

## **Does the EU need a new European Security Strategy?<sup>1</sup>**

*On 12 December 2003, the Council of the European Union adopted the EU's first European Security Strategy 'A Secure Europe in a Better World'<sup>2</sup>. The European Parliament in its (November) 2006 report<sup>3</sup> has called for a revision of the ESS in the year 2008. According to the EP this revision is necessary, because "geopolitical challenges have evolved considerably". This vision is shared by a number of member states amongst which Sweden and France. President Sarkozy wants to have a new text adopted under the French EU-presidency in the second half of 2008. What are these new geopolitical and other challenges that make a revision of the current ESS necessary? Does a new ESS have to take into account factors like energy security or climate change? Is Russia to be considered as one of the new challenges for European security? Does the EU have to increase its military strength and what should the cooperation with NATO look like?*

The discussion about updating the ESS of December 2003 has been lingering for a while. In the second part of 2007 it was prompted by the French and Swedish demands. The decision which put it on the menu for 2008 in the focus of the presidency conclusions is based on the implementation, not on its analytical contents. The analysis, broadly, still holds, whereas the introduction may sound a bit dated. The challenges and the threats are still more or less the same with only marginal shifts. We are now much more aware of the importance of homegrown terrorism which was only hinted at in December 2003. We are also more aware now of the challenge of finding the right balance between security and liberties. Other new factors are: organised crime as well as hackers and traders. Russian hackers for example tried successfully to infiltrate public servers in Estonia.

A third point is the fact that energy dependency has dramatically increased and, of course, energy rich countries are always difficult countries to deal with. Last but not least, there are the "wild cards" of which we are more aware today as well: natural disasters like the tsunami in the summer of 2004 and more generally climate stresses which have a possible impact on our daily lives. Then there are the Beijing Olympics. We should not forget that the Seoul Olympics 1988 were the beginning of the democratisation in South Korea. The impact of such global events is difficult to predict.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/committees/reports/documentSearch.do#>

The objects of the ESS in 2003 were so broadly defined that they still hold. However, we are now much more aware of the difficulties. Whereas concerning weapons of mass destruction, the ESS addresses Iraq and North Korea as threats, today we only have in mind Iran. We are adjusting our focus almost on a weekly basis. Regarding regional conflicts we were still thinking of quick-in and quick-out actions. Now – with Iraq and Afghanistan in mind as well as Lebanon and probably soon Dafur - we are increasingly aware of the fact that the quick-ins are important, but that the long-ins are what follows. We have to consider 10-12 years of stabilisation every time with a peace building mandate. Building security in the neighbourhood is more difficult today.

In the Balkans we have experienced that the EU's soft power is decreasing (Serbia has even rejected an offer of membership). So, how are we going to handle the Balkans if the soft power is decreasing? Frozen conflicts are still unresolved and have an impact on our relations with our neighbours in Europe and nearby. In the Mediterranean the Barcelona Process is clearly in a crisis and we do not know how to sort it out. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is being permanently reviewed in some sort of trial and error process. Last but not least: we have noticed how difficult multilateralism functions (Kosovo, Iran, Dafur). We want it, but it is difficult. Because the world we are in is more difficult to approach in this way. Even NATO is not in its best shape these days. What is most unfortunate is that the weakest point is working with (strategic) partners: there is a discrepancy between the claim to go for effective multilateralism and the attempt to negotiate. We should build a bridge between these two approaches.

Finally, there are no benchmarks concerning the policy implications of the ESS. The aims are quite general: ESDP has to be more active, more coherent and more capable. Capability is still the biggest problem. Solana has insisted for a long time considering ESS as a set of guidelines for possible actions, not as a politically, legally or operationally binding document. Solana has always refused to break down the ESS into detailed action plans - he did not want it to become a binding document. It is a doctrine rather than a proper strategy. Lacking the constitution, the ESS has been used as a legitimising document and it was the starting point for a number of joint actions.

#### Munich Security Conference

At the recent Munich Security Conference the complete absence of the EU as an actor was striking. Even Germany did not particularly stress the EU aspect. Despite limited progress in ESDP, EU citizens are expecting and the EU is not delivering. This means that the ESS assessment has to go into why the EU is not delivering and this starts with the member states. What is happening is that Sarkozy, Merkel and Brown all have domestic problems, whereas in Italy the government just collapsed which means that we do not have a leadership in Europe right now. Everybody is pursuing very much national strategies. ESDP fails to get into the consciousness on a political and bureaucratic level. That is probably the biggest failure over the last 5 years. In debates on defence in national parliaments, Europe is hardly ever mentioned. The EP has a role to play in this. We should have six-monthly debates in the EP and at the same time in all national parliaments about the priorities of CFSP/ESDP and a real assessment, not a bureaucratic

report in the Council that hardly anybody ever reads. Unfortunately, we do not have the political constituency to push this.

Also, Germany has to be much more prominent in the discussion on ESDP. The biggest nation in the EU cannot abstain in this discussion, it should be central in the ESDP negotiations. A shift in the German press around the Munich Conference was already perceivable: it is no longer sufficient for Germany to say: our history makes us special. This is not the end of (German) history, but this history does no longer free Germany from its international duties.

### Use of force

Most European nations have an issue with the use of force. The problem is not deployment, it is "employment". If one has a problem with the use of force, one should not talk about deployment. Most of the enemies these days are thugs, not states with military forces. For too long conflict prevention has been separated from the use of force. This is an artificial separation.

In the German debate, the civilian casualties play an important role. The reason for a high casualty rate among the civilian population is the fact that we are relying on an American type of war which leans heavily on technology. This happens because we are not willing to intervene with proper well-prepared strategies.

Security is not only linked to force. There is a conceptual whole. Civilian crisis management is a completely underdeveloped concept – that should be a main target of a new ESS. Another black hole is the role of multi-nationals in conflict zones: in Eastern Congo, European companies have fuelled the conflict and the EU has done nothing to address this issue. Even the Green Security Strategy<sup>4</sup> is very focused on socio-economic factors, whereas there are socio-cultural and other factors which a new ESS should address as well.

There is a limited number of tools when it comes to conflict prevention and conflict resolution. Use of force /threat of using force, sanctions and incentives. The latter depend on multilateralism. Europe is reluctant on the use of force. But, as the Iran questions shows, Germany is reluctant on economic sanctions, because it hurts your own industry and if you do not deliver, somebody else will. There is no guarantee that others are not going to cheat. Do we have a strategy for a common sanction and incentive policy?

How can one exercise coercion without the use of force? The EU is very reluctant to enforce negative measures (sanctions). It has always been very keen on using positive incentives. The offer to Serbia recently (EU membership in case of acceptance of Kosovo's independence) went a little bit too far. What was truly successful were the sanctions against apartheid in South Africa. In all other cases there was much more reluctance to use sanctions: there are always trade consequences which one tries to avoid.

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.boell.be/download\\_en/Sicherheitsstrategie\\_EN.pdf](http://www.boell.be/download_en/Sicherheitsstrategie_EN.pdf)

The use of force is one of the fundamental issues that needs to be addressed. Reluctance is a good thing, but – if not military force, what then? The fundamental problem is : all member states of EU and others have military force, but not a well developed capability on the civilian side. What we need is a significant number of people who are prepared to go to dangerous areas.

### Conclusions

One should refrain from statements as: we do not have a common foreign and security policy. The situation we have now is not comparable with only 5-10 years ago. Big progress has been made. If that is not sufficient it is due to the behaviour of the member states. For example, regarding **Lebanon**, the Finnish presidency came forward with an interesting declaration to the Council which included a call for a ceasefire. The declaration was not adopted because two countries (UK and Germany) opposed it. The situation is much more complex than we might think. **Police(wo)men** and especially police(wo)men under military order are not easily to deploy, however, the EU can make a difference here. We should also be more careful on celebrating European success regarding **Iran**; we should not celebrate the process when there is a lack of outcome. We have not achieved the goals we set out for. As far as **Chad** is concerned: it is not entirely true that we do not agree on the use of force and how to do that. There is much more convergence during the last years. One of the problems is that the rules of engagement demand impartiality, whereas as to Chad, the UN asked to support the legitimate government – which is not impartiality and this is where we are stuck. In **Afghanistan** the problem is one of the military structure the Americans decided they want to have. Another problem is that NATO and EU will not cooperate because of Cyprus. This is wasting billions of tax payers' money. They cannot communicate because of Turkey.

The ESS of 2003 has been prepared in two stages: many things had changed between June and December 2003 (Iraq!). Solana never wanted to negotiate on ESS in COREPER. ESS is probably the best policy document the EU has delivered in the last years – it will not be rewritten entirely at this stage. So, what is the assessment of ESS that Solana is going to present by the end of the year going to be about exactly? There is a minimalist option (in scope): the implementation of ESDP. The presentation will coincide with the tenth anniversary of the St Malo declaration. Sarkozy and - if the UK will have ratified the Lisbon Treaty by then - Gordon Brown will probably use that occasion for relaunching ESDP. Solana's report will also be delivered right in between the US presidential elections and the inauguration of the new US administration in January 2009. And it is likely to be prepared in parallel to the elaboration of NATO's new strategic concept which is supposed to be launched just a few days before the Lisbon Treaty will (hopefully) come into force. Which means that there could be a more ambitious option for the exercise led by Solana, if you take all these elements: a broader reassessment of the goals and means of the ESDP at the end of the Bush era and at the eve of the new treaty. It could even be to some extent some sort of team building exercise for the new foreign policy actors established by the Lisbon Treaty and will occupy the minds of both, the French and the Swedish presidencies.