a military response to the Kosovo crisis should not be ruled out, whilst conceding the EU's own inability to organise one.
- 44 *US Ambassador to NATO on US, NATO, Europe Partnership* (London, Office of Public Affairs US Embassy, 2000), p. 3.
- 45 Europe's Political Future – speech by the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, to the Polish Stock Exchange, Warsaw, Friday 6 October 2000. Website reference www.fco.gov.uk/news/spechtext.asp?4913.
- 46 The decision by the EU as a whole to go ahead was taken at the Cologne summit in June 1999 and confirmed at the Helsinki summit six months later. In Helsinki EU members agreed on a 'headline goal' with four components: to develop an EU military capacity by 2003, capable of deploying up to a corps size force within sixty days and sustainable in the field for at least a year. See *Helsinki European Council 10 and 11 December 1999: Presidency Conclusions*. Website reference http://europa.eu.int/council/off/conclu/dec99/dec99_en.htm.
- 47 Kosovo – Joint press conference given by M. Jacques Chirac, President of the Republic, and M. Lionel Jospin, Prime Minister, following the Cologne European Council. Website reference www.ambafrance.org.uk/db.phtml?id=2861anda=1.
- 48 NATO – Special meeting of the North Atlantic Council – Speech by M. Jacques Chirac, President of the Republic. Website reference www.ambafrance.org.uk/db.phtml?id=5007.
- 49 European defence – Speech by M. Alain Richard, Minister of Defence, at the Institute of Higher National Defence Studies. Website reference www.ambafrance.org.uk/db.phtml?id=3455anda=1.
- 50 According to a subsequent report in the *Financial Times*, XFOR 'included only six Americans'. See D. Buchan, 'Forward march for Europe', *Financial Times* (25 November 1999).
- 51 On this see *The Future of NATO: The Washington Summit*, para. 72.
- 52 Quoted in G. Seigle, 'NATO's Kosovo rescue force set for deployment', *Jane's Defence Weekly* (2 December 1998), 4.
- 53 M. Albright, 'The right balance will secure NATO's future', *Financial Times* (7 December 1998).
- 54 The conditions being Albright's famous 'Three Ds': no decoupling from, duplication of, or discrimination within NATO.

- 55 French Defence, NATO and Europe – Introductory remarks by M. Alain Richard, Minister of Defence, at the CSIS. Website reference www.ambafrance.org.uk/db.phtml?id=3744anda=1.
- 56 The Eurocorps grew out of a Franco-German brigade established in 1987. Designated as being available for both NATO and WEU/EU tasking, five EU member states have assigned troops to the Eurocorps: France, the FRG, Spain, Belgium and Luxembourg. The UK has expressed interest in contributing to the corps' headquarters element. The KFOR assignment was the Eurocorps' first operational deployment.
- 57 P. Sherwell and C. Hart, 'Eurocorps: neither rapid, reactive nor a force', *Sunday Telegraph* (26 November 2000).
- 58 *Interim Report: Building European Defence – NATO's ESDI and the European Union's ESDP* (Brussels, NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 2000), para. 69.
- 59 Europe/Defence – Speech by M. Jacques Chirac, President of the Republic, to the Presidential Committee of the WEU Parliamentary Assembly and the Visiting Fellows from the IHEDN. Website reference www.ambafrance.org.uk/db.phtml?id=4048anda=1.
- 60 F. Heisbourg *et al.*, *European Defence: Making it Work (Chaillot Paper 42)*. WEU Institute for Security Studies. Website reference www.weu.int/institute/chaillot/chai42e.html.