Chaillot Papers

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March 1991

EUROPEAN DEFENCE : WHY NOT THE TWELVE ?

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March 1991

ISSN 1017-7566

Published by the Institute for Security Studies of Western European Union and printed in Alençon, France, by the Imprimerie alençonnaise.

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PREFACE

I am pleased that the first of the Institute's *Chaillot Papers*, which are intended to bring work undertaken in the Institute to a wider audience, should be a paper by my deputy, Nicole Gnesotto, on the current debate on security structures for Western Europe.

When the Institute for Security Studies was established in July 1990, it took as one of its primary tasks work on the definition of a European security identity. The present paper by Nicole Gnesotto was first discussed in an early form at a seminar held here on 13 November 1990. Since then there has been considerable debate, both at the Rome summit, the opening meetings of the Intergovernmental Conference and the WEU Ministerial Council. I believe that publication of Nicole Gnesotto's paper in its revised form will make a valuable contribution to this continuing debate. The Institute hopes to continue to play an active part in the debate on this subject, and we believe that this analysis of the problems involved and the positions adopted deserves a wider circulation than it has had so far.

John Roper
Paris, March 1991

EUROPEAN DEFENCE: WHY NOT THE TWELVE?[1]

Autumn 1990 was a period of intense diplomatic activity: German unification on 3 October, the CSCE summit in Paris on 19 November, a meeting of the WEU ministerial Council on 10 December, the Intergovernmental Conference on Political Union of the Twelve on 14 and 15 December and the North Atlantic Council on 17 and 18 December, all of these being punctuated with *ad hoc* WEU meetings on the coordination of military activities in the Gulf. These events marked the renewal of the debate on the organisation of European security and raise the question, and for the first time in a very practical way, of what should be the place of the Twelve of the EC in this debate.

WHO DOES WHAT, AND WHERE?

During a year of upheavals that have affected East-West relations in their entirety, concepts of security in most European countries have oscillated between two sets of alternatives.

The first of these is based on a traditional geographical distinction: on the East-West scene, security becomes an essentially political concept as the perception of a Soviet military threat and the idea of opposing blocs both disappear. On the North-South scene, or more precisely, out-of-area, the military aspects of security have become more obvious since the Gulf crisis began on 2 August 1990.

The second ambivalence is much more diffuse: in most European countries the tendency is simultaneously to more or less developed collective arrangements (where security relations are established through membership of the UN, CSCE, NATO, the Twelve and their proposed Political Union or the Nine of WEU) and at the same time to making security policies more national (which can mean unilateral decisions to reduce military budgets or the size of armed forces, or existing or planned bilateral security accords).

Depending on the way they are combined, these four variables (the national or collective approach, the political or military aspects) structure the debate on the organisation of a future European security system. For some, the disappearance of the Soviet threat and the democratisation of Eastern Europe argue in favour of security cooperation among 34 `European' states, rather than for a specifically Western European organisation. Others on the contrary, and using the same arguments, put the emphasis more on the political aspects of the Atlantic structure as a priority. Others again see in the potential military disengagement of the two superpowers one more reason for the Europe of the Twelve to strengthen its role in security matters, and even in defence.

This description of the situation is obviously a generalisation. It does, however, underline the state of flux of the present debate and the absence of decisive, objective criteria on which a future European security system might be based; at the moment it seems that a wide range of contradictory conclusions can be drawn. The only thing that is clear in all this obscurity is the reality of an out-of-area military crisis created by Iraq on 2 August. The Gulf crisis has had the effect of suddenly introducing a note of reality into the European debate on security, but makes it even more complex.

Supposing that there is agreement on what is meant by a security policy - which is far from being the case - several institutions are already competing to provide the framework for European cooperation on the subject. The 34 CSCE countries institutionalised a pan-European dialogue at the Paris summit of November 1990; the sixteen nations of NATO have been accustomed to consultation for the past forty years and some would like to see a strengthening of the political aspect of NATO as the military dimension of East-West relations becomes less dominant; because of the Gulf crisis, the Twelve of the EC are *de facto* cooperating closely over their security policies, and *de jure*, as part of the project on Political Union, cooperating over the institutionalisation of a joint policy; the Nine of WEU have powers to consult over

both security and defence and have since 2 August brought about practical military cooperation that is without precedent in the organisation's history; and lastly, bilateral structures, such as the Franco-German Council or Germano-Soviet arrangements, overlap all of these multilateral fora, whereas at the other end of the spectrum the UN framework is each day becoming a more effective and necessary reference. Who is to do what, and where, is now the diplomatic puzzle being faced by all countries.

Criteria no doubt exist which would make it possible to define the powers of each of these organisations, by geographical zone of application, political and/or military competence, powers of consultation and/or decision, mechanism for decision-making, etc. Thus the CSCE will not become a 34-nation military pact, unlike the Sixteen, the Nine and indeed one day the Twelve. In the same way, no geographical restriction is placed on the security and defence cooperation of the Nine and the Twelve, unlike the CSCE and, in the view of some, NATO. However, these criteria do not at this stage allow a precise mandate for each of these organisations to be defined, because none of them is fixed once and for all: for example, there have been recent attempts to extend the powers of NATO to cover out-of-area theatres, and the Twelve, within Political Union, may admit exceptions to the rule of consensus in decision-making. The preferences of individual nations for any given institution are easy to caricature but are in fact very ambiguous: to take just three examples, the British are reckoned to prefer sixteen-nation NATO, the Germans the 34 and the French the Twelve. But these broad generalisations are obviously misleading, if not useless. There *is* a common feature among the European countries, which is bewilderment: the strategic revolution is so universal and has been so rapid that, faced with a rapidly-changing situation within and outside Europe, nobody is insisting on excluding any particular option, nor choosing *a priori* any particular future security structure. And with good reason.

Most of the constants that have built up the European security system over the last forty years are now instead variables. The Soviet threat, the unquestionability of NATO and the American military umbrella in Europe, the self-imposed inhibitions of Western Europe in security matters and the limitation of regional conflicts by the system of blocs are four pillars of the former bipolar system which have become much more uncertain parameters: - The Soviet factor encompasses all the ambivalences: non-aggressive, incapable now of representing a threat to the West, prey to a revolution that everyone hopes will be democratic, and threatened with implosion, the USSR none the less remains a very large continental nuclear power that is threatening precisely because of the uncertainty over its future.

- NATO is also subject to two possible developments: that of slow decline, in particular because of the absence of a credible Soviet threat, but alternatively of a possible restructuring to include political cooperation with the East and the prevention of out-of-area conflicts. The ambivalence in the case of the USA is that it is a great world power but living on credit, and a great European power but one that has a diminishing presence in Europe.

- Western Europe is torn between the argument for integration at the level of the Twelve and the case for including other countries, both approaches being necessary and inevitable but conflicting.

- The out-of-area factor now lies outside the logic of the East-West divide, at the same time contributing to its dissolution. There is a risk that regional conflicts will proliferate and at the same time acquire an increasingly international dimension.

In other words, the USSR is both an object of pity and a threat, a partner and an adversary; NATO is in decline but renaissance is possible; Europe may become diluted or assert itself; and the out-of-area factor has an increasing effect within Europe both as a threat and as an opportunity.

But these classic parameters are not the only ones in the complex pattern of European security: two other factors are now equally determinant. The first of these is Germany, and it is not in any way an insult to the democratic solidarity of the FRG to ask what role Germany will decide to play on the international scene in future. The second factor is the way in which the countries of the former Eastern Europe manage to fit into a developed democratic system. Nothing is yet settled in either case.

No realistic, definitive security structure seems therefore capable of taking all of these variables into account. And even less so if they are combined with the time factor (the short, medium and long term; the distinction between peace time, periods of crisis and time of war) and the detailed problems to be resolved in any process of restructuring.

The coexistence of institutions will therefore be necessary, pragmatism useful and flexibility mandatory. It would after all be better to have an untidy architecture than a Europe in which some wish to impose a unique, definitive order. That risk exists: the Soviets would like to see the 34 of CSCE replacing the Sixteen of NATO. Certain voices in NATO have taken up arms against the vague desires of the Twelve to deal with defence issues. Only the Twelve seem ready for anything, a position which could reflect their pragmatism - or alternatively their indecision.

NATO, ENLARGEMENT AND SOVEREIGNTY - THREE PROBLEMS FOR THE TWELVE?

Political Union, a common security dimension, a common foreign policy, a common European defence; the multiplicity of expressions currently used reflects as many large ambitions as it does real ambiguities.

From now on 2 August 1990 will certainly be regarded as a watershed: Iraq may well have been a much more powerful factor in European integration than any number of summits and official declarations. Does that amount to saying that Europe will only come about because of outside pressure, and that there is no political dynamism inside the Community sufficiently strong to make it take the necessary leap towards a common security policy? It is possible that this proposition, the echo of a worn-out debate, will now appear for the false argument that it is, since the Gulf crisis also shows that European political solidarity in this field would never have been possible without the substratum of rules, habitual working methods, structures and mechanisms which have made up the driving force of Europe for decades.

And yet the threat from Iraq does not resolve all the difficulties, far from it. The basic texts on Political Union are themselves incomplete when it comes to the objectives of such a Union in security matters. Title III of the Single European Act says that the member countries `shall endeavour jointly to formulate and implement a European foreign policy', the states declaring themselves `ready to coordinate their positions more closely on the political and economic aspects of security'. The Franco-German initiative of 19 April 1990 went slightly further regarding the objectives of Political Union by proposing that one of these should be to `define and implement a common foreign and security policy'. The European Council in Dublin on 25-26 June 1990 agreed to convene an Intergovernmental Conference on 14 December 1990, with the aim of `transforming relations as a whole among Member States into a European Union invested with the necessary means of action'.

As for the founding member states of the future Union, most of these could not be more vague on their true intentions, in spite of a recent flurry of proposals, all of them equally informal[(2)].

Rather than listing pro-European professions of faith, it is more instructive to mention the counter-arguments and criticisms of the objective of Political Union of the Twelve and its common security dimension, leaving aside the nationality of the main proponents of these views. Three of these, of equal validity, are examined here; they encapsulate all the inherent difficulties of the objective of common security.

The first problem, external to the Twelve, is NATO and the role of the United States in the security of Europe. During a period of forty years the matter was settled *de facto*: in the face of the Soviet threat, only the United States had sufficient political and military credibility to deter an attack on Europe. 1989 and the revolutions in Eastern Europe have now opened a second stage in the debate: faced with the prospect of even partial American military disengagement, Europe could now either take over the responsibility for a common security organisation or alternatively consider that aim superfluous in the light of the reduced threat and leave the question of security to the

collective structures of the 34, or to individual nations. The Gulf crisis marks a third stage: it limits the national option in security matters, at least concerning out-of-area theatres. But does that mean that it strengthens the credibility of a more Western European organisation? Nothing is definitely decided: on the one hand it is certain that the unanimity shown by the Twelve and put into practice by the military cooperation of the nine WEU countries to enforce the embargo against Iraq will have the effect of drawing member states towards the objective of Political Union and a common security policy. But it is equally possible that the role and the requirement to have Americans in Europe once more becomes more evident and also more necessary: because it has effective military power the United States could, thanks to the Gulf crisis, regain the position, indeed the leadership, that it could otherwise have lost, thanks to Gorbachev, in European security.

The Twelve will not be able to disregard this new state of affairs. Saddam Hussein's venture may be working as much in favour of European Union as it is for American leadership. In practical terms, the different scenarios envisaged for the Security Union of the Twelve - a Council of Defence Ministers, the coalescing of WEU and the EC, etc. - must be carefully considered, in particular in the light of the Atlantic structures that already exist. Not that these proposals are unacceptable, quite the contrary, but their implications for the whole European security system are such that their implementation cannot ignore the broader context external to the Twelve.

The other two problems arise within the dynamics of European development: they concern the dilemma over widening or deepening on the one hand and the question of sovereignty on the other.

Why limit Europe to the twelve countries that made up the Community on the day the Berlin Wall collapsed - not counting the former GDR - and link progress to the pace set by Brussels? There are very good reasons why the question of widening or deepening is a real problem. There are no longer any fundamental reasons for excluding the countries of the former Eastern Europe, and even less concerning some of the EFTA countries, from the building of Europe. From now on the only reasons for exclusion have to do with particular circumstances, for instance because democracy is still fragile or because of the poor state of the economy, in the case of the first group, or because security policies (neutrality or membership of the Warsaw Pact) are at this stage incompatible with the system in the EC. Once these circumstances have evolved, it will be quite normal and desirable to enlarge the Europe of the Twelve to any European country that satisfies the criteria for membership of the Community.

The debate therefore concerns the process of bringing about this future reconciliation. For some, the Community must be widened without delay so as to consolidate and hasten the anchoring of the Eastern countries in the democratic system and prevent any retrogression, which is still possible. To choose instead to strengthen the political cohesion of the Twelve would be to raise one more barrier between the two parts of Europe and condemn the other European countries to a longer period on the sidelines. Others take the view that giving priority to widening at the expense of Political Union of the Twelve is also an elegant way of mortgaging the political construction of the Twelve and putting off indefinitely the aim of creating a common (Western) European defence system. A third view is that a twelve-nation Political Union is a priority but

that temporary solutions could be proposed to other European candidates, for instance the French concept of a Confederation, CSCE, or Herr Genscher's idea of a `Single Europe'. A common feature of these proposals is the enlargement of a certain type of political and security cooperation beyond the EC.

It would at the moment be vain to attempt to resolve this dilemma juridically, but dangerous to resolve it politically by deciding either to exclude the other European countries from the EC or to set aside the idea of a common security system for the Twelve. The fact of Ireland's membership of the EC, which has not placed any constraints on the solidarity of the Twelve in the Gulf crisis, suggests that compromise is possible. But if the diplomatic timetable is working in favour of a twelve-nation Union, it must be understood that nothing ought to be decided which could close the door once and for all on other European countries which might at some date in the future share the common norms and values of the Twelve.

The other problem arising within the proposed Union is that of sovereignty. The arguments on the question of widening or deepening described above stem as much from divergent views on the ultimate vision of Europe as they do from different concepts of sovereignty. Thus, British reservations on a federal, political Europe, integrated into a `Brussels hyperbureaucracy' where national identity and the power of individual states would be watered down, lead to a more than usually benevolent attitude to widening of the Community, notably to include the Nordic countries: the larger the number of countries in the Community, the harder political integration would become and consequently the more probable the construction of Europe as an enlarged free trade area and flexible intergovernmental cooperation. And then of course with 14, 15, 16 or more member countries, the relative weight of each one - in particular that of Germany - would be reduced accordingly.

In Germany, to pursue the allusion to a modernised version of Montesquieu's `theory of climates', the notion of sovereignty results from a completely different historical legacy. At the end of the Second World War, it was only through its integration in the Atlantic and European communities that the FRG regained its identity and sovereignty. The `anchoring' of the FRG to the West was the essential condition for its international legitimacy. Forty years on, it is because of the disintegration of the Eastern bloc that German unification has come about, with sovereignty fully restored. During a period of forty years the Community -and of course NATO - has therefore been the condition, the means and the guarantee of keeping the FRG anchored to the West. Nowadays the Community is frequently seen by Germany as being the condition, means and guarantee of keeping its Eastern neighbours anchored to democracy. If Europe's role of integrator is shifting eastwards, however, it may raise the question of German sovereignty once again. Some Germans may ask whether, just as Germany has achieved unification and complete sovereignty, it must immediately - and even voluntarily - delegate part of this new-found sovereignty to some Community institution.

In France, where the model of the independent nation-state is still one of the great myths on which national identity is founded, the question of sovereignty has gradually become identified with the notion of military power. Autonomy of decision-making in this domain is a dogma that has a very wide measure of support in France, reinforced by France's status as a nuclear power and the conviction that such decision-making

cannot be shared. This national tradition has in particular focused on any suggestion of American leadership, whereas the debate on Political Union and a common European defence has tended to ignore, up till now, the question of interference with the notion of sovereignty. It is possible that, as progress is made towards Political Union, some reservations will be voiced over an integrated, 12-nation security system, which would be seen as an interference with French independence. But at the same time the declining relative importance of the military factor in the hierarchy of nations, the strategic revolutions in Eastern Europe, the possibility of American military disengagement and German unification are all upheavals that suggest such traditional reservations might be abandoned. There is no doubt that there is a crisis of national identity in France, and a timid retreat to the national option may for some people be the solution. Another solution, chosen as such by the government, is to argue that the move to a European sovereignty is designed to give an additional degree of sovereignty. It will in any event be difficult for France, like its neighbours, to avoid a debate on national identity.

Going beyond these inherited national viewpoints, security affects the very core of state responsibility and power, and any delegation of power in security matters gives rise to reservations everywhere. Moreover, the vexed issue of sovereignty covers two further problems: the *democratic legitimacy* of European authorities and the *definition of security*.

In other words, will states have to delegate some of their national powers in security matters, and if so to whom, and with what assurance of democratic control? There are in theory two mechanisms that could be used by the Twelve to produce a unified security policy:

- Consensus among governments, which is European Political Cooperation's normal method. A decision-making procedure which preserves each country's right of veto and right of independent action if no common position is adopted could be applied more easily to every aspect of security policy; the deepening of the EC will thus be linked to the widening of EPC.

- Qualified majority voting on some aspects of security policy; achieving this would be a limited revolution. The entire difficulty will lie in the selection of those areas in which the states would be willing to give up part of their sovereignty.

As for the definition of security policy itself, the difficulty is whether or not to include its military aspects. What in fact is understood by security? Many aspects of states' foreign, economic and trade policies already concern security, and in ways that are becoming increasingly complementary. The Twelve, within the Community, have for a long time harmonised certain of their positions on economic sanctions, disarmament, CSCE, the Middle East and China, not to mention their recent solidarity over the Gulf crisis. But defence policy is also one of the essential means for applying a security policy. Is there a readiness to pool military assets? In any case, is it possible to design a common security policy for the Twelve that does not in the long run imply a community of defence assets?

Combining these two factors (decision-making and the definition of security) demonstrates the complexity of the task: is it sensible to construct a security system

for the Twelve that excludes the military aspects? Conversely, can one imagine the Twelve accepting a common defence policy decided by qualified majority vote?

REALITIES: THE NINE AND THE TWELVE, AND THE OTHERS

WEU thus finds itself at the centre of the debate: while occupying the presidency of the Community, Italy recently proposed the fusion of the Nine and the Twelve in order to take the plunge towards Political Union. Italy's ambition is correct: a true European Political Union worthy of the name has scarcely any meaning unless in the long term it includes a common defence dimension. Nobody doubts that WEU and the Twelve will one day be one and the same, in some structure yet to be worked out. Nobody doubts that the European context today is favourable for contemplating and risking a real quantum leap in the building of Europe.

If there is a debate, therefore, it is not so much on the goal as on the procedures, the stages and the necessary steps towards such a fusion. It would in effect be unfortunate if, by rushing into such revolutionary change, one ended up with the opposite effect - that of an uncontrolled unravelling of any idea of a common European defence. Two questions immediately spring to mind.

- The first question concerns the value of the modified Brussels Treaty itself. WEU is at the same time the only purely European authority for concerted action on security and a treaty of military alliance, legally binding (through Article V) between the nine signatory states; this second aspect is fundamental. If the fusion of WEU and the Twelve were to weaken the military alliance element to the benefit of the political element, the loss would be immense. In other words, if the Twelve wish to consider security issues - including the occasions when their Defence Ministers meet - there is no need to involve WEU in order to do so: amendments to the Single Act (Title III, Article 30.6) could be used as the authority, which in itself would be no small matter. But if the Twelve also wish to sign a mutual defence treaty then it is the modified Brussels Treaty which would have to be reconfirmed by the Nine and signed by the three other countries. The fusion of WEU and the Twelve thus first supposes, unless the modified Brussels Treaty itself is to lose all meaning, the enlargement of WEU to include Denmark, Greece and Ireland. Is that possible, and is it desirable, knowing that the Treaty (as amplified in The Hague Platform) implies defence at the borders of member countries? What, then, of the frontier between Greece and Turkey, for example? What of a possible enlargement of the Community to include other countries, in particular those of Eastern Europe, not to mention other official applications for accession to WEU from countries that are not members of the Community - Turkey for example? And what of relations with NATO, with which Article IV lays down a mandatory close cooperation?

- The relationship between WEU and NATO is the second question. Even if the Gulf crisis has shown that the WEU countries can take autonomous decisions, things would doubtless be quite different in the European theatre. Fusion of WEU and the Twelve would necessarily imply either negotiation between the Twelve and NATO, or at the very least an institutional relationship between the two organisations. It is not at all clear that one can simply declare Article IV inoperative. At the present stage of first steps towards Political Union of the Twelve one can question whether it would be desirable to diminish the Community's independence from NATO and involve

Washington in the actual process of establishing Political Union. It is only once that Union is established and consolidated that the Twelve could envisage a dialogue with the Americans in order to define, as equals, a true partnership in security matters.

Three major issues - the autonomy of the Twelve, the defence alliance between the Nine and the evolution of NATO - thus depend on the answers to these two questions. Certain answers may further the cause of European integration, while others may weaken it.

Three options can therefore be considered.

- The first of these supposes that the time has come for a sixteen-nation summit, if necessary at the request of the Twelve, in order to re-build, from the beginning, a global European-Atlantic system. And why not? The upheavals that have affected Europe for the past year, from Eastern Europe to the Gulf, are so far-reaching that an exercise in global restructuring of the Alliance and relations between Europe and the United States could be required. But that is an undertaking whose wide scope is quite different from NATO's customary internal reviews. Is everyone prepared for this?

- Secondly, it could be prudent to wait and to restrict for the moment the security aspect of Political Union to more modest prospects. The Intergovernmental Conference would thus exclude joint military policy from the Union's sphere of competence. This is without doubt the simplest solution, but would it not also be a lost opportunity?

- The third option is that the Twelve adopt a process of progressive steps to Political Union, as happened with Economic and Monetary Union. Joint defence would explicitly be the ultimate objective, but this last stage in Political Union would only occur in 199?, this date being decided at a second conference in 1992.

This third option appears to be both the most realistic and the most acceptable. Defence would be excluded from the first phase of Political Union but maintaining this separation between WEU and the Twelve would not by itself deprive the latter of all their powers of initiative in matters of common security, where everything still remains to be done. The Twelve could in fact extend, within the Union, the concerted action on security issues already carried out within WEU. Not that that requires the creation of a Council of the twelve ministers of defence. But there is no reason why one should not envisage mixed Councils of Ministers with participation from different ministries - for example foreign affairs, defence and economy, in order to compare the defence budgets of the Twelve. Or again, joint Councils made up of the ministers of foreign affairs, defence and overseas trade when policies on armaments exports are to be harmonised, and doubtless many other Councils on an *ad hoc* basis. Foreign ministers themselves have all the necessary powers to concert policy and take decisions on all political aspects of security, from disarmament to CSCE and including such matters as the Gulf crisis or policy regarding Eastern Europe.

A second aspect concerns the method of decision-making: is it to be through intergovernmental consensus or by qualified majority voting? If it is still too early to determine a list of topics that it would be appropriate to deal with, using one or other of these procedures, one should at least envisage the possibility of the Union deciding,

by consensus, whether any subjects (and if so, which) can be dealt with by a qualified majority vote, and this should be done in an irreversible way.

A final question remains which obviously arises once the Twelve strengthen their competence to act jointly on security policy in this way. By virtue of the powers that would then be given to the Twelve in this domain, is there not the risk that one removes the substance of the concerted action based on the modified Brussels Treaty? Will one have to decide to conserve for WEU just its military treaty aspect, and thus a very limited role, if one hopes for the maximum political stability in Europe in the future? No one doubts that problems may arise. In reality the very idea of competition between the Nine and the Twelve appears both mistaken and dangerous. In time they will be identical. So what matter if, in the meantime, some untidy overlaps appear?

There remain the other countries involved, in particular the American partners of the Twelve. As long ago as December 1989 James Baker expressed his wish to see the establishment, one day, of a treaty between America and the Community. It is not known whether this was anticipated homage to the soundness of the European structure or relative pessimism over the state of NATO. The idea did, however, show vision and it was legitimate. A bilateral treaty of military alliance between America and the Community is without doubt one of the most serious options for the future organisation of Europe's defence. The problem, however, is as always one of timing: is there not some risk in instituting here and now a process of political consultation between the Twelve and Washington when consultations among the Twelve on Political Union are still at such an early stage and decisions so uncertain? There is in fact no sense in a double Euro-Atlantic declaration, with the United States and with Canada, unless it is the start of a real partnership - and not just an occasion one-way American intrusion into the Political Union of the Twelve.

November 1990

POSTSCRIPT – WORDS AND DEEDS

The war in the Gulf will have had the effect both of delivering a rebuff and of giving impetus to European dynamism.

The Community was notable first for its absence and impotence when hostilities began - giving rise to ironic commentary in particular because the first session of the Intergovernmental Conference in February 1991 was publicly associated with the definition of a common security policy. The criticism was largely unfounded, since Europe's defence was at the time no more than a groundless project, an ideal or a foil, but certainly not a functioning organisation which would have failed in its task on 17 January of this year. If there was uneasiness or hesitation over the application of a treaty of collective defence, was this not rather within NATO, when the question of a possible attack against Turkey arose? Yet it is true that the war in the Gulf will also have marked a certain moment of truth for the credibility of any future Political Union: can it be an effective diplomatic actor - for instance in the peaceful resolution of future international crises - if its authority is not backed by any serious military power? Does a military alliance, if Political Union indeed implies such an objective in time, signify burden-sharing or risk-sharing, including military risks, by all the countries concerned? These are all questions and fundamental political choices that the war in the Gulf has introduced once more into the European debate, even if the negotiations in Brussels evidently bear only very watered-down traces of them.

In any case, in practical terms the diffuse perceptions of a European failure during the war in the Gulf have given a fillip to the negotiations on Political Union. The debate had two strands (was Political Union to be built along federal lines or through intergovernmental cooperation; and would WEU lean more towards the Twelve or towards NATO?), and this has now been partly simplified.

Even though it is not definitely settled, the first issue has resulted in a minimal consensus by Britain, France and Germany in favour of an intergovernmental formula in which the European Council will be the authority that decides common security policy. The federalists clearly do not warm to this solution which, according to one of their arguments, would risk the profound modification of all that has been achieved in forty years of applying Community policies, by whittling it down little by little to the advantage of member states. The argument is a weighty one. But should one give up the idea of building a common security policy on the pretext that it will not be a Community policy? Should one give greater importance to the Community aspect at the risk of never arriving at a common security policy? The risk inherent in this false debate is evidently that a vision of Europe that is excessively maximalist will in practice be closely akin to the most anti-European of the various positions.

There remains the essential point, which is the question of relations between Europe and the Euro-American defence alliance, symbolised by the debate on the future, the role and the vocation of WEU in relation to the European Council and NATO. Here, differences of view between Britain and France replace their convergence in the first debate. Without going into the detail of the discussions in hand[(3)], it is nevertheless appropriate to mention one precondition.

Before deciding on WEU's preferred vocation - Political Union or NATO -it would be appropriate to give it some real military substance. Without any genuine operational capability, an exclusively political WEU risks being a flimsy, unreliable `bridge'. It seems difficult to defend the idea of a mailed fist at the service of Political Union without nurturing that aim through practical military proposals. And it seems just as difficult to create a European pillar of NATO if that pillar is deprived of any effective military content. After all, Article IV of the modified Brussels Treaty merely calls for close *cooperation* with NATO. It continues: `Recognising the undesirability of duplicating the military staffs of NATO, the Council and its Agency will rely on the appropriate military authorities of NATO for *information* and *advice* on military matters'[(4)].

Giving the idea of European defence real substance would certainly be a decisive first step towards reconciling words and deeds. But no great intellectual effort is required to list all the points of detail that such a development would raise. Will there be WEU armed forces, and if so what will be their relationship to NATO's integrated military structure? What missions would be assigned to European forces? In which theatres - East-West or out-of-area? In particular regarding military integration, in what way will the forces be organized? These are all subjects which, because they were so abstract, have hitherto been taboo or eclipsed by convenient rhetoric, but are now on the table.

The Europeans therefore find themselves once again faced with two fundamental choices. The first of these concerns the European project itself: how does Europe see itself in the future - as a civilian entity with a strictly European vocation, with space and history ending artificially at the frontiers of the Old Continent; or, on the contrary, as a world power with global responsibilities and influence? Without doubt the way in which the new, unified Germany develops will to a large extent be the deciding factor in this. The second choice concerns the relationship between Europe and North America: how, in this post-Cold War world, is the affirmation of Europe's particular identity to be reconciled with the necessary recognition of the indispensable complementarity between Europe and the United States? Britain and France will bear greater responsibilities in this matter, in which it is essential to avoid either of the two extreme positions. In the first of these Europe would be no more than a stop-gap for the Atlantic Alliance: in this rather utilitarian version of Political Union, it would only be allowed responsibilities subsidiary to NATO, in particular out of area[(5)], the management of security relations with the East remaining the exclusive domain of NATO. At the other extreme, Europe, in all respects including the military, would systematically be in competition with NATO and America. As of today, neither London nor Paris adheres to such extreme positions. The parallel developments in these two countries on the whole range of problems concerning Europe are equally fundamental, even though both often pass unnoticed. Certainly a stage has not yet been reached where views coincide, but it is also true that on this point the United States will also have to undergo a Copernican revolution by agreeing to adjust its rights and obligations, in other words adapting its influence to its changing presence in Europe.

At a time when the USSR is obsessed by its internal problems and adopting a hard line, when the United States is now subject to enormous budgetary pressures for a withdrawal, and when Germany appears uncertain of itself and bound up in the shock

of its own unification, the worst that could happen would be for Europe to founder amidst this threefold withdrawal movement. It is to be hoped that European defence will not be merely rhetoric, as has often been the case with the Twelve. If tomorrow it remains merely a slogan in an empty NATO shell, then the triumph of appearance over reality will be as total as the lack of security that results.

March 1991

1. A shorter version of this paper was published in *Politique étrangère*, No. 4/90, pp. 878 - 886. We are grateful to the Institut français des relations internationales for allowing it to appear as a *Chaillot Paper*.

2. The Intergovernmental Conference of December 1990 was prepared, outside the normal European Political Cooperation (EPC) bodies and the purview of the Commission, by informal meetings of the personal representatives of the twelve foreign ministers.

3. What authority is the European Council to have over WEU? What is to be the relationship between the secretariats of WEU and European Political Cooperation? Should the permanent representatives to NATO and/or the Community be nominated members of WEU's permanent Council? Should WEU be located (in Brussels) alongside NATO or alongside the Community?

4. Italics added.

5. Limiting Europe's military responsibilities to out-of-area operations, moreover, amounts to reducing its ability to act to zero, for as long as the present constitutional impossibility for the Germans to assume such responsibilities outside Europe remains.