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The Future of EU-US Burdensharing

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Introduction and summary

Following-up on its recent publication on EU-US burdensharing, the Institute organised a seminar on future patterns in burdensharing in mid-January 2006.[1] The approximately forty seminar participants represented officials, academics, and members of the think-tank community on both sides of the Atlantic.

Among the key questions analysed was how to define burdensharing in light of today's multifaceted menaces and the type of instruments required to facilitate such cooperation. The findings of the seminar suggest that although there is wide agreement in the changing nature of burdensharing, including the need to consider both military and civilian aspects, there are important differences concerning the tactics and methods used for burdensharing. In particular, participants expressed differences on the centrality of the EU/NATO relationship versus the EU/US partnership. While several American participants stressed the need to strengthen the NATO/EU link, numerous European attendees underscored the need for stronger EU/US partnership to ensure appropriate burdensharing.

I. What is burdensharing?

During the first session, several observations were made concerning the definition of burdensharing. First, participants agreed that the concept of burdensharing has evolved substantially since the end of the Cold War. The focus on military capabilities and expenditures has given way to a broader concept of burdensharing that includes both civilian and military dimensions. A speaker pointed to the international contributions for handling natural disasters such as the tsunami in South-West Asia and hurricane Katrina (U.S.) as a testament of the potential reach of burdensharing – even if such collaboration still is considered to fall outside the bounds of the security domain. Overall, this shift is attributable to a greater recognition that a mix of civilian and military tools are usually needed to address today's security threats that range from international terrorism to state failure.

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[1] *EU-US burdensharing: Who does what?* Chaillot No. 82, September 2005.

Second, several participants noted that there has been a transition towards a more strategic notion of burdensharing. While the Cold War period was characterised by tactical burdensharing objectives such as spending a certain proportion of GDP on defence, there currently is a greater focus on strategic issues. However, there was disagreement on whether the US and the EU saw eye to eye on global security objectives. According to an American speaker, only the U.S. sees security in global terms – the EU, on the hand – has yet to understand the "global dimension of security." Several European speakers disagreed with that vision, arguing that EU contributions in areas such the Balkans, Afghanistan and Aceh demonstrated a global security outlook.

Third, several participants implied that there is a need for a new intellectual framework to ensure burdensharing over the long-term. The cooperative "glue" provided by Cold War was long gone and the new challenges, such as the fight against terrorism, were perceived as unlikely candidates to ensure strategic burdensharing. As a prescription, some participants called for a stronger US-EU strategic partnership with the aim of enhancing dialogue on key themes such as democratisation, human rights, security, etc. Agreeing on the content and reach of these terms would facilitate collaboration on which methods and tactics to choose when addressing specific security challenges. Other participants argued that they would rather see burdensharing take place on a "case-by-case" basis rather than be overly conceptualised.

II. How should we share the burden?

The second session considered how to share the burden. It focused largely on the role of international institutions. A number of participants argued that the principal organisations involved with burdensharing activities, such as the UN and NATO, presently face a host of challenges that constrain their burdensharing abilities.

For example, participants noted that the UN's internal reform process had drained much of its energy. Pending a decision on the future shape of the UN Security Council, the institutional debate was likely to continue. With respect to NATO, some perceived its role to be constrained since it still mostly deals with "hard security" issues. A couple of participants argued that NATO had limited U.S. support ("they are not present in the NATO Response Force", "the U.S. wants NATO to have an expanded role in Afghanistan so it can move back its troops to Iraq", "NATO is becoming a proxy for 'not-US'"), further limiting its burdensharing capacity. Responding to these remarks, several participants argued that NATO still plays an important burdensharing role via its out-of-area operations. Some U.S. participants also underlined that the U.S. remained politically engaged in NATO and that its contribution of strategic enablers to the NATO Response Force was representative of its strong support to the Force.

The burdensharing capacity of the EU was likewise debated. Some participants stated that the EU's burdensharing ability was weakened by the failure to pass the Draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe. Others argued that the EU's inability to reach consensus over the war in Iraq was a weakening factor. In its defence, several speakers noted that EU engagement is constantly growing, especially if we consider the number of ongoing ESDP operations. In spite of these potential limitations, a majority of participants agreed that burdensharing should take place through a strong EU-US

partnership rather through an EN-NATO platform, even if both are not mutually exclusive.

The issue of "geographic burdensharing" was raised at different points during the session. There was no agreement among the participants over whether a geographic division of labour would result in more effective burdensharing. While some participants argued that a geographic division of labour was consistent with the EU's focus on the neighbourhood/Balkans and the U.S. commitment in the Middle East, others believed that burdensharing should depend more on the task at hand than the geographic location. In their mind, a geographic division of labour was simply too artificial and inconsistent with the global nature of today's security challenges.

III. Future patterns in burdensharing

The last session discussed the future of burdensharing. While there was no single vision regarding how trans-Atlantic burdensharing might evolve over the medium- to long-term, participants provided some recommendations for enhancing such cooperation. Examples include:

- *Define burdensharing missions collectively* - To the extent possible, policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic should consider security challenges collectively as far in advance as possible to formulate clear burdensharing strategies. Current approaches, which are often ad-hoc and start late, lead to disparate problem-solving approaches. A more global approach to burdensharing would be possible if the EU and the U.S. jointly defined future missions. Good leadership on both sides of the Atlantic would be necessary.

- *Consider what the EU could do to bolster U.S. security and vice-versa* – A speaker provided a list of five things the EU could do to enhance U.S. security. Among them were taking additional steps to better integrate immigrant communities living in EU member states (some U.S. policymakers are concerned that potential Jihadists holding EU passports can easily enter the U.S.), improving the EU's capacity to respond to large-scale shocks, and establishing a modest European expeditionary force. Responding to these comments, European participants provided their own examples of steps the U.S. could take to enhance European/global security. Examples provided include decreasing energy consumption and joining certain international organisations or agreements/protocols (e.g. Kyoto).

- *Focus on the prevention side of security challenges* – By focusing on prevention aspects early on, the EU and the U.S. could expend fewer resources and possibly resolve a security challenges before it reaches a critical stage. In the words of one speaker, sometimes a "police mission early on might be more effective than a carrier battle group at a later stage". Participants acknowledged that estimating when to engage such efforts would not be a straightforward task given the need to be consistent with international law.

- *Connect security and development strategies more effectively* – Several participants noted that aid flows for development purposes were still largely independent of security objectives. While participants were not arguing for a complete harmonisation of security and development goals, they saw room for greater coordination between the two.

- *Recognise the importance of intra-EU burdensharing* – Besides trans-Atlantic burdensharing, a couple of speakers pointed out the importance of achieving appropriate burdensharing within the EU. Currently, there are substantial divergences in areas such as levels of defence expenditures, contributions to official developments assistance, and defence R&D.

List of Participants

Ronald ASMUS – Executive Director, The German Marshall Fund of the United States, Brussels

Alina BELSKAYA – Program Assistant, The German Marshall Fund of the United States, Brussels

Sven BISCOP – Senior Research Fellow, Royal Institute for International Relations (IRRI-KIIB), Brussels

Frédéric BOZO – Professor, University of Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris

Jim CLOOS – Director, Transatlantic Relations, Latin America, Counter-Terrorism, Human Rights and United Nations, General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, Brussels

Sergi FARRÉ SALVÁ – Head of Service, Policy Planning Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Madrid

Timothy GARDEN – Defence Spokesman, House of Lords, London

Hall GARDNER – Professor, American University of Paris, Paris

Nicole GNESOTTO – Directeur, Institut d'Etudes de Sécurité de l'Union européenne, Paris

Przemyslaw GRUDZINSKI – Professor, George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Garmisch-Partenkirchen

István GYARMATI – Ambassador, Chairman of the Board, The Centre for Euroatlantic Integration and Democracy, Budapest

François HEISBOURG – Conseiller spécial, Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique, Paris

Christiane HOEHN – Administrator Transatlantic Relations, EU Council Secretariat, Brussels

Karl HOFMANN – Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of the United States, Paris

Robert HUNTER – Senior Advisor, RAND Corporation, Arlington

Kestutis JANKAUSKAS – Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the PSC, Permanent Representation of Lithuania to the EU, Brussels

Eva KORDOVA – Second Secretary, Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU, Brussels

Gustav LINDSTROM – Senior Research Fellow, European Union Institute for Security Studies, Paris

Dov LYNCH – Senior Research Fellow, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris

Antonio MISSIROLI – Chief Policy Analyst, European Policy Centre, Brussels

Sandor MOLNAR – Ministre conseiller, Représentation Permanente de la Hongrie auprès de l'UE, Bruxelles

Martin ORTEGA – Senior Research Fellow, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris

Kyle O'SULLIVAN – Counsellor, Permanent Representation of Ireland to the EU, Brussels

Michael RYAN – Defense Advisor, United States Mission to the European Union, Brussels

Stefano SILVESTRI – President, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome

Alfred VAN STADEN – Chairman Netherlands Society for International Affairs (The Hague), Professor of international relations at Leiden University, Leiden

Karl VON WOGAU – Member of the European Parliament, Chairman of the Subcommittee for Security and Defense, Brussels

Marcin ZABOROWSKI – Research Fellow, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris

Observers

Patrizia POMPILI – Intern, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris

Agnieszka SONIK – Intern, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris

Nathalie STANUS – Intern, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris

Daniel STEINVORTH – Research Assistant, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris