

UTRECHT UNIVERSITY

# Dutch CSDP Policy and Military Capability Development in the European Union

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The Influence of the Transatlantic Relationship  
on Dutch CSDP Policy between 1999-2012

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# Abstract

Military capability development in the European Union has been a difficult and slow process for member states participating in the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Various authors have noted the transatlantic relationship as being an important or even instrumental dynamic for EU member state policy with regard to CSDP's development, in particular its military dimension. To better understand CSDP's evolution, this thesis traces the influence of the transatlantic relationship in Dutch CSDP policy with regard to military capability development in the EU between 1999 and 2012.

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# Introduction

Over the last twenty years, the European Union has gradually attempted to foster defence integration and cooperation among its member states. With the founding of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)\* in 1999 came the first tangible initiative to this end: the Helsinki Headline Goal. The goal, which was to be achieved by 2003, envisioned a rapid reaction force of up to 60,000 military personnel that would be capable of intervening in any crisis in which European interests were at stake. The aim was for the EU to be able to manage two conflicts simultaneously – one 'hard' mission requiring extensive military involvement and one 'soft' mission of the humanitarian type. Yet when the operational requirements for these possible deployments were compared to the national commitments member states were willing to make, it became apparent that the Union would be struggling with over 40 different capability shortfalls in possible mission scenarios of which no less than 21 were deemed 'significant'.<sup>1</sup> Though attempts were made to address these shortfalls, the 60,000 strong force originally envisioned in 1999 never truly materialised. Instead, member states moved on from the original goal in favour of the new 'Helsinki Headline Goal 2010'. From 2007 onwards as per the new goal, the more modest and mobile EU-Battlegroup formations (comprising a 1,500-3,000 personnel intervention force) became active. However, to date and despite numerous crises, member states have never agreed to actually deploy these Battlegroups.

In many ways, the outcomes of both Headline Goals are typical of CSDP's development. Though ambitious goals are formulated within the EU, its aspirations in security and defence are hampered by the actual capabilities at its disposal. While in the present decade security and defence have reappeared at the top of the EU agenda due to member states' heightened sense of insecurity, the difficulty with which CSDP is progressing is still apparent in recent developments. In November of 2017 it was announced that the EU would launch a new framework intended to deepen defence cooperation and to facilitate joint capability development among participating member states, named Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).<sup>2</sup> While impressive in its scope and objectives (though still intended to tackle many of the same shortfalls identified 18 years ago), the notification

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\* Until the Lisbon Treaty entered into force in 2009 the CSDP was known as the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).

<sup>1</sup> C.J. Bickerton, B. Irondelle, A. Menon, 'Security Co-operation beyond the Nation-State: The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy', *Journal of Common Market Studies* (2011), 49:1, 1-21, 5, B. Schmitt, *European Capabilities Action Plan (ECAP)*, Factsheet, EU Institute for Security Studies (2004) <https://www.peacepalacelibrary.nl/ebooks/files/06-bsecap.pdf> (11.03.18) p. 1-2

<sup>2</sup> See: Notification on Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), published on the website of the Council of the European Union. Direct link: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/31511/171113-pesco-notification.pdf>

text to which the EU agreed does not seem to be the leap in CSDP's development some had hoped for. Reflecting on the announcement, Nick Witney, who served as the chief executive of the European Defence Agency between 2004 and 2007, remarked that the text included constitutional or other exceptions on member states' commitments and unfortunate wording expressing weak engagement with the stated goals, making parts of the text essentially valueless (ex.: 'member states agree to strive for an ambitious approach to (...)'). In addition, Witney stated that it is probable that proposed capability development projects would have been established without the new Permanent Structured Cooperation anyway.<sup>3</sup> While the results of the framework will only become truly apparent in the next decade, it is doubtful that PESCO will suddenly become the vehicle through which the European Union truly attains strategic autonomy.

Even though the ambition to achieve this strategic autonomy seemed to be there when the Helsinki Headline Goal was set in 1999, nearly twenty years later defence integration in the EU is still far from a completed endeavour. Alongside slow progress in capability development, CSDP mission activity has suffered from a lack of engagement as well. While in the early years of the EU's drive to become a global security player military missions were on average launched every three months starting in 2003, there was a marked downturn in member states' appetite for new missions from 2009 onward. From 2008 to 2011 only one new mission was launched, with small-scale limited new engagements in 2012 and 2013. Not due to a lack of crises or opportunity; European countries remained willing to launch substantial new operations in the same time period, just preferably not through the CSDP.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, CSDP missions have typically been sub-strategic in nature, meaning these are neither large-scale operations nor drivers of significant change in the regions or states in which these missions are active.<sup>5</sup> Even though several crises in different regions pose significant security threats to the interests of several European nations, the EU community has not been able to fully agree on and commit to tackling these issues within an EU format. Why is this so?

Various authors have offered explanations for the CSDP's shortcomings. T. Haesebrouck and M. van Meirvenne, two researchers at Ghent University who frequently publish on the CSDP, point to CSDP's inherent weakness as causal to the limited scope of and low drive for CSDP missions: a lack of capabilities, the absence of a permanent headquarters and failure to compose a strategy defining its

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<sup>3</sup> M. Leonard, 'Has PESCO turned Sour?' interview with Nick Witney and Ulrike Franke, Mark Leonard's World in 30 Minutes, European Council on Foreign Relations, podcast audio, November 24, 2017 <https://soundcloud.com/ecfr/has-pesco-turned-sour>

<sup>4</sup> T. Haesebrouck, M. van Meirvenne, 'EUFOR RCA and CSDP Crisis Management Operations: Back on Track?', *European Foreign Affairs Review* (2015), 20:2, 267-285, 268-270

<sup>5</sup> T. Tardy, 'CSDP in action – what contribution to international security?', *EU Institute for Security Studies, Chaillot Paper 134* (2015), 1-51, 32

role in the security domain vis-à-vis NATO.<sup>6</sup> In a different paper commenting on the lack of capability development, M. Drent and D. Zandee, researchers at the Clingendael Institute, state that unanimous decision-making among 27 member states (including Denmark's CSDP opt-out, soon 26 if accounted for Brexit) inevitably leads to consensus on the lowest common denominator, making it unlikely that an ambitious capability development agenda will be achieved within the CSDP.<sup>7</sup> On CSDP activity in general, T. Tardy, a senior analyst at the European Institute for Security Studies, states that through their history, size and role determination in the international arena and within the EU, member states have developed distinct strategic cultures which often contradict one another and which cannot form a shared European strategic culture.<sup>8</sup>

While insightful, these comments only offer a sense of direction when analysing the CSDP without truly lifting the veil on an explanation for the status quo. In order to better understand these issues the following section will explore analyses of state behaviour in the CSDP, followed by the presentation of a case study.

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<sup>6</sup> T. Haesebrouck, M. van Meirvenne, 'EUFOR RCA and CSDP Crisis Management Operations: Back on Track?', 280

<sup>7</sup> M. Drent, D. Zandee, 'European Defence: From Strategy to Delivery', *Global Affairs* (2016), 2:1, 69-78, 74-75

<sup>8</sup> T. Tardy, (2015), 'CSDP in action – what contribution to international security?', 32

## Theoretical approaches

In the academic literature, several lenses can be found through which state behaviour in the CSDP is analysed. The two most prolific schools of thought within the debate are constructivism and realism. Both offer explanations for how and why European nations converge or diverge in security policy. Realist analyses of the CSDP are state-centric and emphasise the importance of geopolitical developments, power and power dynamics in the rationale for European defence cooperation. The constructivist literature has instead focused on the roles of elite socialisation, epistemic communities and the ideational changes resulting from exchanges and debates among agents as driving forces for CSDP development.<sup>9</sup> Another strand of research analysing cooperation in the EU and which has been applied to defence cooperation is liberal-intergovernmentalism. It explains EU integration through domestic policy choices and as a result of national interests being promoted in the international arena. The stronger, more committed and influential governments are most likely to see their national preferences realised internationally. While sometimes at odds as to the causes of European integration, a division of labour exists among these schools, each highlighting important aspects of policy development.

In many realist reflections, the transatlantic relationship is considered a key component to understanding security and defence cooperation in the CSDP, either as an attempt at balancing U.S. power or for keeping the Americans engaged with Europe.<sup>10</sup> While this interpretation of the CSDP as a European balancing or bandwagoning act against American power has received much criticism, relationships with the US are considered an important facet to security and defence policies in Europe. Tom Dyson, arguing from a neorealist perspective, has added 'balance of threat' theory (from Stephen Walt's theory of alliance formation) to the equation to clarify intra-alliance bargaining and divergence in the EU, as European states have 'significant variation in their external vulnerabilities' informing alliance dynamics.<sup>11,12,13</sup> In a related article, Pierre Haroche explores how

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<sup>9</sup> M. Larivé, *Debating European Security and Defence Policy: Understanding the Complexity* (Burlington: 2014), p. 35-39

<sup>10</sup> S. Rynning, 'Realism and the Common Security and Defence Policy', *Journal of Common Market Studies* (2011), 49:1, 23-42, see also: B. Posen, 'ESDP and the structure of world power', *International Spectator* (2004), 39:1, 5-17 and L. Cladi, A. Locatelli, 'Bandwagoning, not balancing: why Europe confounds realism', *Contemporary Security Policy* (2012), 33:2, 264-288

<sup>11</sup> J. Ringsmose, 'Balancing or Bandwagoning? Europe's Many Relations with the United States', *Contemporary Security Policy* (2013), 34:2, 409-412, see also: T. Dyson, 'Balancing Threat, not Capabilities: European Defence Cooperation as Reformed Bandwagoning', *Contemporary Security Policy* (2013), 34:2 387-391 and B. Pohl, 'Neither Bandwagoning nor Balancing: Explaining Europe's Security Policy', *Contemporary Security Policy* (2013), 34:2, 353-373

<sup>12</sup> S. Walt, *The Origin of Alliances* (London: 1987), 17-33

<sup>13</sup> T. Dyson, (2013) 'Balancing Threat, not Capabilities: European Defence Cooperation as Reformed Bandwagoning', 389-390

such threat imbalances, or asymmetric crises, can negatively affect European defence cooperation. Asymmetric crises have the potential to cause significant divergence in the interests of EU member states, stoking fears of abandonment or entrapment to different parties in the alliance.<sup>14</sup> In essence, realist reflections emphasise rational self-interest on the part of states participating in the CSDP, attempting to either challenge or influence power dynamics on a global (or regional) scale.

In the constructivist analyses the importance of socialisation and shared experience among high-level defence officials in the European Union has been noted as another type of driving factor in defence cooperation and CSDP development.<sup>15</sup> Some research has focused on measures of convergence among member states' strategic cultures through their shared experiences.<sup>16</sup> Other authors have similarly directed their attention specifically to military culture. Anthony King has researched the convergence in military cultures in Europe and posits the notion that the development of a shared European military culture is an essential prerequisite to the development of European military capabilities.<sup>17</sup> Tommi Koivula has conducted similar research into the emergence of a distinct EU military ethos.<sup>18</sup> However, with regard to systemic causes for European defence cooperation, constructivist authors, like their realist counterparts, tend to focus on the transatlantic relationship.<sup>19</sup>

Liberal-intergovernmentalist analyses of European integration are built on the analytical framework developed by Andrew Moravcsik in his book *The Choice for Europe*. Moravcsik, focusing on the economic integration of Europe, adopts a rationalist approach dividing European Council negotiations in three stages. The process begins with the formation of national preferences through the mobilisation of domestic interests, followed by interstate bargaining and finally ends in the collective choice of the international institution.<sup>20</sup> Through this analytical framework, Robert Dover, Associate Professor in Intelligence and Security at the University of Leicester, has argued that the British government has been able to preserve the dominance of the nation-state with regard to

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<sup>14</sup> P. Haroche, 'Interdependence, Asymmetric Crises, and European Defence Cooperation', *European Security* (2017), 26:2, 226-252

<sup>15</sup> M.K.D. Cross, 'The Military Dimension of European Security: An Epistemic Community Approach', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* (2013), 42:1, 45-64, see also: J. Howorth, 'Discourse, Ideas, and Epistemic Communities in European Security and Defence Policy', *West European Politics* (2006), 27:2, 211-234

<sup>16</sup> C.O. Meyer, 'Solidifying constructivism: how material and ideational factors interact in European Defence', *Journal of Common Market Studies* (2006), 49:1, 61-81, see also: S. Heiselberg, 'Pacifism or activism: towards a common strategic culture within the European security and defense policy?' ISS Working Paper (2003), no.2 Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 1-36

<sup>17</sup> A. King, 'Towards a European Military Culture?' *Defence Studies* (2006), 6:3, 257-277, 5

<sup>18</sup> T. Koivula, 'Towards an EU Military Ethos', *European Foreign Affairs Review* (2009), 14:2, 171-190

<sup>19</sup> P. Haroche, 'Interdependence, Asymmetric Crises, and European Defence Cooperation', 4

<sup>20</sup> A. Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe, Social Purpose & State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (New York: 1999)



defence matters in the EU and the continued authority of NATO with regard to security issues in Europe. The importance of a transatlantic preference on the part of the British government figures strongly in Dover's analysis, too.<sup>21</sup> Other research has similarly focused on the adaptation of government CSDP policy according to domestic electoral preferences or consequences.<sup>22</sup>

It is clear that in all three schools of thought the transatlantic relationship appears as a factor (though to varying degrees in its importance) in analyses explaining why European states are cooperating or otherwise fail to cooperate through the CSDP. Such analyses are systemic in nature and mostly derived from realist reflections on CSDP development. This thesis will further explore this topic by analysing the relative importance of the transatlantic connection in shaping member state policies with regard to military capability development in the CSDP. This will be done through a case study of one member state's CSDP policy over time, specifically the Netherlands. The following section will provide an explanation of the case study.

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<sup>21</sup> R. Dover, *Europeanization of British Defence Policy* (London: 2007), 3-6

<sup>22</sup> B. Pohl, *EU Foreign Policy and Crisis Management Operations: Power, Purpose and Domestic Politics* (London and New York: 2014)

## Case Study

As mentioned in the previous section, the case study will specifically focus on the CSDP policy of the Netherlands. The majority of EU state policy analyses focus on the member states which have historically been important to CSDP's development: France, the United Kingdom and increasingly Germany. Smaller state policies are highlighted less, perhaps in the expectation that these will bandwagon with the big nations of Europe. Nonetheless the considerations of small states carry just as much weight in the Council's unanimous voting process and have influenced CSDP's development in major ways (One example concerns difficulties in EU-NATO cooperation, which often find Cyprus (an EU but not NATO member) and Turkey (a NATO but not EU member) at the centre).<sup>23</sup> While this research will not be able to account for all variations in member states' CSDP policies, it aims to partly fill the gap in member state policy analyses through a case study of the policy of the Netherlands with regard to military capacity building and integration in the European Union.

The Netherlands provides for an interesting study as the transatlantic relationship has long functioned as a key component of Dutch security and defence policy and has been the subject of many academic reflections on Dutch policy development. The mantra that 'NATO is the cornerstone of Dutch security policy' was coined in the 1970s by former Minister of Foreign Affairs Max van der Stoep and has since functioned as a staple phrase for various figures in the Dutch political elite.<sup>24</sup> F. van Staden writes that well into the 1990s, there was little doubt that cooperation through NATO and with the United States was an undisputed Dutch policy priority. The special relationship with the United States was of fundamental importance to Dutch security interests and a deciding factor in policymaking.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to a seeming transatlantic preference, the Netherlands has long been an advocate for joint capacity building with partner nations in Europe, though predominantly in bi-national formats or multinational frameworks outside of direct EU involvement. At the EU level, the Dutch are outspoken proponents for the crisis management, peacekeeping, post-conflict stabilisation and prevention tools of the Union while for military capability development regional or 'clustered' cooperation is seen as preferable.<sup>26</sup> This is evident by the fact that national efforts to enhance or expand capabilities through cooperation in regional formats have intensified over time. After removing its tank regiments due to budget constraints, the Dutch army decided to lease German

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<sup>23</sup> Ö. Taşpınar, 'Cyprus and the NATO-EU divide' (29 november 2010) <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/cyprus-and-the-nato-eu-divide/> (10/09/2018)

<sup>24</sup> D. Hellema, *Dutch Foreign Policy. The Role of the Netherlands in World Politics* (Dordrecht: 2009), 253

<sup>25</sup> F. van Staden, 'Nederlands veiligheidsbeleid en het Atlantische primaat. Over beknelde ambities en slijtende grondslagen' in: D. Hellema, M. Segers, J. Rood (eds) *Bezinningen op het buitenland* (Den Haag: 2011). p. 28-29

<sup>26</sup> T. van Osch, 'The Netherlands and the CSDP', D. Fiott (ed.) *The Common Security and Defence Policy: National Perspectives* (2015), 75-77, 75-76

tanks for training purposes. The Dutch airmobile brigade has also been integrated into a German-led division. In cooperation with seven partner nations, the European Air Transport Command (EATC) located in the Netherlands pools transport and refuelling capabilities and exercises operational control over these. These examples of permanent cooperation have been established in the last few years. The EATC, a bottom-up regional initiative, has even been touted as a blueprint for European defence cooperation.<sup>27</sup> Longer standing ties, such as the integration of the Dutch and Belgian navies (cooperation officially started in 1948) and cooperation among Dutch and British marines (since 1972) have deepened as well. It is clear that the Netherlands is certainly willing to build or enhance capabilities with European partner nations, though not necessarily at an EU level.

### **The influence of the transatlantic relationship on Dutch CSDP policy**

In line with some realist arguments on European defence cooperation, transatlantic ties in the early 2000s appear to have functioned as a motive for the Dutch government to invest in the CSDP. Only a few years prior, the U.S. government had voiced frustration and dissatisfaction over Europe's performance in the Yugoslav wars and the Kosovo crisis. Bill Clinton, then president of the United States, even went so far as to call the Europeans' handling of the Yugoslav crisis 'incompetent'. Only a US-led NATO intervention managed to contain the escalating violence – and did so again in the Kosovo crisis in 1999.<sup>28</sup> Klep and van Gils write that in order to prevent American disengagement from the transatlantic alliance, the Dutch government deemed it imperative to strengthen the European contribution to transatlantic security cooperation - the CSDP was to serve this purpose.<sup>29</sup> Projects and capabilities in the EU were to be complementary to NATO projects and means, which also meant that NATO was still considered the obvious policy priority.

Since 2010 Dutch scholars and think tanks have observed a subtle but gradual shift in security policy from the single-minded focus on NATO into a more diversified approach. In an article on the primacy of the Atlantic relationship in Dutch security policy, Fred van Staden states that official Dutch policy now prioritises multilateral organisations such as the UN, NATO, EU and OSCE equally. Even though van Staden suspects that 'when the chips are down' the Dutch may still prioritise the transatlantic relationship, such a choice would be based on practicality rather than

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<sup>27</sup> J.H. Berghuizen, 'European Air Transport Command, een blauwdruk voor Europese samenwerking en integratie', in: *Militaire Spectator* 181:6 (2012), 271-282

<sup>28</sup> A. Peen Rodt, S. Wolff, 'EU Conflict Management in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia', R.G. Whitman, S. Wolff (eds.) *The EU as a Global Conflict Manager* (New York 2012), 138-151, 140

<sup>29</sup> C. Klep, R. van Gils, *Van Korea tot Kabul: De Nederlandse militaire deelname aan vredesoperaties sinds 1945* (2005), 170

ideological preference. Van Staden emphasises that militarily NATO is still 'the only game in town'.<sup>30</sup> A 2010 report by Martijn Klem, researcher at the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR), also states that the Dutch government is increasingly pragmatic in its approach to NATO. Alternative political-military structures now receive Dutch support as well and, according to Klem, NATO is no longer the obvious first choice in Dutch security policy.<sup>31</sup> Another 2010 WRR report denotes the EU as the most important forum for the realisation of Dutch interests. In addition, the report asserts that NATO is losing some of its meaning due to the lack of a common enemy to unite its member states.<sup>32</sup> However, in an official response to the 2011 report, the Dutch government noted that the transatlantic relationship functioned as the anchor for safety and security in the world and that it remains a cornerstone in Dutch security policy.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, the use of the indefinite article 'a' does indicate an unequivocal departure from the policy in which the U.S. and NATO were considered *the* cornerstone of Dutch security policy.

These observations on the evolution in Dutch policy note a shift from an approach dominated by bandwagoning on the transatlantic relationship to a more independent pragmatism which is less focused on NATO and the United States. Accordingly, this thesis will trace this development in Dutch CSDP policy. How has the transatlantic relationship affected this policy and can it most adequately explain Dutch CSDP policies? The transatlantic relationship may play a part in the preference for regional defence cooperation over cooperation in EU frameworks as well. To gain a better understanding of these issues, this thesis will analyse Dutch policy through the following research question: To what extent has the transatlantic relationship influenced Dutch policy with regard to military capability development in the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy?

To tackle the research question this thesis will be divided in three separate chapters covering different periods of the CSDP's development, each marked and divided by milestones and challenges which greatly shaped the political and institutional direction of the CSDP. With regard to military capability development, the first Helsinki Headline Goal (1999), the second Helsinki Headline Goal (2004) and the introduction of the Treaty of Lisbon (2008-2009) provide the dividing lines along which the chapters are organised, each exploring the influence and role (or lack thereof) of the

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<sup>30</sup> F. van Staden, 'Nederlands veiligheidsbeleid en het Atlantische primaat. Over beknelde ambities en slijtende grondslagen' in: D. Hellema, M. Segers, J. Rood (eds) *Bezinningen op het buitenland* (Den Haag: 2011). p. 28-29

<sup>31</sup> M.H. Klem, *Het Nederlandse Veiligheidsbeleid in een Veranderende Wereld*, Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid 42 (2010), p.30-31

<sup>32</sup> Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid (WRR), *Aan het buitenland gehecht. Over verankering en strategie van Nederlands buitenlandbeleid* (2010), 77-79

<sup>33</sup> Verslag der handelingen van de Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal (Hereafter: HTK), brief van de Minister President en Minister van Algemene Zaken, 'Strategie van Nederlands buitenlandbeleid', 2010-2011, 32 635, nr.1, p.3-4

transatlantic relationship in Dutch CSDP policy during these time periods. In its entirety, this thesis will cover the 1999-2012 years in policy development. 2012 has been chosen as the final year for this thesis' analysis considering the limited scope and size of this thesis and as the defining events in the current era of CSDP's evolution (deteriorating relations with Russia, large scale migration and Brexit among other factors) are still very much in progress.

The first chapter will focus on the early years of CSDP's development (1999-2003). Not only was the first Helsinki Headline Goal formulated in 1999, the institutions, relationships with regard to partner organisations and specifics and goals of EU military cooperation were still being created or outlined. The second chapter will delve into the 2004-2008 period, marked by a redirection of efforts in defence cooperation informed by the European Security Strategy (adopted by the European Council in December of 2003), the subsequent formulation of the Second Helsinki Headline Goal in 2004 and the failure to ratify the European Constitution in 2005. Cooperation in the EU's CSDP at this time was also affected by the United States' invasion of Iraq. The third and final chapter will analyse the years 2008-2012, marked by the introduction of the Treaty of Lisbon and the first real challenge to the EU's security environment when the war in Libya unfolded in 2011, which was ultimately addressed by a NATO-led coalition through the imposition of a no-fly zone over Libyan airspace.

## Sources

Apart from secondary academic literature and reports published by think-tanks, primary material in this thesis will derive mainly from three sources. Official Dutch policy documents and policy statements made by government officials will be drawn from two separate websites: (1) the online archive of official publications of the Dutch government ([www.officielebekendmakingen.nl](http://www.officielebekendmakingen.nl)) and (2) the website of the Dutch House of Parliament, which holds notes of debates and commission meetings and their accompanying documents ([www.tweedekamer.nl](http://www.tweedekamer.nl)). These primary sources provide an excellent overview of Dutch policy and its evolution primarily through letters written by or on behalf of the Dutch ministers of foreign affairs and defence and statements made by these ministers during debates and commission meetings. For documents and statements published by the European Union, the publication archive of the Council of the European Union (to be found at [www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu)) will be utilised.

# Chapter I

## The St. Malo Agreement and the first Helsinki Headline Goal

The Helsinki European Council meeting of 1999 laid the foundations for what was to become the CSDP (then named the European Security and Defence Policy – ESDP). The origin of this summit can be traced to the pivotal bilateral agreement signed between France and the United Kingdom in 1998 at the French town of Saint-Malo. The unrest in the Balkans in the 1990s had spurred both countries to the negotiation table. For the United Kingdom, the wars in the former Yugoslavia led to the realisation that the United States may no longer act as a guarantor for European security as it had in the previous decades. Tony Blair’s labour government observed that if the transatlantic alliance was to be maintained, European countries would have to cooperate much more deeply to increase their conflict management capabilities.<sup>34</sup> This was an unprecedented move in UK policy, which up until that moment had always championed the primacy of NATO in all matters relating to European security. France, which never fully trusted U.S. intentions and which had pleaded for the creation of a European defence identity since the fall of the Berlin Wall (and long before that), reassessed its own security policy after the end of the Cold War as well. French experience in the 90s in the First Gulf War, in Bosnia and with the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy highlighted its own military limitations, slow EU development and the security implications of an absent or unwilling United States. In the new post-Soviet era, French policymakers deemed it possible and necessary to reapproach NATO, which France had left in 1966 under the leadership of De Gaulle.<sup>35</sup>

Through the conceptual acceptance of an exclusively European security architecture on the part of the British and a reapproach in the relationship with NATO on the part of the French, both countries made crucial steps towards one another. Both countries agreed the European Union needed a capacity for autonomous action, credible military forces and the means to use them, as well as that these elements should contribute to a modern Atlantic Alliance.<sup>36</sup> One year later in Helsinki, European member states agreed to the development of a 50-60.000 strong military force deployable for up to one year in a given EU operation. Alongside this goal, the Council pledged to create new political and military structures for the direction of operations and to do so in ‘consultation, cooperation and transparency’ with NATO. The conclusions of the Council meeting

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<sup>34</sup> J. Howorth, ‘Britain, France and the European Defence Initiative’, *Global Politics and Strategy* (2000), 42:2, 33-35, 34

<sup>35</sup> J. Bryant, ‘France and NATO from 1966 to Kosovo: coming full circle?’, *European Security* (2000), 9:3, 21-37, 23-27

<sup>36</sup> British-French St. Malo Joint Declaration, in: M. Rutten (ed.), ‘From St. Malo to Nice, European Defence: core documents’, *Chaillot Papers* (2001) 47, 8-9

further include a promise to develop non-military crisis management means and to allow non-EU NATO members and third parties to contribute to EU operations (crucial for the possible involvement of the United States and others).<sup>37</sup>

Dutch policy at the time of the St. Malo agreement was informed in much the same way in which the United Kingdom entered negotiations with France. The Dutch seemed ambitious with regard to EU cooperation though focused on preserving the transatlantic connection, in accordance with observations made by authors such as van Staden, Klep and van Gils. Like the British, the Dutch considered the CSDP as a vehicle for strengthening the transatlantic alliance. In a November 1999 letter of the Dutch minister of foreign affairs to the House of Parliament discussing the upcoming summit in Helsinki, the minister stated that the government saw the improvement of European military capabilities as a top priority. Nevertheless it was stated that large EU operations should utilise NATO means.<sup>38</sup> One month later during a meeting of the defence commission, the minister elaborated that any operation involving the envisioned 50-60.000 strong intervention force (which as per the Helsinki Headline Goal was to be deployable by 2003) should be NATO-led and only 'autonomous' with the use of NATO-capabilities. The government had also pushed for the inclusion in the Helsinki negotiations of a reference to NATO's Defence Capabilities Initiative (DCI). The DCI had been proposed by the United States in 1998 and was intended to improve the interoperability among NATO allies through the coordination of future capability development.<sup>39</sup> But was this focus on the inclusion of NATO borne out of an ideological preference for transatlantic cooperation on the part of the Dutch?

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<sup>37</sup> Council of the European Union, Presidency Conclusions of the Helsinki European Council (10 and 11 december 1999), articles 25-29

<sup>38</sup> HTK, brief van de minister van Buitenlandse Zaken, 'Voorbereiding Europese Raad van Helsinki', 1999-2000, 21 501-02, nr.318, p.2

<sup>39</sup> HTK, Verslag van een algemeen overleg, 1999-2000, 21 501-02, nr.321, p.8

# Operational Autonomy and the Transatlantic Connection

Certainly, U.S. policy did influence the development of a security and defence dimension in the European Union from the outset. When the French and British concluded the St. Malo agreement in 1998, this new development took the Clinton administration by surprise. At a December 1998 meeting of NATO's foreign ministers, the U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright reacted positively to the St. Malo agreement but highlighted three possible aspects of this new European security and defence initiative which should be avoided: a delinking of European and NATO security architectures, a duplication of existing efforts and possible discrimination against non-EU member states (otherwise known as the 3-D's).<sup>40</sup> All three criteria stemmed from uncertainty about the direction set out in St. Malo for the European Union vis-à-vis NATO. The development of the CSDP was particularly surprising to some because only a few years earlier in Berlin in 1996, NATO members pledged to develop a European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) within the organisation, its purpose to enable European allies to assume greater responsibility for their common security and defence. The ESDI agreement provided European NATO-members with the possibility to utilise NATO capabilities in operations under the autonomous leadership of the Western European Union (WEU - which was to be absorbed into the EU's CSDP in 1999).<sup>41</sup>

An analysis of the US's 3Ds can be found in a monograph report on the relationship between the ESDP and the United States/NATO published by the RAND Corporation. With regard to de-linking, this was highlighted firstly to ensure that the 1996 Berlin agreement on the ESDI would be honoured. Secondly, behind de-linking was also a more long-standing U.S. concern for a de-coupling of the transatlantic relationship in which the willingness on either side to share risks and security interests would diminish. To some in the U.S. administration, NATO's ESDI was already perceived to have the potential to cause such a rift. Discrimination was of particular concern to the five non-EU NATO members, namely the United States, Canada, Turkey, Iceland and Norway. The desire for EU autonomy left for the possibility that non-EU NATO members would be side-lined in the event of an ESDP mission. At the time it wasn't wholly clear to what extent the EU would want to draw upon NATO assets (in large part provided for by the United States) in such a case, either. The last issue, duplication, was of most importance to the United States. The concern was that scarce resources

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<sup>40</sup> Albright, M.K. 'Statement to the North Atlantic Council', U.S. Department of State Archive (1998), <https://1997-2001.state.gov/statements/1998/981208.html>

<sup>41</sup> NATO Press release, Development of the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) within NATO (1999) <https://www.nato.int/docu/comm/1999/9904-wsh/pres-eng/05esdi.pdf>



would be spent on means European nations could easily obtain through the 1996 agreement, especially as European defence budgets were simultaneously decreasing.<sup>42</sup>

The Dutch seemed firmly aligned with most of the US's views. Involvement of NATO was considered vital and much stake was given to the issues of operational autonomy and avoiding duplication. There was also the fact that NATO's ESDI agreement with the WEU preceded the establishment of the EU's ESDP (which absorbed the WEU) – the NATO connection was thus automatically built into the new framework. In a letter reacting to the French-British St. Malo agreement, the Dutch ministers of foreign affairs and defence highlighted that the government's goal in European defence cooperation was first and foremost to deliver a balanced European contribution to NATO operations. Crucially, however, the letter states that too much reliance on the United States was undesirable as the European Union was increasingly being confronted with tensions and conflicts in its surroundings.<sup>43</sup> In November of 1999, accompanying the new developments in Europe, the Dutch government also published the 'Defence Note 2000'.\* In the note the emerging EU security and defence framework is described as a necessary step to develop more unity and a greater capacity to act on the part of European allies. The expectation within the Defence Note was that the EU's new framework would bring more balance to the transatlantic relationship. Moreover, the document explains that the insistence on using NATO means constituted a practical choice deriving from the view that it would avoid unnecessary duplication of capabilities between both organisations (such as a headquarters for the planning and execution of operations) and because at the time European nations did not have all required capabilities for autonomous operations.<sup>44</sup>

In spite of these arguments however, the reasoning in the Defence Note belied a crucial factor in the EU's inability to assume operational autonomy: the very fact that the EU did not have a headquarters for operational planning, which the Dutch effectively opposed. This meant that the operational direction of CSDP missions would have to depend on non-EU planning capabilities. To facilitate this dependency, much relied on the success of negotiations for deepened EU-NATO cooperation. In the negotiations for the extension in scope of the 1996 NATO-WEU Berlin agreement to fit the needs of the new ESDP, the Dutch considered access to NATO operational planning capabilities a first priority.<sup>45</sup> The resulting agreement would become known as the 'Berlin-Plus'

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<sup>42</sup> R.E. Hunter, 'The European Security and Defence Policy: NATO's Companion – or Competitor?', RAND Corporation (2002) Chapter 6, 34-41 [https://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph\\_reports/MR1463.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1463.html)

<sup>43</sup> HTK, Brief van de Ministers van Buitenlandse Zaken en Defensie, 'Europese Raad', 1999-2000, 21501-20, nr.79

\*Defence notes are key security policy documents akin to white papers, functioning as a strategic review of the current state and future course of the Dutch Ministry of Defence. The previous defence note was published in 1991 to react to the changing security environment following the end of the Cold War.

<sup>44</sup> HTK, Defensienota 2000, 1999-2000, 26900, nr.2 28-33

<sup>45</sup> HTK, Brief van de Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken, 'Ministeriële Noord-Atlantische Raad', 2000-2001, 26 348, nr.4

agreement, comprising several areas of close EU-NATO cooperation (the precise details of which are classified). One particularly tense topic in the transatlantic relationship during the Berlin-plus negotiations was the view shared by the United Kingdom and United States that NATO should have a right of first refusal over the EU in case of a crisis – meaning that the EU would only act in instances where NATO decided it will not.<sup>46</sup> A Parliamentary questions and answers document on the Dutch Defence Note 2000 states in response to a query on the right of first refusal that France resisted the formalisation of such an arrangement. The Dutch government was ambivalent in the matter: the Q&A response deemed it unnecessary or redundant because current Dutch policy already notes that the larger and more dangerous an operation becomes the more important NATO involvement will be.<sup>47</sup> Nonetheless, the answer did not align with the views of the UK and US, who demanded the right of first refusal in any possible crisis scenario codified in a written agreement.

While Berlin-Plus was finally agreed in its entirety in 2002 (the negotiations were drawn out due to a blockade by Turkey on the NATO side of the discussions over the level of its involvement in possible EU missions and their planning), the issue of autonomy and operational planning capabilities truly came to a head in April of 2003, when a joint proposal by France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg for a European military headquarters was first forwarded. The proposal came at a difficult point in time for the transatlantic relationship, only shortly after the U.S.-led coalition of the willing had invaded Iraq. The four European nations outlined a facility for the operational control of EU military missions in Tervuren, Belgium. The plan drew strong criticism from the United States. After several months of discussions, US NATO Ambassador Nicholas Burns reacted publicly during a press conference in September of 2003 by stating the following: “What we cannot support and will not support is the creation of an alternative EU military headquarters, whether it’s in Tervuren or some other place, in Brussels or elsewhere”. Burns continued to describe the plan as duplicative, needlessly costly, a contradiction to the Berlin-Plus agreements and to the detriment of future NATO-EU relations.<sup>48</sup> An EU military headquarters was effectively seen as being in violation of the three D’s outlined by Madeleine Albright. The Netherlands, one of the few European countries which (politically) supported the invasion of Iraq, was equally critical. In a November meeting of the defence commission, the Dutch minister of defence echoed the US ambassador by stating that the plan contravened the Berlin-Plus agreement, was duplicative and strained transatlantic relations.

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<sup>46</sup> A letter of the Dutch minister of foreign affairs about a meeting of the North Atlantic Council on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December 2003 states that US Secretary of State Colin Powell emphasised the well-known US view that NATO has a right of first refusal. HTK, Brief van de Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken, ‘Noord Atlantische Raad’, 2003-2004, 28 676, nr.10 Tony Blair, cited in an article published by The Telegraph in November 2000, stated that the new European force would only act ‘when NATO decides as a whole that it does not wish to be engaged’. G. Jones, ‘Hague goes to war over Euro army’, The Telegraph, November 22, 2000.

<sup>47</sup> HTK, Defensienota 2000, Lijst van Vragen en Antwoorden, 1999-2000, 26900, nr.5

<sup>48</sup> J. Joshi, ‘US holds out strongly against EU Military HQ’, Agence France Presse, 30 September 2003

Moreover, the minister remarked that the proposed headquarters bypassed the availability of national headquarters as well.<sup>49</sup>

The minister's statement leaves the impression that the Dutch government again mostly aligned itself with the United States. However, the minister's reference to the availability of national headquarters alluded towards another factor that was certainly of influence in his opposition to the proposed European headquarters. Since 1995, the Dutch military had invested considerable effort in a new joint Dutch-German rapidly deployable army corps headquarters intended to lead a military force of ~50.000 soldiers – a good fit for the Helsinki Headline Goal of 60,000 deployable troops. Already in early 2000, the minister of defence speculated that the new headquarters could be available for both EU and NATO operations.<sup>50</sup> The Defence Note 2000 underlines the notion that the headquarters' staff could become involved in the shaping of the ESDP in the future.<sup>51</sup> In a EU capability commitment conference for the Helsinki Headline Goal in November of 2000, the Dutch and German delegations issued a joint statement offering the Dutch-German headquarters as an available rapidly deployable headquarters for EU operations. NATO had also begun transforming the headquarters to a designated high readiness forces headquarters for NATO operations.<sup>52</sup> In addition, the Dutch government branded the Dutch-German army corps an ESDP-project with NATO application, in part financed through a nationally allocated ESDP budget.<sup>53</sup> Clearly, the 2003 proposal to create a separate EU headquarters would have potentially competed with or even side-lined the Dutch-German headquarters from involvement in possible ESDP operations. Moreover, it is doubtful the Dutch military would have had spare planning and leadership capacity to contribute to such an initiative alongside its commitment to the bi-national headquarters and national facilities. This demonstrates that while transatlantic stability may have been a factor, national interest certainly played a role as well.

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<sup>49</sup> HTK, Verslag van een algemeen overleg, 2003-2004, 21501-02, nr. 510

<sup>50</sup> HTK, brief van de Minister van Defensie, Defensienota 2000, 1999-2000, 26 900, nr.21, p.4

<sup>51</sup> HTK, Defensienota 2000, 1999-2000, 26 900, nr.2, p.7

<sup>52</sup> HTK, brief van de minister van Defensie, defensienota 2000, 1999-2000, 26 900, nr. 35, p.1-2

<sup>53</sup> HTK, brief van de minister van Defensie, NAVO, 2002-2003, 28676, nr.1, p.2-5

## Dutch Policy and EU Military Capability Development 1999-2003

With regard to capability development projects in the EU, the Dutch government preferred a decentralised structure of initiatives from the very start of the ESDP. In a meeting of the defence commission on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1999, the Dutch minister of defence recounted an exchange with his French counterpart during a council meeting on November 15<sup>th</sup>. While the French wanted to discuss the institutional development of the EU's ESDP, the Dutch minister avoided this topic and stated that military capabilities in Europe should fit together 'like blocks', pointing towards existing Dutch-UK and Dutch-German cooperation as examples for future CSDP development.<sup>54</sup> A reason for this preference might be found in three areas. First, in a 2002 request by the government for a report on European defence cooperation to the AIV (Advisory Council on International Affairs - an independent think tank which produces analyses for the Dutch government and parliament), it is written that the Ministry of Defence is and remains firmly within the domain of national sovereignty.<sup>55</sup> Truly far-reaching cooperative projects and top-down EU direction might have threatened this sovereignty. Secondly, emphasising a focus on bilateral or other cooperative arrangements with European partners which were already in place would allow the Dutch government to build upon these initiatives without necessarily having to invest in additional new top-down EU initiatives. Considering the fact that the defence budget had been steadily shrinking throughout the 1990s and 2000s, it would have been difficult to adapt to new international arrangements while the armed forces' capacities were already strained. Between 1989 and 2003, the budget had already declined from 2.7% to 1.5% of GDP, only to decrease even more in the following years.<sup>56</sup> Third, the existing models had so far been deemed successful. The minister stated the Dutch were 'much farther along' than other countries in the EU with regard to European military cooperation.<sup>57</sup> Naturally, this meant that the Dutch considered their approach to be an example for the other member states to emulate.

Nationally, the Ministry of Defence further established a separate CSDP budget to finance projects intended to strengthen European defence cooperation. The expenditures within this budget provide an indication of the policy priorities on the part of the Ministry. As stated in the last section, the Dutch-German army corps headquarters was partially financed through this budget. In the 2002 and 2003 budgets other expenses within the CSDP budget were mainly related to bi- or multilateral cooperation projects with European partners in logistic support (such as air transport & tanker

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<sup>54</sup> HTK, verslag van een algemeen overleg, 1999-2000, 21 501-02, nr.321, p.8

<sup>55</sup> Adviesraad Internationale Vraagstukken, 'Militaire samenwerking in Europa; mogelijkheden en beperkingen' (2005), nr.31, 'Adviesaanvraag' <https://aiv-advies.nl/67b/publicaties/adviezen/militaire-samenwerking-in-europa-mogelijkheden-en-beperkingen#request-for-advice>

<sup>56</sup> Nederlandse Omroep Stichting, 'Wat stelt onze krijgsmacht nog voor?', March 14th, 2017 <https://nos.nl/artikel/2163157-wat-stelt-onze-krijgsmacht-nog-voor.html> (20/10/2018)

<sup>57</sup> HTK, verslag van een algemeen overleg, 1999-2000, 21 501-02, nr.321, p.8

capabilities and medical support) or even national expenditures (a track & tracing system for logistical support to deployment zones).<sup>58</sup> It should be clear that the budget, even though it bears the name of the EU's CSDP, is not constrained to expenditures within the EU framework or the CSDP but rather reserved for expenditures which are nationally deemed to contribute to the stated goals of both the Headline Goal and NATO's Defence Capabilities Initiative. This allows the Ministry of Defence considerable leeway in the budget's allocation. Notwithstanding, despite a declining defence budget, the CSDP budget grew between 2001 and 2003<sup>59</sup> and again from 2003 to 2006.<sup>60</sup> Despite this, budget cuts did affect the military's ability to deliver on important EU and NATO targets such as the fact that there were no longer funds available for the acquisition of medium-heavy transport helicopters.<sup>61</sup> Nonetheless, considerable efforts were made to develop and acquire capacities. One clear example is the German-Dutch army corps headquarters; another is the attempted development of a MALE-UAV system with France which started in 2001.<sup>62</sup>

The adoption of the European Capabilities Action Plan (ECAP) by the European Council in 2001, in which the Dutch played an instrumental role, was an EU-wide step towards decentralised, bottom-up cooperation. The ECAP was similar to the NATO's Defence Capabilities Initiative (DCI) in that it was intended to address capability shortfalls and strengthen European defence cooperation. The ECAP emphasised four principles: (1) to enhance the effectiveness of European defence efforts, (2) a bottom-up approach relying on voluntary national commitments (3) the importance of coordination between member states and with NATO and (4) the importance of political and public support for capacity building.<sup>63</sup> As part of the ECAP, 19 panels were established to develop possible solutions to specific European-wide capability shortfalls, ranging from Nuclear, Biological and Chemical protection to Attack/Support Helicopters and Strategic ISR IMINT collection (Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance / imagery intelligence). The panels presented their reports on the identified shortfalls as late as March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003, the year the Helsinki Headline Goal of 60,000 deployable troops was supposed to be achieved.

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<sup>58</sup> Ministerie van Financiën, Rijksbegroting 2002, artikel 11 (p.132-137), p.135. Retrieved at: [http://www.rijksbegroting.nl/archief-minfin/2002/defaultd086.pdf%3FCMS\\_TCP=tcpAsset&id=MFCR4BAE415F3505F45C18CA84442CAAB87F0?CMS\\_TCP=tcpAsset&id=MFCR4BAE415F3505F45C18CA84442CAAB87F0](http://www.rijksbegroting.nl/archief-minfin/2002/defaultd086.pdf%3FCMS_TCP=tcpAsset&id=MFCR4BAE415F3505F45C18CA84442CAAB87F0?CMS_TCP=tcpAsset&id=MFCR4BAE415F3505F45C18CA84442CAAB87F0) See also: Ministry of Finance, Rijksbegroting 2003, artikel 11 (p.126-131) Retrieved at: [http://www.rijksbegroting.nl/archief-minfin/2003/defaultbac8.pdf%3FCMS\\_TCP=tcpAsset&id=0473345514E9409682977B4C4ED0CD5A?CMS\\_TCP=cpAsset&id=0473345514E9409682977B4C4ED0CD5A](http://www.rijksbegroting.nl/archief-minfin/2003/defaultbac8.pdf%3FCMS_TCP=tcpAsset&id=0473345514E9409682977B4C4ED0CD5A?CMS_TCP=cpAsset&id=0473345514E9409682977B4C4ED0CD5A)

<sup>59</sup> Ibidem

<sup>60</sup> AIV, Europese Defensiesamenwerking, Soevereiniteit en Handelingsvermogen (2012), nr.78, 20-21

<sup>61</sup> J. Hoffenaar, 'Een politieke aangelegenheid en daarmee nooit een uitgemaakte zaak. De ontwikkeling van de hoofdtaken en het ambitieniveau van de Nederlandse krijgsmacht na de Koude Oorlog', NIHM (2009), 63-64

<sup>62</sup> AIV, Europese Defensiesamenwerking, Soevereiniteit en Handelingsvermogen (2012), nr.78, 20-21

<sup>63</sup> B. Schmitt, (2004), European Capabilities Action Plan (ECAP), Factsheet, Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies, <https://www.peacepalacelibrary.nl/ebooks/files/06-bsecap.pdf> (11.03.18) p. 1-2

During the ECAP panel discussions neither national planners nor procurement specialists were involved, making it difficult to see how and when ECAP would lead to the development of the required capability shortfalls.<sup>64</sup> One positive however was the fact that in NATO through the DCI (which the Dutch had pushed to be referenced in the Helsinki negotiations) and its successor the Prague Capability Commitment (PCC) mostly the same shortfalls were identified within the European portion of the alliance as those analysed through ECAP. Both organisations being in agreement on shortcomings would make efforts to solve these issues easier and complementary. A report by the AIV, an independent think-tank for the Dutch government, stated that the only remaining issues in addressing these shortfalls would be financial and the required political commitments.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, the late reports and the delay in the EU-NATO Berlin plus agreement made it impossible to achieve the Helsinki Headline Goal within its set deadline. A statement released by the EU defence ministers after the capability conference on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May 2003 regarding EU military capabilities declared the process a success but recognised existing remaining issues. In the declaration, even though the ministers stated that the EU now has operational capability across the full range of the Petersberg tasks\*, they acknowledge that this capability remained limited and constrained due to recognised shortfalls.<sup>66</sup>

## Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the extent to which a transatlantic preference can be traced in Dutch CSDP policy during the early phases of the CSDP's development (1999-2003). Statements made by the Ministry of Defence in official documents and the projects pursued by the armed forces in the 1999-2003 period suggest that while policy choices were made with transatlantic cooperation in mind, an independent pragmatism and various national considerations played a deciding role in policy development. This was true for both Dutch policy with regard to institutional arrangements in the CSDP and in capability development. Moreover, while NATO was still considered the most important security arrangement and the U.S. an important ally, it is clear that the government prioritised European defence cooperation though not necessarily within or through the EU or even NATO but based on the goals formulated in NATO's Defence Capabilities Initiative and the Helsinki Headline Goal. Even though European defence cooperation was considered a priority, a bottom-up approach based on bi-national or other frameworks outside of larger institutional arrangements was preferred.

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<sup>64</sup> Ibidem, 2-3

<sup>65</sup> AIV, 'Militaire Samenwerking in Europa, Mogelijkheden en Bependingen' (2003) nr.31, 25

\* The Petersberg tasks describe the possible military missions the EU is empowered to engage itself in. These are humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping, peacemaking and crisis management.

<sup>66</sup> Council of the European Union, Draft Declaration on EU Military Capabilities (2003), page 2 retrieved at: <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9132-2003-INIT/en/pdf>

This also ensured that much of the substance of Dutch involvement in European defence cooperation firmly remained within the sphere of national decision-making.

# Chapter II

## The Second Helsinki Headline Goal

2004-2008 was a difficult time for the EU's CSDP. NATO and the transatlantic alliance were politically and physically increasingly preoccupied by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the previous chapter, it was briefly touched upon that tensions arose between the United States and some European allies when a proposal was made for the formation of a separate EU headquarters barely a month after the invasion of Iraq (March 2003). France, Germany and Belgium, the main proponents of the new EU headquarters, were also among the countries which had openly opposed the United States' invasion of Iraq for lack of a UN mandate. Countries such as the United Kingdom and Poland had instead readily joined the United States in its invasion – the contrast had created a schism within Europe and within the transatlantic alliance. But the diverging policies on the Iraq war and the ensuing tensions in the relationship between the US and EU appeared to increase countries' interest in shaping the CSDP. In his book *The European Security Strategy* (2005), Sven Biscop states that 9/11 and the Iraq war had undoubtedly influenced EU member states' willingness to consider the formulation of a European security strategy. For some, to formulate alternatives to US policies which they could not agree with, for others, such as the UK, to preserve a transatlantic alliance which seemed threatened in its existence.<sup>67</sup> Haseler has argued that the invasion of Iraq specifically was a unifying factor for the EU – bringing together Germany and France in a shared interest for an EU security and defence policy.<sup>68</sup>

The development of the European Security Strategy was vital to prevent future schisms in the European Union through the alignment of the strategic thinking among its member states. It would also help in the day-to-day policymaking and determine the (military) capabilities and instruments which needed to be developed to reach the strategic level of ambition. In the process that led to the formulation of the strategy, three seminars were organised between September and October 2003 to solicit input from NGO's, academia and media, as well as officials from member states, the European institutions and even future member states. The result was a forward thinking strategy that emphasised political, diplomatic, civilian, trade and development means alongside military ones to prevent and manage conflicts. In December of 2003, the strategy was adopted by the European Council.<sup>69</sup> The strategy states that the European Union should pursue the building of security in its geographic neighbourhood using its own means as well as globally through the support

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<sup>67</sup> S. Biscop, *The European Security Strategy: A Global Agenda for Positive Power* (Aldershot: 2005), 12-13

<sup>68</sup> S. Haseler, *Super-State. The new Europe and its Challenge to America* (London: 2004), p.98-101

<sup>69</sup> Biscop, *The European Security Strategy*, 13-15



of multilateral institutions such as the UN and WTO. The transatlantic relationship, and by extension NATO, are also noted as core elements of the international system.<sup>70</sup> In terms of military capability development, the EU's militaries needed to be transformed into more flexible, mobile forces. The systematic use of the pooling and sharing of assets was expected to reduce duplication, overhead and increase capabilities.<sup>71</sup>

The Helsinki Headline Goal 2010, ratified in the European Council of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of June 2004, was set in part to reflect this newly formulated strategy. On one hand, existing capability shortfalls not resolved in the 2003 goal still needed to be addressed, on the other the strategy called for mobile and flexible forces, shifting the focus for capability development from a large number of deployable troops to more rapidly deployable and available pre-constructed force packages. The 2010 Headline Goal formulated eight specific milestones, six of which were focused on military capability development. A European Defence Agency would be established in 2004 to support capability development by facilitating cooperation, developing benchmarks and evaluating progress, multinational force packages based on the Battlegroup concept would be operational by 2007 and by 2010 strategic airlift (one particularly troublesome capability shortfall) was expected to be jointly coordinated among member states. In addition, the 2004 council conclusions state that qualitative benchmarks and criteria are to be formulated in the fields of deployability and multinational training, to which national forces would be evaluated.<sup>72</sup>

During the 2004-2008 period another important development, which had been initiated in 2001, began to take shape: the drafting of the European constitution. The constitution was regarded as a huge step forward for the CSDP through the enhancement of Europe's capacity to act in several ways. Among other changes, it included a mutual assistance clause obliging every member state to aid (including through military means) another state in the event of a terror-attack, man-made or natural disaster if so requested. It also included the concept of PESCO and made a number of fundamental institutional changes to the CSDP. A special Union Minister of Foreign Affairs was to be appointed, chairing the Foreign Affairs Council and having executive powers over the CSFP (including the CSDP). In addition the treaty proposed a new service: the European External Action Service (EEAS), an 'embryo' of what was to become an EU diplomatic service.<sup>73</sup> By October 2004, The EU constitution had been signed by the heads of all member states during a meeting of the European Council. The only remaining step was ratification of the treaty by each member state – a process

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<sup>70</sup> European Council, *A Secure Europe in a Better World* (2003)

<sup>71</sup> European Council, *A Secure Europe in a Better World*, p.12

<sup>72</sup> European Council, *Helsinki Headline Goal 2010* (2004), p.2-3

<sup>73</sup> I. Isakova, 'ESDP after the European Constitution', *The RUSI Journal* (2005), 150:1, 33-37, 34, for official treaty text see: European Council, *Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe*, Title V – chapter II (Common Foreign and Security Policy).

which ended in failure when Dutch and French voters rejected the European constitution in nationally organised referenda.

This chapter will explore how Dutch policymakers navigated the developments from 2004-2008. Was the Dutch government aligned with the UK, primarily motivated to formulate a European Security Strategy in order to preserve the Atlantic alliance, or to distance the EU from US policy choices? How did the government position itself with regard to the related formulation of the European Constitution and the new Helsinki Headline Goal? The following sections will address these questions.

## The European Security Strategy and the EU Constitution

The European Security Strategy (hereafter: ESS) and the EU Constitution (to be reshaped into the Lisbon Treaty post-2005) more clearly delineated the EU's role and purpose as a global security actor and constituted the most important agreed upon documents affecting the 2004-2008 time-period, also shaping (potential) capability development. The transatlantic relationship was of importance in the negotiations on both documents. A year prior to the formulation of the ESS, the United States government revealed its new National Security Strategy (NSS – issued September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2002), introducing a strong emphasis on countering WMD proliferation, terrorist threats in the context of the War on Terror and the necessity of pre-emptive action. The strategy states that action against a potential threat could be undertaken even if '(...) uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy's attack'.<sup>74</sup> It also noted that the US 'will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting pre-emptively'.<sup>75</sup> Effectively, the 'Bush doctrine' (as the 2002 NSS would be known) underscored possible unilateral action on the part of the US, without providing clear policy guidance on the concept of pre-emptive action. Just five days prior to the issuing of the NSS, President Bush formally began making the case for the invasion of Iraq, addressing the UN Security Council on September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2002.

The formulation of the ESS as a consequence of the Iraq war also served as a response to the US's NSS. Sven Biscop, who traced the development of the ESS in his book *The European Security Strategy*, states that the first draft of the ESS closely mirrored the US's NSS in its threat analysis with a strong emphasis on the dangers of terrorism and WMD proliferation. Besides bridging the divide which had formed among European nations, the confirmation of Washington's threat analysis was interpreted on both sides of the Atlantic as a political signal and as a gesture of transatlantic solidarity. Nevertheless, the final version of the ESS was toned down in its assessment while simultaneously elaborating on other possible threats to European security such as regional conflicts, organised crime and state failure while still highlighting terrorism and WMD proliferation.<sup>76</sup> More striking differences between both documents are found in strategy implementation. Whereas the NSS underlines possible US unilateralism and focuses mostly on its military dimension to address possible threats, the ESS unsurprisingly supports effective multilateralism, international institutions, the international rule of law and the development of stronger diplomatic capabilities (alongside military ones) in its approach to conflicts and threats.<sup>77</sup> In some fundamental ways, the EU and US

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<sup>74</sup> United States Department of State, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (2002), p.15

<sup>75</sup> Ibidem, 6

<sup>76</sup> Biscop, *The European Security Strategy*, 18-19

<sup>77</sup> Ibidem, 109-110

appeared to drift apart in their strategic thinking and conflict approach. Despite this divergence, Colin Powell praised the ESS as an excellent document in a ministerial meeting between NATO and the EU on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2003.<sup>79</sup>

To the Dutch government, the development of the ESS was considered one of a number of important steps the EU undertook in the process towards healing the rift within Europe and with the United States over the invasion of Iraq (in line with Sven Biscop's observations). In a September 2003 letter on the State of the European Union by the minister of foreign affairs and the state secretary for European affairs, the government notes that the ESS would allow the EU to become a serious partner to the United States and for the Union to be able to contribute to security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>80</sup> In a letter written by the minister of Foreign Affairs to his Greek counterpart George Papandreou prior to the informal ministerial meeting which decided upon the development of the ESS (Greece held the rotating six-month presidency of the Council at the time), the minister outlines the Dutch strategic vision for the CFSP/CSDP. The letter states that focus should be given to subjects such as non-proliferation, the fight against terrorism, a dialogue with the Islamic world, more active engagement in the stability and security of neighbouring regions, capability development in the CSDP and greater coherence in external policies. Any CSFP/CSDP agenda should be pursued in the multilateral system – which, according to the minister, needed to be repaired and be made more effective. Only then would the United States be willing to work in that system. Curiously, the minister writes that most of these issues can be found in the US's NSS as well, including a willingness to work in the multilateral system. The unilateral intentions expressed in the US's security strategy are not mentioned, only that the Dutch do not always see eye-to-eye with the US on the choice of instruments, methods or implementation timeframe.<sup>81</sup>

The EU constitution codified into law the division of labour within the CSDP and proposed the reform of the EU's institutional framework (and its expansion). These changes would support and make actionable the strategic vision and ambitions of the EU, which in terms of security and defence policy were expressed through the ESS. As previously stated, the appointment of a Union Minister for Foreign Affairs and the creation of a European External Action Service (EEAS) were important facets of this constitution-driven reform. Other significant changes were the inclusion of a mutual assistance clause, a possibility for permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) as well as defining the

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<sup>78</sup> European Council, *A Secure Europe in a Better World* p.9,p.12

<sup>79</sup> HTK, Brief van de Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken, verslag vergaderingen Noord-Atlantische Raad (NAR), NAVO-EU bijeenkomst, NAVO Rusland Raad, NAVO-Oekraïne Commissie en Euro-Atlantische Partnerschapsraad (EAPR), 2003-2004, 28676, nr.10 (12 januari 2004)

<sup>80</sup> HTK, Brief van de Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken en de Staatssecretaris voor Europese Zaken, De Staat van de Europese Unie, 2003-2004, 29201, nr.1 (12 september 2003), p.78

<sup>81</sup> HTK, Brief voor Informele Raad voor Algemene Zaken en Externe Betrekkingen, 2003-2004, niet-dossier stuk, eu03000074-b1 (9 mei 2003)

tasks and responsibilities of the newly-created European Defence Agency and its organisational position within the CSDP. The Union Minister would be a central figurehead in the CSDP's bureaucracy, contributing to the preparation of the policy through proposals to the Foreign Affairs Council (where he or she would act as chairman), ensuring the implementation of council decisions and act and engage in political dialogue on the Union's behalf. The EEAS, headed by the newly appointed Union Minister and supporting this post with analyses, would act as the nucleus of CSDP's implementation in cooperation with the diplomatic services of all EU member states.<sup>82</sup> Until the proposed institutional changes would come into force, the chairmanship of the foreign affairs council (and with it the executive/managerial responsibilities of chairmanship) still rotated among EU member states every six months. Moreover, the EU bureaucracy had three different representatives on foreign relations. The presidency had its own foreign minister, the EU bureaucracy had a High Representative and, additionally, one of the members of the European Commission was responsible for external relations. All three roles would be merged into one. The new Union Minister would bring some much needed streamlining and stability to the EU's foreign and defence policies.<sup>8384</sup>

Dutch government policy was mostly positively inclined to the proposed constitution. An explanatory memorandum was published on april 4<sup>th</sup>, 2005, outlining the position of the Dutch government on the final version of the document. Several points were made on the CSDP. The Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg had continually pleaded in favour of a Union Minister for Foreign Affairs. This new post and the EEAS were welcome additions which would help increase the effectiveness of the Union.<sup>85</sup> The purpose and goals of PESCO were endorsed by the government as these were in-line with existing national defence policies. The government also supported the constitutional entrenchment of the new European Defence Agency, pointing out that its creation would help streamline capacity-building and material cooperation in Europe through one organisation. However, a point of contention was found in the mutual assistance clause introduced in draft versions of the constitutional treaty. The Dutch were initially opposed to this proposal because of fears for duplication with NATO, stating that NATO's article 5 already provided for common defence. As such, the Dutch insisted that the relevant clause would be modified to include a reference to NATO, stating that the organisation remained the foundation for and primary instrument in the common defence of its member states.<sup>86</sup> Nonetheless, in a statement during a debate on the State of the European Union half a year prior to the publication of the memorandum,

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<sup>82</sup> European Council, *Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe* p.140 Art. III - 296

<sup>83</sup> European Council, *Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe* p.36-37, Art I - 41

<sup>84</sup> C. Grant, 'Constitutional Fudge', The Guardian, 19 Juni 2007. <https://www.cer.eu/in-the-press/constitutional-fudge>

<sup>85</sup> HTK, Goedkeuring van het op 29 oktober 2004 te Rome tot stand gekomen Verdrag tot vaststelling van een Grondwet voor Europa, 2004-2005, 30025-(R1783), nr.3, 4 april 2005. (p.44-45)

<sup>86</sup> Ibidem, p.94-96

the minister of foreign affairs concurred with the notion that the mutual assistance clause would create the possibility for closer cooperation within the CSDP.<sup>87</sup>

Even though the constitution text with regard to the CSDP was promising and positively received by governments in Europe, the 9-month long negotiation process to arrive at the final version of the EU constitution ultimately ended in disappointment. In both France and the Netherlands following nationally held referenda, the document was rejected in its entirety by popular vote. In the Netherlands, where no less than 61% voted to reject the constitution, the result of the referendum had very little to do with its actual contents. Rather, the debate centred itself on ideological concerns – most importantly the resistance against a possible European super-state and the perceived threat posed by the EU against Dutch culture. The cultural threat was also closely linked to the perceived cultural threat posed by minorities.<sup>88</sup> Cooperation in security and defence did not figure in the discussions. With the rejection of the constitution, the proposed reforms could not take place and a period of reflection was ushered in within the EU. For a time institutional stagnation set in and only in 2009, with the introduction of the Lisbon Treaty, did the CSDP undergo further institutional transformation.

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<sup>87</sup> HTK, Voortzetting van het debat over de Staat van de Europese Unie, 2004-2005, 29803, nr.4 (9 november 2004)

<sup>88</sup> M. Lubbers, 'Over het "Nee" tegen de Europese Grondwet, een studie naar het belang van verschillende verklaringen', *Sociologie* (2007), 3:2, p205-224, 219-220

## Dutch CSDP Policy and capability development in the Helsinki Headline Goal 2010 (2004-2008)

The Headline Goal 2010, more focused on mobility, flexibility and pooling and sharing seemed an excellent fit with the Dutch ambition and vision for European defence cooperation. In a February 2004 letter written by the Dutch minister of defence, the government reiterated its position that tackling European military shortages was a central part in its long-term vision for the military aspects of the CSDP. The letter was written during the developmental phase of the new 2010 Headline Goal and outlined Dutch priorities within it, which were as follows: (1) Improving the reaction time of the EU by reducing the length of time it takes to deploy for at least some forces (which was outlined in the 2003 headline goal (within 60 days)). (2) More pooling and sharing of capabilities and resources among European countries. (3) Transparency and coordination among NATO and the EU, especially with regard to the EU's European Capabilities Action Plan (ECAP) and NATO's Prague Capability Commitment (PCC – successor to the DCI). (4) Development of standards and criteria to assess quality improvement of European armed forces and evaluate capabilities. (5) An assessment of the status quo with regard to capability improvement as a point of departure for the new Headline Goal. (6) Completion of the ECAP process by making countries adopt the recommendations of the ECAP project groups.<sup>89</sup> Clearly, many of these priorities found their way into the Council Conclusions of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of June, 2004.

2004 in particular would be an important year for the Dutch as they would assume the rotating presidency of the Council in the second half of the year. In a letter on the Dutch chairmanship by the minister of foreign affairs, an outline is provided of Dutch policy during the presidency. With regard to the CSDP and capability development in particular, it is noted that special attention will be given to EU/NATO cooperation based on the Berlin-plus agreement. Beyond this point only one paragraph is dedicated to the transatlantic relationship and the ties between the EU and the United States. While the Dutch note that the intensification of the relationship in economic and foreign policy between both actors needs to be explored further, a call for realistic expectations is made because of the presidential elections in the United States and the lack of a EU-US summit in the second half of the year.<sup>90</sup> Despite these facts, much of the foundation for future cooperation had already been built during the negotiations on both the ESS and the EU constitution. Dutch policy to include references to NATO and by emphasising cooperation with the United States contributed to the shaping of the final texts. While the EU constitution was rejected, its contents were still

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<sup>89</sup> HTK, Brief van de Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken en Defensie, Het EVDB op termijn; de politieke context, 2003-2004, 21502-02, nr. 525 (9 februari 2004)

<sup>90</sup> HTK, Brief van de Minister en de Staatssecretaris van Buitenlandse Zaken, Nederlands-EU Voorzitterschap 2004, 2003-2004, 29361, nr.5 (28 mei 2004)

deliberated over and the principles laid out in the ESS could still be acted upon. However, establishing EU-NATO cooperation in practice remained difficult, as a July 2005 report by the AIV remarked.<sup>91</sup>

Evaluations on the 2010 Headline Goal were also used by EU member states to propose further capability development in other areas, notably in the military maritime- and air-dimensions. In a May 2006 letter by the Dutch minister of defence, it was expressed that Spanish, German or French proposals to further develop these dimensions would be met with opposition if these led to additional needs and requirements on the part of the EU.<sup>92</sup> During a Council summit in Brussels on November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2006, the French and Dutch ministers of defence had an exchange on EU capability development as well. The French minister stated that European citizens were in favour of defence cooperation in the EU and, as such, the EU should be more capable to provide in their defence – followed by the remark that NATO and EU capabilities were not sufficient to deliver the effort required to handle conflicts in the Middle East and Africa. The French proposed a Maritime Rapid Reaction Force. The Dutch minister responded by stating that the European public counted on NATO for their common defence.<sup>93</sup> By opposing EU initiatives such as this, ideologically it was clearly expressed that NATO was the safeguard of Europe's territorial security.

Resistance to further capability development, while internationally expressed on ideological basis, was certainly influenced by the recalibration of Dutch defence policy articulated in an updated policy note in June of 2006 and a policy note published in 2007 entitled 'Wereldwijd Dienstbaar' (Globally of service). Besides multiple reorganisations and budget cuts in the preceding years, policy was now also strongly affected by the radically expanded Dutch contribution from February 2006 onward to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. The Netherlands had committed a battlegroup-sized force (~1,500 soldiers) to one of the more dangerous southern Afghan provinces (Uruzgan) to aid NATO efforts in the country, at the request of the NATO Secretary General. Consequently, the budget of the Ministry of Defence was in large part re-purposed to prioritise reinforcing measures that would immediately benefit on-going operational activities.<sup>94</sup> With regard to the CSDP, the 2007 policy note only matter-of-factly stated that it faced military capability shortfalls, referencing the European Defence Agency's Capability Development Plan as a work in progress. No promises of additional investments or visions for the future were outlined, only the guarantee that the Netherlands would fulfil its obligation to contribute to the EU Battlegroup

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<sup>91</sup> AIV, Nederland in een veranderende EU, NAVO en VN (2005), nr.45 p.16-17

<sup>92</sup> HTK, Brief van de Minister van Defensie, Raad Algemene Zaken en Externe Betrekkingen, 2005-2006, 21501-02, nr. 683 (8 mei 2006)

<sup>93</sup> HTK, Brief van de Minister van Defensie, Raad Algemene Zaken en Externe Betrekkingen, 2005-2006, 21501-02, nr.713 (23 November 2006)

<sup>94</sup> J. Hoffenaar, Notitie Ontwikkeling Hoofdtaken, NIHM, 77-78



formations on its rotation-basis.<sup>95</sup> Clearly, due to the direct engagement in NATO's Afghanistan operation, the institutional development of the CSDP became a lesser priority.

## Conclusion

This chapter has analysed Dutch CSDP policy during the 2004-2008 period and the transatlantic considerations which influenced these policies. In the writing processes surrounding the European Constitution and the European Security Strategy it is evident that on a strategic level the transatlantic connection and EU-NATO cooperation were deemed to be of fundamental importance to the Dutch. The Dutch government seemed closely aligned with the United Kingdom, intending to preserve the transatlantic relationship through its input for the European Security Strategy and the European Constitution. Attempts to further enhance military capabilities within the EU were also always evaluated based on their complementarity to NATO or the possibility that these would constitute duplication of means among both organisations. The importance of the transatlantic connection seemed to figure more prominently as a guiding thread in policy from 2004-2008 than during the first Helsinki Headline Goal. However, lessened interest in further developments beyond the Helsinki Headline Goal 2010 as agreed to during the European Council of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> June 2004 also stemmed from budgetary and organisational constraints caused by the significant effort required for the deployment and maintenance of the Dutch military contribution to NATO's ISAF mission in Afghanistan.

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<sup>95</sup> HTK, Brief van de Minister en Staatssecretaris van Defensie, Wereldwijd dienstbaar, 2007-2008, 31243, nr.1 p.7-12

# Chapter III

## The Treaty of Lisbon and CSDP's Downturn

The 2008-2012 period was marked by several important developments. In the run-up to 2008, on the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaties of Rome in 2007, the German presidency of the Council ended the 'reflection period' that followed the outcome of the Dutch and French constitutional referenda. Member states of the European Union signed the Berlin Declaration in March of 2007, stating that it was their aim to place the European Union on a 'renewed common basis' prior to the European Parliament elections of 2009.<sup>96</sup> It was their intent to revisit the European constitution and create a new document, culminating in the Lisbon Treaty, which came into effect in 2009. The institutional stagnation following the failure to ratify the constitution was overcome through this effort. In terms of contents the Lisbon Treaty copied much of the constitution. For the CSDP, the articles were a match, apart from a few subtleties such as the fact that the Union Minister for Foreign Affairs was renamed High Representative for the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. This mainly stemmed from British opposition to the term 'minister' and because Member States wanted all references to state symbols removed in the new text.<sup>97</sup> Despite the institutional breakthrough however, the development of the CSDP from 2008 onward to 2012 can be considered a low-point as well. The optimism of the early 2000s accompanying the launch of the CSDP had now made way for pessimism. The introduction of this thesis touched on this change by citing Haesebrouck and van Meirvenne – their article pointed towards the fact that between 2009 and 2013 only few and small scale missions were launched. This contrasted with the preceding years and also with the fact that European nations were still willing to participate in deployments during these years but outside of the CSDP framework.<sup>98</sup>

The pursuit of a more capable military dimension within the EU was also increasingly received as a disappointing venture. Despite the continued calls for more and better coordinated capabilities throughout the 2000s, it became apparent at the end of the decade that little tangible progress had been achieved. Academia noted this discrepancy and articles on capability development in the early 2010s were increasingly cautious or negative with regard to the EU's ambitions and means. Like the Headline Goal 2003, the Headline Goal 2010 came and passed without being achieved. In a descriptive article on the EU's military capabilities published in 2010, Claudia Major

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<sup>96</sup> European Union, Declaration on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaties of Rome (2007)

<sup>97</sup> M. Pleszka, 'High Representative for the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy – Analysis of the Lisbon Treaty provisions', vol.13 issue 1 Yearbook of Polish European Studies (2010), 13:1, p.81-106, p.90

<sup>98</sup> T. Haesebrouck and M. van Meirvenne, 'EUFOR RCA and CSDP Crisis Management Operations: Back on Track?', 268-270

and Christian Mölling write that the EU Battlegroups, which became active in 2007, were the main success story in EU military cooperation, while the in 1999 identified shortfalls in intelligence, reconnaissance, strategic and tactical transport and force protection still persisted. Even in the case of the EU Battlegroups it had to be noted that these were small (2 active at one time, each ~1.500 soldiers) and that military effectiveness could not be assured in all formations because the minimal criteria for participation had been watered down to allow participation of all nations. The European Defence Agency had also seen limited success due to its small allocated budget (which is decided upon by member states) and the national walls protecting the European armaments industries. Intergovernmental structures also prevented EU economic rules from being applied to the defence sectors.<sup>99</sup> An EUISS report comparing military capabilities in 1999 to 2009 determined that some progress had been made but that the process was slow with some countries 'more awake' than others, while defence budgets as a share of GDP and overall capabilities had declined sharply in the same time period.<sup>100</sup> Major and Mölling still hoped that the provision for a Permanent Structured Cooperation in the Lisbon Treaty could provide a breakthrough in capability development.<sup>101</sup>

The outbreak of the Arab Spring in 2011, the destabilisation of Libya and the subsequent NATO (instead of EU) intervention in that country reflected particularly badly on the EU's CSDP. In an article on the failure of the CSDP to be involved in Libya, Jolyon Howorth wrote that it 'cannot be overstated' how perfect of a fit the Libyan crisis was with the ideal type CSDP mission.<sup>102</sup> Instability in Libya, a sparsely populated but strategically and economically important country, had direct consequences for the security situation of several European nations. An intervention into the civil war would be a medium-sized undertaking, requiring an integrated approach of both civilian and military means and it would be situated well within the European neighbourhood. CSDP had been painstakingly developed precisely for such an event. Yet, when the use of force was seriously considered by European nations, CSDP was completely bypassed in favour of a NATO-led intervention. This turn of events prompted some commentators and even diplomats to state that CSDP had failed, or worse, that the Libya crisis marked the end of the EU's security and defence dimension.<sup>103</sup> In a 2011 article, Anand Menon wrote of an 'incoherent' and 'incapable' Union in the security and defence domain.<sup>104</sup> The NATO-led intervention strained transatlantic ties as well, as the

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<sup>99</sup> C. Major, C. Mölling, 'EU Military Capabilities – some European Troops, but not yet a European Army' in: E. Greco (et al) *EU Crisis Management: Institutions and Capabilities in the Making* (Rome: 2010) p.15-17

<sup>100</sup> D. Keohane, C. Blommestijn, 'Strength in Numbers? Comparing EU military capabilities in 2009 with 1999, EU Institute for Security Studies.(2009)

<sup>101</sup> C. Major, C. Mölling, 'EU Military Capabilities – some European Troops, but not yet a European Army, p.19-22, 107-108

<sup>102</sup> J. Howorth, 'Operation Harmattan' in Libya: a paradigm shift in French, European and transatlantic security arrangements?, *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* (2014), 12:4, 405-417, 405

<sup>103</sup> A. Menon, 'European Defence Policy from Lisbon to Libya', *Survival* (2011), 53:3, 75-90, 76

<sup>104</sup> A. Menon (2011), 'European Defence Policy from Lisbon to Libya', p.75-90

U.S. seemed reluctant to contribute yet was forced to deliver the majority of all capabilities due to European shortages. In a speech delivered in June of 2011 Robert Gates, the serving U.S. Secretary of Defence during the Libya crisis, was intensely critical of the burden sharing within the NATO alliance and questioned whether future U.S. politicians and leaders would still value the organisation like he did.<sup>105</sup>

Mirroring the previous two chapters, this chapter will consider how Dutch policymakers positioned themselves in CSDP's (military) capability development process for the 2008-2012 timeframe. The following sections will deal with two main questions: (1) which factors affected Dutch CSDP policy priorities after the introduction of the Treaty of Lisbon? (2) Did the intervention in Libya and U.S. dissatisfaction over European contributions alter CSDP policy?

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<sup>105</sup> C-SPAN 'Defense Secretary Robert Gates on the Future of NATO' (2011) <http://www.c-span.org/video/?299970-1/defense-secretary-gates-future-nato> (10/09/2018)

## EU Capability Development and Dutch CSDP Policy

As stated in the previous chapter, from 2006 onwards the Dutch Ministry of Defence found itself preoccupied by a lack of funding and international engagement. Reorganisations resulting from a decline in the defence budget and the relatively extensive involvement in the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, where 1,500 personnel were deployed in dangerous circumstances, severely limited possibilities to act in or contribute to international cooperation. CSDP policy was a clear lesser priority and only in August of 2008 did the ministers of foreign affairs and defence present a letter updating the Defence Committee of the House of Representatives specifically on the country's CSDP policy. At the time, the French government acted as the president of the European Council and further capability development within the CSDP was one of its top priorities. In the 2008 policy letter, the ministers noted that while the Dutch government would support the French quest for projects to eliminate European capability shortfalls, the Dutch did not have additional means available to invest in European cooperation. Ideologically, it was also reiterated that the Dutch are proponents of bottom-up initiatives and regionalised cooperation led by member states.<sup>106</sup>

In this respect the situation did not change much from 2006. Budgetary/organisational constraints and ideological opposition seemed major contributing factors to the lack of appetite for expanded cooperation at an EU level. As the global financial crisis would unfold throughout 2007 and 2008 well into 2011, the Ministry of Defence's financial woes would not be alleviated either. However, in June of 2010 another policy update was provided reflecting on the CSDP after the introduction of the Lisbon Treaty, in which it was underlined that the financial circumstances made it ever more important to effectively use scarce EU military resources – in some way budgetary constraints motivated efforts to find new ways to cooperate with partners.<sup>107</sup> A slight change in policy can be discerned in another area. During Sarkozy's presidency, the French government completed the process which it began in the 1990s to reapproach NATO on a strategic level by re-joining the alliance as an official member in 2009. One of the French (nationally developed) conditions set for re-entry into NATO was a strengthened CSDP and a greater role for Europe vis-à-vis the United States in the NATO alliance.<sup>108</sup> Among other proposals to achieve these goals, the French wanted to expand military coordination and planning capabilities within the EU. The idea first forwarded in 2003 of a European military planning and command capacity seemed to resurface.

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<sup>106</sup> HTK, Brief van de Ministers van Buitenlandse Zaken en Defensie, Defensieraad, 2007-2008, 21501-28, nr.45.

<sup>107</sup> HTK, Brief van de Ministers van Buitenlandse Zaken en Defensie, Raad Algemene Zaken en Buitenlandse Zaken, 2009-2010, 21501-02, nr.973

<sup>108</sup> G. Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet, 'France's New NATO Policy – Leveraging a Realignment of the Alliance?', *Strategic Studies Quarterly* (2009), 3:4

While the Dutch government outright rejected the 2003 proposal for a headquarters in Tervuren, referencing the Berlin-plus agreement giving the EU access to NATO facilities and availability of national planning capabilities, the 2008 letter nuances that position.

In the 2008 letter, the ministers recognise the limitations of NATO-EU cooperation mainly due to the enduring political issues among the Turks and Cypriots and concede that decision-making in the EU can be delayed due to limited capabilities, the need to utilise national headquarters and to separately assign an operations commander. The ministers conclude that for military planning and command the relationship with NATO's available means should be considered closely.<sup>109</sup> In a debate during the Defence Commission, the minister of defence clarified that an EU headquarters would still be one step too far but that decision-making in Brussels was too slow and could be improved. NATO transformation processes with regard to planning and command were also not being put into action, to Dutch frustration.<sup>110</sup> While a headquarters would still be opposed, these considerations indicate a slight departure from the position in 2003, when the discussion on military command and planning capabilities for the EU was immediately shut down. Nevertheless, no additional planning & command capacity manifested during the French presidency of the Council.

With regard to Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) the Dutch government was initially positively curious of its possible use and activation. Article 42(6) of the Treaty of the European Union stipulated that Member States whose military capabilities 'fulfill higher criteria and which have made binding commitments to one another' could establish such a cooperation framework.<sup>111</sup> This framework would span objectives in (investment) expenditure in Defence, further pooling, integration or specialisation of capabilities and resources and the creation of new equipment programmes through the EDA.<sup>112</sup> The 2010 policy letter reflecting on the evolution of the CSDP after the Lisbon Treaty concentrated mainly on the PESCO option in its segment on military capability development. It is clear that hopes for future development were tied to the activation of this protocol. The government opined (prior to official EU discussions) that PESCO should be accessible to all member states (thus not a selective group) and that PESCO discussions should look at the possibility for cooperation among multinational forces. Building on existing EDA projects and coordination between NATO and the EU were also considered important.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> HTK, Brief van de Ministers van Buitenlandse Zaken en Defensie, Defensieraad, 2007-2008, 21501-28, nr.45

<sup>110</sup> HTK, Verslag van een Algemeen Overleg, Defensieraad, 2008-2009, 21501-28, nr.47

<sup>111</sup> European Union, *Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on the European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community* (2007) art.42

<sup>112</sup> Foundation for EU Democracy, *The Lisbon Treaty – The Readable Version* (Allingåbro: 2009), Protocol no.10 on Permanent Structured Cooperation, p.280-281

<sup>113</sup> HTK, Brief van de Ministers van Buitenlandse Zaken en Defensie, Defensieraad, 2007-2008, 21501-28, nr.45

Within the European Union, PESCO was subject of preliminary discussions in 2010 on three separate occasions – once during the Spanish presidency in March and later during the Belgian presidency in July and September. Sven Biscop and Jo Coelmont wrote an article on these discussions in 2011 and state that during the attempt in March it seemed the two main proponents of the concept in its early development (France and the United Kingdom) were no longer enthusiastic about its activation, though the discussion at least allowed PESCO to remain on the EU's agenda. Later in the year, the Belgians circulated a position paper co-signed only by Hungary and Poland. The ensuing discussions exposed a number of objections several member states had to the concept. One was the fear that PESCO would lead to a divided Union if one followed the premise that it was an exclusive framework with high-entry standards mainly for Member States most active in defence and security (as it was originally envisioned). Another was that PESCO would add another bureaucratic layer to the CSDP without the guarantee that this would lead to more capabilities.<sup>114</sup> The fact that the Dutch government did not co-sign the Belgian position paper and expressed its wish for an inclusive PESCO accessible to all member states indicate that the Dutch were likely positioned more on the careful side when it came to these PESCO discussions. Ultimately, no decision to move towards official negotiations was made and PESCO did not resurface until 2016. Member states did eventually agree to develop a framework for more coordination in defence planning and to identify possible cooperation projects called the 'Ghent Initiative', in which the financial crisis played a key role.<sup>115</sup> The aim was to create pooling & sharing initiatives among member states. This type of cooperation would be bottom-up, cost-effective and flexible in its use for member states.

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<sup>114</sup> S. Biscop & J. Coelmont, 'CSDP and the 'Ghent Framework': The Indirect Approach to Permanent Structured Cooperation?', *European Foreign Affairs Review* (2011) 16:2, 149-167, 152-155

<sup>115</sup> *Ibidem*, 155-156

## The Libya Intervention and its Implications for the EU's CSDP

The introduction of this chapter touched on the fact that the crisis and subsequent NATO-intervention in Libya in 2011 did not reflect positively on the EU's CSDP. It was the first major crisis in the European neighbourhood with security implications for the EU since EU member states started cooperating in the CSDP in 1999. The instability in the country stemmed from protests inspired by the Arab Spring, which were violently dispersed by security forces loyal to the Gaddafi regime which fired upon the crowds. A civil war erupted between factions supporting Gaddafi and those who opposed him. Several European nations, notably France and the United Kingdom, pushed for the international community to intervene. Through initiatives of the EU in the United Nations, starting in late February multiple rounds of sanctions were imposed on Libya and Gaddafi's assets were frozen. The situation did not improve however and on March 17<sup>th</sup>, the UN Security Council passed resolution 1973, determining the situation in Libya as a threat to international peace and security and demanding an immediate ceasefire. Moreover, resolution 1973 invoked the international community's 'responsibility to protect (R2P)', authorising member states to take all necessary action to put an end to violence against civilians in Libya. On March 19<sup>th</sup> 2011, a UN-sanctioned, NATO-led intervention commenced. The European Union, while involved in the initial sanction response, did not take a role in the execution of resolution 1973.

In the decision-making process leading up to the intervention in Libya the EU and its CSDP were briefly considered as an option to lead the intervention. On March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011 the French President Sarkozy and British Prime Minister Cameron sent a letter to Herman van Rompuy, President of the European Council, proposing action to establish a no-fly zone over Libya.<sup>116</sup> The next day during an extraordinary meeting of the Council, the plan was rejected. Leading the opposition was Germany, which noted that at the time there was no legal basis for a no-fly zone.<sup>117</sup> An Italian Proposal for a Maritime CSDP operation to enforce the arms embargo was rejected as well, also by Germany and the UK. Moreover, the High Representative of the Union Catherine Ashton stated that military action should be led by NATO, motivated in part by Member States who were uncomfortable with the prospect of an EU-led military operation.<sup>118</sup> The Dutch government was not keen on installing a no-fly zone above Libya and was adamant an unambiguous mandate under international law was required.<sup>119</sup> While its precise position with regard to an EU-led operation is unclear, it can be

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<sup>116</sup> T.P. Palm, *Normative Power and Military Means: The Evolving Character of the EU's International Power* (2016), 158

<sup>117</sup> I. Traynor, N. Watts, 'Libya No-Fly Zone Plan Rejected by EU Leaders', *The Guardian*, 2011

<sup>118</sup> T.P. Palm, *Normative Power and Military Means*, 158-159

<sup>119</sup> HTK, *Verslag van een Algemeen Overleg, Raad Algemene Zaken en Buitenlandse Zaken, 2010-2011, 21501-02, nr.1047*



inferred from these statements and past Dutch insistence to rely on NATO planning facilities and military capabilities that the government likely aligned itself with Germany on March 10<sup>th</sup>.

The decision to lead an operation through NATO on March 19<sup>th</sup> was the subject of much reflection on the CSDP in academia. Research on the EU's inability to respond to the Libyan crisis generally focused on two areas. The first on the EU's intergovernmentalism; how divergent interests on the part of member states caused the resulting standstill.<sup>120</sup> The second focal point concerns the internal and/or structural problems within the EU's CSDP. Some of the identified problems were the EU's reliance on strictly national forces and planning facilities which are gathered after a decision to conduct a military operation is made (ad-hoc). Calling into question the EU's ability to act in a situation such as the Libya crisis at all, these analyses tend to call for permanent EU military structures such as an operational headquarters and planning facility and more multinational standby forces.<sup>121</sup> As is evident throughout the preceding chapters – such arrangements had been opposed by a number of member states, among whom the Dutch. Fred van Staden's statement cited in the introduction of this thesis that the Dutch would prioritise the transatlantic relationship 'when the chips are down' and that NATO was considered 'the only game in town' when it came to military capabilities seemed to ring true when Libya unfolded.

However, the NATO-intervention could hardly be deemed a success either. European nations, who initiated the push for intervention in Libya and who were supposed to lead the operation, relied heavily on American capabilities. 66% of the personnel in theatre were US military, approximately half of all coalition aircraft were American, 34% of all sorties were flown by the United States and 92% of the launched cruise missiles were from U.S. origin (224 in number – the other 18 launched by the British).<sup>122</sup> Approximately 90% of the military operations in Libya would not have been possible without U.S. support.<sup>123</sup> Considering the amount of U.S. support required to conduct operations, NATO involvement was a dire necessity. The Libya intervention clearly exposed the glaring capability gaps in European nations' military forces, crucial shortcomings which both NATO and especially the EU have attempted to address ever since the wars in the former Yugoslavia. The

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<sup>120</sup> The following articles are a selection of the works which utilise this analytical approach: S. Fabbrini, 'The European Union and the Libyan Crisis', in: *International Politics* (2014), 53:2, L. van Loon, *Libya: The EU's Failure to Act in Concert*, MA Thesis - Utrecht University (2014), N. Koenig, 'The EU and the Libyan Crisis: In Quest of Coherence?', in: *Istituto Affari Internazionali, IAI Working Papers* (2011) 11:19, A. Menon (2011), 'European Defence Policy from Lisbon to Libya', *Survival – Global Politics and Strategy*, vol. 53(3) 75-90

<sup>121</sup> Hasebrouck, van Meirvenne (2015) – EUFOR RCA and CSDP Crisis Management Operations: Back on Track? In: *European Foreign Affairs Review*, vol.20(2), 267-285, 274, L. Símon 'CSDP, Strategy and Crisis Management: Out of Area or Out of Business? In: *The International Spectator* (2012) 47:5, 100-115, 112-113, J. Howorth, 'CSDP and NATO Post-Libya: Towards the Rubicon?', in: *Egmont Strategic Policy Brief* (2012) nr.35, A. Menon (2011), 'European Defence Policy from Lisbon to Libya', *Survival – Global Politics and Strategy*, vol. 53(3) 75-90, 79-81,

<sup>122</sup> The Guardian, *Nato Operations in Libya: data journalism breaks down which country does what* (2011)

<sup>123</sup> N. Koenig, 'Libya: a Wakeup Call for CSDP', *TEPSA Policy Brief* (2012), 3

lack of progress was not well-received by American allies, as evidenced by Robert Gates' criticism of the burden sharing in the alliance.

Capability development in the EU was momentarily jolted by these developments and some proposals were made to revitalise efforts. During the Polish presidency of the Council in the second half of 2011, the planning and command structures in the EU were again subject of discussions among a proposal for a permanent civil-military headquarters. A letter of the Dutch minister of defence explains that while many countries supported this initiative, citing Robert Gates' speech in June that Europe should assume its responsibility for international security issues, some countries opposed the plan. Low priority compared to other capability gaps, duplication of means with NATO, possibly high costs and possible criticism from the United States were cited as reasons for opposition.<sup>124</sup> The minister explained the Dutch position during a debate in the Defence Commission in November of 2011, stating that the government aligned themselves with the UK, relinquishing support if the UK did so, and that any such capacity should concentrate on low-intensity violence and be limited to planning and not conduct (i.e. command). Anything resembling a headquarters would be opposed.<sup>125</sup> While the stance on planning capabilities seemed to have been relaxed slightly in 2008, by November 2011 it became clear that there was no room for policy adjustment. Transatlantic relations and a now clear preference for NATO seemed to be fundamentally important to this policy. The opposition to any real military planning capability would remain a red line until 2017, when the UK and the Netherlands compromised and it was decided to create a Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC – which intentionally avoided the word 'headquarters' in its name).

The so-called Ghent initiative which arose after the attempted PESCO discussions in 2010 did proceed to produce results after Libya, as the European Defence Agency identified possible projects for cooperation by November of 2011, which the Dutch government welcomed.<sup>126</sup> Eleven pooling and sharing initiatives were presented, all of which were either equipment programs or support capabilities such as transport and refuelling, pilot training or field hospitals.<sup>127</sup> The Dutch government readily participated in nine out of eleven initiatives and considered bundling capacities through pooling and sharing as a method to retain military capabilities.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> HTK, Brief Minister van Defensie, Verslag informele bijeenkomst van EU ministers van defensie, 2011-2012, 21501-28, nr.76

<sup>125</sup> HTK, Verslag van een Algemeen overleg, Defensieraad, 2011-2012, 21501-28, nr.79

<sup>126</sup> HTK, Brief van de Minister van Defensie, Defensieraad, 2011-2012, 21501-28, nr.77

<sup>127</sup> These concerned a helicopter training program, Maritime surveillance networking, a European Satellite Communication Procurement Cell, Medical Field Hospitals, air to air refuelling, future military satellite communications, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, pilot training, a European transport hub, smart munitions and naval logistics and training - [https://www.eda.europa.eu/docs/documents/factsheet\\_-\\_pooling\\_sharing\\_-\\_301111](https://www.eda.europa.eu/docs/documents/factsheet_-_pooling_sharing_-_301111)

<sup>128</sup> HTK, Verslag van een Schriftelijk Overleg, Defensieraad, 2012-2013, 21501-28, nr.88

## Conclusion

This chapter has analysed Dutch CSDP policy with regard to military capability development from 2008 to 2012. As in the preceding years, budgetary and organisational constraints including ideological opposition to top-down EU-driven cooperation seemed contributing factors to Dutch objections against new EU cooperation initiatives. However, the financial constraints imposed on the Ministry of Defence also motivated the search for new avenues for cooperation in an effort to retain capabilities, causing enthusiastic Dutch support for and involvement in bottom-up focused pooling & sharing initiatives via the Ghent process, which emerged after attempted discussions on PESCO. Transatlantic ties did not seem to figure prominently in the decision-making processes surrounding these issues, with the exception of when new proposals were made for military planning facilities in the EU after the Libya intervention. Paradoxically, while some countries cited Robert Gates' comments that the EU should assume responsibility in matters of international security as an argument for military planning capabilities in the EU, others assumed the United States would oppose such facilities and cited duplication of means with NATO. In the debate, the Dutch firmly aligned itself with the most Atlantic-oriented EU Member State, the United Kingdom, which effectively opposed efforts to construct anything resembling a (military) headquarters. The conduct of the Libya intervention ultimately seemed to have little effect on EU CSDP cooperation or Dutch CSDP policy. During the decision-making process to intervene in the country the Dutch government aligned itself mostly with Germany, citing the need for an international legal mandate and its reluctance to become involved.

# Final Conclusion

The introduction to this thesis began by outlining the difficulty with which the military dimension of the EU's CSDP has progressed and by asking how this could be explained through an analysis of member state policy. As the transatlantic relationship is considered an important facet to understanding CSDP as a whole, this thesis set out to explore the influence of the transatlantic relationship in shaping EU member state policy with regard to military capability development in the CSDP. For its case study, Dutch CSDP policy was analysed in the 1999-2012 period. In the existing literature, the Dutch government is described as being Atlanticist in its orientation, being historically expressly focused on NATO and motivated in 1999 to cooperate in the CSDP mostly to prevent American disengagement from the transatlantic alliance in the aftermath of the Yugoslav wars. This orientation supposedly gradually shifted by 2010, resulting in a security policy prioritising NATO, the EU and UN equally in its considerations.

The three chapters of this thesis, each focusing on different time periods, demonstrate that this interpretation is neglectful of other international or domestic influences on Dutch policy considerations. The early years of CSDP's development (1999-2003) seem to have been most formative in the later policies pursued by the Dutch government. While on one hand transatlantic cooperation was certainly a strongly preferred interest in the new EU defence and security arrangement, on the other hand early policy documents also express a desire for less reliance on the United States as Europe was increasingly confronted by regional security threats. European defence cooperation was prioritised, but the Dutch decision-making process on which institutional arrangements or projects to support derived strongly on national considerations as well. Cooperation was preferably not officially embedded under the institutional umbrellas of NATO or the EU, though informed through the goals formulated in both organisations. A preference for bottom-up initiatives and regional cooperation was expressed from the very start of the CSDP, likely owing to the fact that the Dutch had already established such defence cooperation prior to the CSDP's founding and for the flexibility it allowed in the event of a crisis situation in which either organisation would become involved (by having not previously pledged forces to one or the other). Avoiding duplication between the EU and NATO and assuring complementarity and agreement in projects and goals in both organisations became often-repeated top policy priorities.

The 2004-2008 period saw a continuation of the balancing act in which the Dutch government engaged itself, though a more prominent influence of transatlantic considerations. The formulation of the European Security Strategy as a response to the US's invasion of Iraq was considered as a step towards healing the rift between the Europeans and the US by the Dutch and an

important development for the EU to become a serious partner to the United States. In the European divide where some countries wished to develop the ESS to formulate alternatives to US policy and others to preserve the transatlantic alliance, the Dutch seemed firmly positioned in the preservation camp alongside the UK. The resulting strategy however contrasted with the strategy of the United States in some important facets and its implementation aligned neatly with the national Dutch policy priorities for more regionalised cooperation. However, from 2006 onward further institutional or cooperative ventures in the EU received little support due to budget cuts and reorganisations in the Ministry of Defence and extensive involvement in the NATO-led operation in Afghanistan, shifting the priority to fulfilling immediate operational requirements, straining available resources. The rejection of the European constitution by Dutch and French voters in 2005 also brought to light anti-European sentiment and dimmed prospects for cooperation, mainly because of the institutional stagnation it caused, preventing much needed reforms within the CSDP.

The last time period this thesis has analysed, 2008-2012, was marked by increased pessimism with regard to progress in capability development and political stalemate despite the breakthrough in institutional reform through the introduction of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009. The intervention in Libya and reflections on the EU's failure in this respect also did not spur member states to significantly step up their cooperation. Member states could not agree on further ambitious projects in the CSDP's development, rejecting both PESCO and proposals for military planning capabilities within the EU. The Dutch government did not appear positively inclined towards either initiative, strongly aligning itself with the United Kingdom in opposition to military planning facilities. It was, however, a strong proponent of cooperation through pooling and sharing and participated in almost all the projects the EDA proposed to this end. Relations with the United States did not appear prominently in policy documents published during this time-period.

Revisiting the entirety of the analysis from 1999-2012, it can be stated that Dutch policy with regard to the development of the CSDP's military dimension has from the outset been informed mostly through an independent pragmatism, attempting to balance national considerations and constraints, transatlantic cooperation and the need to alleviate European shortfalls. While transatlantic cooperation and NATO figure prominently in the Dutch policy priorities for the overarching political-strategic institutional design of cooperation in the EU and in Europe in general, the practical implementation of this cooperation is strongly informed through national interests and national limitations with regard to available capabilities. Throughout the entire time period, the details of Dutch involvement in the CSDP's military dimension generally indicate policy consistency in this respect from 1999 to 2012. Ultimately, these findings lend credence to the liberal intergovernmentalist framework which posits that European Council negotiations are primarily driven by bargaining over various domestic interests among participating Member States.

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