
The Western Balkans and EU-NATO relations

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INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the cold war a lot of things have changed in the international relations in the entire world. The profound changes initiated a process of transformation both in NATO and EU. The tragic events of September 11th had a further strong influence on the desire of both organizations to adapt to the new environment. Meanwhile the relations of these two most important organizations of the political West have been the subject in the center of many analyses. In essence, the end of the Cold War profoundly changed the central parameters of the relationship between Europe and the US. The developments in the Western Balkans have been very important in shaping the EU-NATO relations to be more defined. The following paper will examine the Integration process of Western Balkans and under the influence of transatlantic relations.

THE NATO-EU STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

NATO and the European Union share common strategic interests. Both organizations consult and work together to prevent and resolve crises and armed conflicts, In a spirit of complementarily. The decision to cooperate on security issues goes back to 24 January 2001 when the NATO Secretary General and the EU Presidency exchanged letters defining the scope of cooperation and the modalities of consultation between

the two organizations.¹⁶ Cooperation has accelerated ever since, in particular with the signing of the landmark “NATO-EU Declaration on ESDP” (European Security and Defense Policy), which paved the way for the adoption of the Berlin-Plus arrangements.

The “NATO-EU Declaration on ESDP”

Agreed on 16 December 2002, the “NATO-EU Declaration on ESDP” reaffirmed the EU assured access to NATO’s planning capabilities for its own military operations. It also reiterated the following political principles of the strategic partnership:

- effective mutual consultation
- equality and due regard for the decision-making autonomy of the European Union and NATO;
- respect for the interests of EU and NATO members states;
- respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations; And coherent, transparent and mutually reinforcing development of the military capability requirements common to the two organizations. ;¹⁷

The Berlin-Plus Arrangements

Following the political decision of December 2002, the Berlin- Plus arrangements were adopted on 17 March 2003 (through an exchange of letters covering 14 agreed documents). They provide the basis for NATO-EU cooperation in crisis management by allowing EU access to NATO’s collective assets and capabilities for EU led operations. In effect, they allow

¹⁶ Burwell, G. Frances, Gompert, c. David, Policy Paper, March 2006, Transatlantic Transformation: Building a NATO-EU security Architecture, pp. 15

¹⁷ DeCAMP, William S., *ESDP: NATO’s demise or opportunities for NATO?*, USAWS Strategy research Project, 18 march 2005, pp. 79

the Alliance to support EU-led operations in which NATO as a whole is not engaged. They consist of the following major elements:

- A NATO-EU Security Agreement (covers the exchange of classified information under reciprocal security protection rules);
- Assured EU access to NATO's planning capabilities for actual use in the military planning of EU-led crisis management operations;
- Availability of NATO capabilities and common assets, such as communication units and headquarters for EU-led crisis management operations;
- Procedures for release, monitoring, return and recall of NATO assets and capabilities;
- Terms of Reference for NATO's Deputy SACEUR - who in principle will be the operation commander of an EU-led operation under the Berlin-Plus arrangements (and who is always a European) - and European Command Options for NATO;
- NATO-EU consultation arrangements in the context of an EU led crisis management operation making use of NATO assets and capabilities;
- Incorporation within NATO's long-established defense planning system, of the military needs and capabilities that may be required for EU-led military operations, thereby ensuring the availability of well-equipped forces trained for either NATO-led or EU-led operations.¹⁸

CRISIS MANAGEMENT, NATO FIRST

There need to be wholehearted, unambiguous European adherence to the principle of "where NATO as a whole is not engaged, " and political processes should be developed to ensure that no doubts arise about this point or about NATO's ability, sufficiently early in a crisis, to make such a determination. Many Europeans will resist the notion that this implies "NATO first": But as a

¹⁸ DeCAMP, William S., *ESDP: NATO's demise or opportunities for NATO?*, USAWS Strategy research Project, 18 march 2005, pp. 83

practical matter, it is important for preserving cohesion of the alliance. Securing this goal, which is important to the United States, will probably have to come from day-to-day consultations, including close cooperation between the North Atlantic Council, the EU's Political and Security Committee, and permanent, day-to-day liaison arrangements between the two; but it requires a shared vision and political commitment on all sides.¹⁹

In short, US reluctance to share the risks and tasks, especially in the Balkans, the most serious area of instability in today's Europe, would be incompatible with the effort to keep the Security and defense policy of EU (ESDP) as simply a second-choice option for dealing with crisis and conflict in Europe.

The 1999 Campaign

The Serbian genocide had reached at a high level which had made the Kosovars to establish (UÇK) LKA against Serbian Army. But the situation had worsened by many civilian killed and many Kosovo's villages and cities burned. Javier Solana directed NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) General Wesley Clark to initiate air operations in Yugoslavia. The military operation of NATO in spring 1999 against Yugoslavia was called Operation Allied Force.

NATO launched military operations because everything else failed and it was clear that the diplomatic track would not deliver a solution, whilst at the same time the humanitarian situation on the ground had become worse to such an extent that outside intervention became essential in order to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe.

“Targets for air strikes were selected by the NATO Military Authorities, acting in accordance with guidance agreed by the North Atlantic Council on

¹⁹ Hunter, E. Robert, *The European Security and Defence Policy NATO's Companion or Competitor?*, pp. 149.

broad sets of targets and the requirement to minimise collateral damage. The North Atlantic Council was not involved in the detailed process of target selection. Individual Allies were responsible for the clearance of the targets assigned to them by NATO.²⁰ The Allies hoped that the air operation would be short, and that Milosevic would again, as he had in the past, back down when confronted with the threat or use of force.

But this time it was different so operations were intensified to increase the pressure on Milosevic, his regime and his forces in order to achieve NATO's objectives. It would have been possible at any time for Milosevic to bring the air operation to an end by withdrawing his forces from Kosovo. "The initial phase of the air operation was designed to degrade the Yugoslav Integrated Air Defence System, the Serbia Command and Control infrastructure, airfields and aircraft and deployed heavy weapons in Kosovo. The subsequent phase widened the operation to include targets of high military value across Yugoslavia."²¹ This Campaign lasted 89 days in the end of which the US plan and objective were realized. During this campaign NATO proved itself to be a capable and effective crisis management organisation and that EU partners must work together with NATO Allies to improve their capabilities through the Defence Capabilities Initiative and the European Headline Goal. This will increase their ability to act and strengthen Europe's partnership with the US.

EU FOCUSES ON THE POLITICAL ASPECTS

NATO membership for the most part of the European countries has been one step before the EU membership. In fact, we can claim that EU membership process needs more time and longer way comparing with that of NATO. The enlargement of EU and NATO is commented sometime as a kind of

²⁰ NATO'S Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment, Benjamin S. Lambeth, RAND publications, pp. 35.

²¹ NATO'S Air War For Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment, Benjamin S. Lambeth, RAND publications, pp.58.

competition. This occurs that both of them during the last two decades are orientated towards the East and Southeast Europe. But when we take the cases we easily understand that the manner two organizations proceeds is different.

The Kosovo is a good example where NATO was ahead during the crisis management and afterwards EU has been active in the time afterward. It should be emphasized that the role of EU has been very important to put rule of law in Kosovo in cooperation with US Department of Justice and also has been very important to keep equilibrium of Serbia by having different negotiation to give as an objective the EU membership.²²

WESTERN BALKANS GOOD EXAMPLE OF THE COOPERATION

Operation Concordia

On 31 March 2003, the EU-led Operation Concordia took over the responsibilities of the NATO-led mission, Operation Allied Harmony, in the Republic of Macedonia. This mission was the first in which NATO assets were made available to the European Union.

In line with the Berlin-Plus arrangements, NATO's Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR) was appointed as Operation Commander of this first ever EU-led military peacekeeping mission.

NATO supported the European Union on strategic, operational and tactical planning. An EU-Operation Headquarters (OHQ) was set-up at NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Mons, Belgium, to assist the Operation Commander. In addition, an "EU Command Element" (EUCE) was established at AFSOUTH in Naples, Italy, which is the NATO Joint Force command for Balkan operations (since mid-2004 it is called the Joint Force Command Headquarters (JFC HQ), Naples. At the time, the Chief of Staff of AFSOUTH also became Chief of Staff of the new EU Command Element, assisted by an EU Director for Operations. These dual

²² Pond, Elizabeth, The EU's Test in Kosovo, The Washington Quarterly, Autumn 2008, pp 97-112

NATO-EU posts guaranteed the linkage between the European Union's and NATO's operational chain of command during Concordia.

Concordia was terminated on 15 December 2003 and replaced by Proxima, an EU-led police mission, which was completed on 14 December 2005.

Operation Althea

Building on the results of Concordia and following the conclusion of the NATO-led Stabilization Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (SFOR), the European Union deployed a new mission called Operation Althea on 2 December 2004. The EU force (EUFOR) operates under Berlin-Plus arrangements, drawing on NATO planning expertise and on other Alliance's assets and capabilities. The NATO Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe is the Commander of Operation Althea and there is also an EU Operation Headquarters (OHQ) located at SHAPE. The entire NATO chain of command is in fact used. On the same day as the transition to an EU-led mission, NATO established a NATO Military Liaison and Advisory Mission (NATO HQ Sarajevo) that complements the EU mission with specific NATO competencies.

The Independence Proclamation of Kosovo and Afterwards

Status talks for Kosovo started in February 2006. The talks were initially led by UN Special Envoy for Kosovo, the former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari. After fourteen months of negotiations, Mr. Ahtisaari presented his Comprehensive Proposal for a Kosovo Status Settlement to the UN Secretary General in March 2007. On 1 August 2007, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon launched an extended period of engagement with the parties led this time by the EU, Russia, US Troika under the auspices of the Contact Group. By the end of the Troika's mandate on 10 December 2007, Belgrade and Pristina failed to reach any agreement on Kosovo's future status. NATO supported the international process to determine the status of

Kosovo from the start, including the efforts of President Ahtisaari and those of the Troika.

After a long road of different initiatives to find a solution accepted by both Kosovo and Serbia there was clear that the realization of such a plan would be impossible. The General Secretary of UN said Marti Ahtisari to find the solution of the Kosovo. He after many negotiations and meetings with parties prepared and proposed a draft to UN which was accepted by Kosovo but not by the Serbia. As a result Kosovo politicians decided to proclaim the independence of Kosovo.

The 2008 Kosovo proclamation of independence was an act of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government Assembly of Kosovo, adopted on 17 February 2008 by unanimous quorum (109 members present), which declared Kosovo to be independent from Serbia.

This decision was supported immediately by US and after that by France, UK and other European countries. The President of France Nicolas Sarkozy, this time preferred to be with US different from Chiraque's view during Iraqi intervention, because he was aware of the future with the Kosovo which geographically is only some hundred of miles from Paris and Berlin. He also was aware that EU, presidency of which would belong to France only some months later, should be the decider in the future of the Balkans. The EULEX (EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo) was the mission that EU sent to put the rule of law and to supervise the functioning of new born state.

CONCLUSION

The NATO membership of Albania and Croatia and especially Kosovo's Independence brought the US and EU closer to each other. In July 2003, the European Union and NATO published a «Concerted Approach for the Western Balkans», which outlined core areas of cooperation and emphasized the common vision and determination both organizations share to bring stability to the region. In the Balkans the cooperation of has been of a high importance during the last two decades. About one decade ago the

common commitment of NATO and the EU prevented a civil war in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia²³. The EU took on policing tasks and NATO the military ones. In Bosnia, on the other hand, the EU has been ensuring "hard" security while NATO concentrates on training the Bosnian armed forces²⁴. In Kosovo, NATO remained militarily committed for some years. But after the proclamation of Independence, the EU started acquiring a greater role there. For that reason NATO and the EU, in cooperation, has played a decisive role in the situation of the Balkans. And in general the EU's policing tasks have been harmonized with NATO's military tasks.

The other side of EU- US/NATO cooperation has been in the aspect of EU and NATO enlargements. These two organizations have moved almost parallel towards the East and Southeast Europe. Although some commentators consider this as a kind of competition to conclude I say that these two organizations have been complementary to each other to be more effective and successful in Balkans and also in the other parts of the world.

²³ De HOOP SCHEFFER, Jaap, *NATO and the EU: Time for a new Chapter*, Keynotes speech by NATO secretary General, 29 January 2007

²⁴ De HOOP SCHEFFER, Jaap, *NATO and the EU: Time for a new Chapter*, Keynotes speech by NATO secretary General, 29 January 2007