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NATO & CSDP: Can the EU afford to go solo?

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Abstract: This article negotiates whether Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) can replace North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) military capabilities. It examines the following two cases: (1) Whether European integration can spell the end for NATO and (2) Whether NATO will continue to prevail over the EU's CSDP. To get there the article goes through issues such as the transatlantic gaps and differences, EU's efforts for more autonomy in military actions, and problems that arise within the EU and the US. At the same time it examines the reasons behind NATO's success up until now. The author's conclusion is that the EU at the moment cannot afford to go solo and thus will have to rely on NATO for any future military actions.

Subjects: European Union Politics; Foreign Policy; Global Governance; International Political Economy; International Politics; International Relations

Keywords: NATO; CSDP; ESDP; EU; US; integration; security

1. Introduction

The development of European cooperation is something that has been growing gradually through years within a process, called European integration. Within this process—and among other ideals—collective defence issues for countries constituting the European Union (EU)—and not just—have been developing. For most of the countries that participate in the EU, this is a new area of discussion, as until now it has always been the case that defence issues were dealt with inside the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and in cooperation with the United States (US). The end of the cold war of course did constitute a *raison d'être* for the Alliance, as its main rival—the Warsaw Pact—went out of business. All of a sudden its future relevance became questionable and many rushed to

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Petros Demetriou is a lecturer at the Cyprus University of Technology and the Open University of Cyprus. He specialises in International Relations issues which deal with the EU–US relations. His research focuses in European integration, NATO and the military capabilities of the former vis-à-vis the latter. He is also interested in global security issues, which relate to international terrorism. The research concerning this article has come in a period in which international terrorism has the European Union in its scope. This is no time for experimenting, but for acting multilaterally against a common threat. It is in both the EU's and the United States' best interest to act together in order to tackle this issue. The umbrella organisation, under this should take place, must be a well-established military organisation, and NATO seems to be the best option for the coalition to flourish even more.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The EU has for the past decades been agonisingly trying to create its own military capabilities. This effort has so far flawed. This article explores the European Union's efforts towards this direction up until now, and wonders why the EU would want to create its own military capabilities, when it already effectively cooperates with the United States in an established military organisation, namely NATO. For this reason, the article initially examines whether there is a case for the EU's military capabilities to replace NATO's military capabilities. Subsequently the article's arguments concentrate on why this will not take place in the near future. Clearly the evidence presented indicates that NATO is the right option for the EU—short-term and long-term—and that it would serve its military ambitions not to go solo.

proclaim it as obsolete because of this. Therefore, the problem for the Alliance nowadays is its role within the global context that was sketched after the cold war.

In the perception of the author, several reasons may lead the Alliance towards its decline. An important one is the US–EU relations, which always have been under minor or at times even major tension. But are issues such as this really able to lead the Alliance towards its expiration? The truth is that virtually no one believes relations should continue as they seem to be today, or that the transatlantic cooperation should be abandoned totally. On the contrary, most allies would like it to continue existing, but on a new basis (Light, 2003, p. 69). The continuation of US–EU cooperation inside the Organisation, however, depends exactly on how it eventually will shape up.

NATO's European allies' attitude is what is at question. Do they really want the Alliance to continue in existence, or would they much rather develop their own military capabilities via the European integration process and, more specifically, via the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)? What has begun as a political and economic—and in some cases even social and cultural—integration of European states now may lead also into defence integration. The initial process by which sovereign states relinquish their national sovereignty and surrender sovereign prerogatives within an international institution to maximise their collective power and interests indeed has increased the European allies' appetite to March in a more autonomous direction (Bomberg & Stubb, 2003, p. 9). But, is this achievable? Can this be a potential reasonable target for the EU? What must be stated here is that the rise of the EU as a hegemon is by no means a certainty—on the contrary—and this is something that should be taken into account when examining the European integration.

The process of European integration and whether this has affected or will affect NATO is what this article considers. This is why the aim is to deal with and analyse whether the European integration will spell the end for NATO. To do so, the article develops arguments for and against the questions under analysis. To be more precise, the aim is to provide the arguments by which someone could suggest that the European integration may spell the end for NATO or not. The aim therefore is to point out the strengths and weaknesses of each case based on the long-running transatlantic relationship. For this to happen the article relies on Structural Realism—or Neorealism—as the EU seeks to strike a balance of power with the US, with regard to its military capabilities. There is though a security dilemma lying ahead for the EU; in a global environment where international terrorism is on the rise, should its efforts concentrate on striking a balance of power with the US, or should it concentrate on tackling—alongside the US and under the NATO umbrella—terrorism which today threatens many EU territories?

2. Why European integration may spell the end for NATO

2.1. Gaps and transatlantic differences
Europe's military and political dependence on the United States after Second World War, and the importance of the US in the post-cold war era, produced a dilemma for European states. On the one hand, the aim was to secure sufficient military and political support for their territory from the US; on the other, they aimed for adequate financial and political autonomy. More specifically in US–European relations—as in any other defence coalition in which members are uneven—there is a contradiction between strategic dependence and both financial and political autonomy.

The military presence of the American superpower which counterbalanced the Soviet threat, and the consecration of nuclear weapons as a central defensive element of NATO, produced powerful "anti-motives" to those who could think of starting such a war in the region of Europe (Zadra, 2014). Subsequently, an absence of military conflicts was observed, but voices for the establishment of an autonomous European defence and security system became louder. The result of this US military presence was for the European defensive system—in both collective and national levels—to be built based on Atlantic rather than European needs.

The US presence in Europe also weakened the need for Europe to equip itself defensively. The US presence has developed a complex of Euro-Atlantic institutions and procedures, in which the EU's defensive policies are internationalised. The American defensive "umbrella" provided an easy defence and security solution for Europe, but it also left it without the ability to take autonomous military actions. The argument here is that the perpetuation of the US's supremacy maintains the development of security and defence in the European integration process at a low level and restricts the EU members into a secondary role, which is not always in their interest (Calleo, 2013, p. 211).

Gordon argued that the most important issue for American leadership—for both Democrats and Republicans—is whether European pursuits and aims are "in harmony with those of the United States and not whether Europeans possess or not an identity" (Gordon, 1996, p. 133). From this, one easily can realise that the American aim has been for the US to make the decisions and for Europeans to support it. It is likely that some EU member-states would like to change this mode of cooperation into a more collective one, in which decisions will be made multilaterally instead of unilaterally (Mouritzen, 2013).

The US never accepts being an equal partner in a coalition; it wants to lead it. For the US, "reality" is to organise its allies into effective and supportive coalitions. This can be understood clearly when reading the Bush administration's 2002 National Security Strategy (NSS), and its 2006 update. The strategy is framed by a language of unilateralism. The importance of building alliances is mentioned, but it is made very clear that the US "will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary". In addition, the language regarding pre-emptive rather than preventive strikes is something the US seems to prefer (National Security Strategy, 2006, p. 6). Military power gets to be the most important means towards the completion of Washington's diplomatic aims, "for its own purposes on its own authority", and opposition to terrorism becomes the cornerstone of the NSS (Bailes, 2008, p. 118).

The NSS references to NATO seem to be a blueprint for reform rather than a celebration of achievement, as the US's defence policy appears to embrace a unilateral rather than a multilateral way of acting when dealing with terrorism. Apparently, the US would like the Alliance to have an upgraded interventional policy role, which will be supported by advanced military capabilities. The problem lies in the fact that the Americans see this upgraded policy role as a means for the evolvement of the Alliance into a security organisation that will overlook and lead any other international organisations, with the perspective of becoming the institutional regulator of global law and order (Rühle, 2013). Europeanists, on the contrary, understand the Alliance's upgraded policy role as a means to deepen the intra-alliance democracy, and will cooperate with the rest of the international organisations in which they have invested so much. The consensus within the EU is that the current world order must continue to be based on multilateralism, and that solutions must be negotiated within regional and global institutions. This requires that the "check and balances" system will be followed and upheld within a system of global governance (Hendrickson, 2006).

There has been a change in the perceptions of values on both sides of the Atlantic, leading to what is referred to as a "values gap". The difference in the way that Europeans and Americans see their role in the world, world affairs and bilateral relations widens this gap. As far as the decision-making process is concerned, the EU is willing to use military force grudgingly, and only after all other non-military methods of conflict prevention have been exhausted. Cornish argued that the EU prefers "full-scope conflict prevention, rather than threat prevention" (Cornish, 2004, pp. 68–69). In addition, the EU would like to see diplomatic, political and economic measures prevail, with military action being the last resort. Furthermore, strategically, the US states that "the mission must determine the coalition", a concept widely attributed to ex-US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld (Mowle & Sacko, 2007, p. 605). Here, the argument is that the EU is willing to let the "coalition determine the mission", a view that embeds different notions of understanding international and transatlantic relations.

Eurosceptics tend to view the EU as a possible obstacle or even as a challenge vis-à-vis the US's power (Milzow, 2012). For them, the construction of a CSDP alarms the danger of evolving a super-power with a worldview that is fundamentally different from that of the US, and that will work to spread its values and concept of governance on the international level. At the same time, the EU's preference for multilateral cooperation, compromise and diplomacy, and its reluctance to use force, has been viewed with impatience and frustration, and was defined by Huntington (1999) and Kagan (2002) as an evident sign of weakness. Mars and Venus associations with the US's hard power and the EU's soft power do not contribute to better EU–US cooperation.

The US's near-monopoly global possession of force, and the fact that the US subjects the EU to its scrutiny, are things the Union would like changed (Brown, 2012). In the past, American hegemonic tendencies in NATO were accepted because of the coiling attitude the cold war imposed. In this era, and in front of a complex and pluralistic institutional and political frame that has been developed in the contemporary international system and where European, Atlantic and other institutions or organisations coexist, the confrontation of these hegemonic tendencies may develop into a critical issue.

2.2. Civilian and military power

In early 2000, many EU member-states believed that civilian power—or soft power as Kagan (2002) calls it—should prevail over military power. Nowadays, the general consensus is that a Union of 28 member-states constitutes a global power, which deserves to have a say in the management of international problems. For the past few years, the EU has developed important defence and security functions by utilising military and civilian power. The EU has gained the ability of automatic access to NATO mechanisms—such as Berlin Plus (EU, 2003a)—in a complementary basis of functioning and acting alongside the Alliance. This something-less-than-equal partnership indicates that Americans and Europeans do not share the same strategic vision. Of course, civilian power is not of greater importance than military power, but unless the US realises that both are equally important, then their views will continue to deviate. At the moment, the US offers the EU a protective military power and the EU in return offers democratic legitimisation in their combined operations. Without this democratic legitimisation, the US will find it difficult to convince the world regarding the "purity" of its actions. If NATO indeed was shaped—always according to the first NATO Secretary-General, Lord Hastings Ismay—to "... keep the Russians out, the Americans in and the Germans down" (Lindley-French, 2007, p. 27), then surely the EU should continue its sole development as a security actor.

For the Alliance to continue, several questions regarding the future role of the Organisation must be answered as well. One is whether it will continue to concentrate just on military means. The Organisation's EU allies do not seem to share such a vision, though, as they seem to prefer the idea that these should be used only as a last resort (Giegerich, 2012, p. 73). Another is the type of missions NATO will be undertaking. The successful tackling of international terrorism, the suppression of uprisings, peacekeeping missions and nation-building rely on human values and abilities, and constitute an area in which the EU may have an important role, and where the EU is more capable than the US. Perhaps the time has come for the EU to move towards the integration of its own military and non-military mechanisms without being prejudiced that any European effort is a priori doomed to fail if it has no NATO support. Duplication should not always be dealt as anathema if it wants to be taken seriously; on some occasions, it is needed in order for the different role and the autonomy of the two organisations to be secured.

The EU is the best actor to deal with problems of a socio-economic nature and ensure that they do not escalate into major crises requiring military action. On the contrary NATO cannot deal with these kinds of problems. The importance of soft security—which includes economic, social, demographic and environmental problems—has an impact on national security and political stability. The need for this kind of security also is mentioned in NATO's 1999 Strategic Concept, something which indicates that even the Alliance begins to realise its great importance (NATO, 2001). Of course these do not mean that the EU should not or must not develop more serious and effective military capabilities if it wishes to have a global role, as military issues do have an impact on regional stability. Therefore,

it cannot rely solely on political and diplomatic means. These should be complemented by military means, and the European Security Strategy (ESS) is a step towards this dimension. The importance of the ESS lies in the fact that such a document will contribute to the democratic legitimisation of the CSDP. The ESS—in contrast to the NSS—aims to create an extended zone of security around the EU, with multilateralism being the only means by which international order will be built, and always under the authority of the UN (Whitman, 2004, p. 446).

Contrary to the NSS, in the ESS the word "enemy" does not appear anywhere in the document. This is due to the fact that for the EU, the use of military force prior to the use of other "civilian", diplomatic, economic and political measures is dealt as the last resort. The post-9/11/2001 era reveals that the US has chosen a more "attacking" model as primary response when dealing with terrorists, thereby entering a discourse that enables the use of military and intelligence services and regards combat as something political. The EU, on the other hand, seems to prefer a "justice" model. Even though it regards terrorism as a criminal action that has to be fought in the boundaries of law, the Union's statements also speak of the necessity to tackle root causes like social injustices and ethnic conflicts. It is important to realise that choosing the "justice" model as response to terrorist attacks, as the EU does, means more democracy and less repression. As Guild makes it obvious, it "permits the State to act in ways that would otherwise not be countenanced" (Guild, 2003, p. 182). In the post-9/11/2001 era, both the EU and the US have entered a field of exception, but in different ways.

2.3. A more autonomous EU

Given the extent to which European and American interests are entangled, the EU will continue trying to influence the US. For the EU's public opinion, the problem is that no matter how important the American contribution was to the end of the cold war, the US just could not consent to the EU's direction towards autonomy. Of course, the US clearly does not want the EU to duplicate NATO, but the American objection in any kind of EU defence emancipation is more than obvious. We could even argue that the US's aim is for a weak EU to develop, in order for it to remain the only superpower of the world.

Since NATO has yet to define clearly what its future role will be, the EU should try to be more active when it comes to defence issues, and to be autonomous or complementary NATO relations. The EU should have an active role in conflict prevention, and to deal with them rapidly and effectively, especially when these happen in its own backyard. For this to happen, the EU should be empowered by obtaining operational, military and institutional means—via the CSDP—and the development instruments of an autonomous and active role in preventing, resolving and dealing with crises.

Such goals were first set by the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty, which stated in its preamble that the contracting parties are determined to "apply a common foreign and security policy, which includes the progressive formation of a common defence policy that might in time lead to common defence based on the provision of article J.7" (EU, 1997a). Article J.7 of the Treaty predicts that the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) contains the whole of issues that concern the EU's security, including the progressive formation of a common policy that may lead to a common defence. Nowadays, the CSDP must constitute an inseparable part of the CFSP. EU members therefore must contribute to the fulfilment of the goals set by the CFSP, in order for its effectiveness to be reinforced. The scope of the CSDP will be defined from objective goals and fundamental principles of the CFSP. The ultimate target for the CSDP will be the contribution to the reinforcement of the EU's security, integrity and independence. It is for this reason that there must be a clear definition of the concept, the mechanisms and the procedures in which the EU will act in order to prevent, resolve and deal with conflicts.

The CSDP must equip the EU with the ability to take autonomous and substantial actions, especially when NATO is unwilling or not ready to act. For such an ability to exist, the EU should develop specific operational capabilities, based on credible military forces. The EU must therefore try to obtain its own military capabilities—that is effective army, navy and air force; otherwise it always will have a comparative disadvantage vis-à-vis US military capabilities.

It is evident that the great expectations that have arisen may produce a more coherent strategic vision on the EU's behalf, something that it lacked until now. Such a vision will take flesh and bones only if it manages to overcome its military capabilities deficits. The development of an independent and autonomous CSDP in the new, complex and global environment always is a target for the EU (Winn, 2013). The Union cannot remain an observer of developments that have a direct effect on political and economic interests of its member-states, but whether such a vision can be fulfilled is something that only time will show. As the EU's history points out, there will be periods of progress and periods of retrogression in the EU's defence and security. On some aspects there will be "more Europe" and on others less. What matters, though, beside the procedures and mechanisms that will be used, is the existence of a political will in regard to the usage of all available "tools" in order for a reliable CSDP to evolve. This presupposes that member-states will be conscious of their common interests, as well as that national interests are better served when there is a collective effort. The development, then, of an increasingly confident EU unavoidably leads to some measure of European security autonomy. A robust, confident, lucid and effective EU is in its own interests… and in the interests of both NATO and the US (Brown, 2013).

3. Why European integration will not spell the end for NATO

3.1. NATO's supremacy

NATO has proved itself a durable military mechanism. It has until now served its members with great expertise. Key security interventions, in which the US acted jointly with the EU, include Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992), Kosovo (1999) and Afghanistan (2001). In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, NATO contributed in bringing the Yugoslav wars to an end. The NATO UN-mandated "Implementation Force" (IFOR) deployed resulted in bringing in 1995 the Dayton Peace Agreement (NATO, 2015a). In the case of Kosovo, Operation Allied Force targeted the military capabilities of the then Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, something which led to the end of the war within 1999 (NATO, 2016a). Finally in the case of Afghanistan, NATO took command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which initially secured Kabul from the Taliban and Al Qaeda. After the UN Security Council authorised its expansion in 2013, ISAF was involved in military operations south of Afghanistan (NATO, 2015b).

At the moment, NATO constitutes the only credible security organisation of the Western world, and there can be no doubt that the EU considers NATO as its key strategic partner (Niblett, 2007, p. 633). The end of the cold war meant the end of serious conflict danger in Europe. Conflict fears now were replaced with a cooperation system in sectors such as security, policy and economy. NATO could not continue based on the same ideals, goals and actions of the cold war era and since change was a sine qua non, it did provide a new frame with its 1999 Strategic Concept.

The change of the international strategic environment after 9 November 2001 forced NATO into further adjustments that now offer the Alliance the ability to deal with new challenges, such as the proliferation of WMD and terrorism. The "Alliance Policy Framework on Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction", which includes the "Assessment of Proliferation Risks to NATO", provides a basis for the allies' defence efforts against proliferation and argues that as a defensive organisation, the Alliance must maintain a range of capabilities needed to discourage the proliferation and use of WMD, and to protect NATO populations, territory and forces against such use (NATO, 1994). In addition, NATO's Comprehensive Political Guidance (CPG) provides a revised frame, and reflects all significant challenges and changes that took place since the adoption of the 2010 Strategic Concept (NATO, 2010).

Combined US–EU military exercises are a vital component of their bilateral relations. When executed under the NATO umbrella, these assure the operability and readiness of the Organisation's forces. From 2007 to 2011 the US trained over 40,000 service members from allied nations. This training took place in facilities located in Europe. In autumn 2013, NATO held the Steadfast Jazz exercise. This was the largest exercise since 2006 and one of the largest joint exercises since the end of the cold war. Over 6,000 personnel from NATO and non-NATO members were engaged in this live-fire exercise. In autumn 2015, NATO held the Trident Juncture exercise, which was the biggest

exercise in the last decade. Around 36,000 troops from 27 NATO Allies, and 3 partner-nations were involved. It also involved more than 230 units, more than 140 aircraft and more than 60 ships. The importance of these exercises is that they allow NATO forces to learn working together effectively, and identify areas for improvement.

At the present time, the need is for cooperation rather than competition. As long as nuclear weapons will continue to rule strategic balances, NATO will constitute the only military organisation in the Euro-Atlantic region that will have credible strategic power, which will allow a regulative role in the shaping of global correlations. An effort to replace NATO with any other defence organisation will lead to an institutional and political relations problem with no way out and probably will worsen the implications of disproportion and of uneven development. Furthermore, what is the point for the EU to be competitive vis-à-vis NATO, when it has always been chaired by European General Secretaries? It is for these reasons that NATO must remain the political and institutional organisation in which EU member-states should take their crucial and final defensive decisions.

For the past years, NATO has tried to build a new and better relationship with the EU. The December 2002 "EU-NATO Declaration on ESDP" (European Security and Defence Policy) is one move towards this direction (NATO, 2002). In this Declaration, it was agreed that non-EU members and NATO members should be allowed to be involved in the then called ESDP. In return, the EU would benefit by gaining access to NATO assets and capabilities. Here, the aim for the EU was to be able to take over operations in cooperation with NATO by the end of 2003. What has not been defined, and which must get sorted out, is a clear outlook of the scope and nature of such operations. The agreement between EU member-states on 17 June at the 2004 Brussels European Council came as a confirmation of this, and has led to the conclusion that EU operations should be reliant on NATO assets if they are of a big scale (EU, 2005). This means that the EU accepts NATO's supremacy over the CSDP and is willing to continue the partnership, which will be based primarily on the Alliance's assets. A more effective partnership between the EU and the US—within NATO institutions—in security and defence issues, which will ensure that the EU will have a say in the formation of Washington's global security policy, is the Union's aim.

What must never be forgotten is that NATO was primarily established to secure European stability as well as for the collective defence of its members. The 2008 NATO Bucharest Summit showed that the Alliance is making new openings vis-à-vis countries of the European region. It already includes 28 European countries, of which 21 are EU member-states, and of course future NATO enlargements will include more European states that have the ambition of becoming EU members as well.

3.2. The American view

The American hegemony of the post-cold war era, the American rejection of the creation of a European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) outside NATO, and Europe's unwillingness to take over the necessary financial, political and military responsibilities for its defence, resulted in the EU's dependence on the US's policy. The absence of a real common foreign and defence policy from the EU further undermines Europe's aim of independence from this kind of relationship. Huntington argued that North America and Europe should renew the "ethical base" of their partnership in sectors such as the economy and their policy, in order for them to get closer to each other (Huntington, 1996). By this, he means that the US and the EU should cooperate even more in the aforementioned sectors, as this cooperation eventually will spillover to defence issues. This is something the current US President Barack Obama seems to endorse when saying that "America cannot meet the threats of this century alone, and the world cannot meet them without America" (Obama, 2007, p. 4). Such views leave wide open the door for better transatlantic cooperation in security issues, inside NATO. In this way, the Alliance will endure and will be based on healthier foundations.

The US Administration under George W. Bush demanded greater burden-sharing on the EU's behalf, while it also repeated its mantra of the three "no's": no duplication of American forces by the EU; no decoupling of the US from Europe and no discrimination against the US especially when it

comes to arms purchases (Rutten, 2001, pp. 10–11). In a 2001 speech, Bush expressed his belief that NATO membership and EU membership are not contradictory and went on to say that the US "… welcome[s] a greater role for the EU in European Security…" as long as European security is "… properly integrated with NATO". His concluding remark was that only together can the EU and the US "… confront the merging threats of a changing world" (Bush, 2001). The message for cooperation was very obvious on the US's behalf. The US more or less urges the EU to undertake a more active presence in its neighbourhood. It urges the EU to embrace such an effort and tackle, alongside the US, common threats that show up in the twenty-first century.

To deal with new threats such as the proliferation of WMD and terrorists who fight an unconventional war-type, contemporary military forces must be agile, able to deploy in a short space of time, and remain at the operation field for quite a long time. Furthermore, the forces must be technologically improved and familiar with acting inside an operational frame, which consists of a network of multiple circuits and communication systems that allow the management and exchange of data. The EU does not possess such forces; NATO does. The EU falls behind the US in a series of technology sectors, and especially in those that have to do with the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). The RMA deals with communications, collection and evaluation of data for information war, and accuracy—or long range—ammunition. EU capabilities are very restricted as far as their "power projection" is concerned; it lacks what the US calls as C4ISR (control, computers, command, communications, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance). If we take out both the UK and France, most EU countries are still oriented in the direction of land defence. The absence of effective central planning, the slicing of research funds, and the multiple cover of defensive efforts constitute the most important reasons for the aggravation of the aforementioned problems.

In 2006 NATO members agreed to commit two per cent—minimum—of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to defence spending. Ten years onwards only the United States, the United Kingdom, Poland, Estonia and Greece have achieved this goal. In fact the US spends more than double of what all other members spend on defence. To be more precise, in 2015 the US had a 3.3%—as a share of GDP—military expenditure, whereas EU countries combined managed only a 1.5% military expenditure (NATO, 2015c). If we check the 15 countries with the highest military expenditure in 2015, we can see that the US ranks first at 596 ($ bn.). The UK, France, Germany and Italy are ranked fifth, seventh, ninth and twelfth, respectively. These four EU countries have only managed together a poor total of 169.6 ($ bn.) in military expenditure. The share of world military expenditure in 2015 also indicates that the US ranks first with a total of 36%, whereas the four aforementioned EU countries, among them manage a disappointing 10.4% (SIPRI, 2016, pp. 2–3).

Furthermore, according to the US Department of Defense today the US has an active military personnel of 1,301,300 (Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force) and reserve military personnel of 811,000. This personnel is stationed not only in the US but all around the world; 67,000 of it is stationed permanently in the EU (Department of Defense, 2016). The EU countries, on the other hand, have a total of 1,435,693 in military personnel (European Defence Agency, 2013, p. 14).

Arguably, the major advantage of having US forces in EU territory is the access to logistical infrastructure. Through NATO cooperation, the US and the EU have jointly tested systems that involve the movement of large number of military personnel and weapons from and to Europe. The US has access to a significant number of ports and airports. Since US and EU interests usually coincide, then cooperation via a well-established military Organisation will always facilitate operability and practicability, thus making the completion of joint military operations feasible and successful.

The improvement of NATO-EU relations should not be seen as an alternative to supporting the EU's efforts for better military capabilities. On the contrary, for the transatlantic link to get stronger, the EU should react and fix this anomaly. At the moment, it is more than obvious that the EU cannot afford to act separately from NATO and should concentrate on how to cooperate more effectively with

the Alliance. What the CSDP should concentrate on, since the EU member-states are unwilling at the moment to spend more for their defence, is how to spend better and how to reinforce NATO cooperation, as not working within the Alliance may close off the path for cooperation with Washington.

3.3. Rise of the Russian thread

The annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 and its military actions in eastern Ukraine have led to a rethinking of how the US and the EU should deal with the emerging Russian expansionism. Since 2004, NATO air forces have been involved in securing Baltic air space. In the aftermath of the Crimean crisis, these air patrolling forces were scaled up in numbers.

Russia's primary objective is to restore itself as a major global pole of power. Its effort is to reverse US influences in Europe, by itself influencing foreign and security policies of both the EU and its nearby countries, so that these remain either neutral or support Russian policies. The cases of both Ukraine and Georgia—where Abkhazia and South Ossetia were forced to partition from Georgia— are there to remind us of this Russian goal.

Many NATO Ministers of Defence meetings were held due to Russia's expansionism. I indicatively refer to: the February 2015 meeting where it was agreed to practically support Ukraine and improve relations with Georgia, the June 2015 meeting where Defence Ministers expressed strong support for Ukraine and agreed on additional practical support for the country, and the October 2015 meeting— during which exercise Trident Juncture 2015 was already taking place—where NATO-Georgia and NATO-Ukraine relations were discussed. During the February 2016 meeting a substantial NATO-Georgia package was agreed. In this latter meeting, it was also agreed for NATO to assist with the refugee and migrant crisis (NATO, 2016b).

Russia is therefore a rising thread which must be dealt with due diligence. Given the threat Russia poses for the EU, military cooperation, operability, practicability, effectiveness and overall readiness for joint war fighting is needed. NATO countries—EU countries including—have realised that the way to tackle this thread is by acting multilaterally. NATO's ten-day military exercise Anaconda 2016 which was held in June, involved 31,000 troops from NATO and non-NATO members. The exercise took place in Poland, near the Russian borders. According to officials, the exercise aimed to deal with the nightmare scenario of a potential offensive Russian action. Lately, NATO member-states have also been thinking of positioning permanent NATO bases in the countries bordering with Russia, as a deterrence measure for this potential Russian expansionism.

3.4. Problems within the EU

The EU has integrated rapidly as far as its economy is concerned; it managed to enlarge its territory, with the admission of new member-states, and promises to do more on this issue, despite the fact that it "… is nothing like a state, nor is it likely to become one" due to its *sui generis* character (Zielonka, 2008, p. 473). Where it yet has to move forward is its CFSP. For the past two decades, important conflicts have been taking place in its territory, and yet it remains an inactive actor. Does it lack political will? Does it prefer to concentrate just on issues such as enlargements and its monetary union? Do its member-states feel that defence should have a national character instead of a more collective one?

Whichever the reason, the fact is that the CFSP, and alongside it the CSDP, have not been developed as much as they should have. NATO's Washington Summit declarations do confirm this fact, as the EU still relies heavily on the Alliance's support as far as its defence is concerned (NATO, 1999). Past and present operations and missions have certainly proved so. The indicative cases of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Afghanistan seem to support this argument. Today NATO continues to pursue several missions in EU territory, such as counterterrorism and human-trafficking patrols in the Mediterranean Sea. At the time of writing, the case of Libya seems to be among the priorities for both the EU and NATO. Operation Unified Protector is operating since 2011 and uses ships and

submarines from NATO members in order to "… monitor, report and if needed interdict vessels sus-pected of carrying illegal arms or mercenaries" (NATO, 2011). At the same time the increase, in ille-gal human-trafficking from Africa to the EU, via the Libyan shores makes NATO presence in the area even more important.

Returning to the argument for a common defence system—and in general a political union among states—to be successful and viable, it is essential that this bypasses the socio-political slicing, the national-states' dissimilarities, and the different preferences and options that were piled in the pro-cess of history, and therefore shape individual and dissimilar national-state entities in today's inter-national system. The dissimilarity of preferences and options of the EU's member-states constitutes the most important roadblock to its defence integration. The priority that is given to national inter-ests from national-state parliaments makes all other options seem of inferior importance. In addi-tion, democratic control over both the CFSP and CSDP is effectively through the accountability of foreign ministers to their own national parliaments. With unanimity being one of the EU's most im-portant values, the stiffness in decision-making processes easily can be understood. If EU member-states do not find a solution to this problem one way or another, then the hurdle for the completion of its defence integration will remain. Inability on the EU's behalf to put forward and implement common positions is bound to further frustrate the transatlantic relations and might even damage NATO's weight on the international scene.

The enforcement of mutual support between EU member-states, something which the CSDP en-tails, does not and must not affect or result in weakening of the collective defence commitments made on their behalf to NATO. On the contrary, it must contribute decisively to the vitality of the Alliance and the empowerment of the transatlantic link; at the same time, it will allow the EU to take further responsibilities in future crises. In other words, the development of the CSDP will be comple-mentary and not contradictory to NATO; after all, the foundations of the CSDP are the Petersberg tasks, which restrict the EU into operations of limited extend (WEU, 1992).

The US role—as this is known via NATO—is deemed by many Europeans to constitute an impor-tant element of stability and accommodation among European states, and to the continuation of the Alliance's existence. Because of this, some EU member-states believe that daring actions to-wards the development of European autonomy in defence issues may set their self-interests at the Atlantic Alliance in danger. The biggest fear has to do with NATO's viability, in case European cen-trifugal tendencies are developed, whereas others fear that the development of a European identity may cause the weakness of the Alliance's credibility as a binding link in both sides of the Atlantic.[1]

NATO, with its presence as a Euro-American link, constitutes a transatlantic key community of an emerging Euro-Atlantic security and cooperation system. It is commonly recognised that no state can dispute the political, economic and military power of the US. It is obvious that it is the first among equal partners. The Organisation is the only place where both EU member-states and the US can influence each other. With Europe incapable of dealing with ongoing issues in its territory, the EU has no other choice but to rely on NATO support; and cooperation inside the Alliance is a neces-sity for the Union if it wants to tackle these issues.

Europeans may moan about US hegemony or militaristic superpower status, but they are mani-festly in no position either to challenge it or replace it. If we check the list with the top ten arms manufacturers in the world (excluding China) we see that most of them are American. Seven of them are US-based, whereas only three of them are EU-based. In fact the top places are occupied by US manufacturers such as Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon, Northrop Grumman, General Dynamics and United Technologies, which are ranked first, second, fourth, fifth, sixth and eighth, respectively (SIPRI, 2014, pp. 3–5). This in itself indicates that the US—which as mentioned earlier is the country with the biggest military expenditure—when compared to the EU holds the know-how when it comes to arms manufacturing. At the same time, the fact that the top arms manufacturing companies are indeed US-based indicates that a lot of this production is done for the US military

forces. A country with this much weapon power in its arsenal, is a country with which the EU has no other option but to cooperate with, if it wants to fulfil its military ambitions and manage to maintain its territorial security.

NATO remains the core of European defence that is not static. It always acts with a mission to protect what ethically and mentally constitutes a common value in Western countries. Defensive cooperation constitutes a base for the development of better transatlantic communication models. Whatever the reservations or objections, NATO is accepted globally as the foundation of a common military and political Euro-Atlantic cooperation. With these features, in the twenty-first century, it redefines its central role for the emergence and resurrection of a wider Euro-Atlantic security system, and of important military and political directions. It is in this frame that it turns out to be the leading force of security in Europe.

NATO and the EU differ in their mission, nature and function. Thus, their contribution to crisis management differs as well. NATO's role in crisis management is very specific due to its military character. The EU, on the other hand, constitutes an organisation that has a wide spectrum of policies, financial and diplomacy means, and an institutional frame that allows it to have a wide range of international relations that give it substantial influence in the global field. Both NATO and the EU must remain involved and work together to protect their members' interests and project stability. A question they should sort out is, "what are the modalities of cooperation and the division of labour between the two?" A division of labour is important. This must not be absolute, though, as a clear-cut separation of roles runs directly counter to the task and risk-sharing ethos on which NATO was founded, and would imply an incompatibility between the two that does not exist (Howorth & Keeler, 2003, p. 233).

The EU's military capabilities, then, cannot match NATO's, and the CSDP does not restrict itself to military missions, as it "is not intended to guarantee peace on the continent" (Brummer, 2007, p. 191). Thus, it does not constitute an antagonist for the Atlantic Alliance. On the contrary, the means and experience NATO has combined with the permission the EU has to use them, makes it obvious that the value of the EU's military contribution will be complementary and restricted. The CSDP therefore should be seen as the EU's effort to protect its interests, especially those that have to do with financial issues, and that usually are influenced by international crises. In addition, the CSDP's aim should be for the EU to constitute a trustworthy ally of the US. It is in both the US's and NATO's interest to support the development of the CSDP as it will:

(1) Relieve the US from a significant part of its defence responsibilities in Europe.
(2) Provide further capabilities for the tackling of security issues beyond EU borders.
(3) Empower European understanding of new security threats, including those that evolve from the proliferation of WMD and terrorism.
(4) Restrict European anxiety in regard to American influence inside the Alliance.
(5) Reinforce NATO politically and militarily.

The EU is strong enough to reshape the existing international status, but not strong enough to take a hegemonic global role. Most crises take place near its borders, and this provides the EU the advantage of building better relations with states that are in conflict and a better understanding of the reasons these conflicts take place. The EU's position of "excellence" over NATO lies in the Union's ability to use non-military means like technical aid, humanitarian aid and the empowerment of state law. Investing in the Alliance will have a beneficial turnover for the EU, as the global role it aspires to develop can evolve only via a strong and effective NATO. At the same time, both the US and the EU need an institution that will deal effectively with global security issues. Why would they want to seek for an alternative, when they already have the tested solution?

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4. Conclusions

It is a fact that the EU's military options—while still small scale—are widening steadily compared to just a few years ago. However, from what was mentioned earlier, there is only one conclusion that we may come up with—and this is that the European integration as it is shaped at the moment will not spell the end for NATO. I have elsewhere argued that if European NATO allies are serious about the European integration process in regard to defence, and would like to address the challenge of US unilateralism—as they insist they would—then they should take a look at how they effectively can exacerbate the problem of their own military weaknesses (Demetriou, 2015). This unilateralism is inevitable only if the European allies cannot provide credible alternatives to the US's military capabilities. To put it more bluntly, it is not the US's fault if its European allies are not willing to spend more in equipping themselves militarily.

At the same time the US must realise that "there cannot be a situation in which some nations do the fighting and others simply pay the bill" (Howorth & Keeler, 2003, p. 234). A stronger EU should not—and will not—intend to compete but rather cooperate with the US. What should be understood is that there is room for both NATO and the CSDP when dealing with global security issues. The idea of a stronger and more independent Union is seen, by the majority of the European public, within the context of a continuous—albeit more pragmatic and less sentimental—partnership with the US, as most EU members have realised the obvious: that there cannot be a credible and autonomous European defence at the moment (Dassu & Menotti, 2005, p. 109).

It is clear that any EU-led military operations will depend on a handful of countries, in the first place the UK and France; with the former very much unwilling to get involved in such operations without any US military support, there is not much that the latter can do on its own. For anything beyond small-scale operations, the EU has no option but to rely on NATO's assets. The EU must not be afraid of its own ambition, but it is well understood—on both sides of the Atlantic—that it has yet to develop an institutional capacity to cope with executive decisions, which will have to be taken rapidly and effectively. NATO, on the contrary, is a military alliance that has been there for over sixty years. It knows how to deal with any kind of military challenges, or other kind such as the CSDP and its military ambitions.

NATO itself, though, must find a way to not become an obsolete institutional organisation. A suggestion would be even closer cooperation with both the UN and the EU. If such close cooperation occurs, then nobody ever will imply that there might be important reasons, for the EU to go solo. Furthermore, the Alliance must take better care in regard to its consecutive enlargements. Quality over quantity must become a virtue in order for the Alliance's overstretch to be avoided and for smooth relations between allies to continue.

Another issue that could contribute to NATO's decline is its disuse due to the lack of major and important threats. Waltz mentions "… organizations are created by their enemies, alliances are organized against a perceived threat" takes for granted that NATO's threats are over and states that "… in an interim period, the continuation of NATO makes sense. In the long run, it does not" (Waltz, 1993, p. 75). Of course, global developments disprove Waltz's argument, as increased threats of terrorism and WMD proliferation have become the world's new menace with which NATO has to deal.

The EU and the US take this threat very seriously, something that both the ESS (EU, 2003b) and the NSS (US, 2002) prove; but closer EU–US cooperation—inside NATO—is needed in order for a common strategy on these issues to be developed. For this to evolve, the US must realise that the long-term increasing development and institutionalisation of the CSDP is not likely to cut increasingly across NATO interests. The Alliance traditionally had a commanding role and will continue to do so, as the emphasis of the CSDP is firmly on the Petersberg tasks (EU, 1997b) so as to preserve the EU's cultivated image as primarily a "civilian" power. This emphasis raises the spectre of a future Atlantic Alliance that is militarily unable to act together as an alliance, as opposed to one in which the US does the fighting and the EU keeps the post-war peace. Thus, the conclusion shapes up as follows: it

is in the US's interest for the EU to develop stronger military capabilities in order for a military burden-sharing to occur. Subsequently, CSDP–NATO cooperation—with no absolute division of labour between the two—is indeed in the Alliance's and the world's best interest.

If the original goal for NATO was indeed to keep the Russians out, the Americans in and the Germans down, then NATO is still a contemporary Alliance. When it comes to Russia, the rise of expansionism proves there is a new threat to be dealt with. The cases of Ukraine and Georgia may not be the last drop of the dice by Russia; the Baltic countries—Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania—have already expressed their worries they might be next on the line to deal with Russian expansionism. NATO seems to be taking this thread seriously and thus is in talks with the Baltic countries in order to install permanent military bases in the region. On the other hand, Russia who sees this military movement as a hurdle to its aspiration to become the dominant player in the eastern European region has already shown its dissatisfaction for this potential NATO presence near its borders.

For the EU countries to "keep the Russians out", it goes without saying that they need the US to remain involved in this effort. If the Americans are to "remain in" this can only be achieved under the NATO umbrella. NATO is the Alliance under which the EU countries alongside the US have been militarily cooperating for almost seventy years. The EU's security relies in this cooperation, as NATO has in the years proved to have the bureaucratic effectiveness, military know-how and feasibility to deal with such potential threats. The Americans themselves still look keen in remaining involved in the Alliance, as they see Europe the place to stop both the Russian expansionism and the proliferation of Islamic terrorism. When it comes to the latter, if stopping it while still in Europe then this will help in maintaining security in the US itself. In other words the EU's stability and security is of paramount importance not just for the EU, but for the US as well.

When West Germany joined NATO in 1955, the EU had one less problem to worry about. This admission facilitated the EU's control of the German arsenal—thus keeping "the Germans down"—as in this way the EU and the US were able to monitor the German military strength. In the aftermath of the Second World War, Europe had to find a way to make sure its security was not threatened from the inside and the best way to do this was via cooperation. It is in the best interest of both Germany and the rest of the EU, to address EU security and other kind of threats multilaterally. Political and economic cooperation for the EU countries is achieved within the EU, but military cooperation can only be achievable within NATO.

NATO therefore cannot—and will not—be considered as obsolete even if an efficient and effective CSDP emerges in the future and my disagreement with Waltz, when he says that "NATO's days are not numbered, but its years are", is obvious (Waltz, 1993, p. 76). NATO is the par excellence transatlantic institution and still has many years of existence ahead as the EU does not afford to go solo. Its close cooperation with the CSDP can only be beneficial for US–EU relations and surely will result in a more effective and enduring NATO.

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Note
1. Such member states are: The United Kingdom, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

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