CSDP-NATO:
Shaping the power relation between states

Research Note

Alexandre Rodríguez Barriocanal

Alexandre, 21 from Ourense (Spain), is an undergraduate student who is going to receive his Bachelor´s degree in "Political Sciences and Public Affairs" at the University of Santiago de Compostela in 2015. During his studies he took part in an international exchange in The Hague, where he has been in contact with ICC workers and got thoroughly familiar with his policy. Additionally, he engaged in an internship in Utrecht at a Foreign Affairs minister institution. During his time there, he got in touch with the Centre for Conflict Studies at Utrecht University increasing his knowledge about international conflict management.

Abstract

In the 21st century, we are living a new age of international community where different allies are playing a fundamental role in the international equilibrium. The young CSDP in Europe has to mediate and rise in this new scenario where NATO has traditionally been the big defence leader in the European community. In fact CSDP has found different issues over which to provide security to Europe.

Keywords: CSDP, Defence Policy, European Union, NATO, Security Dilemma.

Late nineties, the entire world witnessed the astonishing debut of a new political and military plan: the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). One of the few examples in modern history where many sovereign states have elected for their own endeavour to cooperate in security and defence policies in the field of crisis management and civilian operations without any kind of external threats. This is something new since the creation of the EU, this remained a purely "civilian actor" focusing chiefly in economics policy areas.

During this research note, I am going to focus on the two main security actors in the Europe-Atlantic area: the CSDP and NATO, comparing the similarities, differences, and relationship of these entities as also how the creation of the CSDP has changed the international community.

The EU and NATO are organizations of different nature; they were mutually reinforcing in the security field creating similarities and proximities in both entities under the common goal of delivering security in the European framework. Also, it is worth pointing out that 22 of the 28 states in the European Union are also members of NATO. However, the similarity and proximity could end with the military "monopoly" of NATO in Europe. Thus raising a possible discrimination problem (HUNTER, 2002:36) that indicate NATO members, which are not part of the EU would be able to take part in the EU military operations. For instance, Turkey, which is a part of NATO and yearns to be a part of EU. However, the opposite situation is equally true—a state can be a member of the EU but not NATO (for example Ireland or Finland could be criticized by NATO´s non European members for using their forces). The EU might set to the fore with its own developments, potentially widening the political and psychological gap with NATO, possibly more by inadvertence than by design because we cannot forget that NATO is the military giant. In the beginning of 2000 the European Council and NATO met to correct this discrimination issue that I call the "50% gap", due to the fact that there are members of one entity and not the other one. Unfortunately nowadays this is still a problem between these two entities.

This issue above added new controversies to the security dilemma environment. In one way, the "50% gap" countries are being benefited by the other entity (NATO or EU) without any kind of cost. Take the Georgian situation for example. Due to its unstable geopolitical situation after the war (being in Europe, but not in EU and not in NATO either) has benefited by a two CSDP plans in 2004 and 2008 with NATO cooperation and a total budget higher than €2050 million (GAERC, 2008:7). Another subject matter that augments the security dilemma is the fact that with the creation of an own defence system in Europe the rest of the international entities such as the states of the Arab League will feel weak or vulnerable with less military power than Europe. Thus, the creation of the CSDP could be provocative for the rest of countries like the Maghreb and Russia despite attempts of cooperation with them.

Directly and indirectly, strength and weakness can modify the equilibrium of security in international relations creating a spiral pattern and producing escalation (action-reaction) due to the actions of a State to augment their security, increase their military strength and the search for partnership may lead other states to respond with similar measures, causing higher voltages that perhaps create conflict, even when neither parties really craves it. When a state increases its power, it creates a sense of insecurity in the other states, so they must match their power through the arms race (MORGENTHAU, 1973:47). By this argument and adjusting the situation to the

21st century where the international organization play a main role, the CSDP is an actor playing with others, making the international community smaller but more difficult to manage due to the different ties among the states in different alliances.

Another point to bear in mind in this large project is the rise of economics and duplication problems creating double capacities—what was done effectively solely under the command of NATO. At least at the time of St. Mâlo (December 1998) the summit was significant in the sense of crafting CSDP, not to spend unlimited resources on trying to make a second set of capabilities that they could just as easily obtain from NATO. Of course, most U.S. analysts also judge that nowadays the EU was in fact not very likely to take any military action of any major size by itself: for example, Madeleine Albright supposed that any considerable military challenge would also hire the United States due to his weigh in the organization. Nevertheless, the issue of "unnecessary duplication" has continued to be at the core of transatlantic debate about the future of CSDP and the recently created EDA (European Defence Agency) and its connection to NATO.

The Common and Security Defence Policy is becoming more important (HOWORTH, 2007:6), by opening new agencies and increasing the number of operations over the world (20 operations in 15 different countries). Thanks to CSDP, the answer after the terrorist attack in Paris was fast with a magnificent cooperation among the EU countries and with a sense of unity never before seen in Europe. This is the goal of the entity—break the bureaucracy and geopolitical borders of EU for the aim of security and defence whenever Europe needs it.

The key point is making a stronger CSDP.   Improving thus European values (EUROBAROMETER) and acting with an European leadership, enhancing the European situation or thwarting possible threats. The issue is not trying to make CSDP well matched with NATO's capabilities and methods of operations. Both are different institutions, although they could cooperate together (avoiding the points explained above) in the international community. The issue is the insecurity escalation that is being created in the international community by the security dilemma, which has increased due to new and improved spying method after the Cold War. We are in front of a new international scenario where the young CSDP has to be one of the axes that move it. "The conflict is unnecessary and unavoidable in certain circumstances and war can be avoided by creating international security institutions" (SNYDER, 1991:23).

References

Howorth, Jolyon (2007), The Security and Defense Policy in the European Union. New York: Palgrave

Hunter, Robert (2002), The European Security and Defense Policy, NATO´s companions or competitor? CA: RAD

Morgenthau, Hans (1973), Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace. New York: Alfred A. Knopf

Snyder, Jack (1991), Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition. London: Cornell University Press

General Affairs and External Relations Council meeting on the situation in Georgia, Council Conclusion 12453/08, Brussels, 13 August 2008.

European Commission, Standard Eurobarometer 82. Accessible at WWW: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm (Revised 03/02/15).