

alliance's future will largely depend on the importance that the US assigns to NATO-EU cooperation.

The future expansion of NATO membership must not be motivated by any simplistic desire to enlarge future "coalitions of the willing". As well as undermining NATO coherence, this would be inconsistent with the UN's efforts to create regional security structures. And

NATO must also make sure that enlargement does not overstretch its operational capabilities or create unwieldy decision-making procedures.

Despite the EU's CFSP, I believe NATO and the transatlantic partnership will remain the foundation of German and European security, and continued and careful adaptation of the alliance to new geo-political requirements will remain essential. I support

NATO's aim to increase its support for peace and stabilisation processes. And while NATO should cooperate closely with organisations and countries committed to our system of values, these ambitions should stop short of any attempt to turn NATO into a global police force or a worldwide security system which would usurp UN responsibilities. □

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It's time to clarify the "constructive ambiguity" in the NATO-EU security relationship

By Roberto Menotti and Paolo Brandimarte



ANA MARIA GOMES
MEP, Vice-Chairwoman of the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Security and Defence

Sir,
I read with great interest the article by Roberto Menotti and Paolo Brandimarte on the need to eliminate the ambiguities that plague NATO's relationship with the European Union as the latter steps increasingly into the domain of security. They argue that the present requirement for NATO always to reach a consensus makes life difficult

both for the EU, which wants to be taken seriously as a security actor in its own right, and for the US, which feels impatient about "war by committee" and alliance politics. The answer, according to the authors, is to create a two-tiered NATO, with the European Union taking the lead in security affairs in its own neighbourhood. This suggestion is innovative and bold but, in my opinion, suffers from three serious shortcomings.

Firstly, there are problems over the definition of Europe's "neighbourhood". Who would decide the boundaries of the "geographical perimeter"

of EU operations where European commands would take precedence over NATO's? Even if this question could be answered, limiting the EU to a regional remit would run counter to the European Security Strategy's declared ambition to develop a global security role for the European Union. The entire Capability Development Plan, for example, which closely involves the EU Military Staff and the European Defence Agency, is designed to make European forces more deployable, sustainable and interoperable way beyond the EU's vicinity. Operational experience in the Democratic

Republic of Congo in 2003 and 2006, and in the Indonesian province of Aceh in 2005-06, shows that the EU is learning how to use its combined military assets in modest but increasingly sophisticated out-of-area deployments. It has done so without access to "US military prowess as the best projection-multiplier", as deemed essential by the article's two authors.

Secondly, NATO and the EU are completely different animals, sharing neither an underlying *raison d'être* nor a *modus operandi*. NATO's core identity is as a military alliance committed to collective self-defence, characteristics that will remain its main attractions for present and future members. In contrast, the European Union's external action includes many non-military aspects ranging from humanitarian aid to post-conflict reconstruction. While the EU's security interests may overlap NATO's, especially after NATO became more expeditionary in the 1990s, the European Union is not a military alliance. Certainly, a more mature and capable European Security and Defence Policy would do much to strengthen Europe's contribution to NATO. But how could the EU become a "second pillar" of NATO when its whole approach is

fundamentally different, and when EU decision-making in the field of security remains inextricably linked to other facets of its external activities?

Finally, their article, ambitious as it is, fails to address those aspects of EU-NATO relations that need urgent attention, including the Berlin Plus package of agreements which form the basis for practical cooperation between the two organisations. The authors rightly decry the limitations of the accord, which effectively restricts formal discussions to the EU's Operation Althea peace-keeping and reconstruction efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Clearly, an agreement which excludes Kosovo, Afghanistan and terrorism from the official agenda is detrimental to long-term planning and coherent action on the ground. To overcome their operational difficulties, NATO and the EU must work more closely together and communicate more effectively. They also clearly need to move beyond the childish dispute between Turkey, Cyprus and Greece about access to classified information and overcome France's insistence that the two organisations keep their distance. □

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ROBERTA PINOTTI, Head of the Italian Chamber of Deputies'

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Sir,

Security policy can nowadays be conceptualised as a continuum which incorporates both external and internal security issues, rather than considering them as distinct from each other. International events and supranational decision-making processes can therefore no longer be neatly compartmentalised within one security policy sector or another. In this context – and for some time now – neither NATO nor the European Union has restricted its security operations to defined geographical areas.

NATO and the EU represent two complementary approaches to security, both of which are pivotal for the future of Europe. NATO has proven its ability to fulfil its designated defence functions and to adapt to fresh security challenges. It remains a pillar of our collective and common security policies, provides a political arena for discussion of strategic choices, and links the US