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Nicolas Fescharek

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European role convergence by default?
The contributions of the EU Member States to security provision and Security Sector Reform during the military intervention in Afghanistan (2001-2014)

Version de diffusion anonymée

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Soutenue le 6 avril 2016

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Acknowledgements

Above all, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my family, my mother Maria, my father Reinhard and my brother Max. Ohne Euch wäre es nicht möglich gewesen und diese Arbeit ist Euch gewidmet.

I particularly thank my Professor, Prof. Dr. Anne-Marie Le Gloannec, who accompanied this doctoral dissertation with great strategic patience. I have learned immensely from her and I owe her a great deal of gratitude.

A special thanks goes to the researchers and friends from the Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization (APPRO) in Kabul, who greatly helped me with my research. Many thanks also go to the colleagues and friends at the *Centre de recherches internationales* (CERI), in particular to Alice Pannier and Samuel Faure for precious comments and to Giulia Romano for valuable corrections.

I owe particular gratitude to two very dear friends who have accompanied this dissertation: Eugen Gossen and Dr. Olga Alinda Spaiser. This thesis would not have been possible without them. Ihr seid großartig und ich bin froh Euch zu haben.

I also would like to express my deepest gratitude to all the wonderful friends I have met along the way, and who either supported me with their friendship or with comments and corrections, Dirk Hamann, Olivier Néola, Jos Winters, Fariba Adelkha, the Butzebach gang from Marburg, Pascaline Vincent, Léa Chatauret, Benjamin Bruce, Joyce Valdovinos, Laura Meijer, Radhika Kanchana, Sihem Djebbi, Folashadé Soule-Kohndou, Laura Pandelle, Aurélien Mazeau and many others. Particular thanks go to the Texas Couscous and the Lavomatic Orchestra, to Morgane Baux, Thomas Bourasseau, Alexandre Maouche, Etienne Alimann, Thomas Ragot, and Matthieu Ballouche. Thank you for all the good moments.

I also wish to thank Conrad Schetter for his help during the early stages, Camille Grand and Georges-Henri Soutou for having believed in me when I first started. Special thanks also go to Emmanuel Dupuy, Samy Cohen, François Rivasseau, Nadège Ragaru, Andreas-Fischer Barnicol, Etienne de Durand, Gale Mattox, Françoise Hostalier, Oberstarzt Manfred Glitsch, Nassim Majidi, Stefan Seiler, Michaël Goudoux, to various interview partners that wish to remain anonymous, and to Maud Biancardi.

Meiner Familie gewidmet

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Glossary

AAN: Afghanistan Analysts Network

ABP: Afghan Border Police

ACO: Allied Command for Operations

ACT: Allied Command for Transformation

AIA: Afghan Interim Authority

ALP: Afghan Local Police

ANA: Afghan National Army

ANAP: Afghanistan National Auxiliary Police

ANCOP: Afghan National Civil Order Police

ANDCS: Afghan National Drug Control Strategy

ANP: Afghan National Police

ANPA: Afghan National Police Academy

ANSF: Afghan National Security Forces

APPF: Afghan Public Protection Force

AREU: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit

ASNF: Afghan Special Narcotics Force

ATA: Afghan Transitional Authority

AUP: Afghan Uniform Police

AWACS: Airborne Warning and Control Systems

BMZ: Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung
(Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)

CBRN defense: Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense

CEDC: Central European Defense Cooperation

CENTCOM: US Central Command

CEPOL: European Police College (abbreviated CEPOL from its French name, Collège européen de police)

CFSP: Common Foreign and Security Policy

CIA: Central Intelligence Agency

CID: Criminal Investigation Department

CIMIC: Civil-Military Cooperation

CivCom: Comité chargé des aspects civils de la gestion des crises (Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management)

CMCO: civil-military coordination

CMPD: Crisis Management Planning Directorate

CNPA: Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan

COIN: Counter Insurgency

CoPP: Coordination of Police and Prosecutors

COREU: Correspondance européenne

CPAU: Cooperation for Peace and Unity

CPCC: Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability

CRT: Civilian Response Team

CSCE/OSCE: Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe / Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

CSDP: Common Security and Defense Policy

CSP: Country Strategy Paper

CSTC-A: Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan

DCI: Defense Capabilities Initiative

DDR: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

DG RELEX: Directorate-General for External Relations

EaP: Eastern Partnership

EAR: European Agency for Reconstruction

EC: European Community

ECA: European Court of Auditors

ECHO: European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department
(formerly known as the European Community Humanitarian Aid Office)

ECSC: European Coal and Steel Community

EDA: European Defence Agency

EDI: European Defence Identity

EEAS: European External Action Service

EGF: European Gendarmerie Force

ENP: European Neighborhood Policy

EOM: Election Observation Mission

EP: European Parliament

EPC: European Political Cooperation

ERRF: European Rapid Reaction Force

ESDP: European Security and Defense Policy

ESS: European Security Strategy

EU: European Union

EUFOR Chad: European Union Force Chad

EUISS: European Union Institute for Security Studies

EULEX: European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo

EUMC: European Union Military Committee

EUMS: European Union Military Staff

EUPM: European Union Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina

EUPOL-Afghanistan: European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan

EURATOM: European Atomic Energy Community

EUSR: European Union Special Representative

FCO: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

FDD: Focused District Development

FPA: Foreign Policy Analysis

GIZ: Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit

GPPO: German Police Project Office

GPPT: German Police Project Team

GWOT: Global War on Terror

HoM: Head of Mission

HQ: Headquarters

i-ANDS: Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy

ICG: International Crisis Group

IED: improvised explosive device

IFOR: Implementation Force

IJO: Italian Justice Office

INCLE: International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement

INL: Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs

IOM: International Organization for Migration

IPCB: International Police Coordination Board

IR Theory: International Relations Theory

ISAF: International Security Assistance Force

JCMB: Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board

JEF: Joint Expeditionary Force

JFC: Joint Forces Command

JRC: Judicial Reform Commission

KFOR: Kosovo Force

KMNB: Kabul Multinational Brigade

LOTFA: Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan

MLOT: Mobile Liaison Observation Team

MoI: Afghan Ministry of Interior

MoJ: Afghan Ministry of Justice

MS: Member State

NAC: North Atlantic Council

NATO: *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*

NDF: National Development Framework

NGO: non-governmental organization

*NORDEF*CO: Nordic Defense Cooperation

NRF: NATO Response Force

NTM-A: NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan

OEF: Operation Enduring Freedom

OMC-A: Office of Military Cooperation-Afghanistan

OMLT: Operational Mentor and Liaison Team

OPLAN: Operation Plan

OPO: Office of the Police Ombudsman

PCC: Prague Capabilities Commitment

PNA: Provincial Needs Assessment

POMLT: Police Operational Mentor and Liaison Team

PPCM: Police-Prosecutor Cooperation Manual

PRT: Provincial Reconstruction Team

PRT ESC: Provincial Reconstruction Team Executive Steering Committee

PSC: Political and Security Committee

PTC: Police Training Center

RC: Regional Command

RPTC: Regional Police Training Center

RRM: Rapid Reaction Mechanism

SACEUR: Supreme Allied Commander

SHAPE: Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe

SNTV: Single Non-Transferable Voting System

SOF: Special Operations Forces

SPG: Support to Provincial Governance Programme Afghanistan

SSR: Security Sector Reform

SWAT: Special Weapons and Tactics

TEU: Treaty on European Union

UfM: Union for the Mediterranean

UK: United Kingdom

UN: United Nations

UNAMA: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNODC: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

UNPROFOR: United Nations Protection Force

UNSC: United Nations Security Council

US: United States

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

US DoD: US Department of Defense

VAB : Véhicule de l'Avant Blindé (Wheeled Armored Fighting Vehicle)

WEU: Western European Union

WMD: Weapon of mass destruction

ZIF: Zentrum für internationale Friedenseinsätze (Center for international peace operations)

i. 1. Introduction

As the leading Afghanistan expert Barnett Rubin once wrote, Afghanistan can be seen as a “mirror of the world”: During the times of colonial conquest and domination, the Russian and British Empires reduced Afghanistan to a buffer state between their respective zones of influence; during the Cold War, Afghanistan became an almost archetypical *rentier* state (with about 40% of its state revenues coming from abroad at one point), the Soviet Union trying to weld Afghanistan into its sphere of influence (Rubin 2002; Rashid 2010: 13). Later, Afghanistan became the major battlefield for a decisive proxy war between the US and the Soviets when the US and others financed and equipped the Mujahideen, Afghan guerilla fighters, to take on the Soviet Union, which had invaded Afghanistan in 1979. When the US withdrew from the region after the conflict, Afghanistan epitomized the optimism of the post-Cold War and the desire to enjoy the “dividends of peace”, but it came back to center stage with the terror attacks of 11 September 2001, which had been planned on Afghan ground. During the next fourteen years, a grand US-led coalition of predominantly “Western” states, many of which members of the European Union (EU), embarked on a major “stabilization” and “state building” exercise with the stated ambition of making the international system more secure.

Afghanistan shed light on international structures or relations of power and cooperation in one way or another during each of these phases. Since an overwhelming majority of European states took part in the US-led campaign from the beginning until withdrawal, one important “reflex” of the Afghan campaign concerns the role of the EU and its Member States (MS) in transatlantic relations and international security (Fescharek 2015c). More precisely, the Afghan case is used to elucidate the way the MS and the EU, a collective “actor consisting of other actors” and therefore not endowed with the same ability to act in the domain of foreign policy as nation states, have fared on their path toward becoming a collective “security provider” on the world stage (Manners 2011: 241). In fact, only shortly before the Afghan intervention began in 2001, the MS had embarked on a series of treaties and European Council meetings to endow their Union with the ability to act on the international scene as a foreign and security policy actor in its own right.

It can be said that this potential emergence of “collective European actorness” in the field of international security carried four related core potentialities: Firstly, the possibility that the MS become a *collective actor* with a common security strategy based on the convergence of national strategic cultures; secondly, the possibility that the MS develop *autonomous military capabilities*; thirdly, the possibility that they *set security agendas proactively*, instead of only reacting to events or contributing to foreign security agendas; and fourthly, the possibility that they may become a collective actor that not only determines a security agenda, but that “*shapes*” and *impacts its security environment* according to an own vision.

Based on a collective European engagement that has lasted since 2001, this thesis looks at the MS’ role(s) in the provision of security during the Afghan intervention. It analyzes their national and collective contributions to Afghanistan’s post-2001 national security and Security Sector Reform (SSR), from military and police training to peace keeping, war fighting and diplomatic initiatives.

It asks if and to what extent the MS’ contributions to the campaign are congruent with the four potentialities of collective European security actorness mentioned above: When these four categories (the MS becoming a *collective actor* in international security that is able to *proactively* and *autonomously* determine a security agenda and *shape* its security environment) are tested in the case of the US-led Afghan campaign, what does this tell us about the EU’s and the MS’ ability to provide security?

The hypothesis this dissertation explores is that the MS’ collective role in Afghanistan must not be analyzed as the pursuit of a common political project, but as the apolitical convergence of behaviors that occurred on an opt-in/opt-out basis. The behavioral convergence of the MS around a de facto European role of support occurred despite the divergence of their strategic cultures. The US alliance leader did not coerce the MS; behavioral convergence was neither decreed in a top down way, nor a bottom up phenomenon (i.e., it did not entail the creation of common security policies). Rather, it emerged “by default” as an addition of sovereign security policies that responded to precise external factors in similar ways.

i. 2. The MS' foray into collective foreign and security policy

The EU did not at all start out as a “foreign policy actor”, a “democracy exporter” or an organization for “state building” in post-conflict societies; it started out as an agreement between Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, France, West Germany and Italy to run their coal and steel industries under a system of common management. Because of the central importance of those two industries for war making, the intention was to make war between France and Germany “not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible”, as the Schuman Declaration formulated it.¹ In a later step, the six went further and created a customs union and a common market of goods, workers, services and capital. The “European Economic Community”, founded on 1 January 1958, simply had no explicit “foreign policy”.

To be sure, there were some important initiatives in the direction of a “common” or “European” foreign policy. The Davignon report of 1970 recommended that the MS speak with one voice on international matters and created an informal mechanism for consultation among the MS, the so-called European Political Cooperation (EPC). Such attempts remained carefully circumscribed to common “positions”, such as the Venice Declaration recognizing the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people (1980) or the coordinated efforts in bringing about the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (1973). However, except for a statement of purpose that it might include external states that might wish to join,² and though it is true that “the history of the Community is the history of successive enlargements”,³ it is important to stress that until the end of the 20th century, the EC/EU did not have an explicit “policy” regarding the question of enlargement – though there were criteria for states wishing to join, the applicants would take the initiative, not the EC (Le Gloannec 2016).

Yet, the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989), the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Yugoslav Wars raised challenges that required at least some form of a

¹ See The Schuman Declaration, 09.05.1950. http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/europe-day/schuman-declaration/index_en.htm. Accessed on 24.11.2015.

² Article 237 of the Rome Treaty stipulated “any European state may apply”.

³ Enlargements started in 1973 with Denmark, Ireland and the UK, followed by Greece in 1981, Portugal and Spain in 1986, Sweden, Austria and Finland in 1995 and a fourth and fifth round welcoming Central and Eastern European states from 2004 to 2007 and then 2013, bringing the number of MS to 28.

collective response, both vis-à-vis external states now wishing to join the EC and vis-à-vis the warring parties of the Ex-Yugoslav Federation. Throughout the 1990s the MS modified their institutional architecture to cope with those new demands; the resulting institutional arrangements reflected both the failures of the 1990s to keep the peace in Yugoslavia and the ambitions of “organizing the continent”, notably through the accession of former Soviet states and the gradual transformation of the EC/EU’s neighborhood (Le Gloannec 2016). All those issues (responding to the Yugoslavian drama, integrating new members and even transforming some of them by means of social engineering as in the post-war Balkans) raised important questions as to whether the collective of European states was actually able to live up to the demands of the “foreign policy game”.

For instance, with the task of embracing the formerly Soviet-occupied states, the EC/EU acquired a whole new dimension: it included new members that would have to be *made fit* for membership before joining. At first, faced with the formerly occupied Eastern European states’ unavoidable “return to Europe”, the older EC members *reacted*, managing and organizing the inevitable by raising conditions: The 1993 Copenhagen criteria required that joining states needed to have *already* achieved a certain degree of stability of institutions. Later years brought more than reactive, but also *proactive* EC policies regarding the European “abroad”, and what is more, policies that aimed to actively transform and shape the EU’s environment: The European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) of 2004 aimed to avoid creating new borders between those admitted to the EU and those not, offering financial assistance on the conditions of governmental and economic reforms to Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia in the South and Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. The MS also went on the initiative in the Balkans with a regional strategy to actively transform the Central and Eastern European states with benchmarks and conditions, to shape them in order to make them fit for EU membership, to “embed democracy, the rule of law and the rights of minorities and to prop up market economies, to stabilize [their] neighboring countries in transition” (Le Gloannec 2016). To what extent, however, would the MS be able to fully “own” these processes, to hold sway if need be, to guarantee outcomes against adversities or resistance?

The Yugoslav wars raised yet a different set of challenges than enlargement,

namely the question how well the EC/EU was prepared to provide security, if need be with military means, and without depending entirely on the US. Though Luxembourg's Minister of Foreign Affairs proclaimed in 1991 that the breakup of the Yugoslav federation heralded the hour when Europe would be able to take care of its own security, events revealed quickly the MS' military inadequacy and exposed their dependence on the US throughout the Bosnian war (1992-1995) and the bombardment of Kosovo (1999). Together, these challenges of enlargement, of shaping the external security environment, and of providing a military response to crises, ultimately brought up the question which security guarantees would back up the MS' foray into "collective foreign policy". This also raised questions about the place and role of the US, the continent's chosen protector since the beginning of the Cold War, in European defense and security integration: Was the relation with the US an inhibiting factor for European security and defense integration, in the sense that the MS would continue to "free ride" and avoid becoming serious about their own rhetoric?

True, with the Maastricht Treaty on European Union, the MS seemed to make a first step toward a more European-owned security policy, agreeing that their political union should not only encompass economic and monetary aspects but should acquire a capacity for joint action on issues of foreign and security policy. A "common foreign and security policy" (CFSP), as the Treaty declared optimistically, was "hereby established" in 1992 (Title V, Article J). The Amsterdam Treaty added a security and defense dimension to the second pillar in 1999 and so-called "Petersberg tasks" were integrated into the Treaties (humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping, crisis management and peacemaking). In addition, the MS devised the instrument of "common strategies" and created a new post, the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy. The Nice Treaty created the Political and Security Committee (PSC), the EU Military Committee (EUMC), the EU Military Staff (EUMS) and the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CivCom),⁴ the common foreign policy's institutional backbone.

Furthermore, the French and the British government issued the so-called Saint Malo Declaration in 1998, which requested "making a reality of the Treaty of Amsterdam" and spoke of the "responsibility of the European Council to decide on the progressive framing of a common defence policy in the framework of CFSP"

⁴ CivCom stands for *Comité chargé des aspects civils de la gestion des crises*.

(Saint Malo Declaration 1998). The declaration then stated “the Union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises (ibid.). Importantly, this Franco-British ambition was adopted at the EU level quite quickly due to an important effort of German diplomacy; the European Council of Laeken issued a “Declaration on the Operational Capability of the Common European Security and Defence Policy” in December 2001 and stated: “Through the continuing development of the ESDP [European Security and Defence Policy],⁵ the strengthening of its capabilities, both civil and military, and the creation of the appropriate EU structures, the EU is now able to conduct some crisis-management operations” (European Council 14-15.12.2001).

These documents obviously raised questions, firstly, about the re-equilibration of transatlantic relations, and secondly, about the scope of European ambitions, as the MS did not explicitly circumscribe crisis management operations to Europe or its near abroad: To the contrary, we will see later that important EU actors suggested the EU would not only become a collective security provider alongside (or even without) the US, but a *global* security provider. These two issues of transatlantic relations and the EU’s global security role bring us back to Afghanistan and the question why it is appropriate to study matters of European security in Central Asia.

i. 3. The Afghan case and European “security provision”

There is great benefit in studying European “security provision” in the case of the post-2001 Afghan intervention, for several reasons. The first is that Afghanistan, unlike the Iraq war, offers an opportunity to study the engagement of nearly all of the EU’s MS over an extended period of time. Because European engagement in Afghanistan is so complete and all encompassing (except for Cyprus and Malta every MS has contributed to the mission), it is possible to inquire into the MS’ difficulties of “providing security” during a time period of approximately thirteen years

⁵ The official designation for ESDP uses British English. When referring to EU institutions, this thesis will respect the official terminology, for instance regarding the European Defence Agency.

(European Parliament 16.12.2010). This also makes it possible to investigate notions of collective European impact or influence.

Very few studies have approached the Afghan campaign with a specifically European focus however, which results in failure to glean its lessons for the European “project” of establishing a common security and defense policy. From a European standpoint, the literature on the Afghan intervention suffers from several shortcomings: Firstly, a great majority of publications quite exclusively deals with the US American or the UK’s experiences. This is unsurprising, given that both countries fielded the major part of the troop contingents over the years, but it also leads to a heavy “Anglo-Saxon” bias in the analysis and an over-emphasis on the US’ strategic mistakes to the detriment of the way alliance dynamics, and therefore European contributions, have affected the campaign (see, for instance, S. Jones 2009; Gannon 2011; Steele 2011; B. Williams 2011; Eide 2012; Gall 2012, 2014; Chandrasekaran 2012; Fairweather 2014).

In most cases, analysis has dealt primarily with military matters in Afghanistan, studying questions of military adaptation to force projection or the “learning” of counter insurgency (COIN) techniques (see, for instance, S. Jones 2008; Marston 2008; Gompert, Gordon, Grissom 2008; Cordesman 2009; Gentile 2009; Farrell and Gordon 2009; Taillat 2009, 2010; Bayley and Perito 2010; Schreer 2010; Chaudhuri and Farrell 2011; Porch 2013; Ucko and Egnell 2013; Bennett 2014; Schmitt 2015). Some studies have done this with a more or less explicitly European focus, sometimes looking at the Afghan campaign in a historical perspective of European military transformation since the Cold War, but largely without going beyond military questions (see, for instance, Larsdotter 2008; King 2011b; Farrell, Osinga, Russel 2013).

A large group of authors has concerned itself with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s (NATO) experience and first “out-of-area” mission (see, for instance, Rupp 2006; Daalder and Goldgeier 2006; Schmidt 2006-07; Smith and Williams 2008a and 2008b; Bird and Marshall 2011; Ivanov 2011; Johnson 2011; M.J. Williams 2011; Mattelaer 2011-2012; Rynning 2012; Schreer 2012). Analysis usually revolves around the campaign’s consequences on the alliance’s future or transatlantic relations more generally, NATO’s organizational adaptation to COIN or its forays into civilian-military affairs (see, for instance, Flanagan, Cipoletti and Tuninetti 2011;

Brattberg 2013; Schmeidl and Maley 2015). In this context, European contributions to the NATO effort are naturally taken into account, but the focus is generally not on European questions of security and defense, but on alliance dynamics more widely, often in order to test theoretical models about “what makes coalitions (s)tick” (Hynek and Marton 2011; see also, for instance, Bensahel 2003; Kreps 2008; von Hlatky 2013; Auerswald and Saideman 2014; Schmitt 2014; Mattox and Grenier 2015).

When it comes to studies with an explicit European focus, an important group has concerned itself with the phenomenon of PRTs (Provincial Reconstruction Teams), fortified military outposts aiming to coordinate development and other projects with local Afghan authorities. This literature has often tried to identify particularities and “national PRT models”, a “Dutch touch” in civilian-military cooperation, the “typical Nordic model” of peace building or the “specifically British” approach to PRTs or COIN and the like (see, for instance, Jakobsen 2005; Eronen 2008; Bauck and Strand 2009; Dommersnes 2011; Chiari 2014c). Others have looked more narrowly at some MS’ military endeavors, sometimes comparing them among each other, but again without an explicit focus on what the Afghan intervention tells us about the MS’s role in security provision as a collective of European states (see, for instance, Barat-Ginies 2011; Hynek and Marton 2011; Chaudhuri and Farrell 2011; Mattox and Grenier 2015; Schmitt 2015).

A few reports and authors have, of course, concerned themselves with the EU and its role in development aid or state building, but such attempts have remained small-scale (see, for instance, ICG 2005a; Gross 2009b; Buckley 2010; Burke 2014). Many publications focused on EUPOL-Afghanistan, the EU’s small-scale policing mission, often greatly exaggerating its importance or “distinctive approach” (see, for instance, Perito 2009; Peral 2009; Chivvis 2010; House of Lords 16.02.2011; Larivé 2012; Mawdsley and Kempin 2013; Pohl 2013).⁶ However, there is no publication so far that deals comprehensively with the MS’ collective role in, and problems with, security provision in Afghanistan, neither during the years of the Obama administration, nor during the years of the Bush administration. Studying the MS’ collective role(s) in the Afghan intervention explicitly under the aspect of post-Cold War advances toward a common foreign and security policy this dissertation therefore adds significant value to the literature on European security studies in general and the

⁶ From now on, this thesis refers to “EUPOL-Afghanistan” as “EUPOL”.

MS' collective role in security provision in particular.

The second reason why it is essential to study Afghanistan with a European focus is that in the case of the MS, the political problems of collective military action are particularly connected to the rhetoric of “soft power”, “civilian crisis management” and so-called “comprehensive approaches to security”. Hence, what started as a benign peacekeeping mission and later turned into COIN logically presents an opportunity to inquire into the political challenges that these issues raise for the MS' collective actorness and role in security provision. Afghanistan, because it so profoundly challenged some European self-portrayals and self-understandings of proposing alternatives to classic (read: US) hard power, is a good case to study the reality and limits of the European “soft power” discourse, and by this token, to test the limits of the MS' ambitions and ability to become a global security provider.

This leads to a third reason, which is that Afghanistan was NATO's first and most significant “out-of-area” mission. After Osama Bin Laden's planes hit the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, it quickly became clear that the MS would, yet again, be faced with tasks that were new for most of them: As the United States (US) turned its attention to Afghanistan, it asked its European allies to “transform” their military capabilities to allow force projection globally and in support of democratic “state building”. Even though Afghanistan obviously was no Common Security and Defense (CSDP)⁷ mission but NATO's responsibility, the intervention offers an opportunity to study Europe's collective will and ability to project and sustain force, to take responsibility for far-away theaters, in sum to act in the *global* way many European documents and speeches suggested at the time of 9/11. Moreover, because this was a global mission, one important lever the MS disposed of in the Balkans, an accession perspective to join the EU, was non-existent in this case, and this makes it possible to study Europe's role in international “security provision” in a much more abstract sense than was possible in the Balkans, where the EU, as a direct neighbor, was much more involved in the historical context of the region.

⁷ CSDP was called ESDP (European Security and Defence Policy) until the 2009 Lisbon Treaty.

The fourth reason is that Afghanistan offers an opportunity to study the relationship between the MS's role in global "security provision" and the US. Afghanistan started out as an exercise in alliance solidarity with a heavy European presence and later became a strongly Americanized COIN mission. During all stages of the conflict, it was possible to study the place the US occupies in European security and defense calculations, and thus the relationship between "collective security actorness" rhetoric and the MS' strong reliance on the US as a security guarantee. Before this introduction now delves into the necessary context of the mission, one important potential misunderstanding needs to be cleared right away: The EU's stated objective to "launch and then to conduct EU-led military operations in response to international crises" only where "NATO as a whole" is *not* engaged could be interpreted as a reason to dismiss the relevance of the study because, clearly, this was a NATO campaign. However, European documents like the Saint Malo Declaration were not only concerned with ESDP missions in a narrow sense, but spoke of European "autonomy of action" in a general sense. In other words, they described an ability to act and decide without outside interference or influence, and this is why Afghanistan, though a NATO operation, is an appropriate case to study questions of European security autonomy.

Coming back to the background of the Afghan mission, it was said above that Afghanistan offered a good opportunity to study the place the US occupies in European security and defense calculations, and this is mainly because two different types of leadership situations could be observed throughout the intervention: During a first phase that started in 2001, the US administration's hands-off approach to Afghanistan created an outright leadership vacuum, focusing on narrow counter terrorism objectives but leaving crucial questions of stabilization, governance or state building largely to its European allies. This slowly changed with a deteriorating security situation between 2004-2007, leading to a heavier American involvement and the Obama administration's full commitment to the campaign after 2009, with more money, resources, soldiers and a new strategy. During both phases, the MS' approaches to security and their national strategic cultures remained obviously very different from each other, but the patterns of European contributions to the campaign

converged around a de facto common role under US president Obama, and this constitutes the starting point of this thesis (see below).

The next pages deal with these two main phases of US leadership, i.e., the initial leadership vacuum and the later Americanization of the campaign, that constitute the basic framework for the analysis of the MS' collective role. They present the wider context of the Bush administration's "Global War on Terror" (GWOT), connected debates about "global NATO" and the divide between counter terrorism and peacekeeping embodied by two different missions in Afghanistan, Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). The overview here is necessarily cursory, as this introduction gives only the necessary background to understand the *problématique* of the dissertation; more details will, as appropriate, be provided at later stages of this dissertation.

i. 3.a. A "Global War" between state building and counter terrorism

Only a few hours after the 9/11 terror attacks, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) unanimously promised the US government assistance (NATO 11.09.2001). A day later, European NATO allies offered to activate Article 5 of the Transatlantic Treaty, the famous "solidarity clause" that stipulates that

"an armed attack against one or more of [the members of the alliance] in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that ... each of them... [will take] action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area" (NATO 1949).⁸

⁸ The decision to offer the activation of Article 5 showed a strong sense of solidarity if one considers that articles 3, 5 and 6 of the Transatlantic Treaty refer to "armed attack" – and airplanes are not, technically speaking, arms. Furthermore, the Transatlantic Treaty refers to *international* attacks – however, nobody had claimed responsibility for the hijackings by the time Article 5 was activated (Rynning 2012). If 9/11 had been a case of *homegrown* terrorism, such as, for instance, the Oklahoma City bombing on 19 April 1995, European allies with separatist movements as in Spain were taking a risk to engage NATO in an affair for which it was not designed.

The NAC stated: “The Council agreed that if it is determined that this attack was directed from abroad against the United States, it shall be regarded as an action covered by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty...” (NATO 12.09.2001). After high ranking US officials presented NATO members with evidence linking Al Qaeda to the attacks in the weeks that followed, NATO reached an official agreement in early October that the attacks had indeed come from abroad – the activation of Article 5 could proceed.

The Bush administration, however, turned down the offer. On a visit to Brussels two weeks after the attacks, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz explained to the allies: “If we need collective action, we'll ask for it. We don't anticipate that at the moment” (US DoD 26.11.2001). In addition, US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld declared, “the mission determines the coalition. And the coalition must not be permitted to determine the mission” (Rumsfeld 27.09.2001). US Secretary Colin Powell did evoke the “viability of the [NATO] alliance” and made an official request that NATO assist the US with the provision of port and airfield access, but according to a NATO official “everybody knew it was essentially symbolic” (quoted in Hallams 2009: 47).

In fact, the US had emerged from NATO's Bosnia and Kosovo campaigns “with a belief that its operational freedom and flexibility had been hampered by operating within alliance constraints” (Hallams 2009: 38). NATO's Bosnia campaign in particular had exposed European shortcomings in required command and control arrangements, secure radio communications, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance: “[W]e never want to do this again” was the verdict of a NATO defense minister (quoted in Kagan 2003: 49). For many prominent US officials, European deficiencies and military weaknesses had gravely affected NATO's Bosnia campaign: US Defense Secretary William Cohen, for instance, argued that a unilateral US military campaign could have been much more swift than was possible with the European states (Daalder and O'Hanlon 2000: 105). As one expert noted:

“The extent of US dominance in combat capabilities proved critical in forging a growing consensus within the US that NATO as an alliance simply lacked the necessary collective capabilities and resources to undertake major military interventions” (Hallams 2009: 42).

Hence, European allies were invited to contribute to a “coalition of the willing” and help hunt terrorists on an *ad hoc* basis, but the counter terrorism campaign would have to be organized outside of NATO’s command and control structures. This strong US insistence on operational freedom was related to the new paradigm of the Bush administration’s post 9/11 GWOT: “Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there”, Bush declared on 20.11.2001. “It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated”, he noted, warning this would be “a lengthy campaign”. Therefore, “[e]very nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists” (Bush 20.09.2001). On 29 January 2002, US President Bush’s State of the Union Address indicated that this “war on terror” would be a radical endeavor way beyond Afghanistan. Referring to North Korea, Iran and Iraq, Bush said: “States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world” (The White House 29.01.2002). Almost across the board, European governments reacted with reluctance and caution to this “global war”.

Both of these themes, “coalitions of the willing” and the “GWOT” raised a set of hard questions for the MS: Did 9/11 definitely sound the death knell for collective security governance, giving instead way to the dominance of small “coalitions of the willing”? How “global” was this “war on terror” going to be, would NATO be a relevant organization in dealing with it if the US snubbed its most important tool, the mutual defense clause, and what role could the European states, almost none of them prepared for sustained force projection, play in global counter terrorism operations? Only in 1999, the European allies, albeit accepting terrorism to be added to NATO’s purview, had prevented NATO’s Strategic Concept from explicitly mentioning military operations reaching out beyond Europe’s borders (see Sloan 2010: 189). Concerning terrorism, the 1991 Strategic Concept and the 1999 Strategic Concept both stated that it constituted a threat to the allies’ “security interests”, but stopped short of mentioning *counter* terrorism operations (NATO 1991: § 12; NATO 1999: § 24). However, OEF was precisely about counter terrorism and this raised the question how the MS could remain partners if their alliance was not invited (Yost 2010).

In this respect, the Bush administration now insisted that NATO become a “global alliance”. At the 2002 Prague Summit, NATO allies vowed to improve NATO’s “ability to adjust to new priorities and to adapt its capabilities in order to

meet new challenges” (NATO 2003). Proposals were put on the table concerning a reform of NATO’s command structure, improving NATO’s capabilities (under the so-called “Prague Capabilities Commitment”, PCC) and thirdly, a proposal for a NATO Response Force (NRF). Post-1989 US administrations had long insisted that NATO not remain strictly confined to the Euro-Atlantic area but that “Alliance security must also take account of the global context” (NATO 1999: § 24). The 1999 Strategic Concept had mentioned the “possibility of regional crises at the periphery of the Alliance” and argued the “size, readiness, availability and deployment of the Alliance’s military forces will reflect its commitment to collective defence and to conduct crisis response operations, sometimes at short notice, distant from their home stations, including beyond the Allies' territory” (NATO 1999: § 20, § 52). However, the fact that European diplomats, especially French and German, had fought hard (though without success) for the 1999 NATO Strategic Concept to restrict NATO’s role to the transatlantic area only, indicated that matters would become complicated in the years to come.

Answers to these questions of NATO’s purpose and remit would soon be given in Afghanistan, in the form of tortured compromises, but in order to understand this, one needs to delve deeper into the Afghan mission.

i. 3.b. Initial US under-investment and its consequences

Despite grand schemes of a “global war” starting in Afghanistan, the early Bush administration underfunded the Afghan mission and formulated no project for Afghanistan going beyond tactical-level questions, the hunting and/or killing of terrorists and terror suspects and the quick-fix solution of installing a new Afghan government at the Bonn conference (Grenier 2015). Around late 2002/early 2003 critical assets were withdrawn from the Afghan theater and sent to Iraq, where the Bush administration’s real focus lay (and which it invaded in 2003), and the US Department of Defense (US DoD) planned for troop reductions in Afghanistan until the autumn of 2005 (Woodward 2004; Rashid 2008, 2010; Zakheim 2011; Hynek and Marton 2011: 4). OEF was conceptualized and carried out as a limited punitive

measure, exactly the opposite from the “comprehensive approach”, “nation-building” or “COIN” of the later years. OEF was to be a *limited* counter *terrorist* operation and its goals were relatively modest: In the new context of the GWOT, the Taliban simply needed to be defeated to prevent Afghanistan “from ever again becoming a safe haven for terrorists”, but the Bush administration initially foresaw no political involvement going beyond military victory (Report to US Congress 2008). A now-famous National Security Council meeting on 4 October 2001 reveals how little the US was interested in “owning” Afghanistan: When Condoleezza Rice and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz discussed the allied involvement in the phase after the Taliban, President Bush asked “[w]ho will run the country?” – but nobody “had a real answer” (Woodward 2002: 168).

Hence, the defeat of the Taliban was to be achieved based on an alliance of several hundreds of US Special Operations Forces (SOF), US air power and roughly 15,000 Afghan Tajik, Hazara and Uzbek fighters (dubbed the “Northern Alliance”) (M.J. Williams 2011: 64). Though a total of 29,000 to 38,000 US Air Force sorties and 22,000 delivered bombs might seem impressive at first sight, the Afghan campaign was actually severely understaffed and under-resourced (Rynning 2012: 77).⁹ Moreover, it is widely acknowledged that the assessments informing international donor conferences for post-Taliban Afghanistan “grossly underestimated the reconstruction needs of the country” (Sedra 2004: 209).¹⁰

President Bush did invoke the Marshall Plan, i.e. the post-World War II military and economic aid program for Germany (1947 – 1951) during a speech at the Virginia Military Institute on 17 April 2002, and Afghan officials interpreted this as a major assistance commitment (Steele 2011: 117):

“By helping to build an Afghanistan that is free from this evil and is a better place in which to live, we are working in the best traditions of George Marshall. Marshall

⁹ In all fairness, this lack of funding was not only a US phenomenon: The total budget for the newly created UNAMA was \$ 193 million for the entire time span from April 2002 to December 2005 (Ponzio 2011: 116). A RAND study shows that per capita aid during the years 2001-2003 equaled \$ 57, compared with \$ 679 in Bosnia and \$ 233 in East Timor. Moreover, RAND calculated that during the two first years of intervention, the soldier-local inhabitant ratio was 1:1000 in Afghanistan, 7:1000 in Iraq, 19:1000 in Bosnia and 20:1000 in Kosovo (Dobbins et al 2005: 228).

¹⁰ According to Astri Suhrke, the hypothesis that the interveners missed a window of opportunity and underinvested is highly questionable: A “stronger international presence in the early post-invasion phase might simply have introduced at an earlier point the negative reactions, problems and strains that appeared in the second half of the decade” (Suhrke 2011: 13). This may be so, but it does not invalidate the fact that the Bush administration lacked a political project for the time after the defeat of the Taliban.

knew that our military victory against enemies in World War II had to be followed by a moral victory that resulted in better lives for individual human beings. After 1945, the United States of America was the only nation in the world strong enough to help rebuild a Europe and a Japan that had been decimated by World War II” (US Government 2002).

However, Bush remained vague on details, and most importantly, no major US funds were actually released: US Congress was not asked until the end of 2002 to provide additional money for Afghanistan. Coming from this US administration, this under-investment in “state building” was not surprising, given that prior to 9/11, President George W. Bush had run his election campaign on an isolationist, anti-state building platform, arguing that the Clinton/Gore administration had stretched the US military too thin and used the US army for military “social work” (Neal 2003). George W. Bush’s senior foreign policy advisor Condoleezza Rice was quoted as saying that the US didn’t need “to have the 82nd Airborne escorting kids to kindergarten” and President Bush declared during a presidential debate, “I don’t think our troops ought to be used for what’s called nation building” (The American Presidency Project 2000; Suhrke 2011: 24).

This lack of political commitment on the side of the US translated into very limited troop levels: The first time the number of US troops in Afghanistan surpassed 40,000 was in March/April 2009, eight years into the mission and no more than 20,000 US soldiers were present in Afghanistan until 2006 (CRS 02.07.2009). Only in 2009, US President Obama surged in an additional 21,000 in March, and another 30,000 in December (The White House 01.12.2009). This had to do with the fact that the US invaded Iraq in March 2003, with a force of 150,000 US troops (supplemented by 23,000 soldiers from other, mostly European, countries). US troop levels in Iraq were relatively static during 2004 and 2005, and they slightly fell to approximately 127,000 in 2006. However, the Iraqi insurgency, parallel to Saddam Hussein’s execution, led US President Bush to surge another 21,500 US troops into Iraq at the beginning of the year 2007. By October 2007, US troop level in Iraq reached 171,000 (Al Jazeera 14.12.2011).

Hence, when this thesis will refer to a leadership vacuum during the early years, this does not only pertain to the lack of resources and funding, but more fundamentally to the fact that the US administration designed its early role as

“counter terrorism without state building”: While the US military was being used as a tool to “bring the terrorists to justice”, the political project sketched out with the Bonn Agreement (see below) was not more than a vague roadmap, barring a political commitment to the country and leading to accusations that the US was conducting “nation-building on the cheap” (US Government Printing Office 2004: 53; Felbab-Brown 2013; Somit and Peterson 2005; Ignatieff 2002). This vacuum of leadership opened an opportunity for the European MS to carve out a role in Afghanistan and complement counter terrorism with humanitarian aid and state building. Moreover, the more the Bush administration focused on re-organizing Iraq, the more the perception grew in Washington that “this was the war Europe was supposed to manage while the US focused on Iraq” (Hunter 2006).

How the European states did “manage” this war is the content of later chapters, but for now, we need to present the early political arrangements for post-Taliban Afghanistan and the way they related to the new paradigm of the “GWOT”. To begin with, the German government convened an international conference at the Bonner Petersberg from 27 November to 5 December 2001, in order to find arrangements for Afghanistan’s political future. A few weeks before the conference President Bush sketched out he wished the allies to support the US-led counter terrorism effort:

“It would be a useful function for the United Nations to take over the so-called ‘nation-building’ – I would call it the stabilization of a future government – after our military mission is complete. We’ll participate: other countries will participate. I’ve talked to many countries that are interested in making sure that the post-operations Afghanistan is one that is stable and one that doesn’t become yet again a haven for terrorist criminals” (The White House 11.10.2001).

In other words, the Bush administration envisaged a strong European involvement in everything that did not concern counter terrorism, notably in the provision of security for the new Afghan government that would be put into place with the Bonn Agreement. The “Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan” spelled out a “broad-based gender-sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully

representative” government as the main goal for post-Taliban Afghanistan. Presidential and parliamentary elections would be held in 2004 and September 2005, respectively, bringing the Bonn Process to a formal end. Importantly, the new Afghan government would need security guarantees, and therefore, the Bonn conference suggested the creation of an International Security Assistance Force (i.e., ISAF), a mission separate from OEF and which the US did not get involved in at all. US Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld encouraged “other countries who have an interest in peacekeeping to participate in the International Security Assistance Force to the extent they want to” but the US administration refused to commit to ISAF even with logistical assistance (Peace Operations Factsheet 2002; Suhrke 2011: 34). Since only France and the United Kingdom (UK) were able to provide real military substance to OEF, ISAF offered a natural solution for other European states to contribute to a campaign that seemed to offer an opportunity to apply the learned lessons of peacekeeping from the Balkans (Rynning 2012).

ISAF’s mandate was initially extremely limited, the United Nations (UN) Security Council authorizing it for six months and only to “assist the Afghan Interim Authority in the maintenance of security *in Kabul and its surrounding areas*, so that the Afghan Interim Authority as well as the personnel of the United Nations can operate in a secure environment” (UNSC Res 1386; emphases added). This stood in a marked contrast to the years after 2003, when, as we shall see, NATO was brought in by the European allies to take over the ISAF mission and roll out across the country via so-called Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). However, be it “UN ISAF” or “NATO ISAF”, in both cases ISAF was primarily a European affair during the first years, while the US remained focused on a counter terrorism approach.

Though it appeared so, this separation between a (largely European) stabilization mission and a (largely American) counter terrorism mission did not reflect a transatlantic “division of labor” because the two missions were not connected by a common transatlantic political vision. To the contrary, ISAF was a default option for those European allies who had qualms about the GWOT, OEF and the later invasion of Iraq and “the United States was willing to let them have it (...) because it was useful, not because it was particularly reflective of political reality” (Rynning 2012: 72). When it came to the fields of aid, development and state building, the MS did indeed play important roles, but European political commitment to a clearly

identified *political project* was as low as the US’.

In sum, the European allies entered Afghanistan condemning terrorism but reluctant to engage in counter terrorism operations. When they brought in NATO, they de facto breached NATO’s Euro-Atlantic focus without officially embracing the idea of “global NATO” and they accepted to become the security guarantee for the new Afghan regime, but without contemplating the politics of Afghan recovery, “including NATO’s role should the country reverse into war” (Rynning 2012: 108). Nevertheless, European rhetoric ran high as we shall see, and almost all European leaders advocated a strong European involvement in stabilization and state building, in order to avoid a return of Al Qaeda. However, as this dissertation shows, a true state building project did not make it on the agenda unless the US took over European engagements in state building, thus systematically Americanizing European activities faced with their underperformance. To explain how and why this Americanization by default occurred despite a clear opportunity for the MS to act and complement counter terrorism with European expertise is the reason why the thesis returns to the initial phase of the intervention.

i. 3.c. From a “NATO operation with US input” to a “US mission with NATO input”

The situation of the early years is not comparable to the second phase that this dissertation analyzes, namely the years under President Obama (elected on 4 November 2008). This is because, firstly, the Bush administration had finally put a state building project on the agenda to support the build-up of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP), secondly, because the US increasingly Americanized the military effort when security deteriorated and European allies refused to budge, and thirdly, because the Obama administration formulated two important reviews in 2009 to change the objectives and strategy of the Afghan war (the “good war” as opposed to the “dumb war” in Iraq, as former Senator Obama had once put it at an anti-war rally in Chicago in 2002, see NPR 20.01.2009).

Despite the Bush administration’s focus on counter terrorism during the first

years, US military officials had in fact realized early on that the poor training and discipline of Afghan militias was becoming a liability for the new Afghan government and the entire Bonn process. Major General Karl W. Eikenberry, who took charge in the Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan (OMC-A) in October 2002, concluded that what was needed was more than the provision of training, but “constructing an entire military edifice to include the Ministry of Defense, a General Staff, and all the other institutions and facilities that fall under that type of structure” (Wright, Bird, Clay et al. 2010: 232). It took years for the Bush administration to officially acknowledge it was indeed in the business of state building, and this major conceptual shift was officially formalized with the 2006 “London Compact”, a document which replaced the Bonn process and pledged to “(b)uild lasting Afghan capacity and effective state and civil society institutions, with particular emphasis on building up human capacities of men and women alike” (The Afghanistan Compact 2006).

The second major change that preceded the Obama strategies concerned the deteriorating security situation and the increasing Americanization of the war effort. In 2005, the level of violence reached unprecedented peaks in Afghanistan. In an assessment, the International Crisis Group (ICG) wrote that the allies were now facing a full-blown insurgency (ICG 2006b: 5). Areas only two hours of the capital, such as Ghazni in the East, started to be unreachable for outsiders and internationals, soldiers and humanitarian aid workers alike. In mid-July, the Taliban even passingly held district centers in Garmser and Naway-e Barakzagy in the Helmand region (ICG 2006b: 7). Larger swathes of territory were coming under the Taliban’s sway in the southern and eastern parts of the country, and they also appeared to take control in central regions (notably in Eastern Logar and Wardak with their strategic significance for launching attacks on Kabul).¹¹ Coalition fatalities had been relatively stable from 2002 to 2004 (70, 58 and 60 fatalities in 2002, 2003 and 2004), but they now more than doubled: 2005, there were 131 fatalities, and 191 the following year.¹²

¹¹ This was to a great extent the result of Pakistani logistical support, but also due to the fact that the Iraq invasion mobilized Islamist militants worldwide. The two battlefields communicated with each other, and tactics and militants were increasingly imported from Iraq (The Christian Science Monitor 01.02.2007). The Bush Administration’s National Intelligence Estimate on “Trends in Global Terrorism: implications for the United States”, a partially declassified document, stated that the “Iraq War [had] become the ‘cause celebre’ for jihadists ... and [it was] shaping a new generation of terrorist leaders and operatives” (The New York Times 27.09.2006).

¹² <http://icasualties.org/OEF/index.aspx>. Accessed on 09.01.2016. See also Porter 2015.

Faced with this Afghan situation, and faced with an Iraq war that was spiraling out of control at the same time, the US Administration grew increasingly worried and pushed the allies to do more. Notably the Canadians, the Dutch and the British answered Washington's calls to alleviate the American war effort with greater allied engagement in southeastern Afghanistan (The Guardian 03.02.2006). Starting with air strikes in March 2006, Operation Mountain Thrust was launched to weaken the resistance of the insurgents. In addition to a contingent from the ANA, some 10,000 NATO allies were engaged in hostilities in a territory comprising four Afghan regions, i.e., Uruzgan in the North, Zabul and Kandahar in the East and Helmand stretching from the South to the North.

Despite the fact that only Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK substantially stepped up their ISAF contributions over the years it should be said that ISAF was still very much dominated by the MS in 2006. Upon the arrival of General Dan McNeill as ISAF Commander in February 2007, European and Canadian soldiers were still predominant in ISAF: In February 2007, 16,500 troops (out of a total of 35,460 ISAF troops) came from EU countries.¹³ In total, 18,340 troops were European.¹⁴ In other words, at the beginning of 2007, only about 14,000 ISAF troops were US Americans (NATO 29.01.2007). In contrast, when McNeill turned over his command in June 2009 the balance within ISAF had changed: Of the now 61,130 ISAF troops in Afghanistan, 25,534 were from EU countries.¹⁵ 28,850 ISAF troops came from the US. In other words, the majority of the MS did not follow the Americans, who had caught up substantially.

In an interview with the Washington Post, McNeill revealed that European reticence to get involved was leading to “unofficial proposals that *U.S. forces take charge of the mission in southern Afghanistan*, where the Taliban insurgency is strongest and where British, Canadian and Dutch troops now serve” (The Washington Post 07.02.2008, emphases added). This idea, he stated, merited consideration and “should enter into the dialogue” with NATO (ibid.). On 22 May 2008, the US

¹³ Another 1,840 European troops were coming from Albania (30), Croatia (130), Denmark (400), the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland (5), Norway (350), Switzerland (5) and Turkey (800). Denmark is a EU country, but has an opt-out on CSDP, Croatia joined the EU only in 2013, and Albania, Macedonia, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey are not part of the EU.

¹⁴ In addition, Canada deployed 2500, Australia 500 and New Zealand 100 troops.

¹⁵ Another 2535 came from Albania (140), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2), Croatia (290), Denmark (700), Iceland (8), Norway (485), Macedonia (170), Turkey (730), Ukraine (10). 1090 were from Australia, 2830 from Canada, 170 from New Zealand. See NATO ISAF Placemat 15.06.2009.

Defense Department confirmed it was likely to take over the command of Regional Command (RC) South by 2010, once the Dutch and the British rotations (2008-2009 and 2009-2010) would be over. Until such time, a US general (General John Mickelson) would be deputy commander of RC South “to give the U.S. force added weight at that headquarters” and in July, an additional aircraft carrier was deployed to Afghanistan (Katzman 2008: 25). The Bush Administration concluded at the beginning of 2008 that the US needed to focus more attention and resources than had been previously done, and Joint Chiefs Chairman Mullen confirmed in his testimony in December 2007 that the campaign was “under-resourced” (Katzman 2008). In January 2008, Defense Secretary Gates deployed 3,200 more marines to the Afghan south and in September 2008, President Bush announced another 5,000 more troops for early 2009 (Katzman 2008). Hence, long before President Obama took office, the war had become strongly dominated by the US.

This growing “Americanization” of the Afghan war made it possible that the new strategies put forth by the incoming Obama administration literally leaped over the European allies (who did not make claims to determine the strategy anyway) in defining the new objectives of the war. Two key documents spelled out the US’ new approach and strategy in Afghanistan, the March 2009 Riedel review and Obama’s West Point Speech in December of the same year. Based on a review led by his adviser Bruce Riedel in the spring of 2009, Obama announced a “stronger, smarter, and comprehensive strategy” with the “clear and focused goal to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat Al Qaida in Pakistan and Afghanistan and to prevent their return to either country in the future” (The White House 27.03.2009). The campaign, in other words was now officially about COIN, not stabilization. Because “America must no longer deny resources to Afghanistan because of the war in Iraq”, an additional 17,000 soldiers would “take the fight to the Taliban” in Southern and Eastern Afghanistan, and a new emphasis would be put on training and increasing the size of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) (ibid.). Recognizing the “fundamental connection between our war effort in Afghanistan and the extremist safe havens in Pakistan”, this first review represented a more focused, narrower strategy than the previous ones, and it carried a pledge to “better coordinate our military and civilian efforts” (ibid.).

Eight months later, President Obama sent an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to

Afghanistan (The White House 01.12.2009). The core points of the Riedel review remained unchanged, but Obama now stepped up the pace: After “18 months, our troops will begin to come home”, he announced (ibid.). The three core elements of Obama’s strategy were the following: “a military effort to create the conditions for a transition; a civilian surge that reinforces positive action; and an effective partnership with Pakistan” (ibid.). In sum, President Obama “limited the war’s objectives, shedding his predecessor’s utopian rhetoric about promoting a Western-style democracy and focusing instead on preventing Afghanistan from reverting to a haven for global terrorists” (Korski 2010: 4).

The European allies supported this new lead in various ways, militarily, politically and diplomatically, although the Obama “strategy” was clearly short on goals and sub goals: Its attention, as one observer noted, was “on the how rather than on the why; its focus was on the means, as the ends with which it was concerned were, in the standard hierarchy of military plans, essentially operational, not strategic, even if they posed as strategy” (Strachan 2010: 173; Schreer 2012). Nevertheless, it became the roadmap for NATO’s exit at the end of 2014, and it significantly changed the nature of European contributions, as we shall see. In sum, to study how European commitments to Afghan stability and security changed under this US lead and how the MS’ respective contributions related to their earlier rhetoric about collective “European security actorness” is the reason why this thesis studies the second phase of the war.

We can now come back to the central questions of European security actorness, namely European attempts to engage in collective global “security provision”. The MS’ apparent move towards a common (or “Europeanized”) security role in international affairs carried four core potentialities, which this thesis proposes to call the four “Collective Foreign Policy Potentials”.

i. 4. The four “Collective Foreign Policy Potentials”

The first of these “potentials” concerns the possibility that the MS become a *collective actor in security*, able to define common security goals and formulate strategies to reach them, making binding decisions and formulating common interests, and vested with the necessary capacity for analysis, shared ideas about appropriate action and means that are both useful and sufficient: “The increasing convergence of European interests and the strengthening of mutual solidarity of the EU makes us a more credible and effective actor”, as the European Security Strategy of 2003 noted (ESS 2003: 1). Attempts to work toward a “European Foreign Policy”, to turn “Europe” into a more unified, coherent and effective collective actor in foreign policy did not emerge out of nothing, of course. Such projects have a long history, but the events of the 1990s gave them new impetus and accelerated their development. As the European Council in Helsinki noted: “New political and military bodies will be established within the Council *to enable the Union to take decisions* on EU-led Petersberg operations and to ensure, under the authority of the Council, the necessary political control and *strategic direction* of such operations” (European Council 10-11.12.1999, Annex 1; emphases added). In this thesis, the possibility that the MS “learn” to act together cohesively in security shall be called the “actorness potential”.

Secondly, if the “objective is for the Union to have an autonomous capacity to take decisions”, advances in European security and defense integration during the 1990s carried the potential that Europe would “emancipate” significantly from American security tutelage and become *autonomous in security*: Adding a security and defense dimension to the Common Foreign and Security Policy required “a capacity for autonomous action backed up by credible military capabilities and appropriate decision making bodies” and this would ideally enable the Council of the EU to take decisions, autonomously, “on the whole range of political, economic and military instruments at its disposal when responding to crisis situations” (European

Council 10.-11.12.1999, Annex IV; European Council 03-04.06.1999). As noted, these definitions of autonomy did not only concern the launching of crisis management (which the MS promised should only take place “where NATO as a whole [was] not engaged”), but the focus was on autonomy of decision and action *per se*. In other words, this focus on “autonomy of action” implied the ability to operate without depending on external support or infrastructure and this is why Afghanistan, though it turned into a NATO operation, is an appropriate case to study the development (or not) of European autonomy. It is important to note in this respect that autonomy does not imply full independence, whereas independence implies full autonomy: An independent actor can make self-determined decisions *and* act without the help of others, while an autonomous actor has the capacity to act without the help of others but can theoretically do so to enact a decision taken by another actor. The strong rhetoric and the drive towards the “capacity for autonomous action”, which German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer once referred to as “Europe’s Boston Tea Party”, shall be called the “autonomy potential” (quoted in Garton Ash 2005).

Connected to these two points, a third potential is that the MS could also evolve into an actor that could be *proactive* instead of just *reactive* (as with the first wave of enlargement mentioned earlier). In other words, the MS could collectively initiate security projects if necessary, rather than waiting for others to take the lead: “[W]e should be ready to act *before a crisis occurs*. Conflict prevention and threat prevention cannot start too early”, is how the 2003 European Security Strategy would put it (ESS 2003: 7, emphasis added). This, as will be explained in more detail at a later stage, implies not only the ambition to take the initiative, but to set the security agenda in a given situation. A proactive policy can be seen as a policy aiming to create a situation rather than only responding to it once it has occurred; it aims to prompt and determine pre-defined outcomes through differentiated planning and purposeful action. This shall be called the “proactiveness potential”.

More than just initiating programs, the fourth core potential is that the MS might become a collective actor that impacts and “*shapes*” its security environment: “Europe should be ready to share in the responsibility for global security and in building a better world” (ESS 2003: 8). Europe could, for instance, “promote a ring of well governed countries to the East of the European Union and on the borders of the Mediterranean with whom we can enjoy close and cooperative relation” and it could

build security “in the Union's immediate neighborhood and promot[e] an international order based on effective multilateralism” (ESS 2003:8; Gnesotto 2004: 6-7). As the Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy 2008 succinctly put it: “[W]e must be ready to *shape events*” (IR ESS 2008: 2, emphasis added). A policy that tries to “shape” events attempts to change the status quo, to have a lasting impact on the environment and to form it according to a vision. This shall be called the “shaping” potential and is connected to the distinction Arnold Wolfers famously operated between “possession goals”, which designate a state’s aim to enhance or preserve “things to which it attaches value” (for instance, “a stretch of territory, membership in the Security Council of the United Nations, or tariff preferences”), and “milieu goals”, which pertain to the ambition to shape “conditions beyond [a given state’s] national boundaries” (Wolfers 1962: 73-74). This “shaping” ambition must not necessarily imply military means, but it can.

A few remarks on these Collective Foreign Policy Potentials are necessary. Firstly, taken together, these “potentials” tell us what the EU and the MS *are* (or may aspire to be) – but they do not tell us *what* they will do. Therefore, these potentials need to be infused with “security narratives”, themes like “democracy promotion” or another central motive, namely the notion that the EU needs to engage in *global* security provision, that it needs to be present beyond its own neighborhood: The task of the European MS, as High Representative Solana put it, would be to “make Europe a *global power*” (quoted in Rogers 2009: 851; emphasis added). It is notably the latter theme that has gained great importance for the “European actress project”, as we shall see.

Secondly, whether these potentials were mere rhetoric or reflected a true ambition, and whether they could be translated into action, is an obvious, if tricky, question. It is ultimately impossible to disentangle which European leaders “truly meant it” and which ones did not or were secretly skeptical, and therefore the thesis contents itself with François Heisbourg’s formula: The whole process of European security and defense integration contained a great deal of “constructive ambiguity”, because there were both enthusiastic and more prudent actors involved (Heisbourg 2000). This is why this dissertation does not treat the documents as a “promise” made by the politicians of that time; in other words, it does not argue that the actors who

undersigned these developments were all fully willing to realize the four Collective Foreign Policy Potentials or to bind themselves to the logical consequences of their rhetoric. It is important to say this because an often-used “academic strategy” consists in pretending to take discourse more seriously than is admissible, simply because it is a convenient starting point to compare reality with ambition.

Nevertheless, given the sheer amount of enthusiastic rhetoric, it was at least possible to believe at the time, as many commentators did, that a “full and rapid implementation of the Amsterdam provisions on CFSP” was in the cards and that the MS would indeed “unite in [their] efforts to enable the European Union to give concrete expression” to the goal of “tak[ing] decisions and approv[ing] military action” outside of NATO (Saint Malo Declaration 1998): Not only did several EU summits develop this theme, but so did a great number of national heads of state and government as well as EU officials. A look at the way some European statesmen envisioned NATO, for instance, helps to understand that this was part of a wider intellectual tendency toward “multinational governance”: French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine argued that NATO’s missions needed to be placed under the authority of the Security Council, including when no agreement could be found to activate Article 5 (Védrine 08.12.1998). Similarly, the German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer argued that “NATO should be 'akin to a strategic parliament where strategy was under deliberation until a majority agreed to it and then the talking ceased” (Rynning 2012: 95).

Coming back to the EU, the NATO Summits in London 1990 and in Brussels 1994 had recognized the “move within the European Community [EC] towards political union, including the development of a European identity in the domain of security” and welcomed the notion of a common European defense policy; the French White Book of 1994 even spoke of “bringing about ... a mutualisation of power in the service of the defence of Europe” (NATO 06.07.1990; NATO 10.-11.1994; *Livre Blanc* 1994: 10). Those and other documents cited at a later stage testify to the same belief in collective security provision (including collective war making) and certainly carried the *potential* of Europe making decisive steps toward becoming a *collective, autonomous and proactive actor in security that shapes its security environment according to own interests and in the name of Europe*.

Finally, as High Representative Federica Mogherini’s statement at the 2015

Munich Security Conference illustrated, this conceptualization of Europe as a unified “actor” in international security is far from having disappeared today:

“We support the statebuilding projects [of our partners and friends in Europe’s immediate and wider neighbourhood], their democratisation and economic reforms, as well as their European and regional integration ... And we do this together, North and South, East and West of the European Union. United” (Mogherini 2015).

Nor has, incidentally, the ambition to further develop Europe’s actorness disappeared:

“We need to define a new level of ambition on how we engage with the most important players around the globe ... The European Union’s eleven civilian missions and five military operations are a clear expression of our commitment to global security ... We need a sense of direction. We need the ability to make choices and to prioritise. We need a sense of how we can best mobilise our instruments to serve our goals and in partnership with whom. We need a strategy” (ibid.).

The second remark concerning the four “potentials” is that European states have obviously *always* played a role in international security, contributing to what is commonly called “international security governance”. The latter can be described as a complex web of interactions taking place on various levels, formal or informal, governmental or non-governmental, local or global etc., and characterized by fragmentation and centralization (Muftuler-Baç and Peterson 2014). Governance ultimately serves “to organise collective action and address systemic problems” (Alcaro and Ditrych 2014: 2). “Containment” of the Soviet Union was such a “systemic problem”, for which the European nations helped set up NATO or, in another context, the Non-Proliferation Treaty. All those were attempts to regulate international relations with a dominant Euro-Atlantic imprint. However, what changed with the process of European security and defense integration during the 1990s is that, for the first time, major European documents alluded to the possibility that the European contributions to “global security governance” might come in the name of a collective security actor pursuing a *commonly* agreed and potentially autonomous European policy.

The third set of remarks with regard to the above “potentials” concerns the dimension of “shaping”. When discussing the MS’ ability or inability to shape or proact in cases like Afghanistan, this thesis aims to discuss this matter without

endorsing or rejecting the MS' global role in security. Next, the ability to shape is obviously related to outcomes, which brings up the question of sustainability and success of international state building since the end of the Cold War. For instance, a US evaluation of external attempts to establish and operate a viable system to cover Afghanistan's ANP payroll costs showed that despite \$ 1,5 billion having been spent on such attempts between 2002 and 2011, the Afghan Ministry of Interior (MoI) was unable to "determine the actual number of personnel that work for the Afghan National Police because it has been unable to reconcile the number of personnel records or verify the data in four different personnel systems and databases" (SIGAR 2011: ii). Moreover, the MoI's "systems and databases [were] decentralized and the records and data in them are incomplete, unverified, and unreconciled" (ibid). Such examples abound, and they tally with the literature on state building, which now paints a very dim picture of the intellectual underpinnings of state building and its chances for success (see, for instance, Paris 2004; Barnett 2006; Suhrke 2007, 2008, 2011; Ayooob 2007; Hehir and Robinson 2007; Barnett and Zürcher 2009; Chandler 2006, 2009; Richmond and Franks 2009; Richmond 2014; Campbell, Chandler, Sabaratnam 2011).

If "even" the world's mightiest military power fails to "build" states, does this pose a challenge to the question of the MS' ability to "shape"? This thesis argues it does not, technically speaking: Firstly, its starting point lies at the European *rhetoric* of shaping in security, in other words, the high level of ambitions with which the European project was charged after the Cold War. The fact that "even" the US' recent record in "shaping" is a paltry one does not change the fact that a great deal of European leaders continue to formulate the ambition for the MS to be able to shape collectively. Therefore, this thesis is not so much concerned with dynamics of local resistance to external state building or state capture by local elites pretending to reform while actually undermining the imported state, as it is with the MS' will to act together in security, to set a security agenda and to leave a collective impact according to pre-defined outcomes (Goodhand and Sedra 2006; Barnett and Zuercher 2009). Lastly, the difficulty to shape points to a much wider trend concerning the transformation of "power" itself, which concerns all actors, for instance nation states and international organizations. It is therefore important to mention that since the "cycle" of large-scale international interventions seems to be coming to an end, the

conclusions this dissertation draws continue to be relevant nevertheless (Hassner 2015). We will come back to this in the final conclusion of this dissertation.

Box. The “Collective Foreign Policy Potentials”: Collective and autonomous MS acting, shaping and proacting in international security

<p>Actorness potential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will and ability to define common security goals and formulate strategies to reach them - Will and ability to make binding decisions and formulate common interests - Capacity for analysis - Shared ideas about appropriate action - Means that are both useful and sufficient 	<p>Autonomy potential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to operate in security without depending on external support or infrastructure - NB: Autonomy does not imply full independence but independence implies full autonomy: An independent actor can make self-determined decisions <i>and</i> act without the help of others, while an autonomous actor has the capacity to act without the help of others but can theoretically do so to enact a decision taken by another actor
<p>Proactiveness potential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The will or ability to create a situation rather than only responding to it once it has occurred - The will or ability to prompt and determine pre-defined outcomes through differentiated planning and purposeful action 	<p>Shaping potential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The will or ability to change the status quo in international security - The will or ability to have lasting impact in a given case - The will or ability to form (“<i>gestalten</i>”) the security environment according to a vision

i. 5. Main Findings

The study’s main findings can be presented in a few sentences. The Afghan case shows the MS’ national strategic cultures and security approaches continue to diverge substantially and that the MS have consequently not realized the Collective

Foreign Policy Potentials. When it comes to becoming a collective foreign policy actor in security, the MS are to a great extent opting out of their own rhetoric's logical consequences: A Europeanized Foreign Policy.

However, and despite the fact that bottom-up "Europeanization" logics or top-down pressures played a minor role in forging a common European approach, role, or policy in Afghanistan, there is significant evidence to make the case that a European role convergence by default occurred in Afghanistan, and that this phenomenon is linked to the way the MS' security policies related to the US' alliance leadership during the different phases of the war.

If, as this thesis shows, the MS' different strategic cultures kept them from elaborating a common European security *policy* in Afghanistan, but were no obstacle to the alignment of their individual security *actions* under the US' lead (once the latter manifested itself after the initial phase of hesitation described above), this points to the variable of leadership, and in this case US leadership, as a major factor of convergence logics in European security. The convergence of roles described here happened in Afghanistan as a de facto European alignment on an external political project (the US' leadership) that solved the inner-European leadership problem during a phase of security deterioration.

This role convergence was based on the contribution of European capabilities and techniques to an "imported" policy and was therefore a *technical* phenomenon, but not the expression of a specific and orchestrated *political* project. This brings us back to the hypothesis mentioned at the outset, namely that the role convergence described here is the possibility of joined-up *action* in the absence of joint *policy*; it happens next to – or even despite – the EU, and it is neither decreed in a top down way, nor a bottom up phenomenon (i.e., it does not entail the creation of common security policies), but occurs "by default" and as an apolitical project.

This allows for a different approach to European security and defense studies because it leads us to displace the focus from norms to behavior, and to analyze the possibility of a European defense and security policy not primarily as a cultural or political phenomenon (i.e., the convergence between strategic cultures, which, though undeniably happening, is not producing common policy), but as a behavioral occurrence by default. In other words, this focus on state behavior better sensitizes us

to the fact that “behavioral constellations” – but not “cultural convergence” – primarily drive European defense and security forward: This advances the theoretical discussion by challenging those who expect strong European security cooperation to be possible only once national strategic cultures converge toward one another. To the contrary, the thesis shows that growing cultural divergence (as expressed through conflicting strategic cultures) poses no insurmountable challenge at all to European defense and security. What is capable of advancing European security and defense is not so much a common security culture or European strategic culture, but leadership and/or common actions in concrete cases, of which Afghanistan is only one example.

With regard to the MS’ collective security actorness, the technical and apolitical nature of their security cooperation leaves the MS in a position where they have great difficulty shaping their security environment collectively (because this requires a political project), but where they are very well able to complement (or “co-shape”, as this thesis calls it) under an existing lead or within an existing security paradigm or framework. As the final Conclusion will show, this leads to the statement that thinking about a “European security strategy” must start with a recognition of the fact that such a thing is currently impossible, but that if European strategizing is conceptualized as dealing with the constraints of limited actorness, rather than the making of positive collective choices, a European role by default is entirely possible.

i. 6. Case selection

It was argued above that Afghanistan is a good case for a study on European “security provision”. It is also a good test case for the four Collective Foreign Policy Potentials, and having now presented them, it becomes possible to present the *problématique* more fully: Firstly, as shown above, the Bush administration neglected state building in Afghanistan from the start (Woodward 2004; Rashid 2008). As stated, this leadership vacuum gave the European MS an opportunity to justify their recent rhetoric and take ownership of the campaign, bending it either in the direction of humanitarian aid and development or producing a policy on “state building”. In

sum, the early period provided a good case to test if the MS were willing and able to take the initiative and define the political framework (the “proactiveness potential”).

Moreover, strong national and EU rhetoric of solidarity reflected a wide consensus in Europe that the 9/11 attack concerned “the West” as a whole and that there was a fateful necessity to defend the fundamentals of Western civilization. In the German Bundestag, Chancellor Schröder declared the US could count on Germany’s “unconditional – I repeat – unconditional solidarity” (“*uneingeschränkte Solidarität*”), while the UK’s prime minister Tony Blair affirmed that Britain would “not rest until this evil is driven from our world”, standing “shoulder to shoulder with our American friends” (Schröder 2001; BBC News 11.09.2001). Meanwhile in France, *Le Monde* ran a headline saying “*Nous sommes tous Américains*” and Jacques Chirac promised “*une action déterminée et collective*” (Colombani 2001; *Le Monde* 15.05.2007).

European opinion polls also showed strong support for European involvement, and importantly, participation in military action. A Gallup poll taken on 14 and 15 September 2001 showed that 73 % of the French favored participation in US-led military action against the terrorists, 79 % of the British, 58 % of the Spaniards and 53 % of the Germans (Menon and Lipkin 2003: 7–8).¹⁶ A Pew survey in April 2002 showed that 64% of the French, 61 % of the Germans, 59% of the Italians and 73% of the British expressed support for the US-led campaign in Afghanistan (The Pew Research Center 17.04.2002). In September and October, EU officials visited several countries in the Middle East and Central Asia to shore up support for the coalition against terror; a European Conference with Central and East European states in October also emphasized these issues and an economic cooperation agreement was signed with Pakistan, as it became clear that Pakistan would be a central partner in this effort (Toje 2008a: 119). In other words, the MS were bracing themselves for a great struggle, because this was not the US’ war – it was theirs as well. In other words, conditions were good to develop a common policy (the “actorness potential”).

When NATO later became involved in the conflict, this added yet another

¹⁶ To be sure, later public opinion polls in Europe showed a fundamentally different picture, but this does not invalidate the fact that European heads of state and government did portray Afghanistan as an important European cause, many of them until the end.

reason to take Afghanistan seriously, as many authors and politicians argued NATO's future was now at stake and failure would greatly damage the organization (Rupp 2006; Smith and Williams 2008a and 2008b; Feffer 2009; Gheicu 2011; Gates 2011; Brattberg 2013). Logically, if NATO's future was endangered because a disappointed US might permanently turn away from the alliance in the face of European under-investment, the MS had yet another theoretical incentive to work toward more defense capabilities and autonomy (the "autonomy potential"). Also, the more tensions grew between Washington and some European states over the Iraq war (launched in March 2003), the more the European "dissidents" had a reason to compensate their stance by leading an important contribution and seeking positive impact in Afghanistan, stressing the superiority of their "multilateral" model and "collective security governance (the "shaping potential"). The same is true for the period under President Obama's leadership, when a "multilateral" European response could have been a response to a greatly "Americanized" and therefore "unilateralized" war.

In sum, if the world's security was indeed seriously threatened by the Afghan "failed state"; if this was "Europe's war" as well (as its publics seemed to believe and most of its leaders asserted until the end); if NATO was fundamentally threatened by the prospect of failure; if the US openly encouraged a stronger "European voice"; if Afghanistan presented an ideal opportunity to stress multilateralism over unilateralism; and if, finally, European states accepted to see their soldiers suffer the unimaginable pains of war, to invest great amounts of money and time in Afghanistan, then Afghanistan offers an unprecedented array of factors to study the realization (or non-manifestation) of the four core potentials of actorness, proactiveness, shaping and autonomy.

Finally, and before turning to questions of methodology, one important element in the approach of this dissertation must be mentioned: Several examples of European states' contributions and EU level initiatives are assembled and juxtaposed here, so as to contribute to the emergence of a bigger picture (though certainly not a complete one). However, for practical reasons a choice was made early on to limit the number of countries and to focus particularly on France, Germany and the UK. This is based on the observation that these three countries were the main drivers behind the re-definition of transatlantic security relations and the process of security and defense

integration in the 1990s. Given their weight in European defense, they continue to play a leading role in European defense; they also crystallize and represent the most important currents in transatlantic relations, i.e. traditionally Europeanist positions of relative autonomy from the US, Atlanticist positions of closeness to the US, and the middle ground. The logic behind this choice is straightforward: If those three countries are found unable and unwilling to realize the “Collective Foreign Policy Potentials”, then a wider argument about the EU as a whole becomes possible in the sense that this would most likely deal the whole process a fatal blow. This being said, the focus on France, Germany and the UK is complemented whenever appropriate by examples from other European countries. This includes examples from Denmark and Norway, though the first has an opt-out in the CSDP and the second is not a member of the EU. This choice is justified by the fact that the CSDP has played only a very minor role in Afghanistan’s security, and that the phenomena of apolitical security cooperation this thesis draws attention to occur next to or despite the EU, not *via* the EU.

i. 7. Single-Case studies

Having said this, we are still left with the tricky problem that working with “single-case” studies such as the post-2001 Afghan intervention requires some comments about the production of predictive or generally valid statements in social research: Case studies provide context-dependent knowledge and the problem of generalization is one that needs to be very carefully thought through before embarking on a project of such dimensions. For instance, arguing that European foreign ministries found it difficult to agree on common Afghanistan policies does not necessarily mean it is generally impossible to arrive at such an outcome.

First, this dissertation strongly suggests the extent to which “generalization” is usually celebrated as the only viable path toward scientific progress is exaggerated. As Bent Flyvbjerg notes

“[t]hat knowledge cannot be formally generalized does not mean that it cannot enter

into the collective process of knowledge accumulation in a given field or in a society. A purely descriptive, phenomenological case study without any attempt to generalize can certainly be of value in this process and has often helped cut a path toward scientific innovation. This is not to criticize attempts at formal generalization, for such attempts are essential and effective means of scientific development; rather, it is only to emphasize the limitations, which follow when formal generalization becomes the only legitimate method of scientific inquiry” (Flyvbjerg 2006: 227).

Nonetheless, single-case studies such as the present work have often had a difficult standing in social sciences. For instance, for Donald Campbell, single-case studies “have such a total absence of control as to be of almost no scientific value” (Campbell and Stanley 1966: 6-7, quoted in Flyvbjerg 2006). A logical approach many researchers favor to control the problem of generalization is to compare *several* cases, which is expected to produce knowledge “close” to a generally valid statement because inferences about the observed phenomenon’s *typicality* can be made more easily than when dealing with a single case. Consequently, the dissertation does try to incorporate other cases whenever feasible or necessary, in order to test how far one can go with particular arguments: For instance, when dealing with the EU’s difficulties to devise strategy, examples will not only concern Afghanistan, but, for instance, the ENP and other cases.

Yet, despite frequent comparisons with other cases of the MS’ collective security provision, this dissertation does essentially deal with examples from a single case and this does make a few more remarks necessary. This dissertation argues that the number of cases is not the only thing that matters – “the strategic choice of case” can also “greatly add to the generalizability of a case study” (Flyvbjerg 2006: 226; see also Ragin 1992). This is what is generally called the “critical case” selection. A critical case ideally displays social phenomena that are important beyond the immediate case because the combined presence of a range of factors makes it possible to say that if a statement is valid for *this particular case*, it is likely to be “valid for all (or many) cases” (Flyvbjerg 2006: 230).

Hence, if it can be shown that the MS do not want to develop the policies, instruments and capabilities necessary to fulfill the four Collective Foreign Policy Potentials in a case that presents an opportunity to act at a time of internal consensus, to be proactive when leadership is needed, to shape a security environment that is presented as unacceptably dangerous, and to work toward autonomy when

dependence on the US becomes obvious, then this would also most likely apply for intermediate cases (see Flyvbjerg 2006: 226).

Arguably, the great recession that started in 2008 or the fact that over the years Afghanistan turned out to be a more difficult terrain than initially envisaged matters in this respect because this made it “rational” for some MS to “opt out” and let the US bear the brunt of the burden, as some diplomats have argued during interviews. To say it up front, this concern is justified. Nevertheless, it is possible to infer statements about the MS’ ability and will to shape that go beyond Afghanistan: First, if an alleged security leader in the making caves in in the face of difficulties, and does *not* seek to prove itself, this tells us a great deal about the way the possibility of European foreign and security policy has been “talked up” and might never have been very substantial in the first place (Hill 1993). If, despite the great amount of rhetoric about the necessity of state building and the necessary stabilization of failed states, as well as the sheer amount of human, military, rhetorical and political capital invested in Afghanistan, the MS can be shown to be interested only in co-shaping but not shaping, or if shaping ambitions pertain only to situations of low intensity, this would tell us a great deal about the direction in which the MS’ collective security and defense project is heading.

Thirdly, as stated above, this dissertation does not intend to make generally valid, law-like statements. In other words, it is not because the MS failed to shape and proact in this case that they never will be able to. On the other hand, there is currently no example where they have done so successfully in the domain of security and in this sense, this dissertation only reinforces a trend. It seeks to add value studying the way, and explaining why, European shaping ambitions turn out to be more adequately described as “co-shaping”: The MS obviously do shape and proact individually and collectively, but this happens under certain circumstances, which this dissertation describes and analyzes.

i. 8. Methodology, process tracing, sources and interviews

As is clear by now, this dissertation follows an inductive approach; it is not primarily concerned with the testing of existing International Relations (IR) theories or theory-induced hypotheses, but with the exploration of social phenomena, in this case role playing of the MS and Euro-Atlantic alliance dynamics in Afghanistan. It is a qualitative work that starts with the observation of empirical data, which are organized as small or medium-size case studies. For instance, chapter 6 is devoted to one case study (EUPOL), but smaller cases will also be encountered in chapters 3, 4 and 5. The way this dissertation shall try to supply examples and/or cases with evidence is via the so-called “process tracing method”.

The term is used more broadly here than has sometimes been done (George and McKeown 1985: 35). In this dissertation, it refers not only to decision-making but causal processes more broadly. As Van Evera writes, investigators who do process tracing try to explore chains of events “by which initial case conditions are translated into case outcomes” (Van Evera 1997: 64). The link of cause and effect that connects “independent variable and outcome is unwrapped and divided into small steps” and in a next step, the investigator looks for “observable evidence of each step” (ibid.)

As for this study’s empirical material, four groups of sources inform the analysis. The first group is the great body of secondary literature on European defense and security studies, transatlantic security relations and the literature that deals with the West’s luckless invasion and subsequent “state building project” in Afghanistan (Suhrke 2011). Concerning information on events unfolding in Afghanistan, this thesis has generally privileged reports coming from independent and non-profit research organizations, such as the Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN), the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), CPAU (Cooperation for Peace and Unity), or the ICG. Moreover, since the war in Afghanistan is a contemporary topic it is also a “moving target”: News and facts can often change quickly, and therefore, media coverage is a second important source of information, ranging from investigative journalism to interviews with policy makers or journalistic blogs.

Thirdly, a great deal of primary sources from national governments or

international organizations was consulted. They range from the speeches of heads of state and government to shorter policy statements at press conferences; they include governmental reports (such as, for instance, the German *Fortschrittsbericht Afghanistan* or “Progress Report”), statements by defense ministers, foreign affairs ministers and other ministers, and parliamentary hearings. In the case of the EU, analysis includes summit declarations from the European Council but also statements from other European actors involved in European foreign and/or security policy, for instance the European Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Parliament (EP).

Leaked documents were also consulted, notably the Wikileaks cables. The Guardian, *Der Spiegel* and the New York Times have sifted through the more than 92,000 records of the “Afghan war diaries” covering the time between early January and late 2009 and have confirmed their authenticity (The Guardian 25.07.2010). Internal evaluations have also been used, some of them public, some of them consulted on an informal basis (for instance so-called “non-papers”).

The fourth source of empirical data consisted in field observation and personal interviews. Since the beginning of this dissertation, more than 120 different interview sessions have been conducted, most often with one person, sometimes with groups (notably with Afghan police recruits or leaders). Though most non-Afghan interview partners were practitioners, diplomats, ambassadors, defense attachés, foreign ministry officials, EU officials etc., this author has also met with numerous experts (academic and non-academic) or NGO (non-governmental organization) workers to get a fuller picture.

In order to get an idea of the situation on the ground, the author traveled to Afghanistan twice, once from mid-September 2011 to mid-December 2011 and, two years later, from January to February 2013. During these trips, several series of semi-directional interviews were conducted on the premises of the national embassies of the US, France, Germany and the UK; the author met EUPOL and Afghan MoI representatives at the EUPOL and Ministry of Interior (MoI) compounds as well as at the Afghan National Police Academy (ANPA) and Staff College. Furthermore, the author was allowed to use a military machine and fly to Mazar-e Sharif in 2011, in order to interview European military and police trainers at the Police Training Center (PTC) and on ISAF’s military camp Marmal.

Most importantly, this trip was one important occasion to spend time with and interview a great deal of middle-rank to higher-ranking ANP recruits, whose accounts often varied in tone from those of the internationals. These interviews were either conducted in English or with the help of translators. Interviews were, of course, not only conducted in Afghanistan: A total of eight rounds of interviews were conducted in European capitals, Berlin (twice), Paris (twice), London (twice) and Brussels (twice). Phone interviews complemented those rounds, notably (but not only) when speaking to experts in Washington DC.

Conducting research in Afghanistan, and on the Afghan war, often proved to be a challenge. One particular difficulty in doing interviews with Western diplomats or police trainers/mentors was the often extremely high turnover rate. Some interlocutors working in international institutions were only posted in Afghanistan for 6 or 10 months, and it could be difficult to keep in touch or get a picture over longer periods of time. Between the two trips in 2011 and 2013, for instance, so many of the Western interlocutors had since left for other posts that this author often had to basically start over again in constituting an address book.

Related to the problem of turnover rates is that of institutional memory. For instance, when, in 2014, the author asked one representative of the European diplomatic services about contributions to the PRTs (Provincial Reconstruction Teams), the answer was: "*Qu'est-ce que veut dire 'PRTs'? Programme de retour au travail?*" In other words, diplomatic services and ministries, but also research organizations and international organizations often had difficulties stocking information over the years and "remembering" it. The author has therefore tried, though not always with success, to focus particularly on mentors, trainers and/or diplomats with a certain duration in office or, ideally, on their second or third tour in Afghanistan.

Another difficulty consisted in often-overt pressures from actors of the national militaries or the police to present their missions in "a much more favorable light", as one apparently furious defense official wrote to this author after a publication. Especially when dealing with military officials, it could sometimes be tough to obtain information. The author surprisingly encountered the greatest deal of

distrust on the side of the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence, though these institutions were not the only ones to be little forthcoming in providing information. Also, because this was the explicit wish of many interview partners, names are systematically rendered anonymous, though the date and place of the conversation are cited. A full list of names (including title and position) is included at the end of the work, but according to the Chatham House rules the interviews were conducted under, it has been made impossible to identify interview partners and/or connect quotes to their names.

i. 9. Structure of this dissertation

The empirical content of this dissertation is largely structured around the four Collective Foreign Policy Potentials, with three chapters explicitly devoted to one potential at a time. The only potential that is not explicitly covered in a chapter of its own, but is present in all chapters, is the autonomy potential. When it comes to the theoretical arguments, all chapters are linked by the distinction between *actions* and *politics* and the fundamental argument that role convergence is the possibility of joined-up *action* as long as joint European policy is not necessary.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 clarifies the main assumptions guiding this dissertation and introduces the main theoretical-conceptual arguments that run through all the chapters. It starts by introducing the debate about Europeanization and strategic culture in the domain of security and defense studies, identifies key flaws and explores avenues to build on the work of Bastien Irondelle, who studied dynamics of Europeanization *without* the EU, or, as this thesis shall say, role convergence *next to* the EU (Irondelle 2003).¹⁷ It then introduces debates between realist and

¹⁷ Bastien Irondelle accompanied this dissertation until his premature death in 2013.

constructivist approaches to “structure” and “agency” in International Relations (IR) Theory as well as the concept of “roles”.

Chapter 1 takes issue with an over-emphasis in the literature on norms and the convergence of national strategic cultures. It focuses instead on the policy outputs of states that lead to what this thesis calls “role convergence by default”: Behavioral *convergence* in European security and defense that happens despite normative and strategic cultural *divergence*. Hence, the chapter argues European role convergence should not be studied as the gradual convergence of European strategic cultures towards one *European strategic culture*. To the contrary, in the absence of a clear common political project for European defense and security, the chapter makes the proposition that European convergence is better studied as a sequence of behavioral “constellations” in reaction to events, some temporary and some possibly more durable.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 applies the previous chapter’s argument of “constellation, not convergence” and revisits the historical context that made advances in European security and defense integration possible during the post-Cold War era. Contrary to what has often been written, it argues that this process did *not* represent a logical end point in a long process of Europeanization, somehow crystallizing a European strategic culture based on force projection and the ideas of an active European role in the world. In fact, the chapter argues the opposite, namely that advances in European security and defense integration during the 1990s were akin to an “alignment of the stars”. In other words, it was an important occurrence that happened in reaction to precise events, expressing a confluence of interests and norms at a given moment. Coinciding policy agendas among the important drivers of Germany, France and the UK made this possible – but it was no inevitable result of history. The MS had to imagine their responses to the challenges of the Balkan wars, for instance, and those were not predestined, nor did they come about mechanically, automatically or naturally.

This is an important argument, because it dampens expectations about the MS' collective foreign policy in security and helps understand that many of those who have "talked up" what the ESDP/CSDP can (or is expected to) deliver have done so in defiance of the documents: The latter were always rather clear about the fact that an integrated *political* defense project going beyond the somewhat easy part of creating institutions was simply not in the cards (Hill 1993: 306).

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 takes the analysis from the events of the 1990s to the 2000s and the Afghan post-2001 theatre. It shows there still is no notable European ambition to "shape" if it means proactively taking responsibility in the security environment without a US lead or guarantee, and it argues there is little will to "adapt" the different national strategic cultures to each other, which leads to very different ways of framing security and defense matters. Consequently, normative convergence and learning processes, while both real and important, are not transforming national foreign policies into a common European approach, let alone a European strategic culture.

The first part of this chapter is conceived as a *tour d'horizon* of the European "actorness potential", its "shaping", "autonomy" and "pro-activeness" potentials. It reviews the MS' collective ability to produce strategy and act in security and introduces the notion of "potluck strategist": A "potluck dinner" denotes the practice of throwing leftovers in a pot in hopes of producing an acceptable-tasting stew. Similarly, European strategy making in security mostly follows a capability-driven, not a strategic logic, as tools are shared while waiting for a policy to manifest itself. This leads to quasi-"strategies" by default, but not by design.

The chapter then turns to Afghanistan and the "comprehensive approach to security" to analyze why, despite strong normative acceptance and strong rhetorical MS commitments to approach security issues, firstly, in a coordinated manner and secondly, with joined-up civilian-military tools, the MS' parallel security actions failed to produce a "Europeanized" foreign policy approach. Looking at the way the British, French and German foreign policy elites construed their contributions during

the early years of the Afghan intervention, the chapter analyzes how these countries' national responses were rooted in their respective strategic cultures and how this led their foreign policy elites to frame the same Afghan mission differently.

With respect to the following chapters, a few words are in order. If the divergent strategic cultures described in Chapter 3 were no hindrance for a common European policy of support to US leadership in the later, Americanized phase of the war, this signals that diverging strategic cultures are no *insurmountable* obstacle for the emergence of collective security and defense policies: Despite their strategic cultural divergence, the MS *did* end up cohering around a political project – under the US' lead. Therefore, the problem of security and defense Europeanization is not only the divergence of strategic cultures but the MS' refusal to develop a collective security project *of their own*.

Put succinctly, if no common European project emerges when the US provides no leadership, but it emerges when the US finally does, this tells us something about US leadership as an important external factor in European role convergence. The MS' different strategic cultures mattered in both cases (i.e. when the US did not lead and when it did), in the sense that national elites would not formulate policy outside the realm of the acceptable. However, since the difference between strategic cultures makes it difficult to formulate a common *European* policy, one solution the MS find is to support policies that come from outside and can be complemented on an opt-in/opt-out basis. The chapters 4, 5 and 6 must therefore be seen together, as they illustrate this argument even though the situations are very different (from leadership vacuum to “Americanization”).

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 tests the “proactiveness” potential, i.e. the MS' ability to lead and initiate collectively. It does so with a focus on the early years of the Afghan intervention, when the leadership vacuum created by the US' emerging Iraq agenda opened a window of opportunity for a proactive policy the MS did not take advantage of. If a proactive policy is one that aims to create a situation rather than only

responding to it once it has occurred, and if a leader is an actor who tries to persuade others to follow a vision, who provides the information, resources, knowledge and methods to realize that vision and who coordinates and balances the conflicting interests of all group members and stakeholders, then this situation revealed the MS' great difficulty to be a proactive collective leader in international security. The MS, this chapter argues, displayed no ambition to take ownership of the campaign by formulating measurable goals, and did not have the capability or the will to be a proactive leader in security. Their contributions, individually or collectively, never developed the "critical mass" necessary to affect "the West's" Afghan adventure in accordance with "European goals".

An important exception to the argument is that some MS were very active, even proactive, in bringing in NATO as the framework organization, and then in limiting NATO's mandate. On this point, some MS did indeed succeed to "create a situation before it occurred", but this was, firstly, not a collective European project (many European governments were skeptical about bringing in NATO), and secondly, this proactiveness concerned only the *modalities* of the engagement, not the goal of the engagement per se, thus severely limiting European buy-in. The mission was adapted to capabilities and other restraining factors, in other words. The paradox of this European proactivism was that it aimed to limit European responsibility for, and ownership of, the campaign's outcome. This was proactivism of form, not content; it did not intent to shape outcomes, but *input* – while limiting this input at the same time.

Chapter 5

This brings us to Chapter 5, which concerns itself with the "shaping potential", or the possibility that the MS develop the ability not only to agree to common initiatives but also to agree to common policies aiming to change (i.e. shape) their security environment according to a vision of theirs. As shown above, the Afghan intervention became substantially "Americanized" over the years, and when the incoming Obama administration reoriented the leaderless campaign with two

strategic reviews and successive troop surges in 2009, the MS displayed no collective ambition to make sure the campaign would be conducted according to a vision of theirs. Instead, they played a supporting role *under the US' leadership*.

To be sure, there were many European attempts to shape the Afghan security environment, as individual European nations often sought to change the status quo in their respective areas. However, this happened on the operational level, not on the strategic one: It was a *shaping in niches*. Those niches were either topical or geographic, but the MS were always acting inside a security paradigm defined by the US. On the whole, the MS accepted the US' "agenda setting dominance", some willingly and publicly, some secretly, many grudgingly.

This goes back to the above notion of "constellations": Important synergies between national European contributions happened in Afghanistan once they were effectively bound together by US leadership, which was the decisive "event" that created this European "role convergence by default". Enabled by US military infrastructure and leadership, the MS' accumulated contributions had more "shaping" impact on the operational theatre than during the early phase. Since this did not come in the name of "the EU", however, one must speak of European "co-shaping" rather than "shaping": The MS offered skills, expertise, capabilities and techniques as "pieces" to the US' "puzzle" – in this case, the COIN strategy. This was not part of a "European strategy" – the MS *individually* offered their services to a foreign lead on an opt-in/opt-out basis.

Chapter 6

Finally, Chapter 6 turns to an aspect of European independence and decisional autonomy that has not received enough attention in the literature. This is the fact that European governments do not allow the EU and its collective security instruments to grow into the shoes of a full-fledged crisis manager. EUPOL, the EU's police mission in Afghanistan, is used as a case study to show how the accumulated inertia of the MS contributed to what is termed a "de facto opt out", i.e. the MS paying lip service without stepping up to the plate, their "talking the talk" without "walking the walk",

eschewing open conflict with the US but effectively “underperforming” via EUPOL. In other words, while Chapter 5 analyzes the accumulation of individual *opt-ins* that happened despite the absence of a collective policy (a “de facto collective opt-in”), Chapter 6 turns the perspective around and looks at a “de facto collective *opt-out*” that equally happened without an explicit collective decision.

The chapter therefore argues that European decisional autonomy is indeed manifest, though in a very different form than may have been envisaged by some of the architects and/or eulogists of European security and defense integration. It is not the expression of a collective project to either propose an alternative to the US’ security leadership or even to actively thwart US policies, but simply to opt out of becoming a credible global security actor in the first place.

Chapter 1.

1.0. Introduction

Much of the existent literature about European defense and security policy has focused on the interrelation between European security norms and cultures on the one hand, and political integration on the other. In other words, a central question has been how the MS' strategic cultures change and how this relates to the creation of a common or "Europeanized" European security and defense project. The literature has long argued that a European strategic culture (and a European security and defense policy more widely) must come either as the result of convergence between national strategic cultures, the integration of "European logics" into domestic policy making or a move toward institutional integration (bottom-up), the effect of "coercion" or socialization and learning processes induced at the level of the European Council (top-down), or the gradual diffusion of norms that impact all MS (cross-loading or horizontal).

One way to classify the literature is with a distinction between pessimists and optimists. A pessimistic group of authors has tended to argue that the absence of convergence between the MS' national strategic cultures makes a common European defense and security policy illusory (Lindley-French 2002; Heiselberg 2003; Rynning 2003, 2011; Toje 2008, 2010; Meyer 2013; Biehl, Giegerich and Jonas 2013). On the other side, optimists state the opposite and argue that the different national strategic cultures are in fact slowly converging. Therefore, they argue, a European strategic culture is starting to take form, which, in turn, lays the ground for common policy/policies (Heisbourg 2000; Cornish and Edwards 2001; Howorth 2002; Everts et al. 2004; Matlary 2006; Meyer 2005; Giegerich 2006; Norheim-Martinsen 2011; Howorth 2014).¹⁸

This chapter takes issue with both perspectives and points to the discussion's over-emphasis on norms and apolitical tendencies as its central flaws. In their focus on norms and cultures as a basis for foreign policy analysis, many authors either

¹⁸ Both groups of authors are presented in more detail below.

assume that culture leads to (or even explains) policy, which is a simplification, or they fail to take the necessary second step of analyzing the behavior of states, without which the description of their cultural predisposition has only limited utility. Both the optimists and the pessimists tend to neglect the convergence around concrete European defense and security projects or roles, which is located not so much in the realm of norms and culture but in case-specific policy outputs and state behavior.

This claim is mainly based on the fact that the two positions sketched out above are incompatible with this case study's empirical observations: Despite the fact that the European countries went to Afghanistan with very different strategic cultures, and despite the fact that those strategic cultures still remain divergent on crucial aspects, the Afghan case shows that the MS developed very similar roles and behaviors vis-à-vis the alliance leader and under the US' strategy. Because these roles were similar in the way they related to the overall framework of US leadership, we can speak of a *de facto* collective role. This requires an adequate conceptualization that explains how this role came into being.

Hence, for the topic of European defense and security matters, the study of national strategic cultures is very relevant, but it does not *suffice* to understand the fact that role convergence occurred despite cultural strategic divergence (see Chapters 4, 5 and 6). If this observation is correct, this calls into question the primacy of normative and cultural approaches in the literature on European security and defense.

In order to develop these arguments in the necessary depth and detail, this chapter lays the conceptual ground for how European role convergence by default should be studied. The chapter starts by presenting the concepts of strategic culture (1.1) and Europeanization (1.2), because the arguments of authors writing about a European strategic culture (1.3) are rooted in both literatures. The argument is that both optimistic and pessimistic approaches in the literature about a European strategic culture have tended to discuss their topic along the lines of implicit "Europeanization" frameworks, which emphasize "the processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms" (Radaelli 2003: 30).

Both the optimists and the pessimists in the literature on Europeanization and European strategic culture focus heavily on the convergence of norms, paradigms, informal rules, shared beliefs, etc. in all types of fields, but this can be problematic because the analysis of norms and/or culture without the analysis of behavior or output does not help to understand foreign policy. Culture is no independent variable as many scholars purport, and therefore, culture helps frame and understand, but it explains no policies, as the fourth section argues (1.4).

Importantly, the research agenda of the Europeanization literature is designed to detect the emergence of common European *policies*, or the emergence of common culture that would supposedly lead to common policies (Gross 2009a; Wong and Hill 2011; Müller 2012), but this tends to neglect (or is blind to) technical, pragmatic and apolitical forms of cooperation (i.e., *behaviors*) that emerge despite the absence of a political project. Because of the intergovernmental nature of European security and defense, common policies are mostly not forthcoming in the domain of EU foreign policy, as we see with the EU's difficulty to respond to crises from Syria to Libya and Mali (Laïdi 2012). Nevertheless, the analytical focus often continues to be set on the emergence of "Europeanized policies", leading the literature to under-analyze the convergence of behaviors that can happen *despite* the non-existence of meaningful common security policies. Therefore, this study proposes to examine the phenomenon of parallel, joined-up or aligned European actions in the absence of a Europeanized political project in security.

After these first steps, the chapter introduces Bastien Irondelle's work about Europeanization *without* the EU. Despite Irondelle's explicit focus on norms and framing logics, it shows how his approach is nevertheless very useful to this dissertation's behavioral analysis, as it enables us to see the advances in European security and defense cooperation that happen despite the MS' reluctance to hand over national sovereignty to the EU level and despite the absence of full convergence of strategic cultures (1.5).

Since the sovereign national policies of the MS are thought to be of primordial importance to understand common European defense and security projects, this dissertation needs an adequate conceptualization of a state's "agency". Moreover, how a state's agency relates to the structure of the international system must also be discussed. It will be argued that contrary to what different schools and authors of IR

theory profess, both structure and agency need to be taken into account when studying foreign policy (1.6). Finally, the concept of roles is introduced as a useful concept that helps grasp foreign policies (1.7).

1.1. Strategic Culture

Drawing on Peter Katzenstein, one can say that culture consists of norms, values, rules and models that define how social actors operate and how they relate to one another (Katzenstein 1996: 6). According to Yaacov Vertzberger, culture is a “unified set of ideas”, which members of a society share; they establish “a set of shared premises, values, expectations, and action predisposition” (Vertzberger 1989: 68). Numerous scholars have tried to connect the discussion of “culture” to the study of “politics”, which is what the concept of “political culture” does: For instance, Gabriel Almond argued that “every political system is embedded in a particular pattern of orientation to political actions” and Lucien Pye wrote in a 1965 collaborative book on political culture: “[In] any operating political system there is an *ordered subjective realm* of politics which gives meaning to the polity, discipline to institutions, and social relevance to individual acts” (Almond 1956; quoted in Pye 1965: 7; Pye 1965: 7; emphases added). The concept of political culture therefore suggests that the

“traditions of a society, the spirit of its public institutions, the passions and the collective reasoning of its citizens, and the style and operating codes of its leaders are not just random products of historical experience but fit together as a part of a meaningful whole and constitute an intelligible web of relations” (Pye 1965: 7).

Hence, a political culture can be defined as a “system of empirical beliefs, expressive symbols, and values which defines the situation in which political action takes places. It provides the subjective orientation to politics” (Verba 1965: 513).

The concept of “*strategic culture*” is similar (Gray 1999a, 1999b; Gray 2006). Jack Snyder put forth a ground-breaking study in 1977, based on his dissatisfaction with realist approaches, which tended to mechanically deduce foreign policy from fixed interests and the structure of the international system. Snyder was interested in a more flexible approach that would make space for subjective and ideational elements in foreign policy. He coined the term “strategic culture”, which he referred to as “the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses and patterns of habitual behavior that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other with regard to nuclear strategy” (Snyder 1977: 8).

Since then, the concept has been continually used and refined in political science. Because Snyder's definition was limited to nuclear strategy, another approach is necessary. The definition of Giegerich et al. is useful; they have defined strategic culture as a

“a number of shared beliefs, norms and ideas within a given society that generate specific expectations about the respective community's preferences and actions in security and defence policy. In this context, a community's security and defence identity, expressed through its preferences and behavioural patterns, derives from shared experiences and accepted narratives specific to a particular security community” (Biehl, Giegerich and Jonas 2013: 12).

Though one should be cautious regarding the somewhat mechanical link Giegerich et al. suggest between ideas and expectations when they write the former “generate” the latter, the above definition captures the essence of strategic culture well, as it underlines the fundamental relation between the historical dimension of lessons national elites and the wider public draw from the past and security actions that are deemed acceptable in the present and future. We return to the problem of causation below, but for now, what needs to be done is to make the concept more manageable. The analysis of national strategic cultures is often broken down into the following categories:

A first important element of strategic culture is the basic posture and outlook of the armed forces, but also increasingly non-military tools, for instance whether those forces and tools are meant to conduct preventive, offensive or purely defensive tasks. Second, there is the level of ambition on the international scene as they are expressed in official strategic documents such as national White Books. For instance, a country's elites can be the carriers of a self-understanding that the country's mission is to extend democracy (or the rule of law, or free markets, or good governance etc.) to the wider world. The dimension of ambitions includes looking at the budgets and levels of civilian-military capabilities that underwrite a foreign policy.

One must also ask whether a country's ambitions are formulated in a way that is “system-relevant”, i.e. intended to *define* (or simply go along with) the rules of the existing order. This is captured in Wolfers' classic distinction between “goals pertaining (...) to national possessions”, which Wolfers named *possession goals*, and goals pertaining to the “shape of the environment in which the nation operates”,

which he termed *milieu goals* (Wolfers 1962; see Introduction). In the context of this thesis, “ambition” is connected to the four categories of “shaping”, “pro-acting”, “autonomy” and “actorness” laid out and explained in the introduction.

Another important indicator of a national strategic culture concerns the favored arenas of cooperation and the inclination or disinclination for cooperative security. For instance, while some states have a tradition of considering unilateral action if necessary, others make it a constitutional requirement to act in frameworks of cooperative security for everything that goes beyond the strict defense of the national territory. In the European context, some states have traditional preferences for NATO or the EU and there are disagreements when it comes to the tasks the EU or NATO should fulfill, respectively. This also brings up the question of closeness or distance vis-à-vis the US as an important element of a European MS’ strategic culture.

Next, one must look at the domestic constitutional/institutional environment of a given state. This environment regulates the use of force or foreign policy in a given country, enabling or impeding quick military action, or likewise enabling or impeding the use of civilians under a military chain of command on external operations theaters. This dimension does not only concern the constitutional rules of the game, so to speak, but also the institutional set-up. For instance, do inter-ministerial arrangements allow for comprehensive, inter-agency, joint-up approaches to foreign policy?

Moving away from the national level, the question of a *European* strategic culture resurfaced with the acceleration of European security and defense integration during the 1990s. The European Security Strategy of 2003 was an important event in this regard; it stipulated that “[w]e need to develop a *strategic culture* that fosters early, rapid, and when necessary, robust intervention” (ESS 2003: 11; emphasis added). This reflected an admission that a shared strategic culture did not yet exist but it conveyed the optimistic view that such a new culture could indeed be fostered or “created”. A wide range of authors has since written about the concept, asking how such a European strategic culture could look like, given the fact that strategic culture had always been studied in the context of *nation states*, but not multinational or partly

supranational organizations like the EU (Hyde-Price 2004; Meyer 2005, 2006, 2013; Giegerich 2006; Biscop 2009; Biscop, Howorth and Giegerich 2009; Howorth 2010a, 2014; Biava 2011; Biava, Drent and Herd 2011; Haine 2011; Norheim-Martinsen 2011; Rynning 2011).

The literature on European strategic culture is presented below, but because it is so deeply rooted in the literature on Europeanization, the main approaches in the latter need to be briefly presented.

1.2. Europeanization

A first element to note is that because the MS' collective foray into collective foreign policy occurred at a late stage of its development, Europeanization literature has traditionally dealt with policy domains in the “first pillar”, i.e., the policies for which common institutions had supranational authority, the EC, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM). Studying Europeanization in the EU's external action is a much more complex challenge, given the CFSP's/ESDP's intergovernmental nature and the fact that there is no “supranational centre eclipsing the national capitals” (Wong and Hill 2011: 13).

The second element to note when writing about Europeanization is the problematic proliferation of terms and unclear definitions in the field, which Bastien Irondelle was among the first authors to point out (Irondelle 2003: 210; Hoeffler and Faure 2015a). Terms like “European institutionalization”, “Europeanization”, “European integration”, “EU-zation” or “Bruxellization” reveal the confusion between either top-down logics, bottom up processes or horizontal dynamics (Lequesne and Bulmer 2005, 2013).

This confusion becomes even more palpable when one considers that for some authors “Europeanization” has meant a bottom up process of “integration itself [i.e.] the creation of common institutions and policies that contribute to the emergence of a European polity” (Irondelle 2003: 210). The first schools of thought studying the political integration process were neo-functionalism and inter-governmentalism (Haas

1968; Lindberg 1963; Hoffmann 1966). For Neo-functionalists, European integration was a deterministic process whereby a “given action, related to a specific goal, creates a situation in which the original goal can be assured only by taking further actions, which in turn create a further condition and a need for more, and so forth” (Lindberg 1963: 9). The fact that this process was not driven by the sovereign nation states but by domestic social interests organized as non-state actors did not change the direction of this bottom-up process.

For inter-governmentalism (which criticized neo-functionalism when it failed to explain why European integration stalled in the 1960s), it was unlikely that states would continue to “integrate” their policies: For them, European governments were animated by the ambition to protect their geopolitical interests in a zero-sum game logic where “losses are not compensated by gains on other issues” (Hoffmann 1966: 882). Though these two approaches were in disagreement about how far European integration would ultimately go, they both devoted their analytical attention to the way national governments create (or do not create) policies that result (or do not result) in more policy competences for the supranational institutions with authority over the MS.

A related concept in this bottom-up perspective – and one that can be applied to the inter-governmental domain of EU foreign policy – concerns the mechanism of *uploading*. This term has been used to designate the processes through which the MS shape the EU’s foreign policy agenda, uploading their national ideas and priorities (Wong 2011: 152; Spaiser 2012; see also Giegerich 2006 and Gross 2009a). For instance, authors like Spyros Economides or Anand Menon have shown how states can externalize national foreign policy items to the EU level, for instance when Greece successfully transferred its Aegean dispute with Turkey on the EU agenda, or when French policy-makers tried to commit European partners to security missions in Sub-Saharan Africa (Economides 2005; Menon 2009). Uploading can also mean that the MS seek to pursue their goals more effectively via the EU than they could alone, using it as an “effective megaphone” (Keukeleire and MacNaughtan 2008: 114; Bindi and Shapiro 2010: 346).

Other approaches refer to Europeanization as a *top down* dynamic. For instance, Thomas Risse and Tanja Börzel have defined Europeanization as

“the emergence and development at the European level of a distinct political system, a set of political institutions that formalizes and routinizes interactions among the actors, and the growth of policy networks specializing in the creation of authoritative rules” (Risse and Börzel 2000).

Here, the focus is on the way the set of rules that is formulated at the EU level impacts domestic politics and institutions. Because the definition creates confusion between the two distinct phenomena of European integration (the construction of a common *polity*) and Europeanization (the emergence of common *policy*), Radaelli proposed the definition of Europeanization already quoted above, namely the process of

“(a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, ‘ways of doing things’ and shared beliefs and norms *which are first defined and consolidated in the making of the EU public policy and politics and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies*” (Radaelli 2003: 30; author’s emphasis).

This is similar to the notion of *downloading*, whereby the EU level applies “adaptational pressure” on the governments of the MS (Green Cowles, Caporaso and Risse 2001: 7).

To say it again, such definitions of Europeanization as an “incremental process reorienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy making” refer to what used to be called the “first pillar” and are difficult to use in the inter-governmental area of CFSP/ESDP (Ladrech 1994: 69).

Because of this difficulty, authors have sometimes used one of the two following approaches. One approach is to operate a distinction between “small” and “big” states and to argue that while Germany, France or the UK are unlikely to yield to top-down pressures in their foreign policies (Miskimmon 2007), smaller states do adapt to pressures that emanate from EU foreign policy positions. For instance, it has been argued that Spain, which joined the EC in 1986, brought its foreign policy positions on the Arab-Israeli conflict and on the conflict in the Western Sahara in lign

with EU positions (Kennedy 2000; see also Ioakimidis 2000 for a similar argument on Greece).

Another way to use the “Europeanization” framework in CFSP/ESDP despite its intergovernmental nature has been to look at Europeanization as a “horizontal” process of normative convergence across the MS. In this perspective, authors are interested in the way norms “travel” across national borders, for instance in the defense industrial sector (Hoeffler 2013). Radaelli himself added a conceptualization of Europeanization he called *sideways* Europeanization, which allows for a more flexible approach to policy transfers than top down logics (Radaelli 2000). In a similar vein, Christopher Hill and Reuben Wong have coined the notion of *cross-loading*. By this, they mean a process through which the MS influence each other through policy transfers or procedural emulation, though the authors readily admit that this is not easily distinguishable from the category of downloading (Hill and Wong 2011: 219-220).¹⁹

Summing up, in both the supranational and the intergovernmental policy areas, analysts talk, firstly, about different levels of autonomy of national governments/elites (or non-state actors) vis-à-vis the dynamics of integration and/or the EU level, second, about different directions of Europeanization (top down, bottom up), and third, about the formation of new norms and/or the evolution of normative systems and how this affects policy (horizontal, cross-loading).²⁰ What many of them share is a focus on the way policy paradigms, norms, beliefs, formal and informal rules or procedures, etc. are either incorporated into the domestic units of nation states, uploaded to the EU level or construed and diffused horizontally.

This can be problematic because there is often an inbuilt preference for the *very* long term: It only makes sense to speak of Europeanization when a norm, for instance, has become partly or fully embraced on the national level and perpetuated

¹⁹ See also section 1.3.b for horizontal processes of socialization.

²⁰ For the sake of completeness, one can mention that three more recent schools of thought have developed since the heydays of neo-functionalism and inter-governmentalism: Liberal inter-governmentalism, “supranational governance” approaches and “rational choice institutionalists” (Moravcsik 1993; Pierson 1996; Hix 2002; Tsebelis and Garrett 1997). All of these approaches essentially refine the two “founding theories” of European integration and Europeanization cited above, adding layers of complexity in our understanding of the formation of state preferences (liberal intergovernmentalism), about the multiple layers of decision-making and imperfect information (supranational governance) or about likely policy equilibria (rational choice institutionalists).

over a long period of time. However, this perspective tends to neglect that common *ways of doing things* or *policy paradigms* can also very well emerge outside of the paradigms of Europeanization, namely when the MS try to solve a common problem in a punctual manner, and this can create a common role *without* a common policy. The fact that such “common ways of doing things” may then be “forgotten” and might have to be “learned again” at a later stage in no way hinders the fact that common short-term action can produce “common ways of doing things”. Such learned lessons may be stepping-stones on the way to “Europeanized policy/policies” in security and defense but, as with the question whether the French Revolution was a success or not, one could quip it is still a bit too early to know.

Secondly, the focus on norms, informal rules, culture, policy paradigms etc. can run the risk of determinism when it comes to the way they are translated into behavior or policies: The link is sometimes implicitly assumed to be quite unidirectional and the below section on European strategic culture discusses the problems that need to be avoided in this respect. This becomes even more problematic when studies concern themselves with the inter-governmental field of defense and security: Analyzing the convergence of norms and culture is important, but since the partial convergence of European strategic cultures does not directly lead to common European strategies (see 1.4), a different approach is needed to capture the dynamics behind the type of “convergent role behavior” analyzed in this thesis (see below).

1.3. European strategic culture

The following brief overview of the literature about European strategic culture reveals similar approaches and cleavages as the Europeanization literature: There are both optimistic and pessimistic authors and they equally approach their question of a European strategic culture horizontally or in a bottom up way.²¹

²¹ Note that, except for EU documents like the ESS 2003 and prescriptive policy papers who call for the EU-led development of a European strategic culture, an explicit top-down perspective is largely absent in this literature because ESDP/CSDP remains strictly inter-governmental (see De France and Witney 2013; EGS 2013).

1.3.a. Pessimists

To begin with the pessimists, there is today a majority of authors for which a European strategic culture is elusive. One prominent representative is Sten Rynning, for whom the EU does not have the ability to become a “player in strategic affairs where great powers traditionally distinguish themselves” (Rynning 2003: 490). Therefore, the EU does not have “the potential to construct a strong strategic culture” (ibid.: 479). In a similar vein, Julian Lindley-French wrote in 2002 that European defense

“sits trapped between engaged and disengaged concepts of security, reflecting a profound strategic confusion within Europe over the objectives and methods of its security and defence: on the one hand, a minimalist, defensive commitment to the protection of the European citizen; on the other, a more aggressive pursuit of security through pre-emption” (Lindley-French 2002: 789).

Such authors stress that while some MS hope to extend the “first line of defense” to far-away theaters, others emphasize territorial defense (ESS 2003: 7). Consequently, a strategic consensus on what to do and how to do it is impossible because national strategic cultures, and notably national attitudes to the use of force, diverge too markedly. This comes down to the argument that a European strategic culture can only have meaning in a European federal state (see also Hill 1993).

Since the financial crisis in 2008 more authors have joined the ranks of the pessimists (Maull 2011; Tsoukalis and Emmanouilidis 2011; Youngs 2010a). It was particularly the 2011 that led analysts to revise their optimistic views on the MS’ strategic cultural convergence. Despite a textbook case of formal international legitimacy²² the MS disagreed substantially when it came to the modalities of the use of force: While traditionally activist states such as the UK, France or Denmark chose to support NATO Operation Unified Protector, traditionally reticent states like Germany did not (Koenig 2011: 13).

²² The UNSC adopted a resolution (UNSC Resolution 1973) that established a no-fly zone and authorized member states to “take all necessary measures ... to protect civilians ... while excluding a foreign occupation force” (UNSC Res 1973 (2011)).

One recent contribution to the literature on European strategic culture that deserves to be analyzed in more detail comes from Christoph Meyer, who has grown more skeptical than he used to be about the possibility of a European strategic culture (Meyer 2013). He has looked at the importance the strategic cultures of the UK, France, Poland and Germany accord to the transatlantic relationship, their acceptance of casualties (among the fighting forces, the enemy and the civilian population), the attitudes toward force projection versus territorial defense and the question whether a move towards greater European unification is deemed acceptable or not. He finds that on the first issue, both France and the UK have grown increasingly pragmatic, as the UK has grown less attached to the US and a new generation of French forces is “gradually in favour of finding a common ground for cooperation” with the US (ibid.: 55).

As regards the acceptance of casualties, he finds that Germany and Poland differ on important accounts, notably when it comes to the willingness to die for one’s country, which is relatively high in Poland, but very low in Germany (ibid.: 55-56). On territorial defense, Germany and Poland (despite having ended conscription and developed more flexible force projection models) remain close to each other in their preference for a posture of pure territorial defense, while the UK and France consider more readily that the homeland and national citizens must and can also be defended abroad. On the fourth dimension, the ceding of autonomy to higher levels of (EU) authority, he finds that particularly the UK, but also Poland, find it difficult to discuss the *finalité* of the EU project and ceding sovereignty to a hypothetical “European Army” (ibid.: 57-58).

On the whole, Meyer argues that while among high level elites, there is “growing coherence and convergence of shared ideas about nature and hierarchy of threats that need to be addressed and the utility of the EU”, there also is a “considerable degree of *diversity and incompatibility* among national political elites as well as the publics. *Only a small set of norms is fully shared* among key countries, without even considering some of the more fundamental concerns of non-aligned countries such as Austria and Ireland” (Meyer 2013: 58; emphases added).

What binds the pessimistic approaches to the field together is that they, firstly, approach the question of a European strategic culture based on the assumption that it follows convergence of national strategic cultures, in other words, that their convergence is a precondition for a European strategic culture and therefore a common defense policy. Second, they tend to argue that because the MS' national strategic cultures are *not* converging, there is no (or can't be a) European strategic culture. As with the below optimists, such perspectives would gain in strength if they conceded sufficient space to the possibility of *behavioral* convergence that happens largely independently of cultural convergence and below the radar of politics.

1.3.b. Optimists

For the optimists – one observer even speaks of “mandatory optimism” – a European strategic culture *is* emerging (Biscop 2012). Paul Cornish and Geoffrey Edwards were among the first to argue that a European strategic culture could be defined as the “institutional confidence and processes to manage and deploy military force as part of the accepted range of legitimate and effective policy instruments, together with general recognition of the EU's legitimacy as an international actor with military capabilities” (Cornish and Edwards 2001: 587).

One strand of optimistic authors looks at the phenomenon in a bottom up manner; this group argues that European states are adapting their strategic cultures to each other as parallel reactions to shared challenges. This research agenda was heavily influenced by events between the 1991 Gulf War and the 1999 Kosovo campaign and the fact that in 1991, only Britain, France and Italy participated in combat against Iraq (under UN Security Council Resolution 678), whereas in 1999, the number of European NATO members participating in air strikes, *without* a clear UN mandate, had risen, now including France, UK, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands (Heisbourg 2000: 6).

Because European states were narrowing down their strategic cultural differences, authors expected “greater, not lesser, acceptance of the use of military force”, and differences between “countries with alliance commitments and a strong

extrovert tendency” (Britain, France, Italy), and on the other end, the four neutral²³ ... ‘non-aligned’ countries” (Austria, Finland, Ireland, Sweden), were becoming narrower (Heisbourg 2000: 6).

Authors like Steven Everts, Christoph Meyer and Bastian Giegerich have presented variations of this approach. Everts et al. argued in 2004 that France and the UK proposed an attractive model of robust strategic cultures that other European states may want to follow (Everts et al. 2004, see also Giegerich 2006). Christoph Meyer, who published an important study on the convergence of European strategic cultures in 2003 (and whose now more pessimistic work was quoted above), also argued that convergence is not “simply the process of approximating the British or the French strategic mind-set, but a process of hybridisation of strategic cultures, a gradual ironing out of differences” (Meyer 2005: 30).

This process concerned more than a general acceptance of the necessity of force projection, as France and the UK themselves had also undergone profound transformations in their strategic cultures, namely concerning the abandonment of national security autarky and a move toward collaborative security schemes (ibid.). To be fair, Meyer argued European states remained divided in regards to the use of force and its projection abroad, the desired proximity to NATO or the acceptability of casualties (ibid.). However, concerning the de-prioritization of territorial defense, the idea of humanitarian interventions, the international legal framework and a growing attachment to the EU as an appropriate cooperation framework for defense, European states had started to converge (ibid.; see also Chapter 2).

In a similar 2005 study, Giegerich studied the impact of EU security policies on the strategic cultures of Austria, Spain, Sweden, Ireland, the UK, France, Germany and Denmark, and found that they were adapting to an emerging European strategic culture; though this process was “gradual and limited”, it was also “driven by constant interaction and the emergence of collective norms” (Giegerich 2005 quoted in Howorth 2007: 18). More recent studies continue on this trail and show how Europe’s national armies are, on the whole, shifting toward a shared model of more professional, more lethal forces, based on the abandonment of conscription and the

²³ For the strategic cultures of traditionally neutral Ireland, Austria, Finland and Sweden, see Biehl, Giegerich and Jonas 2013.

development of all-volunteer forces (Nicoll and Giegerich 2008; Meyer 2013; King 2011b).

Another version of the same argument about the emergence of a European strategic culture is that European states are not only reacting similarly to external challenges (for instance, developing force projection capabilities as a reaction to globalization), but are actually learning to put their “national reflexes based on history and geography” into perspective (Howorth 2002: 105). Here, the focus is on a horizontal process of socialization (also, but not only, in EU institutions) that makes the MS “think European”. Arguments such as that an “increasing convergence of European interests and the strengthening of mutual solidarity of the EU” is developing can be traced back to earlier works about EPC, which took interest in the way the latter produced “common views” among European states and paved the way for “agreed comprehensive” concepts and outlooks that the MS developed via their collaboration in the EU framework (ESS 2003: 1; Ifestos 1987; Quille 2004).

Spurred by countless EU meetings and fostered through diplomatic channels, authors like Simon Nuttall argued that a “concertation reflex” helped produce a homogenous alternative to “nationalized” politics (Nuttall 1992). Because European states frequented the same arenas (EU, NATO, OSCE), governments would tend to “move closer to one another on an increasing number of points that could previously be subject to more marked divisions” (Minard 2013, author’s translation). Drawing on constructivist research, numerous authors argued that EU-level foreign policy institutions were able to “socialize” their agents (for CFSP see Juncos and Pomorska 2006 and Tonra 2000, 2001; for ESDP see Cornish and Edwards 2001; Martinsen 2003 and Meyer 2005). In all of those arguments, the underlying idea is that a common European strategic culture can be “distilled” over the years in a “culture of consensus” (Lewis 2015).

Other authors approach the issue with a focus on the evolution of specific security norms. One of them is Per Norheim-Martinsen, for whom “a specific strategic culture” has already emerged in the EU. The latter evolves around the focal point of a “consensus on a comprehensive approach to security as a unique European Union asset, rather than on a broad set of shared security interests amongst its Member States” (Norheim-Martinsen 2011: 517). Other optimists have looked to the

concept of “Human Security” as a normative basis of a European strategic culture around which the MS are supposedly cohering.

Human Security can be defined as an approach to security that differs from classic state-centric conceptualizations in that it is people-centered. It emphasizes the freedom from want and fear and aims to protect

“people from critical or pervasive threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people’s strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity” (Final Report of the Commission on Human Security 2003).

Janne Haaland Matlary and Mary Kaldor, for instance, argue that the human security concept provides new meaning to CSDP and can serve as a foundation for its actions (Matlary 2006, Kaldor et al. 2004). For Matlary, “the ideological basis for a post-national strategic culture based on human security provides a window of opportunity for the EU”; it “seems likely that the EU can develop a strategic culture” – and the concept of human security “[is a] possible basis for a post-national strategic culture in the EU” (Matlary 2006: 107).

In sum, the optimists and the pessimists writing about European strategic culture actually share the same approach in that both primarily analyze the evolution of norms and strategic cultures and how this may relate to the emergence of a hypothetical European strategic culture. They certainly give different answers: The pessimists tend to argue that a common European strategic culture *can’t* evolve because national strategic cultures are not convergent. The optimists tend to argue national strategic cultures are in a process of convergence and mutual adaptation, and/or learning to “think European”, which produces a common outlook: Therefore, a European strategic culture has already emerged.

However, this difference between the two does not change much about the fact that both overemphasize the link between culture and behavior/policy output: For the pessimists, the reason why a common European policy does not come into existence is the absence of cultural convergence; for optimists it can happen based on cultural convergence. This link between culture and behavior is problematic: As the next

section shows, the analysis of cultural convergence (or its absence) does not *explain* common behavior (or its absence). Likewise, behavior and ideas do not, as in the above definition used by Giegerich et al. “generate” expectations or preferences; they only contribute to shape them.

1.4. Culture and causation of behavior

Mechanical thinking is, in fact, one of the major weaknesses of many strategic culture studies; authors such as Alastair Johnston go as far as to claim that strategic culture has a falsifiable impact on strategic behavior (Johnston 1995). In this view, strategic culture becomes an independent variable that causes phenomena. In reality, cause and effect are often impossible to distinguish. Martha Finnemore has adopted a much more careful approach to the question how strategic culture can be said to “cause” action: “By creating new social realities ... new beliefs create new policy choices, even policy imperatives” (Finnemore 2003: 14-15). Thus, “understanding beliefs ... is not ‘mere description’, since beliefs ... *constitute* certain behavioral possibilities and, in that sense, *cause* them” (ibid.).

Therefore, strategic culture should be seen as something that “structures what options are considered to be appropriate by a specific actor in security and defence, hence *influencing, but not determining behaviour*” (Giegerich 2006: 11; emphasis added). Building on the definition in section 1.1., strategic culture can be said to act like an “ideational milieu that limits choices of states”, and it is “based on a historically unique experience of a society, which generated persistent preferences that are only open to gradual change through policy-making elites, particularly in times of perceived crisis” (Giegerich 2006: 40). Elites can mobilize what Berenskoetter and Giegerich call a “biographical narrative giving meaning to the past and allowing for an orientation toward the future by anchoring those basic principles in pertinent lessons and desirable visions” (Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010: 420).

Hence, it makes sense to use strategic culture in an Aronian tradition as something that helps *understand*, but does not necessarily *explain*. The concept of strategic culture, then, contains a particular historical context and a set of beliefs that

are shared by a group. This ideational milieu informs (and is informed by) action. Thus, with John Ruggie, it makes sense to aim for “narrative explanations”, by which he means “as full an account of the facts as possible”, in order to engender “results that are verisimilar and believable to others” (Ruggie 1998: 94).

While the problem of causation is already difficult in the context of nation states that have less difficulty to formulate unambiguous political security projects, it becomes infinitely more complicated in the context of multi-state organizations like the EU (or the UN or NATO, for that matter). As Chapter 3 shows, it seems clearly problematic to expect that the supposed “strategic culture” of a multinational entity like the EU can be translated into precise policy. However, this is what many of the above authors imply: To argue that a European strategic culture, and therefore a common political European defense and security project, is possible because the national cultures do converge is based on the implicit assumption that common policies somehow follow common culture.

Besides the often overly deterministic link between norms or culture on the one hand and policy output on the other, there is another problem with these assumptions, which will be at the heart of Chapter 5: This is the fact that in the absence of a collectively agreed political project, the latter can also be “*imported*”, as a default option so to speak. In the case of Afghanistan, it was *the US*’ strategies that the MS cohered around: The MS had no strategy because their different national strategic cultures made it difficult for them to agree to one. They solved this problem by outsourcing leadership (and thus politics and strategy) to the US and helping to make this US strategy successful.

This points to the fact that the “US factor” in European defense and security should not only be analyzed as the “ultimate protector” but also as an important driver of, and factor in, role convergence, because the MS can use it as a solution to their leadership and actorness problems. In other words, they can use external leadership as a default solution to their non-realization of the four Collective Foreign Policy Potentials.

Before turning to this “US factor”, Jean-Yves Haine’s examination of EUFOR Chad (European Force Chad, an EU military mission that lasted from January 2008 to March 2009) is presented, because it illustrates the above theoretical point that politics do not automatically follow culture. Haine shows how the CSDP mission EUFOR Chad failed because despite the existence of a commonly agreed concept based on the principles of human security, the MS could not agree on clear political goals or even a strategy for the campaign. EUFOR Chad’s operational concept was clearly rooted in the approach of human security laid out in the 2004 Barcelona Report; it attempted to reconcile armed force with ethical beliefs, “the primacy of human rights, clear political authority, multilateralism, a bottom-up approach, regional focus, the use of legal instruments, and the appropriate use of force” (Haine 2011: 591,592).

EUFOR Chad’s problem was situated on the political level: The “obvious instrumentalization by France of CSDP structures and goals”, Haine writes, “was met by reticence from European members with no tradition and no willingness to play an active military role in Africa, most notably Germany, which started to call the CSDP ‘the French Africa Korps’” (Haine 2011: 590). On several occasions, the MS were in disagreement about fundamental aspects, such as, for instance the question how to deal with Chad’s President Idriss Déby Itno. While the French had a long-standing relationship with Déby and saw this link as an asset, Brussels was preoccupied with “distancing itself from France” more than with “assessing the strategic situation on the ground” (Haine 2011: 595).

To repeat the point made above, such examples raise the question of how strategic culture can be connected to “strategy” and therefore politics. As Sten Rynning observes: “Culture is not leadership, first of all, and deriving operational capacity from a single outlook will be a challenge because of the EU’s complex Brussels set-up” (Rynning 2011: 536). In sum, the key question is this: While there “are many indications that there exists a cluster of ideational and cultural preferences that guide Europe’s civilian and military operations or at least have the potential to do so”, how does it further political science if statements about a European strategic culture remain descriptive catalogues of the obvious (Schmidt and Zyla 2011: 489)?

That CSDP missions do indeed display a great deal of normative commonalities, defined by a set of values that could indeed be qualified as shared, or

even “European”, is not fundamentally surprising. However, this is essentially a descriptive statement (“A European culture exists and its characteristic are the values x, y, z and the norms u, v, w”). What we need are hypotheses and plausible models helping to understand European security actions and behaviors (“How can common European security actions come about and what factors help understand such occurrences?”). Unless one has such models, there is a risk that the fate of Vladimir and Estragon befalls European security and defense researchers: As in Samuel Beckett’s absurdist play they may wait in vain for the arrival of the Godot of a political project.

1.5. Convergence without Europeanization

This thesis proposes an alternative to the top-down, bottom-up or horizontal approaches to European defense and security policy that were presented above. The entry point for this alternative is that this dissertation questions the implicit claim that a common political security and defense role is impossible in the absence of cultural convergence, because, as stated, this operates on a problematic assumption concerning the link between culture and politics: Even if all the MS’ strategic cultures converged to form one harmonious European strategic culture, this would not change much about the fact that no common political project and *finalité* has so far been identified for European security and defense, but despite this absence, the behaviors of the MS *did* in fact converge in Afghanistan – *outside* of European logics. This points to the fact that a common European role encompassing more than just the “Big Three” (as in the Iran 3 Group) or the “Big Three” plus Italy (as in the Contact Group during the Balkan crisis) is possible even without full security cultural convergence of all MS around a common European strategic culture.²⁴

Since “role convergence” in Afghanistan happened outside of logics of cultural convergence and horizontal, top down or bottom up Europeanization, it is useful to develop further the work of Bastien Irondelle, who explored notions of Europeanization *without* the EU in a policy domain that is known for its strong

²⁴ The non-EU members of the Contact Group were the US and Russia.

resistance to Europeanization: national defense (Irondelle 2003). Despite the absence of strong institutional EU pressures, the logic of European integration, he argued, nevertheless had a decisive impact on French post-1989 army reforms, he argued (Irondelle 2003: 208). His argument will be presented in more detail now.

Building on previous attempts to restructure the French Armed Forces, President Chirac embarked on a decisive reform process of the French Army in 1996, which resulted in its professionalization and the abandonment of conscription with the view to developing an army model based on European defense cooperation and projection, not territorial defense and French autarky. This was more than noteworthy, given France's strong heritage of Gaullism and a highly independent and nationalist defense tradition (Gordon 1993). French policy elites clearly predicated the reform efforts on the necessity of moving toward a European defense: President Chirac declared that "[t]his "European ambition" affected the reform of the military apparatus on all levels, from nuclear deterrence to the arms industry and the conventional forces (see Irondelle 2003: 209). France, Chirac's argument went, would have to restructure and adapt its armed forces to meet the challenge of working toward a European defense.

This represented a theoretical puzzle: How was it possible that European logics would play a strong, even determining, role in the domain of national defense, which most political scientists deemed the unlikeliest of all candidates for integration or Europeanization? The paradox becomes even more marked when one recalls another one of Radaelli's definitions of Europeanization as a "set of processes through which the European Union political, social and economic dynamics become part of the logic of domestic discourses, identities, political structures and public policies" (Radaelli 2001: 110). In this perspective of Radaelli's, Europeanization is only possible in areas "subject to specific treatment by the EU" (Irondelle 2003: 2010). In other words, Europeanization can only exist "where common institutions, rules and policies exist" (ibid.). Without European integration, and without the existence of institutions, there can be no Europeanization. However, this is precisely what Irondelle was able to show.

Using a process-tracing method, he demonstrated that French military policy had been "Europeanized" following a "cognitive logic by changing the beliefs and expectations of domestic actors" (Irondelle 2003: 212; see also Knill and Lehmkuhl

1999). This Europeanization of French military policy took several forms. For instance, regarding French “exceptionalism”, Chirac’s reform meant that France moved from the principle of defense autonomy to a paradigm of cooperation:

“the age of ‘national deterrence’, built on the principle of national independence, served by the *force de frappe*, and centred on the mission of territorial defence through conscription, was on the decline. French military policy evolved towards a ‘multinational action’ paradigm founded on the principle of co-operation – essentially European – served by an army immediately available and operational to participate in multinational interventions outside France, mainly in Europe or its vicinity” (Irondele 2003: 215).

In the domain of nuclear deterrence (i.e. the field of military doctrine), this meant that the purpose of the armed forces was adapted to the projection of force and foreign intervention as the primary mission of the army. In sum, French military policy illustrated a form of Europeanization that “occurred *before* true sectoral integration of defence issues at the European level” (Irondele 2003: 223, emphasis added). This made Irondele a forerunner of a dialectical relationship between Europeanization and European integration, or an “interactionist approach” to Europeanization (Palier, Surel et al. 2007).

To come back to Afghanistan, the following chapters will show that the MS always largely eschewed top down EU programming and prioritized national approaches over common European responses (see also Korski 2008). Thus, despite an initial narrative that “Europe” could (or should) provide the “soft” counter-weight to “hard” US anti-terror policies, the MS’ Afghan policies were not dominated by “European” logics. As will be argued, their role convergence under the US lead of the later years was akin to an “alignment of stars” in the sense that it was the expression of a favorable constellation of national policies, not the result of a cultural convergence process. This was a European convergence without the EU (Fescharek 2015a).

Hence, this dissertation proposes to conceptualize the MS’ collective role in Afghanistan’s security not as cultural, normative or political convergence, but as a behavioral constellation of similar sovereign national policies in reaction to shared events. The role behaviors of the MS added up to produce synergies (among

themselves and also with the US alliance leader), providing real added value in the field of security. This role convergence happened despite the absence of Europeanization across the four Collective Foreign Policy Potentials (see Chapter 5). What enabled this convergence was the apolitical and technical nature of cooperation under US leadership, which means that role convergence was facilitated by the fact that a common (“European”) policy was not required. If this is correct, role convergence is the possibility of joined-up *action* in the absence of a joint policy. A convenient way to solve the MS’ problem to produce common policy is when they can either react to events or *faits accomplis*, or complement an external political project (in this case the US’).

In sum, the classic Europeanization framework is not useful in the case of this dissertation. Firstly, it mostly looks for durable change. Secondly, it often tends to over-emphasize normative evolutions and therefore neglect behavior. Thirdly, it has an inbuilt focus on the emergence of common policies, but because the latter are not forthcoming in security and defense, a different approach is needed: One that looks for joined-up action that happens despite cultural divergence and without a Europeanized policy.

To make it more concrete, this thesis uses the four Collective Foreign Policy Potentials introduced in the introduction to show that

- the MS have not tried to act collectively in the domain of security (i.e., the actorship potential was not fulfilled – see Chapter 3)
- they have not collectively tried to determine the security agenda (or even parts of it) in a specific way (i.e., the proactiveness potential was not fulfilled – see Chapter 4)
- they have not tried to shape the Afghan security environment according to a vision of theirs (i.e., the shaping potential was not fulfilled – see Chapter 5)
- they have not drawn the conclusion that NATO’s potential failure in Afghanistan should result in more European security and defense autonomy (i.e., the autonomy potential was not fulfilled – see Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6).

Instead, they waited for US leadership in order to “insert” their contributions

into the US' security framework once the latter became visible, and what may have been an initial ambition to change their external security environment turned into an accumulation of niche contributions, providing synergies for the US' attempts at shaping the security environment. To say it again, the fact that the MS display great differences in their national strategic cultures did not keep this European default role of tactical complementation from emerging.

Two assumptions are implicit in the above conceptualization of role convergence. Logically, if Europeanization logics do not help understand European behaviors, there are essentially two other possibilities to explain MS behavior: One is that "role convergence" toward an enabling and/or supporting role vis-à-vis the US alliance leader could be the more or less direct function of the US lead. In this case European states would have, implicitly or explicitly, aligned their role behavior on US demands – but how? The name of the game could be US pressure on MS policies and the MS' "structural constraints" under US hegemony. The school of thought most apt to capture this structural dynamic, by which the MS' policies could be more or less directly explained by power relations in the international system, would be neorealism.

The second option is that not the US' lead and pressure shaped and shoved MS policies, nor the mechanical forces of shifting tectonic plates, but national decisions, formulated at the level of national elites. Domestic logics, such as national leaders' reactions to public opinion, pressures from the military or reformist groups, for instance, could all play together, but the outcome would primarily be explained by sovereign national dynamics. National role conceptualizations and role behaviors would be an important part of the equation, and this is why the contributions of constructivism would be best suited to understand what happens. Hence, the missing pieces in the puzzle of this chapter are the concepts of "structure" and "agency", and neorealism and constructivism's contributions to political science.

1.6. Agency and structure

Different schools in IR theory accord varying degrees of freedom of action to the actors, units and states that make up the international system. Some assume the system (for instance, the “anarchical” nature of international relations, meaning the absence of a world government or supreme authority), the structure (for instance, a bipolar, unipolar or multipolar system of powers) and material reality (for instance, a state’s military capabilities, economic “health” or its geographical location) to a great extent determine a given foreign policy behavior (Reus-Smit and Snidal 2008; Webber, Sperling and Smith 2012: 34; Hurd 2008: 299-300). For those authors, system and structure exert such immutable pressures on states that international politics are synonymous with the struggle for power (Waltz 1979:121).

Other authors assume there is much more space for the units (or actors or states) to define what reality is in the first place and therefore tend to hold much more optimistic views about the possibility to act *despite* the pressures of the surrounding system, structure or constraining material factors. Such authors often have a background in constructivism. A world seen through a constructivist lens is a world in which preferences, interests, identities - and ultimately policies - have *social* and *relational* sources. They are not determined by the surrounding system or structure and material factors, but construed in the arena of the social (Hurd 2008). Alexander Wendt’s catch-phrase that “500 British nuclear weapons are less threatening to the United States than 5 North Korean nuclear weapons” is a good example for this type of reasoning (Wendt 1995: 73).

Then there are also those who hold the middle ground between these two positions. Representatives of the English School recognize both systemic pressures on what a state perceives as its interests and the states’ ability to collectively act and also elaborate common norms that restrain all of them, in other words, to construct something like a “society” of states in which shared rules help organize the interactions that are commonly called “international relations”. For instance, for Hedley Bull and Adam Watson states can “not merely form a system, in the sense that the behaviour of each is a necessary factor in the calculations of the others” but they

can also establish “by dialogue and consent common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations, and recognise their common interest in maintaining these arrangements” (Bull and Watson 1984: 1).

Coming to the present case of European security and defense policy/policies, the literature reveals similar cleavages: There are those who optimistically assume that the MS have the collective agency, the will and ability to chart a security course for the EU. In this view, US hegemony and leadership must not automatically reduce “Europe” to the role of a “submissive add-on to Washington”, since the MS can collectively agree on a security project of their own. We will encounter those optimists, often institutionally affiliated with the European Commission, in Chapter 2. The concentrated expression of this belief in collective European agency was presented in the introduction as the four “Collective Foreign Policy Potentials, namely the belief the MS can become a collective security actor and a proactive leader in security that shapes the security environment autonomously.

On the other side of the spectrum there are those who are generally pessimistic about the MS’ ability to ignore (or work their way around) systemic pressures. For such authors, European security policy/policies are largely deduced or determined by the fact of US hegemony and preeminence. These pessimists come to different conclusions about the way the MS’ collective policy/policies vis-à-vis the US look(s) like, but they all largely deduce behavior from the surrounding structure, system and material reality of capabilities. James Sperling et al., for instance, argue that under conditions of unipolarity, the “presence of an overwhelming power or unipole leads to a number of theoretically derived possibilities”, and these “possibilities” are either “bandwagoning”, “balancing” or “hedging” (Webber, Sperling and Smith 2012: 34; Cladi and Locatelli 2012; Posen 2004, 2006; Toje 2010).

The theorists of “bandwagoning” argue that “weak” and “small” states like the MS do not balance bigger states, but “jump on the bandwagon”. This “bandwagoning” concept is used to describe a foreign policy strategy of systematic and total alignment with the strongest element in a system (i.e. the US). The search for security is one motivation, but importantly, bandwagoning implies the “prospect

of obtaining some gain” or the “spoils of victory” (Cladi and Locatelli 2012: 281; Schweller 1994). This “may occur as a survival strategy: joining with the more powerful or threatening side in order to pre-empt the danger of enforced subservience” (Webber, Sperling and Smith 2012: 34). Bandwagoning can be defined as “the weaker allying with a threatening, stronger state”, but there is also “bandwagoning for profit”, which is seen as “joining with the stronger side because [...] it represents the “wave of the future” (ibid.).

Contrary to the “bandwagoning” thesis, the theorists of “balancing” or “soft balancing” go back to Kenneth Waltz’s standard position that under unipolarity, states seek to challenge the unipole, possibly “balancing” a disquietingly powerful hegemon (see Webber, Sperling and Smith 2012: 38). As in the above bandwagoning thesis, “balancing” posits the US as the main driver of European foreign policy and strategy, but it expects the MS to act jointly in ways that, though not directly challenging US military preponderance, “use nonmilitary tools to delay, frustrate, and undermine aggressive unilateral US military policies” (Pape 2005: 10).

Either because they are in fear of being abandoned by Washington, or because they are anxious about entrapment in US foreign policy adventures, the European strategy is to collectively hammer out a “pact of restraint”, according to Galia Press-Barnathan, and ESDP/CSDP is the outgrowth of this pact (Press-Barnathan 2006). This balancing thesis gained prominence in interpreting the motivations behind the 1998 Saint Malo declaration. IR realists assumed that

“no longer willing to act as the obedient lieutenant of America in the face of its declining position, the EU has become more ambitious and assertive *as a rival centre of power* to that of Washington. European political and economic union spurred the emergence of a European foreign and security policy that can be argued to have unsettled the transatlantic relationship” (Rees 2011:30, emphasis added).

According to this view, “Europe has repudiated Atlanticism and has struck out on its own, trying to act as a second choice in the West and a *counterweight* to America” (ibid., emphasis added; see also Paul 2005 and Posen 2004, 2006).

The third variant of such structural arguments that see European policy/policies as a consequence of global systemic pressures in an anarchic world is that the geostrategic uncertainty of the US’ further involvement on the European continent shapes a European strategic culture of “hedging” against the US (Toje 2010:

175). Arguments that the EU “will not strive to uphold the US primacy, nor will it work against it”, that it seeks to “contribute as little as possible to American geopolitics while clinging to the security guarantees of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty” or that the EU is “trying to create a European alternative to the US global agenda” are based on an understanding that structural shifts are shaping a common European posture or role (Toje 2010: 92, 175).

All of these approaches are problematic when applied to collective European security behavior. Paradoxically, although they mechanically deduce policy from structure, such arguments are based on the premise that the MS can agree to common policies that will either take them out of their predicament of dependence through balancing against the US, or similarly, collectively follow US security leadership without questioning. Such positions seriously overestimate the MS’ ability to agree to substantial common policy in the field of security and defense policy, because, as Chapter 3 will show, their different national strategic cultures are a serious impediment to their collective “security actorness”. The balancing and bandwagoning theses are both too dichotomous in the way that the MS are either portrayed as blind followers of US policy or as its rebellious challengers, but because there is no middle ground, and because they overestimate the MS’ policy coordination in security, both fail to capture what is happening.

This leads to the central argument that not bandwagoning, balancing or hedging (which all deduce policy from structure and system) capture the essence of a European security and defense role next to the US, but the accumulation of parallel MS behaviors and security policies based on specific circumstances. Specific security policies largely originate on the MS level and mostly present themselves as a mix of opt ins and opt outs vis-à-vis US security agendas. Opting “in to” or “out of” US security leadership is always to a large extent a function of national strategic cultures (though opting out does not mean challenging or proposing a viable alternative to US leadership, as chapter 6 shows). This leads to the assumption that collective European security roles may occur *by default* – the phenomenon is not “planned” by Brussels or commonly agreed upon between the MS. This default option happens in a “lowest common denominator” logic.

What is important, then, is to distinguish *collective* EU agency from *individual* MS agency: Structural realists tend to under-estimate the second (arguing the system/structure leaves little room for the individual MS to define their own policies). However, this study's empirical results are incompatible with the assumption that the MS' Afghanistan policies were pre-determined by "the structure" or "the system" of international relations or simply by US pressures (see in particular chapters 5 and 6).

This brings us to the concept of "foreign policy roles". Below, fundamental assumptions are presented about how national foreign policy elites can construct roles and behavior in a way that mostly reflects a primacy of domestic over international factors. Material, structural and systemic constraints are an important factor, but they are not the *only* factor. In other words, there is a considerable range of possibilities for individual MS to decide whether they tacitly accept the consequences of structural and systemic pressures or whether they will try find ways around it.

This focus on roles reveals that the present thesis is rooted in assumptions about human actorness. While recognizing the importance of systemic factors and capabilities, it places emphasis on human action and the possibility of leadership. Whereas realist theories tend to "blackbox" and reify "the state", the advantage of strategic culture and role theoretical approaches is their focus on the way governments and elites, as "carriers of culture", can compute new responses despite constant systemic pressures. The concept of roles sees foreign policy actors as social beings embedded in a norm-induced social system of rules; it emphasizes agency, learning, communication and the alteration of perceptions through interaction. This allows more diversified and complex approaches than the simple stipulation that "the state" acts according to immutable laws dictated by the externally given system.

The reason why this is a helpful perspective is that it helps to view systemic-level factors and variables as "translated through unit-level intervening variables such as decision-makers' perceptions and domestic state structure" (Rose 1998: 146). In other words, foreign policy makers (foreign ministers, defense ministers, presidents, high level bureaucrats etc.) are neither seen as "completely free choosing agents, nor is their behaviour entirely determined by external structures" such as the "balance" of power" or the "distribution of military might", for instance (Aggestam 2006: 13).

With Michael Smith and Christopher Hill this dissertation argues that an agent-centered perspective is necessary to understand international relations, *but* “without an understanding of the international, and its distinctive features, the analysis is bound to be superficial” (Hill and M. Smith 2011: 4). This brings us to “Role Theory”.

1.7. “Role Theory”

The first thing to say about Role “Theory” is that its title is definitely a misnomer. Role “Theory” does not have “a set of axiomatic ‘if... then’ propositions and operational definitions”, and is therefore no actual theory (Walker 1979: 176). The *concept* of roles, as it more adequately called, can be traced back at least to the 1950s, when a range of authors started to express interest in the numerous ways leaders’ and elites’ beliefs impacted on their states’ interactions (Snyder, Bruck and Sapin 2002: 58ff). Starting on the premise that realism’s core assumptions about the exogenously given nature of the ‘national interest’ were misguided, Richard Snyder, H.W. Bruck and Burton Sapin argued that foreign policy started with a “definition of the situation” by decision-makers, “who are in turn influenced by the ‘socially defined norms and values’ that they have internalized” (ibid.).

Despite its conceptual richness, the concept of roles has been used in comparatively few studies so far, although there has been renewed interest lately (Walker, Malici and Schafer 2011; Holsti 1970, 1987; Le Prestre 1997; Aggestam 2006; Elgström and Smith 2006; Thies 2009; Maull 2011; Harnisch 2011; Frank 2011). It has its origins in social psychology and sociology and has long been applied to find testable hypotheses to explain human behavior in social systems. The very word “role” originates in theatre, where “rolls” used to be understood as the “parts from which theatrical characters were read” (Aggestam 2006: 12, referring to Thomas and Biddle 1966: 6).

1.7.a. Definitions

When speaking of roles, it is possible to distinguish role conceptions, role prescriptions, role behavior and role-sets (see Harnisch, Frank and Maull 2011). Though this thesis does not intend to draw up a “map of roles” or classify MS contributions in Afghanistan according to ideal-typical “alliance behaviors” as some publications have done, the below terminology is useful to understand how this thesis approaches roles and foreign policy (Hynek and Marton 2011).

Role conceptions designate the actors’ own definitions of their obligations, responsibilities and appropriate course of action. They are “mental maps” “which guide decision makers in their analysis of their country’s international relations and in their decisions on appropriate policies” (Maull 2000: 14). Roles designate an actor’s purpose in a group; they “provide decision-makers with a means of intercepting, classifying and interpreting information in terms of pre-established beliefs” and constitute “a set of conceptual lenses delineating the main coordinates within which policy options are weighed and assessed” (Hyde-Price 2007: 46). A well-known role conception is Germany’s “civilian power” role (Maull 1990; see Chapter 2).

Role expectations designate the way other international actors “perceive the appropriate foreign policy behaviour of a specific role actor” (Aggestam 2006: 19). A recent example would be Ambassador Victoria Nuland’s remarks about the US’s expectations vis-à-vis Europe: “Europe needs, the United States needs, NATO needs, the democratic world needs – a stronger, more capable European defense capacity. An ESDP with only soft power is not enough” (US Embassy 22.02.2008).

At this point, a few remarks are necessary to disentangle “role conceptions” from “role prescriptions”: Which one is “more important”? Which one helps understand actual role *behavior* better? Kalevi Holsti has tried to solve this methodological problem with the argument that “the role performance (decisions and actions) of governments may be explained primarily by reference to the policymaker’s own conceptions of their nation’s role in a region or in the international system as a whole”, because “the fact of sovereignty implies that foreign policy decisions and actions (role performance) derive *primarily* from policymakers’ role conceptions, domestic needs and demands, and critical events or trends in the external environment” (Holsti 1987: 8, 10, emphasis in original).

However, role prescriptions should not be dismissed entirely. Though the results of this dissertation confirm the gist of Holsti's argument the issue is slightly more complex. In the present case, it was not simply about one dimension "winning" or one "losing" against the other: European states' alliance behaviors in Afghanistan, as we will see, shows that while operational, on-the-ground behavior tended to be firmly rooted in national role conceptions, those conceptions were often adapted and sometimes stretched. Much of this happened under the radar of political recognition, in a "don't ask, don't tell" manner. This adds an important nuance to the concept of role-playing, because role conceptions (such as we find them in official statements) are not always congruent with what actually happens on the ground. Hence, it is not necessarily that the "national" role conception "wins" against the external role prescription – sometimes the operational level trumps the national role conception because the latter is too vague and detached from the ground. Chapters 4 and 5 return to this point.

The category of *role behavior/performance* denotes the "attitudes, decisions, and actions governments take to implement" their role conceptions or, if that is the case, the role prescriptions from the external environment" (Holsti 1987: 9). For Holsti, role performance is a direct result of role conceptions. In line with what was said at an earlier stage concerning the issue of causation in social research, this study will be more prudent, arguing with Aggestam that we "should keep in mind that role conceptions do not necessarily determine outcomes directly, but merely define the potential range of options and strategies" (Aggestam 2006: 20).

A more comprehensive term is the concept of *role-sets*. According to Linton, every individual has "a *series of roles* deriving from the various patterns in which he participates and at the same time *a role*, general, which represents the sum total of these roles and determines what he does for his society and what he can expect from it" (quoted in Aggestam 2006; emphasis added). A role-set designates a super-ordinate "theme", a kind of "general role" that is constituted by a number of different roles that an individual or a state shoulders. An example would be the idea that "Europe", because of its "Venusian" nature, is predestined to "soft power" politics in a transatlantic division of labor (Kagan 2003). In other words, if roles are like a Russian doll, the role-set is the biggest one, and it contains the rest.

It is also possible to include what Harnisch calls the “audience cues”, meaning the domestic public as it expresses itself in polls and elections, and which tends to manifest increasing war weariness as wars drag on (Harnisch 2011: 8). This, in fact, tends to be neglected in theorists’ attempts to develop “parsimonious” theories. Excluding public opinion would be an over-simplification. Studies have shown that the degree to which elites react to public opinion or not varies, sometimes defying it and sometimes heeding its wishes (Kreps 2010; De Graaf, Dimitriu and Ringsmose 2015). Links between policy and public opinion are never linear or unidirectional and public opinion is not a “variable” that can be fed into a calculus. There are numerous examples where governments ignore it, but in the present Afghan case, there is plenty of evidence, both resulting from interviews and from the literature, that public growing discontent with the war has acted as a powerful brake on how far a government could go in defining a role in Afghanistan.

1.7.b. The concept of roles and Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA)

This last point about public opinion makes a few statements necessary about the range of *other* factors that play a role in shaping foreign policy. This is what the related concept of FPA deals with. Although the concept of roles and FPA do not exclude each other, it is important to stress that while FPA explores factors shaping foreign policy, the concept of roles is more open to the examination of *subjective* elements in the making of foreign policy. FPA is really more interested in establishing a list of most important factors: Internal bureaucratic fights, for instance, the pressure of advocacy groups or public opinion etc. help explain a state’s foreign policy; FPA tries to disentangle those elements and ideally establish a hierarchy between them.

For instance, in a study using FPA Bastian Giegerich focused on the three following dimensions: Firstly, the external environment, subdivided into the structure of the international system, the impact of other states’ policies and actions (for example, alliance pressure), and the impact of the EU level on national decision-making. Secondly, he examined the internal environment, made up of the institutional process of policy making (for instance, the formal loci of responsibility within a

policy system; the concentration of power in the executive; the existence of veto players etc.) and societal factors such as national identity, norms and ideas. The third category concerned the foreign policy output, defined as resulting from context and process variables (for instance, the deployment of troops or special forces as a result of policy deliberation) (Giegerich 2006).

This leads to an important problem in FPA, which is the sheer width of factors that need to be examined if one aims for a full account of foreign policy. As one observer argued in 1962,

“A research design that requires an investigator to collect detailed information about such diverse matters as the social system, the economy, the foreign situation, the actors, the perceptions, the motivations, the values, the goals, the communication problems, the personality – in short, that asks him to account for a decision making event virtually in its totality – places a back-breaking burden upon him, one that he could never adequately accomplish even if he were willing to invest an exorbitant effort...” (see Hudson 2007: 5).²⁵

In other words, attempting to explain foreign policy by an inventory of factors is akin to explaining Mario Götze’s decisive goal against Argentina in the World Cup Final of 2014 by focusing on the entire history of post-War German football and the concept of roles has the advantage of being more manageable. Authors using the concept of roles obviously do not ignore factors leading to foreign policy. However, rather than trying to explain foreign policy by a range of factors, the concept of roles is more concerned with the way national elites and governments define appropriate action, contributions and what ought to be achieved. This is where our four Collective Foreign Policy Potentials come into play. The concept of roles will be connected here to the questions raised by those four potentials:

- 1) Did the MS attempt to play a collective role, to agree to common policies and strategies? If not why? If yes, how?
- 2) Did the MS aim to initiate and play a proactive role? If not why? If yes, on what types of issues?
- 3) Did the MS deem it appropriate to play a shaping role? If not why? If yes, how?

²⁵ As Valery Hudson remarks with a pinch of humor, some studies have even shown that the color of a room in which a decision is made can have impact on the quality and content of the decision itself.

4) Did the MS have the ambition to act in autonomy? If not why? If yes, what was the kind of autonomous role they sought?

1.7.c. Elites

Another important question that must be raised is this: If roles exist, who carries them? As Walker notes, there has been a de facto bifurcation in FPA between studies focusing on “states-as-actors” (who aggregate individual actions and attribute them largely to the constraints of the international state system) and “individuals-as-actors” (who look at properties within states, such as the number of veto players in a federal system or psychological predispositions of leaders) (Walker, Malici and Schafer 2011: 7). The state-as-actors approach has often been labeled the “billiard ball model”; it assumes a “thin” model of rationality insofar as it stipulates that because international politics “is a struggle for power”, leaders’ own perceptions do not count (and hence, explain) much (Morgenthau 1978:13). On the other side, one can find theorists who argue that “a more robust theory of agency is necessary in order to explain both foreign policy decisions by leaders and the outcomes of collisions by states” (Walker, Malici and Schafer 2011: 23). This brings us to the problem of how the step from the individual to the state is explained. In other words, if we assume that elites have certain ideas about the roles their country should play internationally, is it safe to say their ideas represent the state as a whole?

Alexander Wendt answers in the affirmative, suggesting “States are people too” (Wendt 1999: 215). For Wendt, states have a corporate entity and a stable identity, in other words, a “Self”. According to Michael Barnett, there are two possibilities of transfers from the individual to the state. The first way consists in an equivocation of “the state” with its top officials. Second, the state could be treated as an institutional actor, in which top officials express the continuity of its institutions (Barnett 1993: 274).

The present thesis shall follow Bastian Giegerich, who made a useful suggestion in this regard: In his 2006 study, he used the notion of governing elites not as exclusive “owners” of national foreign policy, but as “gatekeepers”: This, he wrote,

is warranted “because of their involvement in international and domestic decision-making processes and the general lack of involvement of the wider population in security and defence issues” (Giegerich 2006: 39). It is important to add that elites are not *only* “gatekeepers” of national role conceptions, but that they can also actively *shape* and re-define roles in reaction to events.

Also, the above does not mean that there is no space for different roles within one single polity. After all, Holsti identified as many as 17 national roles (Holsti 1970). As Berenskoetter and Giegerich write, “conceptions of the parameters of national identity tend to be contested domestically, expressed in debates over the precise meaning or relative weight of basic principles” (Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010: 420). Thus, following Meyer, this dissertation adheres to a “majoritarian conception of culture in the sense of a national framework culture, which can be subject to both internal and external forces of contestation and change” (Meyer 2005:9). While subcultures exist within a society, a key hypothesis is that strategic culture is characterized by “recognizable patterns and expectations of behaviour across time” (Biehl, Giegerich and Jonas 2013: 12). In other words, an important assumption is that a “dominant strand” can be identified in strategic culture, that elite discourse and practice reflect this, and that subcultures have to position themselves vis-à-vis these dominant strands (ibid.).

1.8. Conclusion

Dissatisfied with some of the dominant approaches in Europeanization studies, this chapter has tried to develop a different approach and then clarified the basic assumptions this dissertation is based on. Because the literature on European strategic culture is rooted in the Europeanization literature, its shortcomings are the same: Both the optimistic authors (who analyze how the MS' strategic cultures converge) and the pessimistic authors (for whom the possibility of a European strategic culture remains an illusion because national strategic cultures diverge) place too much emphasis on norms and culture. This claim is not only theoretical. As chapters 2-6 will show, the sole emphasis on norms and culture is not sufficient because it fails to see that a convergence of behaviors is possible despite the continued divergence of strategic cultures.

This has consequences for the study of our topic. If what is called here "role convergence by default" is not a function of cultural convergence, but happens despite continued cultural divergence, this means European defense and security must not be approached as a normative convergence process, but as what the next chapter calls "constellations", favorable "alignments of the stars" in European defense and security that are conducive to institutional advances at precise historical junctures. This makes it possible to develop Bastien Irondelle's idea of a "Europeanization without the EU" into "Europeanization without European politics", or in this case the technical convergence of national behaviors that is possible because no common policy is required.

Chapter 2. Constellations, not convergence: The making of a potluck strategist

2.0. Introduction

This chapter provides the necessary historical background for the advances in European defense integration during the 1990s. Doing so, it prepares the ground for the later analysis of the four Collective Foreign Policy Potentials and starts testing the hypothesis of apolitical convergence, namely that role convergence occurs as joined-up *action* without a common *policy*, in other words that the alignment of security action on a goal or lead in a given case happens at the expense of the kind of political Europeanization (i.e., the creation of common policy/policies) that many studies seek to analyze.

In order to do this it analyzes how the bilateral Franco-British Saint Malo agreement was put on the European agenda, whilst reflecting both persistent differences in the MS' national strategic cultures *and* narratives about the added value of a “distinctive European approach” to international security. In light of the conceptual approach in Chapter 1 and its dissatisfaction with analyses over-investigating norms and the convergence of strategic cultures, this chapter places a premium on national leaderships (“agency”) in light of the deep shifts in the international system after 1989 (“structure”) and the most important events that were triggered by those during the 1990s, i.e. the Yugoslav wars.

Our starting point is the following: Because much of the literature has focused so heavily on norms, and not enough on policies and behavior, two undesirable consequences still affect our understanding of European defense and security cooperation. A first consequence is that many analysts often incorrectly take the ambition to move towards an autonomous European defense, foreign and security policy for granted. Numerous observers argued the MS had come to accept the idea that a “united European position” was needed on issues of foreign policy and that this “became a political priority even among member states that had previously not been as supportive of equipping Brussels-based EU institutions with decision-making powers and eventually also military capabilities under the European Security and Defence Policy” (Gross 2009a: xi).

However, though important actors in the EU institutions “talked up” the process and infused it with narratives about Europe’s global security actorness, clear limitations were visible right from the start.

Looking at the reactions of the governments of the UK, France and Germany to the events in the post-1989 era, what this chapter shows is that their parallel reconceptualizations (most importantly concerning cooperative security schemes and force projection) contributed to open up a window of opportunity for the creation of security and defense institutions as a “European option”. Nevertheless, the reasons for which the French, German and British administrations agreed to move toward security and defense integration were different, and this not only revealed persistent differences in strategic cultures, but also unwillingness to fulfill our four core potentials of European security actorness.

Moreover, France, the UK and Germany continued to anchor the US in Europe, meaning the process was not about the creation of an *alternative to*, but an *option within* the broader paradigm of US security leadership. This rectification helps understand the MS’ behaviors and policies in the Afghan theater only a few years after the most important European summits, where the above “ambitions” quickly proved to be unsubstantial. In other words, though the process of European defense and security integration during the 1990s was indeed an example for a Europeanized project, this Europeanization collapsed the moment the policy needed to be translated into common action.

The second problem in the literature on security and defense integration is that although a process of cultural/normative convergence did undeniably take place during the 1990s and beyond, the literature has greatly exaggerated the degree of durability of this process. In other words, the impact of socialization and learning, and the impact of European institutions (such as the post of the High Representative, the Nice Treaty’s institutional innovations, the PSC, the EUMC or the EUMS) on national strategic cultures has often been incorrectly taken for granted (Cross 2010, 2011; Howorth 2002, 2014; Meyer 2005).

As the MS’ behaviors in Afghanistan would show only a few years later, socialization and learning in European institutions and during the Balkan wars was ephemeral, largely context-specific, and difficult to transfer to other cases. Many

“lessons from the Balkans”, for instance, amounted to commonplaces about “ownership” and the “necessity of a democratic process”; however, as examples like Kosovo show (which some MS recognize and some don’t), this did not necessarily lead to the development of “Europeanized” Balkan policies, or a willingness to “think coherently” or to “iron out some of the national reflexes based on history and geography which characteris[e] traditional responses to foreign policy” (Howorth 2002: 105; Krasniqi and Musaj 2015).

In sum, the chapter takes issue with the conventional argument that European defense and security integration in the 1990s represented, or was determined by, the convergence of Europe’s strategic cultures. In order to do this, it analyzes the advances in European security and defense integration as a “policy alignment” (or “constellation”) of some of the most important players in European defense and security and particularly France, Germany and the UK. These three states succeeded in temporarily setting the European security and defense agenda and rallying the smaller states behind their project. If their deeply divergent national strategic cultures did not prevent this from happening, there were very specific political reasons for this.

2.0.a. Structure

The chapter is organized in three steps. An overview of the ideational milieu in which the advances in European security and defense integration occurred shows how important policy actors overburdened the largely intergovernmental CFSP with unrealistic narratives and ambitions (most of which were not shared across all MS): Collectively, such actors argued, the MS could become a global security provider, redefine security in progressive ways, and become a strong partner for the US in a transatlantic “division of labor”. This parallel existence of narratives and ideas also permitted MS with very different national strategic cultures to agree to the creation of common security institutions (2.1).

In order to understand this dissertation’s argument that European role convergence may occur *despite* divergent strategic cultures, we need to concern ourselves with examples of European strategic cultures. This is done based on an

analysis of the strategic cultures of France, Germany and the UK (2.2). With respect to the four Collective Foreign Policy Potentials the argument is that their non-realization is no accident (for instance, related to the “too difficult” Afghan terrain): There is traditionally little ambition for collective European shaping and/or proacting in security outside NATO.

A third step presents the argument that security and defense integration is best described in terms of political “constellation”, not cultural “convergence” (2.3). The way the German, French and British security and defense policies became aligned around 1998/1999 gives us a good first example of the role convergence the Afghan case equally reveals. In the Afghan case, this temporary constellation had the MS rally behind a foreign power’s project, not a European one, but the political dynamic was the same as earlier in the sense that, like the creation of European security and defense institutions, this happened despite continued *divergence* of strategic cultures, not because of their *convergence*.

2.1. Western post-1989 security context and narratives

Many authors have argued the process of defense, security and foreign policy integration during the 1990s (with the Treaties of Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice, and European Council meetings in Cologne, Helsinki etc.) was made possible by – and led to – a process of cultural/normative convergence toward a form of proto-European strategic culture. The MS were said to be reacting to the structural/systemic shifts (the end of superpower confrontation) and events of the 1990s (namely the Yugoslavian wars) in two ways:

- They were, firstly, adapting their strategic cultures to each other, learning and socializing through common institutions (in Brussels) and joint experiences (mainly in the Balkans). The resulting proto-European strategic culture was eventually expected to serve as a basis for a common European security policy.

- Secondly and based on the above “learning”, the MS were said to be developing the genuine ambition to fulfill their political union and extend it to the field of foreign policy, security and defense. This was possibly a move toward European emancipation and “autonomy”.

To take an already-cited example, Christoph Meyer argued in an important study that normative convergence between the MS concerned the “de-prioritisation of territorial defence, the legitimacy of intervention for humanitarian ends, international authorisation by the UN, and a growing attachment to the EU as the appropriate framework for defence cooperation” (Meyer 2005: 30; see Chapter 1, section 1.3.b). Though important differences (notably regarding attitudes vis-à-vis NATO/the US) also remained, this normative convergence was, on the whole, a comprehensive European phenomenon. It affected not only the “pacifist, neutral or defensive strategic cultures” (such as Austria, Sweden, Finland or Ireland for instance); the British and French strategic cultures were “also under adaptation pressure with regard to the preferred mode of cooperation through crisis learning, the demise of the Soviet threat, and to a lesser degree institutional socialisation” (ibid.).

Hence, European strategic cultural convergence was “not simply the process of approximating the British or the French strategic mind-set, but a process of hybridisation of strategic cultures, a gradual ironing out of differences” (ibid.). Other authors argued the 1990s led to “greater acceptance as to what constituted EU values and threats to those values”, and because some states possessed attractive models of security cultures, a European “‘way of war’ that builds on the experience of the major European military powers, namely Britain and France” could develop through emulation (Biava, Drent, Herd 2011: 3; Freedman in Everts et al. 2004: 17).

Two main problems with these arguments were noted earlier; a third one is that many authors conflate “European” normative convergence with some of the wider reconceptualizations of security after 1989, the relativization of sovereignty and the importance of force projection in an ever more interconnected world that occurred throughout the *entire* Western world, not only in Europe. In other words, while it may be tempting to attribute many European governments’ convergent analyses only to the pressures of “Europeanization” and European integration, the wider global context must not be forgotten (Wong and Hill 2011: 11-13; Mendez, Wislade and Yuill 2008).

The following section starts by recalling this necessary context, because it constitutes the foil against which important EU and MS actors construed the added value of a hypothetical “EU security actorness”, overburdening it with highly ambitious rhetoric, but also allowing the integration process to be inclusive and open-ended.

2.1.a. “Security governance” and the MS’ collective added value on the international scene

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, many observers expressed hopes that the United Nations (UN) had been permanently freed of the Cold War antagonism that had blocked the UN Security Council almost since its foundation. To many, the First Gulf War in 1991 announced a “new world order” (both US President H.W. Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev used the term), based on international “governance” through multilateral decisions, and a growing number of

grand international UN conferences were convened during the 1990s to find “common solutions to common problems”.²⁶

Coming to the field of international security, UN Secretary Boutros Boutros Ghali called for a more active UN regarding crisis management, proposing that the UN Secretary would be in command of military forces supplied by the UN’s member states to enforce international peace and stability. With his “Agenda for Peace” (1992) he hoped to draw the lesson from the fact that the UN Security Council (SC) had been unable to enforce Iraqi compliance over the treatment of parts of its population in 1990/1991: Without military means of its own, the UN SC could only decide to “remain seized of the matter” when it denounced human rights violations, and a coalition of states (US, the UK and France) ended up militarily enforcing UN Security Council Resolution 688. This happened outside the UN’s legal framework, because there was no explicit UN authorization to act, and “knowing they would not obtain it, [the US, the UK and France] did not ask” (Rynning 2012: 31).

The reason why this matters for our topic is that the First Gulf War seemed to indicate, firstly, that multilateral security cooperation and force projection was the way the new world order could be secured in the future and, secondly, that “justice” now meant that national sovereignty could be violated even without an explicit UN mandate. This led to “an enhanced emphasis on liberal principles of good governance and a step-by-step reform of international law and practice” (ibid.). In this context, the “Democratic Peace” proposition regained wide currency, based on the assumption that contemporary international relations could only move towards a stable world peace if democracy was extended beyond the West (Kant 1984; Russett 1994; Czempiel 1996; Geis 2001; Doyle 2005; Geis, Müller and Brock 2006). This could take the form of an “external social contract”:

“[T]he best way of defending our interests, in order to defend our model and values, is precisely to *spread those values*, because increasing the access of citizens worldwide to security, prosperity, freedom and well-being directly addresses the underlying causes of threats and challenges” (Biscop 2009: 4, emphasis added; see also Rynning 2003).

²⁶ For instance, the 1992 UN Conference in Rio de Janeiro on Climate Change, the 1995 UN Conference in Copenhagen on social development or the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 are only three examples of this unprecedented euphoria of summitry.

After 1989, the retreat of the two superpowers had often left client states without the external support of decades, resulting in violent break-ups and leading to “state failure”, loss of physical control over territory and the monopoly on the legitimate use of force. This led to calls for robust interventions and therefore the adaptation of many armies traditionally geared toward territorial defense. It also entailed the need for reconstruction and the search for new political orders – and given the fact that between 1990 and 1996 alone, more than 30 countries had adopted *democratic* constitutions it seemed only self-evident that new regimes would have to be “made” democratic (Diamond and Plattner 1996: ix).²⁷

The so-called “responsibility to protect” was the most important legal expression of this new-found enthusiasm for interventions: Not an international law but more an emerging judicial norm, the responsibility to protect was born out of the UN’s failure to effectively halt mass crimes in the cases of Rwanda and Srebrenica, in 1994 and 1995, respectively. It was adopted by a UN World Summit in 2005 and gives the UN Security Council the right to call for military intervention in a very precise set of circumstances. Thus,

“where a population is suffering serious harm, as a result of internal war, insurgency, repression or state failure, and the state in question is unwilling or unable to halt or avert it, the principle of non-intervention yields to the international responsibility to protect” (ICISS 2001: xi).

In Europe, the French and the British, with their more interventionist strategic cultures (see below) were quicker than Germany to rally behind the idea of “responsibility to protect”. French President Chirac, in a letter to UN Secretary Kofi Annan, and UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, in a speech before the Labor Party in 2001, both endorsed the notion (Chirac 2005; Blair quoted in Bellamy 2005, footnote 2). Germany, under Chancellor Schröder, accepted the norm later than its European allies, in 2005 (Verlage 2009: 80). This is not to suggest that this was a smooth process, or that the “responsibility to protect” was uncontroversial. However the theoretical acceptance of the norm has been very successful in great parts of the West and Europe (De Franco, Meyer and E. Smith 2015). The EU and the MS have all

²⁷ For instance, international interventions in Namibia and Nicaragua (1989), Angola, Cambodia and El Salvador (1991), Mozambique (1992), Liberia, Rwanda (1993), Bosnia, Croatia (1995), Guatemala (1997), East Timor, Kosovo and Sierra Leone (1999) were all marked by the search for democratic post war arrangements (Paris 2004: 3).

endorsed the “responsibility to protect”, they support the norm at the level of the UN, and the European Security Strategy 2003 reflects important elements of this norm (ibid., see also Wouters and de Man 2013).

Though they are ultimately impossible to disentangle from the wider context of post-Cold War security adaptation, advances in European integration need to be seen in light of the above re-conceptualizations of the international security order. It is against this backdrop that important institutional EU actors in the European Council, the European Commission, and also inside the MS, developed and promoted a range of narratives based on the themes of the EU’s predisposition to be a power with a global ambition (not least in the “juridification” of international relations), a “unique” EU approach to international security based on a “special” *savoir-faire* and “Europe’s soft power”, and the necessity of a “new transatlantic bargain” (Moravcsik 2003). These themes, to which we now turn, had roots in the past and they gained new force and prominence as important European actors tried to construct a “raison d’être” for the EU, leading to the ambitious rhetoric many authors have been taking for granted ever since.

2.1.b. Europe as a power

The first theme concerns the necessity of a European “pooling of power” (or “*mutualisation de la puissance*”, as French Defense Minister François Léotard called it in the 1994 *Livre Blanc*). The idea did not emerge out of nothing in the 1990s, as many European leaders argued at least since the 1956 Suez crisis (when the Soviet Union and the US halted French and British ambitions in their former colonial territories) that the European states needed to pull together in order to make up for their loss of rank. British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, for instance, had argued in 1979 that

“the countries of Europe, none of them anything by second-rate powers by themselves, can, if they get together, be a power in the world, an economic power, a power in foreign policy, a power in defence equal to either of the other superpowers... Europe united could ... by having a single foreign policy, a single defence policy and a single economic policy, be equal to the great superpowers” (Casarini and Musu 2007: xvi).

The political difficulties in achieving this goal were always considerable, especially during the shifts and uncertainties of 1989-1991. For instance, when Iraq's President Hussein refused to comply with a UN deadline to pull his troops out of Kuwait (1990), the three big European states France, Germany and the UK chose different responses and the European Community's role was virtually irrelevant: The UK and France respectively committed 35,000 and 10,000 troops to the US-led coalition to fight Iraqi troops, the British fighting under US command and the French limiting their contribution to chasing Iraqi forces from Kuwaiti soil. The Belgians refused to comply with British demands to supply ammunition for UK troops and Germany did not send troops into battle at all (The New York Times 25.01.1991).

Nevertheless, an important range of European actors, most notably High Representative Javier Solana and Commission representatives, invested significant political capital into the idea of a European power in its own right. More than just a "security community" or an understanding of powers to keep the balance among European nations, their arguments went, the European project could and should evolve into a major power on the international scene, comparable to traditional nation states. With respect to the idea of a federal European defense system, there is a significant amount of continuity in the speeches of successive Commission President from Jacques Delors (1985-1995) to Jacques Santer (1995-1999), Romano Prodi (1999-2004), José Manuel Barroso (2004-2014) and now Jean-Claude Juncker:

In his 1995 farewell address, Jacques Delors repeated his call for a federal European state and for a common defense because "Europe needs to be powerful" (The Independent 20.01.1995). For his successor Jacques Santer, "the future role of a common European defence policy and the WEU [had to be] addressed as a matter of urgency" and the Maastricht Treaty committed the Union "to a common security policy and, eventually, to a common defence".²⁸ His successor Romano Prodi argued in the run-up to the 2003 Iraq war that not adapting a true common defense policy was "dangerous" (Prodi 26.03.2003). He and his successor Manuel Barroso pushed the question of a European army and insisted the EU should become a European "federal state" with its own army that would be able to intervene in conflicts "when

²⁸ See http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-95-6_en.htm (Speech classed without a title). Accessed on 20.12.2015.

needed” (Express 12.09.2012). The current Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker has recently argued that only a common European army could “convey to Russia that we are serious about defending the values of the European Union” (The Guardian 08.03.2015).

2.1.c. Europe as a *global* power

This idea that Europe should be a federal state in order to become a power in its own right is an important corollary of another theme, namely that Europe can also be a “*global*” security player, which is an idea that High Representative Solana ardently defended during his time in office. As he wrote in 2004, the new security environment of the 1990s had turned the EU into a power that needed to “think globally” (ESS 2003: 6). The EU’s task for the future was “to make Europe a global power; a force for good in the world” (quoted in Rogers 2009: 851). In this sense, he argued the 2003 European Security Strategy, according to which the EU was “inevitably a global player” (ESS 2003: 1), was the EU’s “strategic identity card”:

“a global security player, vigilant as regards both terrorism and the proliferation of WMDs [weapons of mass destruction], and more traditional sources of instability (...), building security in the Union's immediate neighborhood and promoting an international order based on effective multilateralism” (Solana in Gnesotto 2004: 6-7).

Other institutions and players, notably the European Commission, have supported this vision of “global power Europe”. According to a 2004 European Commission paper, a major challenge was “to spread peace and security beyond the European Union’s borders. To meet this challenge, the EU is developing a common foreign and security policy so that it can act as a force for stability, cooperation and understanding in the wider world” (European Commission 2004: 4). A wide range of experts supported this ambition and pressed the EU to “commit in earnest to underlying democratic ideals and embrace a wider and global mission” (Rynning 2010: 20).

In sum, the rhetoric and global ambitions found in EU documents became “higher and more comprehensive” with the years (Larik 2013). It is important to note,

however, that global ambitions did not only surface in EU documents, but were also omnipresent in the speeches of national leaders such as the French President Jacques Chirac or British Prime Minister Tony Blair. For Chirac, Europe was an actor serving worldwide progress, commanding attention beyond the EU's borders (Chirac 2000). Tony Blair, speaking in front of the Polish Stock Exchange in 2003, argued it was time to “fashion the new Europe for our and others' national interest. To make it outward, not inward; to make it economically effective, not economically feeble; to use Europe to make our voice heard louder and stronger in the world” (Blair 30.05.2003). “Europe's preoccupation”, he added, could

“no longer be solely within Europe but must be about Europe's place in the world. And the reasons for European union are reasons no longer simply to do with putting peace in place of conflict, but to do with the vital national and strategic interests of the countries that make up Europe, in facing the new challenges - economic or political - of the outside world” (ibid.).

When it comes to the European public, the “Eurobarometer” surveys have regularly polled high percentages of approval among the Europeans for a united European foreign policy and assertive role on the world stage. In 1999, for instance, shortly after the Saint Malo Agreement, more than 7 in 10 EU citizens were of the opinion that the EU should have a common defense and security policy, and more than 6 in 10 expressed the opinion it should have a common foreign policy (Eurobarometer 2000; see also Krotz 2009).

Since the Kosovo war, various EU institutions have repeatedly formulated the ambition to intervene beyond Europe's borders on the whole range from medium-intensity warfare to post-conflict reconstruction and within a framework that combines both civilian and military crisis-management capabilities. According to a joint statement by the High Representative and the Commission “the EU has both the increased potential and the ambition – by drawing on the full range of its instruments and resources – to make its external action more consistent, more effective and more strategic” (European Commission and High Representative 2013: 2). The EU's action must therefore cover

“all stages of the cycle of conflict or other external crises; through early warning and preparedness, conflict prevention, crisis response and management to early recovery, stabilisation and peace-building in order to help countries getting back on track towards sustainable long-term development” (ibid.: 2).

Another document, entitled “EU Civilian and Military Capability Development beyond 2010” lays down the EU’s comprehensive level of civil-military ambitions, aspiring to enable the EU to plan and conduct simultaneously two rapid response military operations of limited duration and up to twelve CSDP civilian missions (see Barcikowska 2013: 3).

As shown below, another important theme is the ambition to elaborate innovative responses to security, for instance to “[pioneer] the technique of integration at the level of society, based on interdependence and adherence to common standards, as a way of promoting peace” (Barcelona Report 2004: 8).

2.1.d. Europe as a distinctive civilian power

As Ben Tonra convincingly demonstrates, “acting differently, more correctly, more ethically or more appropriately than have earlier foreign policy actors or competing foreign policy actors” is a common self-conceptualization of “empires” (Tonra 2011: 1196). Jan Zielonka recalls that like the EU the US, China and Russia equally claim to have a distinct foreign policy through which they promote norms and values (Zielonka 2011).

Similarly, a great number of academic writers have argued that the founding of the European communities in 1957 created a novel type of “international actor” (Caporaso 1996; Risse-Kappen 1996). Often with a teleological perspective implying a *finalité*, many writers tend to see the EU as a progressive, or “post-modern” accomplishment of a process of civilization, which leads the way towards the future in an interconnected world (Cooper 2003). Far from being a specific post-1945 European answer to a specific European problem, the EU potentially symbolizes the future of international relations themselves (Leonard 2005; Cooper 2003). Hence, Richard Youngs argued in 2004 that the normative and value-driven elements of EU external policy received a disproportionate amount of attention: “Many – probably, most – analysts have come to posit a pre-eminence of ideational dynamics as key to

the EU's distinctiveness as an international actor" (Youngs 2004: 415; see also Diez 2004; K. E. Smith 2000; Stavridis 2001; Whitman 1998).

A key theme in this respect is that of Europe as a "civilian power". For François Duchêne, the invention of the atomic bomb and nuclear deterrence had dramatically hollowed the military domain of its substance and paved the way for "civilian" ways of influence and action. The EC was therefore called upon to "demonstrate the influence that could be exerted by a broad political cooperation, formed to exert essentially civilian forms of power" (Duchêne 1973: 43; author's translation). For him, "Europe would be the first major area of the Old World where the age-old processes of war and indirect violence could be translated into something more in tune with the twentieth-century citizen's notion of civilised politics" (Duchêne 1972).

This presented the EC as a "new type of actor in international relations: a 'power' whose influence derived from its trading strength and its attachment to legal processes" (Rees 2011: 25). The notion of "civilian power" stands on three pillars: the transformation of the relations between European nation states from conflict to peaceful coexistence, reliance on non-military and primarily economic means of power and lastly, the acceptance for cooperation in an increasingly inter-dependent world (Keukeleire and MacNaughtan 2008: 11). Many authors have followed Duchêne and argued that the EC's (and later the EU's) "essence" was to use "persuasion rather than coercion and carrots rather than sticks (positive rather than negative conditionality)" (Larsen 2002: 289).

How the themes of the EC/EU's distinctive civilian power have influenced policy becomes visible when studying the documents of the European Commission, the European Council and High Representative Javier Solana's speeches. Their analysis reveals how the EU has been construed by some of its most important institutional representatives as a civilian power (Orbie 2006: 123). Based on discourse analysis, Henrik Larsen has found that in spite of the advances of the Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties, which aimed to add the military domain to the EU's purview, "the dominant discourse in the EU did not articulate the EU as a military power until the second half of 1998" (Larsen 2002: 289-290).

Though in reality the EU's civilian power and non-military discourse was always faced with a rival, alternative discourse which stressed the importance of

military means in unifying Europe and increasing its international status, this second discourse was always weaker and less relied on by European leaders (ibid: 290). Thus, at least until 1998 “the dominant discourse in the EU had been one that stressed the role of civilian means in the Union’s foreign policy in relation to concrete international questions” (ibid.). Hence, the “dominant framework of meaning in relation to concrete international conflicts has always framed the issues in terms of how the EU could contribute with economic and political means” (ibid.).

One finds the “civilian power” in countless speeches at the turn of the century, for instance in Romano Prodi’s address to the European Parliament in 2000: “We must aim to become a global civil power at the service of sustainable global development. After all, only by ensuring sustainable global development can Europe guarantee its own strategic security” (Prodi 15.02.2000). For the ESS 2003, “[s]preading good governance, supporting social and political reform, dealing with corruption and abuse of power, establishing the rule of law and protecting human rights” were the best means of strengthening the international order, and the EU therefore needed “greater capacity to bring all necessary civilian resources to bear in crisis and post crisis situations” (ESS 2003: 10, 12).

With respect to non-military crisis management, two concepts have gained particular salience in EU discourse: Human security and comprehensive approaches. Chapter 1 already introduced the main idea behind the Barcelona Report’s “human security” concept (section 1.3.b). Its emergence must be seen in light of what many observers decried as a trend towards militarization of the EU as a result of the Franco-British Saint Malo initiative (Zielonka 1998; K. E. Smith 2000). The Barcelona Report argued in “today’s world, there is a gap between current security capabilities, consisting largely of military forces, and real security needs”, and therefore Europe’s military forces needed to be reconfigured in order to “be able to prevent and contain violence in different parts of the world in ways that are quite different from classic defence and war-fighting” (Barcelona Report 2004: 2). This means they need to act “within a legal framework that applies to individuals”, not primarily the security of the state (Kaldor et al. 2004: 19, 2).

The concept is frequently referred to in EU documents: The Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy (IR ESS), for instance, claimed that the Human Security paradigm already informs European missions (IR ESS 2008: 2; see also Ferrero-Waldner 2005). Ideas of “human security” have been particularly successful in Nordic states, and their salience in EU discourse was an important factor that allowed them to rally behind a project driven by “force projectionists” such as the UK and France. Authors such as Peter Viggo Jakobsen or Annika Björkdahl have shown how countries like Sweden and Finland have wielded strong influence in establishing ESDP’s civilian dimension and its focus on conflict prevention, for instance (Björkdahl 2008; Jakobsen 2009).

The idea that the EU can become the pioneer of a “comprehensive approach” (combining military and non-military tools) is another important theme in the construction of the EU’s added value in security. Some argue the US’ lack of planning for the post-war phase in Iraq 2003 has placed the EU in the “driver’s seat of an ongoing comprehensive trend” and thus, “from being seen as a sign of weakness”, the EU’s comprehensive approach has been turned into a “rather powerful focal point around which to build a European strategic culture” (Biscop and Norheim-Martinsen 2012). The most prominent EU document that incorporates elements of the nascent comprehensive security “agenda” was the ESS 2003. It attempted to integrate all available tools, ranging from trade to aid, prevention, partnerships, cooperation, diplomacy and the military: “In contrast to the massive visible threat in the Cold War, none of the new threats is purely military; nor can any be tackled by purely military means. Each requires a mixture of instruments” (ESS 2003: 7).

This can also be seen as a compromise solution between states with a record of, and preference for, military force projection and states traditionally favoring non-military tools. That the ESS 2003 stressed the full spectrum of instruments only nine months after the beginning of the Iraq war, where major disagreements had surfaced between the MS concerning the use of force and diplomacy, was no coincidence. The “comprehensive approach” allows different states with different strategic cultures to project different ideas on the same project of CSDP. For instance, France’s 2013 *Livre Blanc* is candid on the fact that the comprehensive approach must allow the French to “transcend the disagreements that may arise between member states about giving priority either to civilian or military management of crises” (Livre Blanc 2013:

95). Meanwhile, the British tend to portray the comprehensive approach as the CSDP's integrated civilian-military contribution to transatlantic burden sharing (Koenig 2014).

German governments have given the comprehensive approach the name of “networked security”, which means the systematic synchronization of “[Germany’s] development policy with its foreign, security, economic, financial, environmental, social, cultural and gender policies, so that coordinated action of German actors becomes possible” (BMZ 2015, author’s translation). In the context of EU security policies, this makes it possible to stress the EU’s non-aggressive purpose and “the military dimension’s secondary nature” (Colson 2009).

The 2009 Lisbon Treaty was an attempt to integrate this “comprehensive approach” into the EU’s foreign policy, creating the EEAS, tasking the High Representative with coordination of the civilian and military aspects of CSDP tasks (TEU Article 43.2), and creating the Crisis Management Planning Directorate (CMPD), which aims to advance the EU’s CMCO concept (short for civil-military coordination) (Knutsen 2009). According to Per Norheim-Martinsen, this has “created a strong, almost teleological drive to highlight integrated civil–military concepts as a way to legitimize and take ESDP forward” (Norheim-Martinsen 2011: 534). The EU’s comprehensive approach is conceptualized as a particular, *inherent* strength of the EU, it was translated from a necessity into a “potential *asset* for the EU”: “The European Union is particularly well equipped to respond to such multi-faceted situations” (ESS 2003: 7).²⁹

These themes and ideational constructions of the EU’s civilian/soft power distinctiveness are tightly connected to an important security narrative that developed during the 1990s and which has been of major importance for the joint US-European intervention in Afghanistan: The narrative of a Euro-American division of labor in international security, which a unified European foreign policy could give substance to.

²⁹ As mentioned, Chapter 4 discusses aspects of the “comprehensive approach” in the Afghan context.

2.1.e. The Euro-American narrative of a division of labor

The idea of a division of labor goes back to the English economist David Ricardo's model of comparative advantages. Based on different factor endowments, Ricardo argued, countries specialize in different areas in an international economy. If they engage in international trade, that is, if they shun autarky, the result of their interaction is that both trading partners benefit from lower prices and greater choices, because resources are used more efficiently. In the field of international security, quite similar ideas emerged during and after the Balkan wars, namely that European states could make a virtue out of necessity and make up for their military underdevelopment by collectively "specializing" on reconstruction and state building tasks: In other words, despite their being only small military powers the MS could collectively play an important security role in a redefined transatlantic relationship.

This was based on the experience that despite having provided 75 % of all ground troops during the Balkan wars in the 1990s (on average),³⁰ European governments had to realize that the wars were ultimately decided by the US' huge technological advantage in military equipment, notably all-weather precision air strikes (Locatelli 2007). Especially the Kosovo campaign revealed major military shortcomings on the European side, leading to a heavily US-dominated military chain of command and campaign conduct (Hallams 2009).

When it came to monitoring the implementation of and compliance with the 1995 Dayton Peace Settlement, the High Representative of the "international community" to Bosnia and Herzegovina Carl Bildt had no authority over the IFOR (NATO's Implementation Force) and had no right to "in any way interfere in the conduct of military operations or the IFOR chain of command" (Kostakos 1998: 465). With the US effectively leading the political-military process, a EU Task Force for Kosovo was created in order to implement the Reconstruction Programme for Kosovo pending the establishment of the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR). The EAR inherited € 134.5 million of commitments made in 1998 and 1999 and it had € 261 million to implement in 2000 (European Commission 20.03.2001). It became

³⁰ As Bruno Tertrais notes, in 1996, "the 'peak' year of US ground deployments, forces provided by Washington represented only 31 %, and in 2001, European nations provided about 72 % of all NATO forces in the region (43,000 vs 11,000 for the US)" (see Tertrais 2002: 119).

active in multiple programs to rebuild housing, reconstruct local infrastructure and communications systems.

On the institutional level, EU initiatives were mainly located in three core areas, namely civil administration reform, modernization of the health sector and justice reform. European reconstruction and institutional support amounted to 70 percent of total reconstruction (Ramel 2005: 39). Notably the “Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe” (1999) aimed at strengthening peace, democracy, human rights and the economy in the countries of South Eastern Europe. The inter-institutional “deal” between NATO and the EU was that the former was in charge of military stabilization tasks, while the EU was tasked with the Stability Pact’s two other objectives, economic development and support for democracy: This division of labor revealed “a specialization of the Union in the civil and economic domains” (Ramel 2005: 38).

Once the situation was deemed sufficiently stable, the EU offered to take over the operation led by NATO. This came after “repeated reminders by both the Clinton and Bush Junior administrations that the United States wanted to get out of the Western Balkans”, but it also represented European government’s wishes to stress that though national European armies were not able to keep up with the technologically advanced US army, they were able to keep a peace in support of a primarily civilian state building mission (Pohl 2013: 358).

This gave rise to the quip that “the United States does the cooking and the European Union does the dishes” and contributed to the emergence of a transatlantic security narrative of division of labor between, on the one side, the technologically advanced US military “leader of the free world” and on the other, the EU with its “unique advantages in dealing with situations *in a holistic way - including political, civilian, nongovernmental organization, and economic instruments* - that NATO cannot match” (Moravcsik and Cameron 2003; Hunter 2002: 141, emphases added).

Both political leaders and academia have picked up this theme. On the US side, one can look to Condoleezza Rice, who, in her function as President Bush’s senior foreign policy aide, suggested in a New York Times interview that the MS and the US should develop this kind of division of labor, notably because “extended peacekeeping detracts from [the US’] readiness for [...] global missions” (International New York Times 21.10.2000). The US American Congress passed a

bill in 2000 explicitly asking the MS to “provide specified percentages of economic and humanitarian aid, reconstruction assistance, and police officers for the Kosovo mission” (Daalder 2000: 6).

As Kristin Archick from the US Congressional Research Service wrote in an influential report to the US Congress, “the EU is much better equipped, given its full range of political and economic tools, to undertake peacekeeping and reconstruction tasks than is the U.S. military”, therefore, “acknowledging that the United States and Europe have different strengths, this option would make better use of these *comparative advantages* in a more coordinated strategy” (Archick 2004: 17, emphasis added).

Often based on very broad-brush arguments, many writers argued “European countries also bring other skills and attributes to peace operations and police work that give them a relative comparative advantage. European involvement in peace operations dates back to the colonial days” when they “became very skilled at integrating local leaders into the security framework and leveraged the assets of the host nation through their colonial offices” (Cogbill 2009: 17). For Robert Hunter, CFSP had “the virtue of helping to make up for a natural defect in NATO’s development” in an “emerging division of labour between NATO and the CSDP” (Hunter 2002: 176; Whitman 2004: 448).

One can note that the division of labor argument comes in different shapes: a *functional* differentiation and a *geographical* one. Andrea Locatelli, for instance, advocates “a functional differentiation in military matters” between Europe and the US, “with the US specializing in capabilities for high-intensity conflict (mainly conventional, limited, or global war), and the European counterpart specializing in low-intensity missions (such as, for instance, peacekeeping and peace-enforcing)” (Locatelli 2007: 133). In such a strategic partnership, the US is “primarily responsible for war fighting and Europe responsible for reconstruction and stabilization” (de Wijk 2003: 202). For Coonen, writing in 2006, this was “the essential nature of the alliance today” and for Moravcsik, it should be part of a “new transatlantic bargain”, “one that redirects complementary military and civilian instruments toward common ends and new security threats” (Coonen 2006: 77; Moravcsik 2003; see also Rühle 2003; Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010, and Koenig 2010).

In the second (geographic) scenario, “the European allies and/or the EU would essentially bear the primary burden for maintaining security within Europe and on its periphery, including in the Balkans, and perhaps for managing small crises in the Maghreb or in Africa”, while the US “would assume responsibility for handling international crises elsewhere in the world, especially in the Persian Gulf and in Asia” (Archick 2004: 17).³¹ For Bruno Tertrais, a combination of these two scenarios, “whereby ESDP would focus on peacekeeping in the Balkans and the long-term stabilization of the continent” was an attractive option: “does it not make sense to let both parties focus on what they are supposed to do best?” (Tertrais 2002: 127).

On the institutional level, such visions of a Euro-American division of labor have inspired a great deal of documents when it comes to EU-NATO relations: A 2000 Ministerial meeting in Brussels welcomed “the intensification of the dialogue between the Alliance and the European Union” and stressed the ambition to “reinforce NATO's European pillar and remain committed to a balanced and dynamic transatlantic partnership” (NATO 2000: § 29; § 28). NATO stated it shared “the goal endorsed by EU Member States at the Nice European Council for a genuine strategic partnership in crisis management between NATO and the EU” (ibid.).

This was followed by an important speech of Solana’s in 2002, in which he made the symbolical gesture to speak of “mutually reinforcing relations” between the EU and NATO. This was the beginning, Solana argued, of a new “strategic partnership that will bring our organisations closer together”: “In full transparency, we are ready as of today to start a new era of co-operation”, namely concerning the EU’s “readiness to take over the military operation in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, “an EU military role in Bosnia and Herzegovina” as well as joint exercises with NATO in November 2003 (Solana 2002). Other examples abound, going from the 2003 ESS’ mention of “multilateral cooperation in international organisations and through partnerships with key actors” to Jaap de Hoop Scheffer’s speech mentioning “true synergies”, or NATO’s 2010 Strategic Concept promising

³¹ For Locatelli, there needs to be a mix of both: “This proposed division of labor in NATO, although not to be applied strictly, should be based on geography and function, with the EU acting as the main promoter of regional stability while the US remains committed to global security issues (Locatelli, 2007).

closer work “with NATO’s international partners, most importantly the United Nations and its strategic partner - the EU” (ESS 2003: 13; De Hoop Scheffer 2008).

Two things need to be said about these scenarios. Firstly, they raise the question who assumes the political lead and who sets the political agenda in a given case: NATO or the EU? Many of the visions described above describe an *equal* EU-NATO relationship – however in Afghanistan the “transatlantic division of labor” presented itself more as MS niche acting under US leadership, not a balanced transatlantic relation (Chapters 5 and 6). Secondly, what these visions about a “transatlantic division of labor” have in common is that they discuss the potential for international cooperation in a way that is entirely disconnected from political questions about what precisely is to be achieved. “Division of labor” scenarios reduce transatlantic cooperation to technical recipes based on the right combination of tools, i.e. the MS’ civilian tools and the Americans’ military ones.

Besides the questionable assumption that the MS are indeed better equipped than the US for “winning the peace” after the US has “won the war”, it is doubtful that the “transatlantic community” can conduct purposeful “foreign policy” or wage wars coherently, based on a vague understanding about complementary tools or zones of primary responsibility, but without getting into the nitty-gritty details of strategy: What chapters 4 and 5 show is that throughout the entire conflict, NATO’ member states were in fact unable to decide on a clear strategy.

This is because the question of tools, civilian or military, were not just technical matters, but expressed very sensitive political questions: In many cases, the MS’ civilian reconstruction ideals clashed with the military nature of the US-led OEF (to which, of course, many European governments also contributed, albeit often secretly). The different tools the NATO allies used were not just different “ways of doing things”, but expressed conflicting ideals and political goals (short-term versus long-term; counter terrorism versus state building).³²

³² What is more, the clear-cut dichotomy between situations requiring “only civilian” or “only military” tools never reflected Afghanistan’s reality in the first place, where the state of war and the state of peace, and therefore military and civilian approaches, were often difficult to disentangle, see Chapters 4-6.

This brings us back to the argument in the previous chapter: Discussing international security cooperation only based on the fact that governments and leaders may converge around norms, shared ideas and grand schemes (like global democracy promotion, exporting stability to Afghanistan or a division of labor in the Balkans) fails to account for the difficulty to translate ideas into policy outcomes. Likewise, agreeing on tools means agreeing on *how* to do things, but not *what* to do.

Thus, if we want to analyze transatlantic or European security and defense policy/policies, we need to augment our attention for convergence around norms with a sharpened focus on the exact circumstances and political projects the MS pursue in a given case. This is what the remainder of this chapter does, following two steps: First, the presentation of France's, the UK's and Germany's strategic cultures as a sample of strategic cultures that encompass the most important currents in European strategic thinking and secondly, the analysis of the precise political circumstances that made advances toward security and defense integration possible despite continued divergence of European strategic cultures. This helps understand the concrete problems behind the "Euro-American division of labor". It also prepares the argument of the later chapters, namely that in Afghanistan, the division of labor turned into European niche acting under US leadership.

2.2. National strategic cultures

Part 2 of this chapter analyzes the strategic cultures of France, Germany and the UK. Though they are grounded in a great range of shared norms, the elites of these three countries have traditionally translated a range of very similar norms into very different ways of approaching European and transatlantic security problems. As briefly stated in the introduction of Chapter 2, there are three main reasons why this section returns to these strategic cultures: Firstly, in light of this chapter's argument that the advances in European security and defense happened despite the great divergence in national strategic cultures, precisely this divergence needs to be presented.

Secondly, a return to national strategic cultures is necessary to show that the non-realization of the four Collective Foreign Policy Potentials is no accident related to the “too difficult” Afghan terrain, but has a strong historic antecedent: In light of the four Collective Foreign Policy Potentials, analysis shows all of the three states here have ambitions to be “system-determining” or “system-affecting” (Keohane 1969) – however, despite a rhetoric suggesting the contrary, they are overall unwilling to really translate this into *collective* European policy (“the actorness potential”), especially once matters concerning the use of force and autonomy from Washington are concerned.

There is a third reason why this section is necessary in the context of this dissertation: The historically grown absence of European defense integration outside NATO is not only a matter of divergence between the strategic cultures of France and the UK, as has sometimes been suggested. For instance, one observer wrote that the main obstacle for CFSP and ESDP has always been “the inability of Great Britain and France to agree on the essentials” (Howorth 2000a: 2; author’s translation). “Because of the British ‘veto’, questions relating to European defense have always been considered as falling within the competence of NATO” (ibid.: 3). This is based on the argument that European defense integration was primarily halted by the lack of understanding between Paris and London on the signal European defense integration would send to Washington: For the British, it risked provoking US isolationism, while for the French, it would consolidate transatlantic relations (ibid.: 2).

However, another important problem need not be overlooked: Looking at the French, German and British strategic cultures in light of the four Collective Foreign Policy Potentials reveals negative congruence on the “European actorness potential” between all of them, not just France and the UK: Despite a German elite discourse suggesting a willingness to integrate foreign policy and even defense policy, none of these three countries has actually come forth with specific proposals for substantial European integration in foreign policy, defense and security (Le Gloannec 1989). With varying degrees, all three are congruent on the need for military *cooperation* via NATO, but there are no examples where governments have made serious attempts at European *integration* in security and defense. The non-realization of the EU’s actorness potential, in other words, is not *only* a matter of Franco-British blockade.

If one widens the discussion to include other European strategic cultures, as is briefly done at the end of this section, one sees that the number of strategic cultures in Europe that put a premium on the collective and proactive shaping of the security environment, be it via the EU or NATO, is also very limited.

2.2.a. French strategic culture: “*La nation qui peut dire ‘non’*”

In addition to being a member of the UN Security Council and in possession of the atomic bomb, the powers the French Fifth Constitution lends to the French President when it comes to the use of force are unique among Western democracies. In parallel, the French Parliament, despite a 2008 reform, enjoys only limited powers in matters of defense (Koenig-Archibugi 2004). According to Article 15 of the French Constitution, the President is the head of the armed forces, and despite the fact that the French Parliament must authorize declarations of war, Article 35 authorizes the president to initiate military action without consultation. This reduces this parliamentary prerogative to a post hoc authority.

French foreign policy elites regularly refer to France as “*le pays des droits de l’Homme*” (“the land of Human Rights”), and the “universal” nature of these values has ensured considerable elite support for their promotion beyond the French “homeland”, including during the phase of de-colonialization. In this self-understanding of being on a “mission” that is bigger than itself, French foreign policy has often resembled, and sometimes vied with, the US (Duroselle 1976). One of such “missions” is the project of *judiciarisation* of international relations, in other words, the idea that anarchy in international relations must be contained as much as possible by a commonly agreed corpus of laws and rules. Another strong theme stems from a Gaullist legacy of independence, with the US as the main reference point of “alterity”: the French discourse and role conception of “autonomy”, including in its European form, has often meant independence from US policies, based on the guiding principle that while the importance of the transatlantic alliance for European defense was never questioned in its core, France (and the EC/EU) should not become dependent on the US (Keating 2004).

This has gone hand in hand with the ambition to play a leadership role in European security, which French governments have traditionally pursued through the heavily institutionalized landscape of the EC/EU and the WEU and, after Maastricht (1992), the CFSP (ESDP after Saint Malo 1998, “CSDP” after the Lisbon Treaty). As Blunden states, the cherished notion of “*Europe puissance*” is in part an attempt to use the European level to preserve a French foreign policy that France does not have the means for alone (Blunden 2000:19). A quote of Charles de Gaulle’s is very indicative with respect to French ambitions to take part in the game of great powers:

“C’est parce que nous ne sommes plus une grande puissance qu’il nous faut une grande politique, parce que, si nous n’avons pas une grande politique, comme nous ne sommes plus une grande puissance nous ne serons plus rien” (de Gaulle in Bozo 2012).

It is in this respect that one needs to see some of the European defense projects initiated during the 1980s by French President François Mitterrand (1981-1995) and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl (1983-1998). Together, the two leaders developed plans to revive the European pillar inside NATO, namely the WEU mentioned above, a military institution of European states (originally composed of Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the UK. Mitterrand and Kohl created a Defense and Security Council in November 1987 to better coordinate their defense policies; they announced a Rapid Action Force in April 1983 to organize joint military maneuvers and training, and a French-German brigade was initiated in 1987. In case the French considered the use of tactical nuclear missiles, mutual consultations between the Chancellor and the President were decided (Saunier 2008: 238). For the French, this strong alliance with post World War II Germany would ideally build the nucleus around which to develop a strengthened European pillar in NATO.

The emphasis on autonomy has been a constant theme way beyond the end of the Cold War, exemplified, for instance, by President Chirac’s words that the French goal is to make “Europe a major global player” and that “... our ambition should be to make Europe a leading political player in tomorrow’s world...” (Boyer 2002: 53). Former Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine’s statements about the need for the EU to play a major role in world affairs “to make the EU both a model and a player in the effort to control globalization”, strike a similar tone (Védrine quoted in Boyer 2002: 50).

Coming back to the Gaullist legacy, Howorth has decomposed the *fourre-tout* of “Gaullism” into three building blocks: “*quest for status*” (as the “determination to play a role in international affairs consistent with France’s own self-perception as a power”), a sense of “*solidarity*” (in the sense of a “commitment to international cooperation, multilateralism, alliance dynamics and respect for international law”) and “*distinctiveness*” (based on an insistence to be autonomous in judgment) (Howorth 2010b: 13). Hubert Védrine summed this conception up saying France is a “friend, an ally, but not aligned”, and this attitude has traditionally enjoyed cross-party support (Irondele and Besancenot 2010: 22). In the military realm in particular, France has traditionally implemented the most independent and the most nationalist of military policies within the European Union (Gordon 1993).

This cross-party consensus to ensure independence for France has often brought it into conflict with a notable preference for the use of international organizations and multilateralism, including a preference for membership in key fora (Irondele and Schmitt 2013: 127). As Blunden writes, "France strove to remain a world power and to make its distinctive voice heard in all the places that matter - the Security Council, the G8 [and] the Council of Ministers" (Blunden 2000:19). This reveals a conflicting relationship between, on the one hand, widely held elite beliefs in “progress towards a more norms-driven, rules-based, institutionally structured, multi-lateral, international forum of solidarity to manage the crises of the post-Cold War world”, and, on the other, the use of membership in key institutions to pursue national objectives (Howorth 2007: 159).

Another main theme that must be mentioned is a high level of ambition and activism in international relations, including in the security realm: Especially in its traditional African ‘*pré-carré*’ France has intervened many times since the break-up of its colonial empire, and, based on its wide network of influence of *la Francophonie*, has made its voice heard throughout the Cold War. This motive to remain “relevant” in international relations, which is quite similar to that of the other former colonial empire, the UK, has gone hand in hand with a growing realization that French capacity for autonomous action has greatly diminished. The 2008 White Book’s concession that major military operations are only conceivable in a multinational context is, in its candor, a consequence of this and highlights once more

the tensions between traditional Gaullist rhetoric and requirements for multilateralism (Livre Blanc 2008: 200).

Nevertheless, polls regularly show that the French population tends to accept a broader role for the armed forces than in other countries (Meyer 2006). Contrary to many other European countries, French public opinion is usually not opposed to military options *per se*, and comparative studies demonstrate that international relations *problématiques* tend to be conceptualized by policy makers in a “securitized way”, in the sense that French elites have continued to come up with military solutions to the increasingly complex problems of the post-Cold War (Page and Bouton 2006).

If the use of military means has traditionally not been the subject of heated debates, the relation to the US has indeed. This has important implications for the way France has gradually evolved vis-à-vis questions of cooperative security.³³ France has long been a “source of exasperation inside Washington DC” (Howorth 2014: 125). As Bozo notes, for the French elites, the US presence on the continent is traditionally perceived to be an “accident” of history, especially given French help for US independence in the 18th century (Bozo 2005). As early as 17 September 1958, French President-to-be Charles de Gaulle addressed a letter to US President Eisenhower and UK Prime Minister Macmillan, asking for tripartite decision-making, suggesting – “not entirely without reason” –, that the French had “never been treated as equal partners when it came to their political influence and their control over the allied command structures in Europe” (Védrine 2012: 3; Fortmann, Haglund and von Hlatky 2010: 1).

The fact that the NATO commander in chief was not allowed revealing to national authorities (and hence to the French President) the whereabouts of the Alliance’s nuclear weapons on France’s own soil had come to symbolize a relation of unacceptable subordination to the French (Védrine 2012: 4). Other issues like French insistence on a nuclear strategy of strict deterrence, as opposed to the “flexible response” approach favored by U.S. Secretary of Defense R. Mac Namara, played an important role in alienating de Gaulle from the US (but also other European allies) and led to President de Gaulle’s letter to US President Johnson, in which he

³³ The following is an adaptation of Fescharek 2015c.

announced that France was leaving NATO's integrated command and would no longer place French forces at the disposal of NATO (de Gaulle 1966). One of the main reasons for this move bears interesting resemblance with French initiatives to reinforce European Defense in the 1990s: De Gaulle believed it would be unwise to rely on US security guarantees in cases of urgency (Howorth 2014: 125-126). For him, "once an allied country lapsed into what he called 'vassalization'", it "ceased to think strategically and thereby to contribute to the vitality and dynamism of alliance options" (Howorth 2014: 125).

However, even while leaving NATO's integrated military command, de Gaulle decided not to withdraw fully from the NATO alliance and to maintain its seat in the North Atlantic Council. Despite an undisputable Gaullio-Mitterrandian-Chiracian consensus on the diplomatic advantages that this decision conferred to the French, many scholars have pointed out that the symbolic nature of this move always outweighed the actual consequences on cooperation in ongoing international military affairs (Védrine 2012: 4; Bozo 2008). Firstly, the 1961 Berlin crisis and most importantly the 1962 Cuban Missile crisis showed that at the end of the day, France sided with the Western camp: France supplied the US with important information about missile installations in Cuba and Charles de Gaulle, threw his "immediate and unconditional support" behind the Kennedy administration, unlike the British government (Vaisse 1994: 185).

Moreover, the Ailleret-Lemnitzer and Valentin-Ferber agreements in the late 1960s and early 1970s allowed for cooperation between allied regional commands and French forces (Howorth 2010b). Joint maneuvers were organized throughout the Cold War and in case of actual hostilities in Europe, French forces would indeed be placed under NATO's operational control (Fortman et al. 2010: 2). In other words, "despite Gaullist rhetoric, France remained militarily much more closely linked to its allies than has been imagined, even if this *ersatz* 'integration' could hardly be advertised by decision-makers in Paris" (Fortman et al. 2010: 2).

In line with this tradition of ambivalence, section III of this chapter shows how the 1990s brought an ambiguous mix of rapprochement between France and NATO *and* major pro-European initiatives with just as much potential to marginalize NATO as French designs to place NATO under UN authority (Rynning 2012: 38). We will return to the French role in the 1990s later, but for the time being it is

necessary to note the following important difference with the UK: While London has traditionally feared that a true European military autonomy would provoke a US return to isolationism, “Paris, on the other hand, expressed confidence that the US would take even more seriously allies who took themselves seriously” (Howorth 2014: 3). This is what Howorth has called the “Euro-Atlantic Security Dilemma”, which has “effectively stalemated any prospect of serious European cooperation on security issues by their contradictory interpretations of the likely impact in Washington of the advent of serious European military muscle” (Howorth 2014: 3).

2.2.b. Germany: “*Zivilmacht*” and “*Handelsstaat*”

Though Germany is France’s closest and most important European ally, many of its strategic choices during and after the Cold War have been diametrically opposed to those taken by French governments, from early divergences on nuclear force posture to the 2011 Libya campaign and beyond. This has to do with a strategic culture that tends to problematize international security problems very differently from the way French elites have often done: While the latter have notably sought an appropriate degree of distance to the US, what became West Germany’s post World War II strategic “identity” was “renegotiated to a large degree with the United States (...) and through NATO ... Close American ties and the Atlantic Alliance enabled a positive redefinition of Germany as a state within the West” (Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010: 427).

With a German Army that was entirely integrated into NATO and therefore enjoyed only extremely limited freedom of maneuver, the new “Western” strategic culture that crystallized in West Germany after the total defeat in 1945 (also often called “*Stunde Null*” or “Hour Zero”) was, as Hyde-Price has noted, one of “*Zurückhaltung*” (restraint), based not on “past exploits and feats”, but the rejection of the very past that led to 1933 (Baumann and Hellmann 2001; Hyde-Price 2001: 20).³⁴

³⁴ Though the term of “*Stunde Null*” is disputed, it can certainly be argued that only Japan is comparable in the radical rethinking of its strategic culture after 1945 (Hoffmann and Longhurst 1999;

The 1945 Potsdam conference, at which Germany's post-war destiny was negotiated by the UK, the Soviets and the USA, engendered the so-called policy of four Ds: Germany was to undergo a simultaneous process of Democratization, Denazification, Demilitarization and Decentralization. Indeed, antimilitarism quickly crystallized as a *Leitmotiv* for post-1945 foreign policy, and until today polls show a deeply engrained reluctance when it comes to the use of force. As Hanns Maull notes "the lessons of history led to aversion or at least profound scepticism vis-à-vis any use of military force and a fierce determination never again to allow German militarism and nationalism to threaten European stability" (Maull 1999: 1). In the "post-heroic society" that crystallized as a rejection of the past, aversion to military power politics and resulting casualties continues to be a defining element of German strategic culture (Münkler 2007; Friesendorf 2013: 336).

Coming to the legal context of German foreign policy, the 1949 West German constitution put major restraints on the new *Bundeswehr*: Article 87a of the Basic Law allowed it to conduct defensive missions only. Thus, there were no provisions about the use of force outside of Germany (Longhurst 2005: 28 and 1999: 37; Schreer 2013: 163). German forces would, *in extremis*, be allowed to transgress into foreign territory if the forces of the Warsaw Pact attacked Germany, though even this idea provoked fierce demonstrations in Germany. This tradition of strict confinement to the defense of the homeland is a central, if obvious, difference with the UK or France.

A reluctance vis-à-vis go-it-alone adventures is a second major characteristic of German strategic culture, something Hanns Maull calls the paradigm of "never alone": Purely national approaches are seen by the wider public as inappropriate and ineffective in an international context, leading to an attitude of "reflexive multilateralism" (Anderson and Goodman 1993; Bulmer 1997; Duffield 1999; Erb 2003: 10).³⁵ As German Foreign Minister Kinkel put it in the early 1990s: "Only together with our partners, not against them, can we win the future" (Kinkel 1998). In this context, Hoffmann and Longhurst have rightly written of a "rejection of the nation-state as the sole organizing principle and referent for allegiance", because "the

Fischer und Lorenz 2007).

³⁵ It is helpful to remember Bismarck's explanations to Germany's European neighbors that since the French-German war in 1871, Germany was "saturated" ("*saturiert*"): Due to its European *Mittellage* (middle position), German foreign policies of the Bismarck and Weimar eras, and after 1945, have usually tried to take into account the fear that Germany's power triggers in Europe.

nation-state was seen as part of the problem and no longer the solution” (Hoffmann and Longhurst 1999: 34).

Because of the particular context of division into East and West Germany, the Western Federal Republic (or Bonn Republic) joined the United Nations (UN) relatively late (1973), but it had joined numerous other international organizations since 1950, including UNESCO, the World Health Organization or the Food and Agriculture Organization. This multilateral context was not simply an external “role prescription” but can be seen as a self-understanding, a domestic commitment to avoid a *Sonderweg* (‘special path’), and also at times a political strategy in the face of domestic constraints.

This being said it would be naïve to forget that German foreign policy was put under tight allied control in 1945.³⁶ Chancellor Konrad Adenauer’s early quest for integration into a Western security system was also an attempt to regain leverage in the wake of the Third Reich’s total moral defeat: Thus, for the German elites of the early Federal Republic, “*Westintegration*” can be seen much as an ideological *end in itself* (sovereignty must be pooled to guarantee security and avoid a relapse into militarism in Europe) as a *security imperative* (only if Germany is trusted will its European neighbors accept entering into alliances with it).

Needless to say, Germany has been an important driver of European integration, and its leaders have tended to portray Germany as an “engine” of European integration (“*Integrationsmotor*”), albeit inside the French-German “tandem” (Wolff and Stark 2010: 89). In contrast to French positions, German elites have often nourished the illusion that Germany would support steps into a European federalist direction, including openness to supranational elements and majority voting in ESDP/CSDP. It is notably Germany’s Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher under the Kohl government (1982-1998) who made suggestions in this sense. These initiatives were not pursued, however, leading Anne-Marie Le Gloannec to argue that the European policies of Kohl and Genscher served to multiply engagements or “promises” in order to increase the number of constraints (Le Gloannec 1989).

Importantly, after 1954, when the French Parliament shot down a project that would have led to a European Defense, which Adenauer had favored, it became clear

³⁶ Germany gained full sovereignty only after the fall of the Berlin Wall, with the 1990 “2+4 Treaty”.

that for the security aspect of *Westintegration*, NATO was the only viable option. Germany has balanced a staunch Atlanticism with pro-European initiatives, sometimes to the point of being called a fence-sitter because of a “policy of equidistance” or “*sowohl-als-auch*-policy” between NATO and the EU and France and the US (Rynning 2012: 27; Frank 2011: 142, 134). For instance, concerning French-German initiatives on a Rapid Action Force in April 1983, a Defense and Security Council in November 1987 or the French-German brigade, Georges Saunier notes that while the French saw “close ties with Germany and the ensuing emergence of European defense” as a necessary step “to increase Europe’s military independence and thereby more freedom of decision for France”, “Germany wanted to bring France closer to the Atlantic Alliance and European defense was a means of bringing pressure to bear on Washington” (Saunier 2008: 238).

Some disputes notwithstanding, Bonn and Washington always sought to preserve good relations and a public imagery of close friendship in contrast to the French (Sherwood 1990). It can be said that the relationship with the US (the ultimate protector), and France (the closest continental ally), have been the two major anchors between which Germany’s foreign policy has operated (Adenauer 1965: 245-246). Despite this, Germany has certainly not always been an easy NATO ally for the US either – disputes were not rare during the 1970s and 1980s (over the stationing of Pershing missiles for instance). Moreover, the *Westintegration* pursued by Adenauer was counter-balanced by a desire to maintain good neighborly relations with Russia, or what was to become Willy Brandt’s *Ostpolitik* of engagement, viewed with as much suspicion in Washington as in Paris (see also Bozo et al., 2012).

The “civilian power” concept (“*Zivilmacht*”) has been of paramount importance in Germany’s strategic culture (Maull 1991; Krotz 2002). Based on the principles of multilateralism, NATO supervision of the German Army, a strictly defensive outlook and a clear primacy of diplomacy and trade over military coercion, the “*Zivilmacht*” paradigm “was shared across the political spectrum and considered central to German identity” (Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010: 428). What is important in the concept is not only that German foreign policy has traditionally been “*tied* to goals, values, principles”, but that “forms of exerting influence and instruments of exercising power ... serve to civilize international relations” (Kirste

and Maull 1996: 300, emphasis in original). Writing in 1990, Hanns Maull described Japan and Germany as typical “civilian powers”, characterized by

“a) the acceptance of the necessity of cooperation with others in the pursuit of international objectives;

b) the concentration on nonmilitary, primarily economic, means to secure national goals, with military power left as a residual instrument serving essentially to safeguard other means of international interaction; and

c) a willingness to develop supranational structures to address critical issues of international management” (Maull 1990).

His definition did not specify the goals of a “civilian power”, but it emphasized the primary nature of civilian means and cooperation with others (K. E. Smith 2005: 2).

The “*Zivilmacht*” concept has gained wide acceptance among German elites and notably the Balkan wars showed how German foreign policy both continues to be predicated on – and restrained by – this notion of “*Zivilmacht Deutschland*”. This is not to suggest that German governments have not at times considerably stretched the concept, as participation in air strikes over Kosovo illustrated. However, it helps understand that German governments usually have to make comparatively greater efforts than other European governments to persuade the wider public of the necessity of the use of force (Longhurst 2005). It also helps to understand that Germany’s longstanding support for the US’ drone war from German military basis Ramstein is kept out of the public eye as much as possible (Der Spiegel 17.04.2015).

Turning to the way this impacts European security and defense cooperation, it suffices to consider the reluctance displayed by German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle in the run-up to the Libya campaign in 2011: In a declaration on 18 March 2011, Westerwelle justified Germany’s abstention in the UN SC with the words that “every military mission will also claim civilian victims” and that “the alternative to a military mission is not inaction (...) but it consists in increasing the pressure, decide on sanctions and tighten them” (Auswärtiges Amt 18.03.2011; author’s translation). This stood in contrast to a joint later by the French, British and American Presidents, who justified NATO’s intervention with the argument that it had halted “the advance of Qaddafi’s forces and prevented the bloodbath that he had promised to inflict upon the citizens of the besieged city of Benghazi” (Obama, Sarkozy and Cameron 14.04.2011). This leads us to our third example here, the

strategic culture of the UK, which shared “interventionist” leanings with France, but strong Atlantic ties with Germany.

2.2.c. British strategic culture: “Footnotes to Churchill”

Legal customs may be about to change under the pressure of Iraq and Afghanistan (illustrated by Prime Minister David Cameron’s lost vote on Syria in August 2013), but from the standpoint of the constitution, the British government can declare war or send the armed forces on missions abroad without prior backing of Parliament. Although Parliament gets the opportunity to debate intervention, this usually happens in retrospect (Forster 2000; Siedschlag 2002). Consequently, the UK’s military has a “long record of large-scale and high intensity deployments, involving a wide range and number of combat and non-combat operations since 1945”, including the deployment of about 30,000 soldiers to Malaysia in 1963-64 (Faleg 2013: 139).

While the UK dominated world politics during much of his colonial history, the wave of decolonization after 1945 led to a process of adaptation that continues to be felt today. As Dean Acheson noted in 1962, the UK “lost an Empire and has not yet found a role” and it has indeed been stressed in the literature that to a great extent, and like France, post WWII UK foreign policy has mainly dealt with the consequences of its unraveling colonial empire (Acheson 1962; Michel 1993; Austin 1980). The 1956 Suez crisis dealt a hard blow to both British and French self-conceptualizations as “great powers” able to define the rules of the international system and to set the security agenda independently from the US or the former Soviet Union (what is called shaping in the context of this dissertation). As Arthur Cyr remarks, before Suez,

“it was possible to believe that the [UK] could operate simultaneously, as a global strategic power armed with nuclear weapons, within the Commonwealth and Empire and within Europe. Suez revealed this to be a fiction, and compelled attention to be given to more realistic alternatives” (Cyr 2012: 1323).

Despite this relative decline, the phrase “punching above its weight in the world” is regularly used to describe the UK’s level of ambition. Paul Cornish, for instance, describes the UK as “a medium-ranking economic and military power with a disproportionately high level of ambition in, and a sense of responsibility for, international security policy” (Cornish 2013: 371). This is reflected in the “willingness to play a leading role in international security, namely by means of the use of military instruments to enforce the national interest” (Santopinto and Price 2013: 142). As the world’s sixth economic power, heavily dependent on trade, and separated from the European continent by its insular position, the UK’s security policy has tended to emphasize global involvement to preserve trade routes and the unfettered flow of goods. As a global trade power, the UK is an active and proactive supporter of international organizations, round about 120 of which it holds membership in (Held and Mephram 2007: 241). Like France, it enjoys a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, it heads the British Commonwealth and is woven into a large network of bilateral relationships (Faleg 2013).

A great deal of selectiveness in the approach to multilateralism, however, has characterized UK foreign policy: For instance, since 1975 UK foreign policy has generally accorded the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE)³⁷ a low priority (as shown by the small number of UK personnel affected to OSCE missions) and it has clearly favored NATO over the EC and EU (although the question of UK-EU/CSDP relations is more complicated than that, see below). Moreover, in contrast to states like Germany or Sweden, for instance, the UK’s position on the necessity of a UN Security Council mandate for armed intervention is far from being an absolute requirement (Santopinto and Price 2013: 159).

Coming to the question of the UK’s relations with the European continent and the US, one observer has written “[a]ll British foreign policy since 1940 has been footnotes to Churchill. The British are still living with the consequences of his strategic choices between American and Europe” (Garton Ash 2005: 36). Though Churchill’s vision of world politics as based on the three intersecting circles (consisting of the US, an emergent “United Europe” led by France and Germany, and the British Commonwealth) very quickly became obsolete in the first post-war decades, his vision is useful to remember because it comprised the three main currents

³⁷ The CSCE was renamed OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) in 1995.

that still determine British foreign policy, i.e. a quest for national autonomy, Atlanticism and affiliation to the European mainland (Clarke 1990: 28).

In fact, the British sense of entitlement to a lead role in world affairs has given way to two major pathways in the post-1945 phase: First, binding the US to Europe as a privileged (junior) partner, and, secondly, defining its place in (and contribution to) the European process (see also Howorth 2007: 147). On the one hand, post-1945 British governments were reluctant to “be tied too tightly into European security arrangements” (Rees 2001: 49). As Cyr notes, “Britain encouraged collaboration among western nations while carefully keeping a distance, generating a deserved reputation of ambiguity regarding commitment to Europe” (Cyr 2012: 1321). Consequently, the UK has stayed clear from a long list of French initiatives for a revival of the WEU in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s (see Howorth 2007: 147).

However, the UK’s membership in the European Communities (it joined the EC in 1973) did, in fact, ultimately contribute to a growing reorientation of the British defense outlook towards Europe. As Rees notes, there is much ground to support the assertion that, “[i]n the latter part of the 1960s, long-term military pressures, the growing political attraction of the continent and changing economic realities” eventually led British elites to include Western Europe much more in their foreign policy designs (Rees 2001: 64). Although the UK has been wary of departures from intergovernmentalism in the European project, this shift from an imperial and global focus to a growing enmeshment in European economic, political and military affairs has been a major trend since 1945 (Rees 2001: 64).

This shifting focus notwithstanding, NATO has always been the UK’s preferred “interlocutor”: “The United Kingdom is generally considered to be the most ‘Atlanticist’ of the main EU member states” (Howorth 2014: 118). Arguably one of the most important British role conceptions has traditionally been that of a privileged partner in a “special relation” with Washington, called “close relationship” under Prime Minister Harold Wilson or “extraordinary alliance” under Margaret Thatcher (Reynolds 1985). In a widely held British interpretation, the US pacified tensions between France and Germany during the Cold War and provided the cohesion that bound NATO together – thus, NATO was of paramount importance for a stable post-war order and the ultimate guarantor of containment vis-à-vis the Soviet Union (Rees 2001: 56; Deutschmann 2002).

No other country in the world enjoys such a close relationship with the US military, its “valuable legacy of co-operation” between the armed forces going back to the Second World War, and no other European ally has so systematically supported US actions, even when all other European states refused, like bombing Colonel Qaddafi’s Libya in the 1980s (Clarke 1990: 30). Despite considerable closeness, the UK-US relationship has not been without periods of great tension, as during the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces crisis at the beginning of the 1980s, when the US Administration frequently unnerved UK officials with hints at “limited” nuclear war in Europe (see Dimpleby and Reynolds 1988).

2.2.d. Summing up strategic cultures

This section showed that the reluctance to act in an integrated European way in security has strong roots both in post-World War II history and the divergent nature of national strategic cultures. This joins the above argument (see sections 2.1.a-2.1.e) that the “constructive ambiguity” surrounding the advances of European security and defense integration, which made space for very different narratives and conceptualizations, is to a great extent what allowed the process to unfold (Heisbourg 2000). True, in light of the four Collective Foreign Policy Potentials the analysis shows that the German, French and British rhetoric is considerably similar when it comes to the ambition of having a say in defining the rules of the international system: All three pursue more than just “possession goals” but formulate “milieu goals”, meaning they also aim to shape “conditions beyond their national boundaries” (Wolfers 1962).

However, this consensus on the ambition to be “system-determining” or “system-affecting” is not easy to translate into collective security policy, especially once the use of force is concerned (Keohane 1969). The question of “autonomy” also receives different interpretations. While France has traditionally displayed great ambition to be militarily autonomous, Germany, with its Bundeswehr enjoying very little freedom of maneuver until the end of the Cold War, has not. When it comes to collective “European actorness” and therefore collective “shaping”, only the Germans

have at times suggested more federalism, but have never made substantial steps in this direction (Le Gloannec 1989).

This tallies with the findings of other recent research, notably with what Olivier de France and Nick Witney show in their cross-country comparison of 27 European White Books and other national security documentation (De France and Witney 2012). Despite largely convergent analyses of the geostrategic context, the great majority of national security strategies in Europe does not take interest in a prospective analysis of the rapid mutations in Europe's geostrategic environment; most European security documentation is essentially descriptive rather than prescriptive: European security documents tend to content themselves with stating how things are, instead of defining how and why they should be changed.

Even going beyond the three countries presented above, the ambition to promote European autonomy or integrated security actorness is low, and ambitions to collectively shape the security environment (be it via NATO or the EU) exist, but there are important limitations. Chapter 3 deals with other European strategic cultures in more detail. For now, it may suffice to point to a comprehensive study of 28 European strategic cultures by Biehl, Giegerich and Jonas, in which the researchers identify three groups of strategic cultures in Europe. Though the distinction between groups of strategic cultures is bound to be imperfect because the limits between them may overlap, there is ground for the argument that the MS can be grouped together according to the four Collective Foreign Policy Potentials.

A first group of countries, often smaller ones, contribute to international military missions with the primary ambition to “contribute”, to “demonstrate that they can live up to the responsibilities of a valued member of the international community and be recognised as such”, in sum to “manifest their own presence in the international system”, but not with the explicit intention of influencing the mission *itself* (Biehl, Giegerich and Jonas 2013: 391). One finds countries such as Portugal, Finland, Cyprus, Malta or Belgium in this group.

A second group attempts to “shape their multilateral security milieu through international bargaining” (ibid.: 391). This group contains both countries that are primarily concerned with territorial defense (such as the Baltic states) and countries

like Spain, Italy and Germany that have participated in more missions of force projection. What brings these states together is that they tend to be “less concerned about the direct and primary effects of their engagement”... “and more about influencing multinational policy” (ibid.: 392). This means they often participate in international missions, but are less concerned with the precise goal of a particular mission. Rather, their engagements aim to create secondary benefits for themselves: A “seat at the table” and the ability to “influence the policies of these larger multinational frameworks” like NATO or the EU (Germany, Spain, Italy) or simply “reliable security guarantees for themselves (Baltic and central and eastern European countries).

A smaller third group of European states (France, the UK, Sweden, Denmark, and the Netherlands) is concerned with “projecting state power abroad”, understands “security and defence policy to be about international order and stability” and is “convinced of the utility of the armed forces in the pursuit of these overarching goals” (ibid.: 393).

In sum, core tenets of national strategic culture (a more or less transatlantic orientation, more or less “Europeanist” commitment, more or less emphasis on military or civilian tools and the like) are actually of rather secondary importance when we study European security and defense in light of the four Collective Foreign Policy Potentials. Being close or distant to the US, for instance, does not change much about the fact that only very few of the European states have a tradition of projecting force or of participating in missions with the explicit goal of shaping the security environment and with a real possibility to do so if force is required.

While a minority of countries such as Denmark, Sweden or the Netherlands perceive “a responsibility to engage beyond Europe, possibly globally, to manage crisis and conflict and are willing to make resources available”, the majority of European states is either more concerned with territorial defense or tends to participate in international military missions for reasons not directly related to the mission itself, and therefore without a clear goal of shaping the external security environment (ibid.: 393).

This is important to stress because the fact that the Afghan intervention is often being portrayed as an “accident” suggests that this Afghan case was simply “a

bridge too far” for the MS, but that their collective defense and security ambitions to fulfill the four Collective Foreign Policy Potentials might have been realized if only Afghanistan had not been such a demanding theatre. While such arguments are obviously impossible to either prove or disprove, this section has tried to show that the reasons for the Collective Foreign Policy Potentials’ non-realization have also deep roots in the past.

With this in mind, we can move on to the next section, which develops the argument, known by now, that advances in European security and defense integration (mostly) during the 1990s occurred as parallel reactions to common problems but *despite* divergence in national strategic cultures, not as the result of their convergence. It also analyzes another important reason for the non-realization of the four Collective Foreign Policy Potentials, namely the MS’ continued import of US security leadership.

2.3. Redefinitions of European security: France, Germany and the UK and European security and defence integration

2.3.a. Learning and socialization during the Balkan crises

The single most important catalyst for the development of a common European foreign policy and crisis management capabilities was the implosion of the Yugoslav Federation that followed the demise of the Soviet Union. The story of Europe’s diplomatic failure in the Balkan wars has been told many times (S. Woodward 1995; Lucarelli 2000; Glaurdic 2011). European governments’ initial reaction to the threatening explosion of the Yugoslav Federation was to mediate between, on the one side, the breakaway Republics of Slovenia and Croatia and later Bosnia Herzegovina, and on the other side, the capital of Yugoslavia, Belgrade. Under the EC’s political sponsorship, the 1991 Brioni agreement sought to bring an

end to the fighting between Slovenian forces and those of the Belgrade-led JNA (*Jugoslavenska narodna armija*, or Yugoslav People's Army), sent by Belgrade to prevent independence.

Yet, the agreement's failure became obvious when the fighting continued, most horribly in the Croatian town of Vukovar, shelled by Serbian forces in the second half of 1991. European disunity was most visible with the contradiction between, on the one hand, the Brioni process under the EC's mediator Lord Peter Carrington, which foresaw a loose federation of Yugoslav states, and on the other hand, the Badinter Arbitration Committee, which elaborated principles for the Slovenians', Bosnians' and Croatians' sovereignty from Belgrade (Terrett 2000).

Though France and the UK were most reluctant to recognize Slovenia and Croatia as independent, Germany made the decisive move to recognize both at the end of 1991. Most importantly, though European governments came up with several peace initiatives since the Brioni Agreement in 1991, they were either reluctant or outright unwilling to back up their plans with military force, despite the Serbian regime's clear aggression policy: Germany was still bound by its unrevised constitution, disallowing military intervention in the Balkans; a French proposal to authorize a military intervention under the structure of the WEU had Berlin's political (though not military) backing – but was refused by London, reluctant to intervene and engrossed in the Northern Ireland conflict (Lucarelli 2000).

This inability of the MS to forge a coherent response in the early years of the Yugoslav wars ultimately drew in the United Nations and later NATO, and thus in fact the US. This first became visible when UNPROFOR, the “United Nations Protection Force”, relied on NATO protection in 1993 to enforce its mandate of delivering humanitarian aid to the local population. Most importantly, it was the US, not the European states, who initiated the Contact Group in 1994 to help find a political solution. As the memoirs of Richard Holbrooke (later US President Clinton's special presidential envoy to the Balkan region) and Carl Bildt (EU Special Envoy to Former Yugoslavia at the time of the Dayton agreement in 1995) reveal, European governments were completely sidelined (Bildt 1998, Holbrooke 1998).

Though the MS did eventually manage to agree on the threat of using force, leading to the deployment of a French-British-Dutch Rapid Reaction Force in 1995,

the Balkan wars did not become the “hour of Europe”, as Foreign Affairs Minister of Luxembourg Jacques Poos had proclaimed in 1991 (The New York Times 29.06.1991). Instead, it became the hour of the US: it was NATO, not the WEU, that enforced the No Fly Zones with Operation Sky Monitor in Bosnia Herzegovina in October 1992, and the approximately 60,000 soldiers under Operation Joint Endeavour were NATO soldiers, not WEU soldiers.

All these failures notwithstanding, the conflicts did spur a considerable learning process among the MS, however, suggesting, as the years went by, that CFSP/ESDP might indeed become a reality. One example for the increased convergence of MS policy analyses concerns the way from the Dayton Peace Agreement (1995) to the bombing of Kosovo (1999). The Dayton Peace Agreement of 1995, which put an end to the Bosnian War, had clearly unraveled by 1999, when Serbian police forces committed a massacre of Kosovo Albanians on 15 January 1999, and a peace conference convened by the French government in Rambouillet did not result in a lasting settlement, as the Serbian government rejected the agreement. As a result, NATO leaders decided to launch an international bombing campaign of Serbia to end Belgrade’s policy of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo.

Importantly, while the European MS had found it difficult on earlier occasions to agree on robust military mandates or the use of aerial bombing, there was now a wide consensus among European leaders that only coercion could force Serbia’s President Slobodan Milosevic into submission. European governments contributed substantially to the bombing, justifying their action on the grounds of liberal principles that intervention was justified because Milosevic’s regime had lost its legitimacy (Hallams 2009; Rynning 2012).

The European states also helped significantly in stabilizing Macedonia, exerting pressure on the Macedonian government to respond to demands of the Albanian minority. Together with the US, the MS resorted to “the whole repertoire of show of force, arms-twisting, threats, rewards, help” and their promise of a Stabilization and Association Agreement led to the Ohrid Agreement in 2001, which recognized the rights of all parties (Le Gloannec 2016; Ilievski and Taleski 2009). Most importantly, the events of the 1990s forged strong bonds between European diplomats, and their close, sometimes daily cooperation and interaction in the EC Council of Ministers and other institutions contributed significantly in fostering an

understanding of respective positions on the various issues related to the unraveling of the Yugoslav Federation (Le Gloannec 2016). For instance, one French diplomat recounted in an interview how regular encounters with German foreign minister Joschka Fischer and his staff also led to learning with respect to “the way one needed to present ideas to the Germans, and particularly Fischer, almost so that he would think it had been his own idea”.³⁸

Such close collaborations led commentators to argue that the Balkan wars represented the “ironing out of differences”, or a process by which governments were learning to “think coherently”, namely about the use of force (see above and see Meyer 2005: 30; Howorth 2002: 105; Heisbourg 2000: 6). Drawing on such works, many authors argued a European “self” was developing. For instance, concerning the EU’s human security narratives Norheim-Martinsen and Biscop make the argument that

“when acting within the auspices of CSDP, all actors are induced or compelled to do so in a way that falls within certain premeditated conceptions of how the EU as a collective should behave. That is, the way in which to act has become a source of a European ‘self’” (Biscop and Norheim-Martinsen 2012: 78).

Sometimes drawing on earlier psychological and functionalist works, such authors argue “access and voice on the same EU committees accompany the enactment of similar role perceptions” or that

“the participation of national civil servants in EU institutions and committees can set in motion socialisation dynamics, which can overcome gaps in mutual trust and world views among national representatives, thereby weakening the ideational influence of their ministries in the capitals” (see Meyer 2005: 18).

It has often been argued, for instance, that the PSC has developed “an esprit de corps, a group-identity and common thinking revolving around the shared commitment to pioneering a ESDP, a high level of mutual trust and an intimate understanding of each other’s positions”, resulting in “a growing acceptance for the EU as a framework for defence cooperation at the level of high officials” (Meyer 2005: 19). However, while some see the PSC as a “major decision-shaping and even decision-making agency of the CSDP”, it must be clear that its everyday business is

³⁸ Interview with French diplomat, 15.10.2011.

one of seeking consensus in two or three weekly meetings. This not only significantly affects its ability to make swift decisions, but also predisposes it to devote a disproportionate amount of attention to respective national “sensitivities” rather than, say, evolutions of a particular terrain or fast-evolving security problems (Howorth 2014: 45).

Juncos and Reynolds have shown that PSC activity does practically amount to more than just bargaining about national red lines, and that it de facto contributes to shape the Council’s decisions (Juncos and Reynolds 2007; see also Duke 2005, 2007). However, the fact that the PSC forms an “epistemic community” does not invalidate the fact that the MS can very easily sideline the body, and they regularly do so in case of important crises: PSC played no role in European debates prior to the 2003 Iraq war, for instance, despite being *the* single most important security crisis of the beginning of the decade (Howorth 2013: 10).

Similarly, the EUMC may be a “highly cohesive transnational” expert group able to shape the MS’ decisions on crisis management operations based on sound advice and tactical expertise, but this does not change the fact that the MS have only been able to agree on very modest military CSDP missions so far (Cross 2011). The same is true on the civilian side of CSDP institutions, for instance concerning the CivCom. Mai’a Cross, whose study on EUMC was cited above, has concluded with respect to CivCom that the advice it gives to the PSC is usually accepted, and that the strong impetus its members feel to work together makes them find compromise solutions. For Jolyon Howorth, the CivCom demonstrates that the “distinction between intergovernmental negotiating and supranational consensus-building becomes blurred to the point of being virtually meaningless” (Howorth 2014: 49).

However, the deeper problem is that the topics that CivCom is allowed to deliberate on are rather narrowly framed in the first place.³⁹ Moreover, if socialization dynamics, notably during the Balkan wars, really durably weakened national capitals’ “ideational influence”, this would have been visible in Afghanistan – but it was not (see Chapter 4). What is more, the following section shows that the capitals’ ideational influence, far from disappearing, is what allowed advances in European security and defense integration in the first place.

³⁹ See Chapter 6.

In this context, one must note that structural realists have often denied the European states much “agency”, describing the “fear of abandonment” by the US as the main driver behind European defense and security integration during the 1990s. For instance, for Galia Press-Barnathan, the systemic shifts after 1989 created

“significant concerns among the allies. The demise of bipolarity in itself increased overall uncertainty about the future and increased general concern that the United States would lose interest in European affairs. There was, therefore, among all the major allies, a *clear increase in the perceived likelihood of American abandonment*” (Press-Barnathan 2006: 287, emphases added).

It is true that a dithering American attitude during the first years of the Balkan wars did seem to indicate a growing disengagement from Europe. US foreign Secretary James Baker III, for instance, dismissed a stronger US American role in the war with the sentence that “We [i.e. the US administration] got no dog in that fight” (Hutchings 1997: 312). It is also true that this led many European leaders to question the future of US security commitments to the European continent: For instance, the French *Livre Blanc* of 1994 (the first since 1972) stated: “The evolution of the United States of America, after the disappearance of the Soviet Union, raises questions” (*Livre Blanc* 1994: 8; author’s translation). Those “questions” concerned notably the possibility of a US retrenchment, because “the Americans vigorously try to strengthen the interior foundations of their security” (ibid.).

However, while structural arguments of the “fear of abandonment” capture parts of the equation, we must also turn to the way parallel national redefinitions of the post-Cold War challenges drove advances in security and defense integration. A look at the different ways European governments redefined their role in European security shows that the motives that ultimately allowed for limited European security and defense integration were different in each case.

2.3.b. The UK and transatlantic relations after 1989

For the UK, the end of the Cold War had not altered the necessity of a strong transatlantic bond (Deutschmann 2002: 62). Even though the advances of the 1992 Maastricht Treaty were rather careful (providing for the eventual framing of a common defense policy “which might in time lead to a common defense”) the conservative government of John Major felt compelled to reassure the British public that NATO would retain primacy for British defense (Forster 1999). The Major administration saw a danger that CFSP might be interpreted as a “balancing act” against the US, thus undermining NATO and encouraging isolationists in Washington (Deutschmann 2002: 66). Supported by other Atlanticist countries like the Netherlands, the immediate reaction to the Maastricht Treaty was thus to block French designs for a stronger European pillar or more European autonomy, and to “outsource” “off-shore balancing”⁴⁰ to the US in Europe (Griffiths 1992).

The 1994 “Defence White Paper” became an opportunity for the Major government to stress “that the Alliance remains the best vehicle through which to ensure that, were a strategic threat to the United Kingdom to re-emerge, our interests could be effectively defended” (UK Ministry of Defence 1994: 9). When the Kohl and Mitterrand governments launched an initiative to deploy a so-called *Eurocorps* (based on the nucleus of a Franco-German brigade established in 1987) under the authority of NATO in a “double-hatting” system in 1993, the Major government did not formally object, but it made sure it would go under the label “separable, but not separate” from NATO (Kuisel 1993; NAC 10-11.01.1994: 1; Roger 1995; McArdle Kelleher 1995).

If this traditionally staunch British Atlanticism could become amenable to a proposal for more European defense autonomy, this had to do with the lessons the Blair administration (which succeeded the Major government) drew from the Balkan wars: “[W]e would not have touched Saint Malo with a bargepole” are the words of a senior Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) official, had not two main factors made Tony Blair and key UK defense officials change their minds (quoted by Jolyon Howorth 2014: 22). The first was the war in Kosovo in 1999, which showed, again,

⁴⁰ In IR Theory, “off-shore balancing” refers to a great power’s strategy to rely on regional powers in order to keep potential rising hostile powers in check.

Europe's military dependence on US leadership: In 1998, clashes between Serbian and Albanian security forces in Kosovo produced a death toll of 1,500 Albanians; 400,000 ethnic Albanians were displaced. When a NATO decision was taken to initiate air strikes in Serbia and over Kosovo on 24 March 1999, the air campaign relied heavily on US military technology and was politically dominated by the US (Sloan 2010).

The second factor was an indirect consequence of the first, namely a change of heart in Washington. Amid ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and the run up to the Kosovo bombings, the Clinton administration concluded the European states needed to get their act together: In the run-up to NATO's 50th Anniversary Summit in Washington in April 1999, the Clinton government made clear that "US support for NATO as an effective military alliance" would rest increasingly 'on the ability of the European allies to support the United States in meeting regional challenges' deemed vital to US security interests in the Middle East and Persian Gulf" (quoted in Hallams 2009: 45-46). Even "if Washington saw a more assertive European role as a challenge to American leadership" the Americans concluded "more capable European military establishments could relieve the United States of some of its international security burdens, improving the burden-sharing equation and thereby strengthening, not weakening, transatlantic ties" (Sloan 2010: 222).

Hence, European security capacities, far from "being perceived in DC as prejudicial to the Alliance (as London had believed for 50 years), it was now being openly touted as the very salvation of the Alliance: unless Europe got its security act together, NATO was dead in the water" (Howorth 2014: 22). In Blair's own words, the US' history in the Yugoslav wars had illustrated that "[Europeans] should not expect the United States to play a role in every disorder in [their] back yard" (Blair quoted in Honey and Barry 2000: 179). According to Blair the Saint Malo agreement was based on the conviction that

"the only thing that was ever going to work in Kosovo was diplomacy backed up by the credible threat of force, and that is all that has brought Milosevic to the position he is in, and we need to keep him in that position now. But I think Kosovo simply underlines the need for Europe to take a very hard-headed review of this and to make sure that it can fulfil its obligations and responsibilities properly" (Blair quoted in Rutten 2001: 3).

Thus, though the Saint Malo Agreement maintained Blair's red lines on a "NATO first" policy (Rees 2001: 73),⁴¹ it acknowledged the ESDP's "vital" role in European defense and aimed at a militarily "autonomous" structure for the purpose of performing the so-called Petersberg tasks, i.e. humanitarian missions, peacekeeping and peace building. This was the first time that the word "autonomous" appeared in European official documents pertaining to European defense and security. In the years that followed, the UK government played a major role in defining and promoting the Helsinki Headline Goals in 1999, the EU Battlegroup concept and the European Defence Agency in 2004. A year after Saint Malo, Blair and Chirac issued a joint statement in which they called on the Helsinki Summit to "to take a decisive step forward for the development of those military capabilities and for the setting up of the political and military instruments necessary to use them", which meant that the MS, "cooperating together", should be

"able to deploy rapidly and then sustain combat forces which are militarily self-sufficient up to Corps level with the necessary command, control and intelligence capabilities, logistics, combat support and other combat service support (up to 50,000-60,000 men) and appropriate naval and air combat elements. All these forces should have the full range of capabilities necessary to undertake the most demanding crisis management tasks" (Anglo French Summit London 25.11.1999).

However, this did not represent a conversion of British Foreign Policy to some European project of independence or even degrees of European federalism, but a "pragmatic approach to strengthen the Atlantic alliance" (Deutschmann 2002: 73). In fact, Blair insisted that the WEU be "firmly wedded to NATO", and that the creation of a "European pillar" be a European pillar *in NATO* (Lansford 1999: 9). Blair's Defense Secretary Hoons underlined the UK government's position when he stated "Helsinki [was] all about enhancing military capability. (...) If hanging a European tag on it is what it takes to make it happen, then so be it" (Deutschmann 2002: 73). Thus, from the outset, ESDP was "treated as a means to galvanize European allies into doing more for the common defense without risking the alienation of the US", in sum, a strategy aimed at "preserving NATO", based on the conviction that any "effort to

⁴¹ Already during the Maastricht negotiations, the British government had successfully lobbied for NATO primacy, anchoring the importance of transatlantic relations in Article J4, 4: "The policy of the Union in accordance with this Article shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States and shall respect the obligations of certain Member States under the North Atlantic Treaty and be compatible with the common security and defence policy established within that framework."

encourage Washington to remain engaged with the rest of the world would falter if Britain began to disengage as well” (Rees 2011: 73; Howorth 2007: 148; Freedman 2007:620).

That ESDP was not intended by the UK to be a rival, but a complement to NATO and US global leadership was made clear by Tony Blair in 2003, when he stated: “[S]ome want a so-called multi-polar world where you have different centres of power. ... [O]thers believe, and this is my notion, that we need a one polar world which encompasses a strategic relationship between Europe and America” (Blair quoted in the Financial Times 28.04.2003). This was based on an “understanding that the benefits of EU security cooperation concern *soft* security, stabilization and conflict prevention tasks,” based on humanitarian tasks of the Petersberg agenda (Faleg 2013: 152, emphasis added). ESDP should be used when NATO was not running the operation itself – in other words, a division of labor between two international organizations based on available tools. For Blair, Britain could “bring ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ power together, using armed force where necessary, while at the same time acting to the fore in addressing the big questions of poverty and climate change” (Freedman 2007: 616).

This “division of labor” theme is very close to a prominent British role conception of being a “bridge” between Washington and Europe. The concept “of the bridge hinges on the ability to relay US policies and attitudes to Europeans and vice versa” and this became a major theme in Tony Blair’s attempts to convince the British public of European defense integration (Giegerich 2006: 155). For him, Britain could “be pivotal ... Britain does not have to choose between being strong with the US, or being strong with Europe ... we are stronger with the US because of our strength in Europe; ... we are stronger in Europe because of our strength with the US” (quoted in Giegerich 2006: 155). As his Foreign Secretary Cook stated in 1998, “We are the bridge between the US and Europe. Let us use it. When Britain and America work together on the international scene, there is little we cannot achieve” (quoted in Mayer 2003: 136).⁴²

⁴² In variations, the “bridge” theme goes further back than the 1990s. For instance, Harold Macmillan, British Prime Minister from 1957 to 1963, conceptualized the UK as “playing Greece to America’s Rome – civilizing and guiding the immature young giant” (quoted in Reynolds 1985: 2).

With this emphasis on Tony Blair's change of course (without which the creation of European security and defense institutions would simply not have been possible) it would be easy to forget the roles played by the French and German administrations after the Cold War – but as the next section shows, both played an important role in shaping the process.

2.3.c. France and transatlantic relations after 1989

The French “grand design” for European security cooperation after the end of the Cold War was not initially based on NATO, but on a stronger Franco-German nucleus and the CSCE/OSCE as the organization that should naturally be tasked with peacekeeping in Europe, while the UN should do the same on the global level. French President Mitterrand initially envisioned NATO as a sort of ultimate assurance against resurgence of a Soviet threat, but the new border and minority problems in the post-Soviet Europe would ideally have to be dealt with by the European states themselves, not the US (Andréani 1998: 80-81).

The Mitterrand administration pondered re-activating the WEU, which the French had tried to revive with French, Italian, Spanish and German support in 1984 as the basis for a separate European security “identity” (EDI, or European Defence Identity). For President Mitterrand, if NATO remained “the principal defense organization”, “the American engagement ... will take more supple and less massive forms than during the confrontation with the Warsaw Pact”. Therefore, “the European continent is looking for a broad and secure organization for its security” (*Livre Blanc* 1994: 30; author's translation).

While the French government was indeed pushing for a redefinition of the US' role and place in European security, it is wrong to suggest the French were trying to sever ties between Washington and the European continent. A number of decisions during the 1990s did bring the French governments the reputation of being “somehow [an] *éminence grise* behind [an] ‘anti-NATO’ project” and that “CSDP [was] a scheme designed in Paris to weaken the [transatlantic] Alliance” (Howorth 2014: 19). French proposals to create a NATO-Russia dialogue (instead of enlarging NATO), or to include Moscow in the bombing campaign of Kosovo in 1999 (and thus to

circumvent the North Atlantic Council) certainly provided some ground for such arguments. However, French elites always stressed the necessity to maintain good relations with NATO: A first visible sign of this was the already mentioned double-hatting system in 1993, when the French agreed that the Franco-German flagship initiative of the *Eurocorps* could be deployed under the authority of NATO. The key word was “*complementarité*”:

“France will continue to favor a strengthening of the EU as a complement to the role of NATO. The *Corps européen* already illustrates the possibility of a progressive augmentation of European defense capabilities in the context of the Western European Union, for the benefit of the Atlantic Alliance as a whole” (*Livre Blanc* 1994: 34).

In 1995, France announced it would resume participation in NATO’s Defense Planning Committee.⁴³ Even though negotiations stalled due to a battle over the Joint Force Command in Naples, France was clearly moving with its German and British neighbors towards a position in which “there was a recognized convergence of interests [among European nation states, including France] over the future of European Security. NATO [not the CSCE or the EU] would remain the cornerstone of the continent's security architecture” (Lansford 1999: 15). Throughout the 1990s, France deployed soldiers for US-led missions in Bosnia, in Kosovo and later in Afghanistan. Thus, as Robert Art rightfully pointed out in 1996, the 1990s saw France moving steadily from “NATO’s denigrator to its supporter” (Art 1996: 34).

It is also important to understand in this respect that French designs to include the Germans in concrete European defense projects around a strong and proactive Franco-German nucleus had clearly failed by 1995/96: Germany had unilaterally recognized Slovenia and Croatia at the beginning of the Balkan crises and French attempts to discuss questions of military intervention in the Balkans were thwarted by turf battles between the German Foreign Ministry and the German Defense Ministry: “Our military proposals were never acceptable to the Germans, because the result of their discussions was that they maintained their policy of non-interventionism [vis-à-vis the wars in Ex-Yugoslavia]”, according to a French defense official involved in the discussions.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, the French and the British militaries cooperated very

⁴³ As noted in section 2.1., France had left NATO’s Defense Planning Committee in 1966.

⁴⁴ Interview with former French defense official, 18.07.2012.

successfully on a number of occasions during this period. As a French diplomat, who was involved in the process, remarked: “Military cooperation with the UK was excellent each time: During the Gulf War, in Yugoslavia and under a UN framework. On the theatre, we worked very well [together], because only we have the forces trained to intervene on all sorts of theaters”.⁴⁵

However, such Franco-German disappointments, *ad hoc* Franco-British military collaborations or even advances toward NATO did not mean French elites abandoned the idea of building an autonomous European defense structure. It is more helpful to look at French policies as a series of pragmatic responses to crises and “tests” in the context of European construction, first aiming to involve the German government in a strong Franco-German brigade and then turning to the British government under French President Chirac, who came into office in 1995. According to the French official cited above:

“What interested us [at the time of Saint Malo] was the build-up of a European armaments industry and the ability for crisis management with our European partners, and when we sensed a policy change in London, we made concrete proposals in the vein of a construction of autonomous European defense capabilities, which became Saint Malo”.⁴⁶

Hence, while it is undeniable that the Bosnian episode led the Mitterrand government to perceive its West European partners as “lacking the political will to allow the French to realise their geopolitical ambitions” and also lacking “confidence in Europe's ability to act alone in security matters”, one must also see the French road to Saint Malo as an incremental process of trial and error, a pragmatic way to remain influent and take European defense further (Treacher 2001: 33). Hence, when French President Chirac convinced US President Bill Clinton to use NATO’s military assets in Bosnia, after initial proposals for a WEU peacekeeping mission had failed due to the reluctance of European partners, this was part of the same pragmatic approach (Holbrooke 1998: 67).

However, just like Franco-German relations, Franco-American relations were not free of tension: Designs of the Clinton and Bush administrations about NATO going “out of area”, or even “going global or going out of business” in a post-Cold

⁴⁵ Interview with François Rivasseau, currently EU Special Envoy for Space, 10.11.2015.

⁴⁶ Interview with former French defense official, 18.07.2012.

War world, i.e. US proposals to set the alliance up as a *global* alliance, were a source of irritation for French leaders (Brown 2014). It must, of course, be noted that multilateral force projection in far-away theaters has never been a problem for France: Operation Cleansweep in 1987, a WEU mission, cleared shipping lanes during the Iranian-Iraqi War, and WEU missions were initiated during and after the First Gulf War, as well as during the Yugoslavian wars (Palmer 1991: 47). It was the repeated US allusions to a global role for *NATO* that raised suspicions in Paris. Despite French resistance, NATO's 1999 Strategic Concept did not limit NATO's remit to Europe, noting that "[a]lliance security must also take account of the global context" (NATO 24.04.1999).⁴⁷

To sum up, the main concern for the French was to proceed to a "balancing act between NATO and the nascent EU security entity (...)", with the intention of retaining "the former for serious operations involving collective defence while building up the latter for increasingly autonomous European crisis management missions, the two working in complementary fashion" (Howorth 2007: 156). As the French Ministry of Defense's "Lessons from Kosovo" study illustrated, the aim was not European autonomy for its own sake, "but autonomy with a view to "turning the European Union into a key partner with regard to defence, while strengthening the Atlantic Alliance" (ibid: 157).

This ambition to turn the EU into a credible military partner was shared by successive French administrations after 1989, and with Saint Malo they should, nominally at least, succeed in 1998. One of Mitterrand's declared goals at the negotiation of the Maastricht Treaty had been to make a common European defense "a vector of stability and integration for the whole of Europe" (*Livre Blanc* 1994: 9; author's translation). However, contrary to the strong federal rhetoric coming from Germany, this was never meant to take place in "a European framework of a federal type, an integrated military organization" (*Livre Blanc* 1994: 31; author's translation). It was, in other words, about European integration without federalism. Whether it was called WEU, EDI or ESDP, for the French, European security cooperation in the making was essentially a framework for the security of the Euro-Atlantic area, meant to bring about a division of labor between NATO and a European pillar, meaning

⁴⁷ In Europe, especially the UK continues to see NATO as a tool for global crisis management (see House of Commons Defence Committee 2008).

ESDP needed to be capable of independent action via military capabilities separate from NATO (Rees 2011: 73).

2.3.d. Germany and transatlantic relations after 1989

Two central dilemmas played a role in the redefinition of Germany's role in post-Cold War security. First, both the conservative Kohl government and the following social-democratic Schröder government got caught between their ambition to present Germany as a reliable international partner and an increasingly assertive member of the "international community", and the deeply engrained pacifism of Germany's strategic culture that made military participation in international missions a thorny domestic issue. Related to this issue was a second dilemma, namely tensions between a strong commitment toward NATO's pre-eminence on the one hand, and a growing estrangement with US military practice on the other, which opened the way for the European option of ESDP.

The way German foreign policy elites solved these two central dilemmas was through a more active participation in international security affairs, including with military means, but largely restrained by a strong pacifist element. Concerning the Saint Malo process, this means Germany was more than just an agenda-taker: German diplomacy took possession of the Franco-British initiative in a way that made sure ESDP would be a widely shared European project, not only a coalition of the willing of the "Big Three". It also made sure civilian tools would be added to the nascent ESDP (some British and French interview partners spoke of Germany's "diluting" the thrust of the project, see below) and greatly contributed to shaping ESDP as a "toolbox", but no fully autonomous alternative to NATO.

Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 immediately raised questions about Germany's role: Would the Federal Republic be able to remain a "civilian power" if peace was now the global business of multilateral alliances, which required war making? President Bush raised the stakes when he declared:

“Even as Germany celebrates this new beginning, there is no doubt that the future holds new challenges, new responsibilities. I'm certain that our two nations will meet these challenges (...). Together, building on the values we share, we will be partners in leadership” (Bush 1990).

Large demonstrations in Germany showed that the wider public was very skeptical about German participation in the war, as “the prevailing view was that war was not an acceptable means of politics” (Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010: 430). As a consequence, Germany did not participate in the Gulf War militarily but offered “cheque book” diplomacy, i.e. generous financial aid (Sperling 1994). In sum, the Bonn Republic was to fail “immediately to live up to this role through its collective recoil from physical involvement in the 1991 Gulf War, which represented everything Germany felt it had definitively rejected” (Howorth 2007: 152).

Realizing that Germany would increasingly be called upon along its allies in the post-1989 international context with its multiple international peacekeeping interventions, the Kohl government (1982-1998) spurred public debate about the role of German armed forces. Where French and British allies wanted the German Army to become more apt at crisis management tasks and other missions requiring force projection to maintain stability out of area, the German debate still very much turned around the acceptability of the use of force *itself*.

A 1994 decision by the Federal Constitutional Court lifted some of the restrictions of the German constitution, albeit under a very precise set of conditions, notably parliamentary consent prior to the engagement of hostilities ("*konstitutiver Parlamentsvorbehalt*"). As opposed to the times of the Cold War, when German forces could only be used to defend the homeland or the alliance, they were now allowed to partake in armed missions beyond the NATO area, that is “out of area” ("*Auslandseinsätze bewaffneter deutscher Streitkräfte*").⁴⁸

However, more German military participation in international missions also raised the question of compatibility between Germany's and the US' strategic

⁴⁸ See BPB 2014 and Deutscher Bundestag. Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr. <http://www.bundestag.de/bundestag/ausschuesse18/a12/auslandseinsaetze>. Accessed on 14.10.2015. In addition to these constitutional restrictions, a 2005 Law on Parliamentary Participation, the *Parlamentsbeteiligungsgesetz*, has further cemented parliamentary prerogatives by obliging the government to keep the Bundestag regularly informed about ongoing missions (§6). Parliament can also revoke approval at any time (§8).

cultures, which led military efforts in Iraq, Bosnia and Kosovo. US air strikes and weapons sales to the Bosnia army alienated great parts of the German public and led to what Berenskoetter and Giegerich call “estrangement” between the allies, namely “German-American dissonance about the terms of building international order through NATO” (Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010: 428). Key issues in this respect were a German emphasis on negotiations and non-violent approaches to conflict resolution while the US favored a lifting of sanctions and air strikes (Hallams 2009: 43).

All of this posed the question of US leadership and, in extremis, dependency of European and German diplomacy. For instance, up until the massacre of Srebrenica (1995), Germany had exclusively relied on diplomatic solutions, peace conferences in Geneva or the Vance-Owen plan, and Germany participated in peacekeeping troops, but it was dependent on US capabilities for anything going beyond the policing of pre-existing political settlements. This was problematic, given that German leaders were in the midst of developing a narrative of an “ascending” power in the heart of Europe, bound to take its due place as a “grown-up” nation in the concert of European powers (Cohen 1999; Ramet and Ingebritsen 2002; Grant 2005, Forsberg 2005).

This was especially true for the incoming Schröder administration (1998), which declared Germany would no longer be the paymaster of the EU and campaigned for a German seat in the UN Security Council (Grant 2005). German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer’s “*Nie wieder Auschwitz*” (“never again Auschwitz”) became emblematic for an entire generation of German officials who argued, as the wars in the Balkans and elsewhere lasted throughout the whole decade, that Germany needed to reaffirm its place as a self-confident power and shoulder its burden: In Fischer’s view, Germany had a moral obligation not to stand idle in the face of mass atrocities and genocide (Der Spiegel 13.05.1999). This could include the use of force, as in Kosovo 1999, but it could also mean that Germany had the right to say “no”, as Schröder and Fischer did over the 2003 Iraq war (Forsberg 2005). It also meant that events like the Rambouillet conference, where Germany was sidelined in its own European backyard by the US government, must be seen as another important factor in the calculations to work for a European defense option (Weller 1999).

The Schröder government's taking possession of the Franco-British Saint Malo initiative needs to be seen in light of the above developments. For instance, all the while supporting Saint Malo, the Schröder government intensified its double-track diplomacy based on pro-integration activism and reassurances to Washington. Indeed, innumerable policy speeches of German foreign policy leaders at the time indicate that the US remained indispensable for European security and that Germany would only act through the ESDP if NATO agreed (Scharping 1999, 2000; Fischer 1999, Schröder and Bush 2001).

Having taken over the EU Presidency in 1999, Germany circulated a paper in Brussels in which it argued that

“The prime focus of our debate should be on how Europe can possess appropriate structures and capabilities (which obviously need to include military capabilities) to conduct crisis management in the sense of the Petersburg tasks. The question of defense commitments (Article 5 NATO - and WEU-Treaty- should - for the time being - not be the first priority. Crisis management is the area where a European capacity to act is required most urgently” (German Presidency Paper 24.02.1999).

However, faced with domestic criticism concerning its participation in the Kosovo bombing campaign, the German government also initiated a debate on civilian post-conflict reconstruction tools. Germany insisted on a focus on comprehensive and civilian security concepts at the Nizza Summit, which issued an Annex on civilian, non-military crisis management tools. At the Cologne Summit, it was agreed that 5,000 policemen (900 of which would be Germans) would be made available to the EU in order to bolster the EU's non-combat-related crisis management profile. The Coalition Agreement between the Greens and the SPD (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*) noted that the CFSP would “increasingly be used in its further development to increase the EU's capacity for civilian conflict prevention” (Koalitionsvereinbarung 1998: 37).

Hence, while the Saint Malo summit had been a French-British initiative, Germany took Saint Malo from the bilateral to a European level in line with its “civilian power” tradition (Overhaus 2004: 40). In the words of one official,

“the role of Germany was to allow the survival of the defense dimension [contained in the French proposals]. It sure softened the project, placing the reflections about European defense in a focus of extreme political correctness, with idealistic conceptions. However, if the road was now open for regular meetings of European

defense ministers, a small skeleton of a military general staff and the European Defence Agency, it was because of Germany, which strongly promoted the creation of European defense institutions”.⁴⁹

It is thus too simple to pretend Saint Malo was only a French-British bargain the result of which Germany passively “downloaded” – rather, it was an important actor in shaping the nascent European defense structures according to its own image. German insistence on non-violent preventive and observation missions, election observation or monitoring in Europe’s backyard also helps explain why the Germans, who were holding the EU presidency at the time of the 1999 Cologne Summit, were able to rally other European countries, like the neutral Austrians or Irish, behind the project.

Thus, while many authors have presented Saint Malo as Franco-British uploading of their strategic cultures to the European level, it is important to stress that the Cologne Summit’s final documents equally represented Germany’s European-centered and inward looking focus, putting it at odds with France and the UK immediately (Muniz 2013; Schmitt 2009). Soon, authors started to issue the suspicion that for the Germans “ESDP was geared more to European integration than to military capacity” (Howorth 2007: 141). In fact, as Lisbeth Aggestam correctly notes, “the deepening of foreign policy integration has been less about exerting European power and more about diffusing it internally” (Aggestam 2004: 94).

Hence, Germany’s role was crucial in keeping Saint Malo “large”, thus allowing different European MS to project different ideals and goals on the project of European defense and security integration.

⁴⁹ Interview with former French defense official, 18.07.2012.

2.4. Conclusion

The analysis of this chapter was framed around the core idea that concrete constellations in reaction to precise events, not strategic cultural convergence, helps understand the advances in European defense and security integration during the 1990s. Based on this assumption, this chapter highlighted the specific factors that contributed to the process, but it also analyzed those factors that hampered a full realization of the Collective Foreign Policy Potentials from the start. Most prominently, Germany played an important role in bringing the Franco-British initiative to the EU level, but it also contributed to frame it in a way that was ambiguous, “diluted and overly politically correct”;⁵⁰ it helped rallying a wide range of neutrals and states with preferences for “softer” security approaches, but also limited French and British buy-in to the project from the start.

It is important to note that the process was very much capability-led, focused on the development of military hardware and the creation of tools, institutions and options. The Treaties of Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice all made sure the reality of the documents would continue to clash with ambitious rhetoric (coming notably out of the European Commission) about a “common” security policy and Europe’s security role as a “global power”: The Maastricht Treaty’s careful formula that the “progressive framing of a common defence policy” “*might* lead to a common defence, should the European Council so decide” was repeated in the Amsterdam Treaty and the Nice Treaty (TEU: Title V, Article 17 J.7; emphasis added).

Given this cautious wording, strong inter-governmentalism and the clashing visions when it came to interventions and the use of force, it was difficult to see how the EU could become the promoter of a particular “approach” to security such as “human security” for instance. Though the “Balkan experience” greatly enhanced European diplomatic cooperation and mutual understanding, it is important to underline the profoundly vague and capability-driven nature of security and defense integration in the 1990s, made possible by specific circumstances but tightly boxed in from the start by divergent strategic cultures.

⁵⁰ Expression used by interview partner. Interview with former French defense official, 18.07.2012.

The following chapter continues the analysis of strategic culture and picks up the theme of the “transatlantic division of labor” presented above. It shows how the largely technical vision of a transatlantic division of labor became an excuse for the implementation of a multitude of uncoordinated micro-strategies in Afghanistan, which were strongly rooted in the respective strategic cultures of the MS.

Chapter 3. European strategic culture, European actorness and Afghanistan

3.0. Introduction

The chapter takes the reader from the 1990s to the 2000s and analyzes the notion of a “European strategic culture”. Though High Representative Federica Mogherini is currently preparing to present a new “EU Global Strategy” in June 2016 (see Biscop 22.11.2015), this chapter advances the argument that it makes little sense to discuss the idea of a European strategic culture in the continued absence of a political *finalité* in security and defense. The chapter starts with a brief repetition: As Chapter 1 showed the concept of “strategic culture” denotes the shared beliefs, norms and ideas within a given society that constitute certain behavioral possibilities in security and defense. Speaking of “strategic culture” implies the existence of an ideational milieu that limits the choices and actions of states based on historically unique experiences and what are thought to be important “lessons” from the past. It also implies a sense of decisional autonomy: Just like it only makes sense to say a person’s manners are “civilized” if that person can *also* decide to behave in “barbarian” (or “uncivilized”) ways, the statement that a given country’s strategic culture is characterized by a reluctance to use force only makes sense if there is a possibility to use force in the first place. In other words, the notion of strategic culture only has meaning in connection with an ability to make positive decisions determined by choice, not only constraint.

Those authors who argue that CSDP missions provide evidence of a European strategic culture point to “dominant strands” in European security cultures, reflected in European elite discourse and policy practice, to make the case that European security action is based on shared common cultural predispositions and therefore the result of positive European choices (see section 1.7.c). However, if a particular MS wishes to formulate a robust military mandate for a particular CSDP mission, but other MS or the European Commission modify the mandate so that the force posture becomes neutral and focused on non-military tasks, it makes little sense to claim the CSDP mission reflects a European strategic culture based on neutrality. This is

because this mandate is no deliberate collective choice, but a tortured compromise (see the example of EUFOR Chad in section 1.4). Therefore, it is important to realize that the proto-European strategic culture that some authors identify can only be a “European strategic culture *by default*” as long as the “actorness potential” remains unfulfilled, in other words as long as there is no political *finalité* for European security and defense.

For the four Collective Foreign Policy Potentials of collective shaping and (pro)acting in autonomy, this absence of a political *finalité* and European strategic culture means that there is no notable European ambition to “shape” if it means *collectively* and proactively taking responsibility in the security environment without a US lead or guarantee. This is certainly not a mainstream position: Prominent EU documents have argued the EU “must lead a renewal of the multilateral order”, for instance (IR ESS 2008: 2). However, this chapter does intend to underline the above arguments, proceeding in two steps.

3.0.a. Structure

The first part of this chapter is conceived as a *tour d’horizon* of collective security actorness. It argues that if a rigorous definition is applied, the EU is no security actor that could translate cultural commonalities between the MS into a comprehensive European strategic culture, or that could agree on common security action going beyond extremely narrowly mandated CSDP missions (3.1). The section starts with a very brief presentation of the EU’s decision-making problem, the low CSDP budget and diverse groups and formats the MS have developed to circumvent the problems of consensual decision-making (3.1.1.a-b.). This is followed by an overview of the MS’ individual and collective crisis management tools (military and civilian) (3.1.2.a-b.). Concerning the MS level, which also needs to be taken into account, the chapter is mostly based on the UK, France and Germany, but other states are also included in the analysis. Next, a look into European White Books and strategic documentation shows the MS’ threat perceptions, their strategic interests and their goals diverge substantially (3.1.3.). The chapter then analyzes four central

problems that hamper collective MS strategy making in security (3.1.4.). This leads to a brief presentation of current discussions about CSDP missions and what they can tell us about the EU's "strategic culture". As stated, the argument is that such discussions are a dead alley, because what is portrayed as a European strategic culture is very much the result of inner constraints, not a positive choice about appropriate behavior (3.1.5).

The second part focuses on the MS' contributions to the early Afghan campaign. It develops the MS' problematic collective actorness against the background of the narrative of a transatlantic division of labor. It analyzes why, despite strong normative acceptance and strong rhetorical MS commitments to approach security issues, firstly, in a coordinated manner and secondly, with joined-up civilian-military tools, the MS' parallel security actions failed to produce a "Europeanized" foreign policy approach.

Looking at the way the British, French and German foreign policy elites construed their contributions during the early years of the Afghan intervention, this chapter analyzes how these countries' national responses were rooted in their respective strategic cultures and how this led their foreign policy elites to frame the same Afghan mission differently (3.2.). This made it difficult to speak of a specific European strategic culture revolving around the focal point of a "consensus on a comprehensive approach to security as a unique European Union asset, rather than on a broad set of shared security interests amongst its Member States" (Norheim-Martinsen 2011: 517).

The three countries came to Afghanistan with different ideas about their role in the international arena, but most importantly their adequate relation to the military leader, the US. This disagreement most fatefully concerned Germany, France and the UK, although the argument is valid beyond those three states (3.2.1.a-c.). Furthermore, they came to Afghanistan with diverging ideas about what NATO was about, and what it could, or should do – and what not. The MS developed very different ideas about which aspects the mission should – or should not – stress, civilian matters or military ones. This became most visible with the question of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) (3.2.2.). Related to this was the question of appropriate relations between civilian and military tools, an issue on which the European states found (and still find) it difficult to establish consensus (3.2.3).

Because of these diverging national agendas, “European” or “common” responses could only be formulated in largely consensual areas such as development, aid and humanitarian relief responses. It is here that a “division of labor” between the MS and the US arguably materialized, although important reservations need to be made, notably concerning the largely un-strategic and little context-specific nature of European aid, which hampered its effectiveness and kept it from having the intended impact (3.2.4.).

With an eye on chapters 4 and 5, it can be noted that the second part of this chapter is an important intermediate step in the overall demonstration of this dissertation, because despite the divergence that kept the MS from elaborating a common (i.e. European) political project during the early years (Chapters 3 and 4), they were able to align their actions on the US’ political project during the later years. The question this begs is what explains the difference between these two situations and this chapter starts providing an answer.

3.1. The MS' unwillingness to realize collective actorness in security

The idea that the MS have achieved collective actorness via the EU is hotly debated (Gareis, Hauser, Kernic 2013; Lucarelli and Fioramonti 2010; Bretherton and Vogler 2006). The great amount of elaborate conceptualizations of the EU's actorness – from Stephan Keukeleire's and Jennifer MacNaughtan's "multipillar and multilevel" system, to René Schwok's and Frédéric Mérand's definition of "multi-level governance", or Magone's "complex system of multilevel governance", to name but a few – only confirms this point (Keukeleire and MacNaughtan 2008: 34; Schwok and Mérand 2009: 52-53; Magone 2006: 144).

Optimistic authors opine that the Maastricht Treaty and later the Lisbon Treaty created an international actor increasingly confident and able (Howorth and Keeler 2003; Posen 2006; Wallace 2005). For Howorth, "like it or not", the Lisbon Treaty definitely turned the EU into an "international actor", not least because it conferred legal personality to the EU (Howorth 2010a: 455). Though the term has become fashionable, it is seldom specified what exactly is meant by "EU actorness" (Major and Bail 2011: 18).

Therefore, this chapter proposes to define an actor as a person or group able to 1) *define goals* and to 2) *formulate strategies* to reach them. In order to be able to define goals (1), the given actor needs

A) a decision-making system that is institutionalized and which allows to make binding decisions. To define goals the actor also must have

B) interests, if possible clearly identified. These interests must be formulated, they must be prioritized and they must flow into goals. Next, to define goals the actor also needs

C) the capacity for analysis, leading to an analysis of a given situation. In the case of this chapter, the situation and analysis we are concerned with is the threat perception: Do the MS agree what the threat environment is?

Concerning the formulation of strategies (2), that is, ways to get where and what the actor wants, the latter must

A) have ideas about appropriate action. This part concerns the normative dimension of foreign policy, i.e., the MS' broad normative convergence around a great deal of common norms. Lastly, one can also ask whether,

B) the means the actor has at its disposal are relevant to reach goals, in other words whether they are useful or adequate and whether they exist in sufficient quantity.

Based on this definition, the following part reviews the problems concerning the notion of collective MS actorness (or "EU actorness") in light of the Collective Foreign Policy Potentials.

3.1.1.a. CSDP's low budget and consensual decision-making

A first important limitation to the MS' collective actorness is the low budget the MS allocate to the CSDP, not to mention the fact that much spending happens through national channels (Wallace 2005: 454; K. E. Smith 2003). CSDP's budget has been rather constant since 2011 (2011: € 303 million; 2012: € 303 million; 2013 (estimated): € 321 million; see EUISS YES 2013). This is low when compared with national foreign policy budgets: For instance, in 2010, the German Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt*) alone had a budget of € 3,19 billion, two thirds of which were dedicated to operative foreign policy (Deutsche Bundesregierung 2010).⁵¹ CFSP's budgetary allocation for the entire period between 2007 and 2013 was € 1,981 million, which amounts to only 0.2 % of the EU's total budget (Terpan 2015). Thus, what the MS have allocated so far to the EU's political role on the world stage does not compare to the ambitions that can be found in EU documents and reduces the CSDP to a tool of relatively low priority (Krotz 2009: 564).

More importantly, although the foreign policy instrument of "common strategies" was written into the EU's toolbox with Article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty, the MS have never agreed to pool sovereignty in the realm of foreign, security

⁵¹ For 2015, there was an increase of € 8,05 million to a total of € 3,73 billion. See "Haushalt des Auswärtigen Amtes vom Bundestag verabschiedet", available online: <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/AAmt/00Aktuelles/141126-BM-Haushalt2015.html>. Updated on 26 November 2014.

and defense policy (see previous chapter). The European Council may be tasked with determining “the strategic interests and objectives of the Union” for all of the EU’s external actions, but the treaties are clear on the fact that the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) “shall be defined and implemented by the European Council and the Council *acting unanimously*”.⁵² As the possibility to impose foreign policy decisions on reluctant MS remains virtually inexistent, the MS’ collective security or country “strategies” are best described as “roadmaps”, but do not follow a true strategic logic (Nuttal 2005; see section 1.4.).

The 2009 Lisbon Treaty brought two important innovations. Firstly, the post of the High Representative was extended to include the role of Vice-President of the Commission. The second innovation was the creation of the EEAS. The EAAS’ purpose is to help define common EU foreign policies and coordinate MS embassies in third countries. Though some carefully optimistic evaluations argue the service improves coordination, it cannot solve the problem of CSDP’s strict inter-governmental decision-making process (Austermann 2014, Koops and Macaj 2014; Laursen 2012).

3.1.1.b. Groups and formats

Two types of “compromise” solutions exist to CSDP’s decision-making problem. The first was introduced by the Lisbon Treaty and is called “permanent structured cooperation”. Article 42.6 formulates the possibility for some Member States to function as an avant-garde group in military matters. Protocol 10 annexed to the Lisbon Treaty specifies that in order to be able to do so, the MS need to inform the Council and the High Representative, following which the Council can decide by qualified majority upon the establishment of permanent structured cooperation. Once the framework has been decided, decisions and recommendations are adopted by unanimity of the participating Council members.⁵³ This theoretically opens the door to “coalitions of the willing” inside the EU and enables it to act in a quick and

⁵² See Art 24.1 of the Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union (emphasis added).

⁵³ Europa. Synthèses de la législation. Glossary. Permanent structured cooperation.

http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/permanent_structured_cooperation_en.htm. Accessed on 30 January 2015.

decisive manner. So far, however, the MS have not used “permanent structured cooperation” a single time (Santopinto and Price 2013). Consequently, the literature tends to paint a bleak picture of the concept’s success (Kempin 2013).

Small groups and defense cooperation formats present the second solution to by-pass the EU’s decision-making and actorness problem (Naim 2009; Alcaro 2014). The case of the “EU3” (Germany, France and the UK) negotiating with Iran over its uranium enrichment program has received close scrutiny (Everts 2004; Denza 2005; Goldthau 2008). Andreas Goldthau, for instance, argued the EU 3 was proof that such groups can overcome the ESDP’s “inability” to generate common policies; a sense of strategic actorness can be triggered by what he calls “issue-specific regimes” (Goldthau 2008: 59). More recently, the so-called “Normandy Format” brought together France and Germany, who assumed European leadership after President Putin’s invasion of Ukraine in 2014/2015 (Auswärtiges Amt 2015).⁵⁴ However, recurring to small groups amounts to recognition that collective actorness, i.e., a common foreign policy comprising *all* the MS is too difficult to achieve, especially when speed is required.

Going beyond case-specific groups like the EU 3 or the Normandy Format, defense cooperation formats now exist everywhere in Europe, for instance between Portugal and Spain, between France, Germany and Poland (the Weimar Triangle) or between Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia (the Central European Defense Cooperation, CEDC) (see Joint Statement 2013; Adebahr 2011; Kurowska and Németh 2013; Onderco 2013). A “Declaration on Defence and Security Co-operation” between France and the UK (2010) has brought French-British defense cooperation to new levels in the domains of, inter alia, transport aircraft, nuclear submarines, military satellite technology, and aircraft carriers (Jones 2011).

There are military cooperation programs between the Baltic states as well, for instance on air policing, joint trainings, air, ground and navy collaboration, but also meetings between defense ministers and leadership in the Baltic Military Committee (Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 02.12.2014). A Lithuanian infantry brigade

⁵⁴ The Normandy Format also includes Ukraine and Russia. Before the Format, the “EU Trio”, involving the foreign ministers of Poland, Germany and France, assumed effective leadership in the Ukrainian crisis.

(“Iron Wolf”) was integrated into a Danish Division in 2006 with the goal of strengthening NATO’s capabilities (Lithuanian Ministry of Defense 19.08.2006). Similar initiatives exist in the Black Sea region (the South Eastern Europe Defense Ministerial Process) and in the Balkans (the Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group, which brings together the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Balkan countries in annual meetings) (see De France and Witney 2012). Together, Iceland, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden cooperate via NORDEF, the Nordic Defense Cooperation.

The Visegrad group (Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic) also features a considerable amount of common defense projects, notably around pooling and sharing. Lastly, the three Benelux countries have signed a “*Déclaration d’intention de coopération*” for further regional integration in training, maintenance, logistics and operations. They have launched the Benelux Battle Group in 2014; Belgian marines train on Dutch submarines and are trained and educated in the Netherlands. Their navies share an integrated command and the Dutch and Belgian militaries jointly survey their air space and collaborate closely in maintenance and mine-destruction.

However, important reservations need to be raised when it comes to these cooperation formats. Firstly, close military cooperation does not necessarily produce common policy, as the case of the Visegrad countries (Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia) illustrates. Those four states have kicked off a host of military cooperation projects, but a recent report argued that since the Ukraine crisis a “return to a ‘go it alone’ approach, bureaucratic inertia and a lack of political leadership impede further momentum on the regional security front” (Nič 2015; Koran, Feledy and Nič 2015).

The Central European Defense Cooperation initiative also encounters the problem that the Czech Republic looks to NATO for security guarantees, while Austria’s neutrality makes it difficult for the latter to push ahead on NATO projects (Kurowska and Németh 2013). Similarly, the Nordic Defense Cooperation between Iceland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland takes great care to underline its

respect for the countries' very different orientations when it comes to NATO, the EU and the UN.⁵⁵

Secondly, many of those defense cooperation formats are meant to compensate for severe spending cuts in defense and therefore perpetuate the MS' overall low capacity to shape the security environment. Though the UK, France and Germany aim to remain “full-spectrum forces” (meaning they try to maintain credible levels of capacity across all domains of military activity), the military risk is that they become “Bonsai armies”: They maintain *capabilities* in all major categories of military action, but low levels of *capacity* characterize each field.⁵⁶ Coming back to defense cooperation formats, this means that spending cuts currently lead the UK and Germany, for instance, to develop cooperation schemes with smaller European countries that are pursuing a path of military role specialization and the development of niche expertise. This results in small, integrated groups that a “framework nation” is bound to lead.

For instance, based on the principle of “*Breite vor Tiefe*” (“width before depth”), Germany has initiated new cooperation agreements as part of what it calls the concept of “*Anlehnungsmacht*” (a word which translates into “power to lean on”). Under this scheme, German Defense Minister de Maizière and Dutch Defense Minister Hennis-Plasschaert signed a German-Dutch cooperation agreement in May 2013 that indicates a trend in European military affairs. The Agreement puts a Dutch Air Mobile Brigade under the command of the German Division „*Schnelle Kräfte*“. This means that the German Division now operates with two battalions: one German and one Dutch. About 80 % of the 55,000 members of the German Army are slated to take part in this scheme in the long term.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ See <http://www.nordefco.org/>, the website of the Nordic Defense Cooperation.

⁵⁶ This distinction between capability and capacity is borrowed from Julian Lindley-French, who sees a danger of a “capability-capacity crunch” in Europe, meaning that European forces develop ever more professional, small and lethal capabilities, but do not have sufficient capacity, or critical mass, to carry out reconstruction or stabilization tasks (Lindley-French 2006).

⁵⁷ Phone interview with German military expert 07.06.2015. Similar “framework nation” agreements now exist between the Dutch and the Belgians (for which the Dutch act as “framework nation”). At a 2013 NATO Defense Ministers Meeting, a group of ten states signed a joint letter to improve cooperation to create multinational projects in priority capability areas, such as logistics support, CBRN protection (i.e. chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense), firepower delivery from land, air and sea and deployable headquarters. The UK also leads another group, the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), which aims at facilitating efficient deployment of military units. Italy, another lead nation, focuses on improving enablers and command and control capabilities (see Kufčák 2014). Other examples include Estonia, which cooperates with Finland on long-range radar systems, and the Baltics, who rely on Poland and Germany to patrol their air space.

Summing up, it is difficult to hold the EU to the yardsticks of a definition that associates actorness with “a clear identity and a self-contained decision making system” (C. Hill 1993: 308). The MS have collectively created a foreign policy “system” that results in collective presence, not European security actorness (Toje 2008b: 203; Müller 2012: 41; Ginsberg and Penksa 2012:35). Whether European foreign policies simply co-exist next to each other, or if they add up to something more needs to be analyzed case-specifically (as the chapters 4, 5 and 6 do).

Going beyond the MS’ ability to act together in security and defense, be it as a collective of 28 states or in smaller groups, an important prerequisite for a policy trying to shape or proact in the security environment is the ability to deploy civilian or military personnel in the context of the Petersberg tasks (which range from humanitarian and rescue tasks to peace-keeping, peace-making and post-conflict stabilization). This is what we turn to now.

3.1.2. European civilian and military tools for crisis management

3.1.2.a. Civilian crisis management tools

On the side of civilian tools, the experience of the Balkans acted as a powerful driver in shaping EU mechanisms for civilian assistance, be it judicial reform, police training, border management or security sector reform (Dobbins 2008; Merlingen and Ostrauskaite 2006). A first “Civilian Headline Goal” singled out the rule of law, policing, civil protection and civil administration as priority areas in the year 2000 and the MS pledged to make 5,000 police officers available for civilian ESDP missions. They defined a list of “key tasks” for civilian policing, including monitoring, advising and training local police forces, preventing or mitigating internal crises or conflicts, restoring law and order in post-conflict situations, and supporting local police in the protection of human rights. The subsequent Gothenburg Council in 2001 set out the rather moderate goal to send, within a month’s time, 200 judges and

prosecutors into crisis management operations, as part of a core pool of civilian administration experts and provide civil protection teams of up to 2,000 people.

When the MS failed to deliver, the European Council launched the Civilian Headline Goal in 2004 to set up a database of available civilian expertise and tools in national capitals. A new Civilian Headline Goal, this time in 2008, added monitoring missions and the support for EU Special Representatives to the previously identified priorities, and it included the “focus areas” of SSR, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR).⁵⁸ Shortfalls continued, however: In 2009, Richard Gowan and Daniel Korski estimated that on all 12 ongoing CSDP missions at the time, the EU was probably lacking at least 1,500 personnel (Gowan and Korski 2009: 44).

One reason for this is that European nations create civilian capacities outside the EU framework. In Germany, for instance, the so-called “*Zentrum für internationale Friedenseinsätze*” (ZIF)⁵⁹ was set up as a broker between German citizens, the EU, OSCE and the UN. Like the UK’s Stabilization Unit, it provides personnel to state building, crisis and other missions. Similar institutions now exist in Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, the UK and Denmark (Gowan and Korski 2009). It is also important to note that the MS second most personnel on EU civilian missions. According to the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC), out of a total of 2,289 personnel deployed on ESDP missions in 2009, 1,914 were seconded from the Member States. Only 375 had been contracted in the private sector (see Gowan and Korski 2009: 45).

There have been proposals to create a European corps of civilian mediators, but as things stand today, the experts the EU can mobilize autonomously do not count more than a few hundred (Bildt, Brantner, Lamassoure 2012; Council of the EU 04.11.2009: 2). Hence, while the EU often claims to be the avant-garde of civilian tools for crisis management, the record so far suggests a haphazard pool of largely uncoordinated tools with different standards of training and mostly controlled by the MS, who cannot agree to put them to use in situations like Libya, because some states prefer military, others civilian approaches (Youngs 2014).

⁵⁸ See: About CSDP. Civilian Headline Goals.

http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/about-csdp/civilian_headline_goals/index_en.htm. Accessed on 11.10.2015.

⁵⁹ Zentrum für internationale Friedenseinsätze translates as Center for international peace operations.

3.1.2.b. Military crisis management tools

Coming to the military side, the following paragraphs discuss the EU's and the MS' ability to project force. The European Council theoretically has the so-called Battle Groups at its disposal. The Battle Groups evolved out of the earlier European Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF), which had been set up by the European Council in Helsinki 1999. Its concluding document read:

“Member States have set themselves the headline goal: by the year 2003, cooperating together voluntarily, they will be able to deploy rapidly and then sustain forces capable of the full range of Petersberg Tasks as set out in the Amsterdam Treaty, including the most demanding, in operations up to corps level (up to 15 brigades or 50-60,000 persons)” (European Council 10-11.12.1999).

The ERRF was to be sustainable for a least one year, capable of everything from disarmament operations to peacemaking and deployable in two months' time. However, when the MS failed to deliver they lowered their ambitions in 2004: At the initiative of Britain, France and Germany, the ERRF became the Battle Groups in February 2004, conceived to be some 2,500 strong (with about 1,500 combat personnel and 1000 for combat support), deployable within 15 days and able to act as a stand-alone first entry force in high intensity missions. Starting in 2007, at least one Battle Group has always been kept on a level of quick deployability, but because the MS have been unable to agree on their use, they have never been sent into combat. One main restraining factor is the fact that the costs for maintaining high readiness on stand-by fall entirely on the nation that contributes: The MS can't currently agree on a financial mechanism for burden sharing.⁶⁰

Furthermore, the MS do not agree on EU operational headquarters independent from NATO structures. The UK's defense minister William Hague made this clear in July 2011, declaring: “I have made very clear that the United Kingdom will not agree to a permanent operational [EU] HQ. We will not agree to it now and we will not agree to it in the future. That is a red line” (The Telegraph 18.07.2011). Other MS can be surmised of hiding behind this position, for instance Denmark.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Interview with EEAS official, Brussels, 10.05.2015.

⁶¹ Ibid.

This leaves the EU with three options if it wants to deploy a military mission: Firstly, a MS can make one of its national headquarters available. A second option is to use a NATO headquarter under the “Berlin Plus” agreements (see below). In a third scenario, the so-called “EU Operations Center” can be used. This Operations Center was created in December 2004 (and ready to be used in January 2007). The Foreign Affairs Council has activated it once in 2012, with the goal of coordinating civil-military activities between three ongoing CSDP missions in the Horn of Africa (see European Council Decision 2012/173CFSP). Compared to NATO, it is poorly staffed and does not represent a European headquarter in the true sense of the word.

Another important limitation to joint EU military missions is the provision that the CSDP’s autonomous capacity to take decisions in the field of crisis management pertains to cases where NATO as a whole is not engaged. Some have referred to Operation Artemis (the first EU operation without the use of NATO assets and for which NATO assent was not awaited) to suggest that since NATO’s “right of first refusal” does not work in practice, this creates a de facto European autonomy. However, given the long time it takes to transfer the EU’s personnel and logistics to national headquarters, it can be safely stated that the EU remains operationally dependent on NATO (and thus de facto on the US) in cases requiring swift and robust action (Toje 2010).

In case the EU wants to plan, field and carry out a crisis management operation, the so-called “Berlin Plus” agreement guarantees it access to NATO assets, for instance secure telecommunication lines, as well as planning capabilities. It also makes a NATO-European command option available for EU-led operations utilizing NATO assets (by designating a NATO office as commander). As we saw earlier, European treaties suggest CSDP may, one day, lead to a common European defense but in practice, the “Berlin Plus” agreement continues to hamper autonomous EU crisis management operations: First, once the EU has made a decision to launch a CSDP military mission, NATO officials will determine which of NATO’s assets and capabilities can be made available. NATO can also always recall assets in case it needs them for a mission (see Council of the EU 11.11.2000).

More importantly, while NATO offers premises, it does not offer personnel. US military is typically not allowed to work for the EU, which means that in case the EU wants to use NATO’s assets, which in practice are US assets most of the time,

Europeans must first learn the procedures, for instance on communication systems. The EU's reliance on national operational headquarters, and the time it can take to identify one when MS hesitate to volunteer, places heavy restrictions on rapid EU force deployment (Webber, Sperling and Smith 2012: 161). In sum, the EU's ability to project force collectively remains under high surveillance by NATO, and tightly controlled by non-EU NATO allies and the US (see Biscop 2006).

For Berlin Plus operations, EU force projection is also blocked by a stalemate between Turkey and Cyprus, which remains a divided island whose northern part only Turkey recognizes as independent. Cyprus (a member of the EU) blocks Turkish membership in the European Defence Agency (EDA) and for Ankara (a NATO member) no formal EU-NATO cooperation can take place until the "Greek Cypriots" lift their objections to Turkey's membership in the EDA. Turkey's power to veto the EU's use of NATO assets is clear from NATO's 2000 Florence Communiqué, which refers to "practical arrangements for assured EU access to NATO planning capabilities and for ready EU access to NATO collective assets and capabilities on a case-by-case basis and *by consensus*" (NATO 24.05.2000: § 29, author's emphasis).

Coming to the MS level, a major difficulty for the ability to collectively project force and shape the security environment is the fact that European armies are still largely structured around heavy combat tanks or interceptor planes, as they were historically designed for territorial defense against the Red Army. The change from European conscription-based armies to professional forces that started in the 1990s is a slow process and important shortfalls in communication, intelligence, logistics, satellite systems or strategic transportation affect European militaries (Liberti 2013).⁶² Much equipment is outdated: Together, European nations still have about 10,000 tanks and 2,500 fighter planes, but their level of adaptation to cyber war or quelling insurgencies is trailing behind (Witney 2008).

Only between 5 and 6 % of European forces can actually be deployed in crisis theaters (Lamassoure 2010). This means that out of a total of 1,45 million soldiers, EU Member States together are able to deploy and sustain 100,000 soldiers in

⁶² The first European armies to abandon conscription were Belgium and the Netherlands in the mid-1990s. France followed in 2001, Spain in 2002 and Italy, Poland, Sweden and Germany made the same choice between 2006 and 2011 (Irons 2003; Meyer 2013).

external theaters. This compares to the deployable capacity of the US of about 400,000 troops (Keohane 2012: 2). What is more, personnel-related expenditure still continues to account for about 50 % of total defense expenditure, at the expense of spending on research and new technologies (EDA 2012).

The 2014/2015 Ukrainian crisis has slightly changed European spending patterns, most visibly in the former states of the Eastern bloc. Poland increased its military spending by 13 % in 2014 and it is estimated that 2015 has brought another 20 % increase, which would make Poland reach NATO's goal to spend 2 % of its GDP on defense (Süddeutsche Zeitung 13.04.2015). Estonia and Latvia were expected to increase their spending by 7,3 % and 15 %, and Lithuania by 50 % in 2015 (ibid.). However, while all NATO members pledged in 2014 to increase their defense spending to 2 % of their GDPs in ten years' time, a recent assessment concluded that it is "unrealistic to assume that this goal will ever be reached by all 28 allies" (Techau 2015; see also Mölling 2014 and Grand 17.02.2015). Most importantly, European defense cuts following the 2008 banking meltdown have not been coordinated at all, as one might expect if the MS really aspired to collective actorness (Maulny 2010).⁶³ While the 27 MS together spend more on defense than Russia and China together, the MS mostly spend their money on national, not European projects (Witney 2011: 2).

Coming to the UK, Germany and France, which all had more than 500,000 troops in the 1990s, they are now down to about a third of these levels (The Military Balance 2013). The UK reduced its defense budget by 8 % after 2011 and a Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) report warned in early 2015 that the British Army could be cut to just about 50,000 over the next four years (Liberti 2013: 22; The Telegraph 09.03.2015). To be fair, the November 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review does indicate that the downward trend has currently been arrested, due to an ambition to increase the deployable expeditionary force from 30,000 to

⁶³ Of course, European defense cuts can be traced back as far as 1945 and they intensified after 1989. While European countries spent 3,1 % of their GDPs on defense between 1984 and 1989 (on average), this figure fell to 1,7 % in 2008 (EDA 2012). For instance, Sweden downsized its field army from 29 brigades to seven battalions between 1989 and 2010 and Denmark cut its army from three divisions and five auxiliary brigades to one division that consists of two brigades. One just needs to pick a country to go on with the list, for instance with the Netherlands, which went to a corps with ten brigades to three understaffed brigades (Angstrom and Honig 2012).

50,000 by 2025 and an engagement that the size of the Army will not fall below 82,000 regulars and 35,000 reservists (UK Government November 2015).

France, the other European military power theoretically capable of conducting “first entry” missions, is estimated to have cut about 54,000 jobs in the army and € 3,5 billion in defense spending between 2011 and 2013 (Liberti 2013: 22). Recent developments indicate a slight upward trend, although increased defense spending is no fundamental game changer: After the 13 November 2015 terror attacks in Paris, the French Senate voted to increase the 2016 defense budget by € 273 million (Ouest France 27.11.2015).

The 2011 Libya intervention revealed the difficulties European states have even in low-intensity conflicts. European allies ran short of ammunitions during the campaign, and while NATO had been able to deploy 1,100 aircraft in Kosovo, progressive European defense cuts resulted in NATO’s inability to deploy more than 300 aircraft in Libya (Tunnsjø 2013). The “military capabilities simply aren’t there” for European states to conduct a serious campaign autonomously, is how US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates reacted to the MS’ inability to take a military lead (Grand 2011).

Only two nations are deemed capable of launching “first-entry” missions: France and the UK. Concerning naval capabilities, which would be needed if Europe were to support the US’ “pivot to Asia”, the number of British, German and French submarines has gone down from respectively 27, 24 and 17 in 1990 to 7, 4 and 6 (Tunnsjø 2013).⁶⁴ Similarly, the British, German and French surface ships were reduced from 47, 16 and 42 in 1990 to 18, 15 and 24 respectively (ibid.). All of this points to a very limited ability to sustain missions in far-away theaters independently, in short, to meet the ambitions one finds in EU documents.

⁶⁴ This does not count the four ballistic-missile submarines in the possession of the UK and France, respectively.

3.1.3. Common interests, goals and threat perceptions?

Could a hypothetical European actorness be based on common interests, goals or threat perceptions? After all, the Schuman Declaration on 9 May 1950 was based on the vision that a “*fusion of interest ... [was] indispensable to the establishment of a common economic system*” and a more united Europe.⁶⁵ A rapprochement or even fusion of interests can certainly be observed in many areas, for instance in the French-2010 British Lancaster House Treaties, which state that France and the UK will work to “permit increasing interdependence” and “do not see a situation arising in which the vital interests of either nation could be threatened without the vital interests of the other also being threatened” (Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation 2012; Pannier 2015).⁶⁶

Going beyond narrow state-to-state cooperation, are there interests that *all* MS share? Answering in the affirmative, Sven Biscop cites the MS’ “fundamental objective” to preserve Europe’s social contract and its “distinctive social model” of democracy, market economy and strong government intervention, the defense against military threats to the Union’s territory, open lines of communication and trade (including in cyber space), a secure supply of energy and vital resources, a sustainable environment, manageable migration flows, the maintenance of international law and the preservation of the EU’s/MS’ decision-making autonomy (Biscop 2009: 3; Biscop 2013: 41-42).

However, while it makes sense to present self-preservation and the protection of vital resources as a fundamental objective, they are self-evident and it might not be difficult to rally the states of, say, MERCOSUR, or the Eurasian Union around similar objectives. Moreover, such inventories do not tell us much about the issue of prioritization: The 2003 European Security Strategy and the 2008 Report on the

⁶⁵ Declaration of 9th May 1950, delivered by Robert Schuman. European Issue, n° 204, 10th May 2011. Emphasis added. Similarly, the 2009 Lisbon Treaty simply assumes European interests exist: “In its relations with the wider world, the Union shall uphold and promote its values and interests...” (Art. 3.5 (ex Article 2 TEU).

⁶⁶ In the same vein, the Benelux Declaration on Defense Cooperation of 18 April 2012 also suggests that the national defense interests of Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands have in fact reached a great deal of similarity, and are increasingly difficult to separate. See BENELUX-verklaring over samenwerking op defensievlak.
<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/convenanten/2012/05/14/benelux-verklaring-over-samenwerking-op-defensievlak/benelux-verklaring-over-samenwerking-op-defensievlak.pdf>. Accessed on 10.01.2016.

Implementation of the European Security Strategy offer no solutions for the problems that arise when different MS interests clash. The ESS 2003 does use the expression of “European interests”, but these are not specified. The document simply assumes they exist, for instance when it evokes the “increasing convergence of European interests”, when it posits that it “is in the European interest that countries on our borders are well-governed” or when it states that conflicts in Kashmir between South and North Korea “impact on European interests directly and indirectly” (ESS 2003: 1,7,4). Such generic interest may be called the “components of grand strategy”, i.e. “physical security; economic prosperity; and value projection”, but they do not engender the kind of concrete goals one typically finds in national strategic documents (M. Smith 2011: 144). What is more, what exactly needs to be *done* in case important lines of communication are threatened, how energy supplies can be made secure, or how exactly to deal with the rise of China finds no mention in the ESS and is not analyzed in the IR ESS 2008 either.

Coming to the MS level, national White Books do not necessarily express directly clashing interests, but the nuances between them are important and their prioritization is clearly not convergent. For instance, the 2013 *Livre Blanc* identified vital French interests in Northern Africa, where “[w]e enjoy multiple common interests (many bi-national citizens, French investments, strategic supplies) and we share common security interests, particularly as concerns terrorism and trafficking” (*Livre Blanc* 2013: 54).⁶⁷ This French priority is not shared across Europe, however.

Bulgaria’s White Book, for instance, looks to the Black Sea and South East Europe as a primary zone of interests, while for the Spaniards, national interest zones include the South American sphere and Belgian documents are concerned with Central Africa. European White Books usually present European “defense cooperation” as a central interest, but do not sketch this out in any detail (De France and Witney 2012: 12). Few strategic documents go beyond commonplaces of the “indivisibility” of European security or display a sense of continental interdependence in their vital security interests (De France and Witney 2012).

Moving from interests to goals, the answer that has been routinely given is the preservation of the UN Charter, meaning the very general goal of strengthening

⁶⁷ Page 53 in the English version (in the bibliography).

international security and preserving peace, as well as the broad range of Petersberg tasks (Ortega 2005). Those have been boiled down to the lowest common denominator of “crisis management”, but the term is not clearly defined at the EU level (Nowak 2006: 16). The ESS 2003 presented the EU’s goals as, firstly, addressing a list of key threats (terrorism, proliferation of WMD, regional conflicts, state failure, organized crime), secondly, building security on the EU’s margins and, thirdly, developing an “international order based on effective multilateralism” (ESS 2003: 6-10). While the goal of promoting “a ring of well governed countries to the East of the European Union and on the borders of the Mediterranean with whom we can enjoy close and cooperative relations” clearly shows the MS are able to formulate broad common goals, it must be noted that the ENP that was supposed to bring this about has suffered of numerous problems (ESS 2003: 7, 8; for ENP see below).

Moving from goals to threat perceptions, the MS agree in the ESS that “terrorism committed to maximum violence, the availability of weapons of mass destruction, organised crime, the weakening of the state system and the privatisation of force” ... could present “a very radical threat” (ESS 2003: 5). However, this remains largely declaratory in the sense that specific measures are not specified.

Turning to the MS level, geographic location, history and strategic cultures continue to be crucial in the way national elites define their immediate threat environment: For instance, while Hungary’s 2007 National Security Strategy and Bulgaria’s 2010 White Paper on Defense and the Armed Forces both saw a low probability of military conflict between states, Lithuania’s, Estonia’s and Latvia’s defense documents have primarily focused on the threat of armed attack from Russia, even after their accession to the EU (De France and Witney 2012). Though the Finnish 2009 White Paper mentions some of the threats identified in the 2003 ESS (for instance, climate change or the spread of WMD), its security outlook is more focused on the Russian neighbor and also the Arctic, which, in turn, the Danish Defense Agreement 2010-2014 equally singles out as a region necessitating renewed risk analysis in times of global warming (because it increases the “amount of traffic and level of activity” in the region) (Tanner, Al Rodhan, Chandiramani 2009; Danish Defense Agreement 2010-2014:12). Greece perceives a risk emanating from Turkey and Bulgaria ponders renewed conflict in the Balkans (De France and Witney 2012).

In sum, while the MS do agree on all-encompassing broad threats such as

climate change and terrorism, their security establishments are primarily focused on different priorities in their short to medium-term activities. This is connected to the aspect of “EU security strategies”, to which we turn now.

3.1.4. The EU’s “potluck strategies”

From Sun Tzu to Carl von Clausewitz, the word “strategy” has been closely associated with military affairs. For Clausewitz, strategy was akin to the use of battles to win a war, and he distinguished “strategy” from “tactics”, which he saw as the art of using troops to win a particular battle, not the war itself (Howard 1983). Going beyond the narrow focus on war and military affairs, there is a more encompassing concept, that of “grand strategy”. Barry Posen defines the latter as “a political-military, means-ends chain, a state’s theory about how it can best cause security for itself ... A grand strategy must identify likely threats to the state's security and it must devise political, economic, military, and other remedies for those threats (...)” (Posen 1984: 13).

This “grand strategy” is to be distinguished from the “foreign policy strategy”, in that the latter “translates the implications of the grand strategy into objectives, instruments and means covering all dimensions of foreign policy” (Biscop and Coelmont 2012). In the case of the EU, a foreign policy strategy “includes diplomacy and the military, but it goes beyond CFSP, covering the entire remit of the High Representative and the External Action Service” (ibid.). In sum, we are talking about a “plan of action that applies specific means to larger objectives. In relation to foreign and security policy, strategy therefore links the use of economic, military or diplomatic power to specific political ends and foreign policy objectives” (Schroeder 2009, see also Kennedy 1991).

A strategy worth its name not only spells out aims and a variety of sub-aims, but it also defines the aim that is to be reached in a way that does not leave room for different interpretations as to what the aim is. A strategy does not wait for a policy to step in or a goal to present itself; it defines both in the first place. It can evolve, as the terrain evolves, but this does not invalidate the fact that a strategy is *specific*, and

more specific than a roadmap. The same unambiguousness must reign when defining the way to reach the aim, because there are usually several options thinkable to reach it. Importantly, the way to reach the aim is made of sub-aims and there needs to be a prioritization between those sub-aims. Lastly, it is important that the strategists agree on the use of means to reach the aim. Here again, no room for different interpretations is allowed if we are to speak of a strategy.

Coming to the EU, many studies have focused on the capabilities and institutions the MS have created, but little research concerns itself with the actual European strategies that those capabilities are meant to serve (Monar 2006; Nowak 2006; Schroeder 2009; Schmitt 2016). The European Council has authored strategies on cyber, the European neighborhood, nuclear proliferation or terrorism. It produces common *Regional* Strategies (for instance, the Strategy for the Sahel region or the EU Action Strategy “Statebuilding for Peace in the Middle East”) or *Country* Strategies (as the Country Strategies on Afghanistan). In 2013, there were 134 individual country strategies (Stokes and Whitman 2013).

Some “EU strategies” deal with the *internal* dimension, such as the Hague Programme (2005–2010), which consisted of measures to improve cooperation and cohesion between the MS’ criminal justice and law enforcement systems, but did not amount to a strategy in the true sense of the word. The EU strategies of interest to this chapter deal with the external dimension, such as the EU strategies on terrorism or non-proliferation. In light of the actorhood problems described above, the MS’ collective attempts to devise strategies in international security display at least four central characteristics: As the following paragraphs show, EU strategies are either vague on goals or formulate very broad objectives, they are often hardly operational, they define agendas but have great difficulty “controlling” these agendas and they are seldom driven by a strategic logic, but rather one of feasibility.

For instance, the ENP, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the Eastern Partnership (EaP) are all EU attempts at “region building”. Together, these programs cover the “ring of friends”: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia in Northern Africa, Israel, Jordan, Palestine, Syria and Lebanon in the Middle East and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine in the East. With the exception of Belarus, the EU has adopted Action Plans with each EaP country within the ENP framework. Based on conditionality, these Action Plans define short and medium-

term political and economic reforms in home affairs (border management, migration, police reform, law enforcement cooperation and crime prevention) in return for financial and technical aid, as well as commercial concessions (Kelley 2006). In other words, it would seem that the European neighborhood policies amount to an international strategy: The aim is to surround the EU core with a *cordon sanitaire* of friendly, well-governed states. The means are not conquest, subjugation or trade war, but the use of cooperative schemes on a variety of issues ranging from migration control to democratic principles.

However, ENP's goals are too broad to be operational. For instance, the goal to make an "important contribution to security and stability in our neighbourhood and beyond" remains vague on the specific meaning and content of the word "stability" (ESS 2003: 10): To take but a few examples, should "stability" be produced by sending gendarmerie forces to Tunisia to help quell the protest of the people, as French Foreign Minister Michèle d'Alliot-Marie seemed to indicate in 2011 (Le Monde 13.01.2011)? Should it entail protecting the population of Benghazi from Colonel Muammar al-Gaddafi's troops or should it even lead to his killing, as the Franco-British-American coalition of the willing decided in Libya in 2011 (Koenig 2012, 2014)? There is no need to draw a full list of such examples to understand the wider point: The MS agree on broad goals and means, but since their operationalization is not consensual, ENP, UfM and EaP are more adequately described as roadmaps, not strategies (Le Gloannec 2016).

This is connected to another problem, namely the MS' difficulties to control an agenda after having formulated it, via the tools of conditionality and/or military enforcement. Conditionality was often a successful tool for candidate states *before* their EU accession, but it has been much less effective afterwards, as recent authoritarian turns in countries such as Hungary illustrate. Moreover, in the case of the UfM, conditionality was long carefully avoided mainly by former colonial powers such as Spain and France, leading one observer to describe it as the "dog which did not bark" (Youngs 2001: 18; Balfour 2012a; Le Gloannec 2016).

Concerning military enforcement, the EU's non-proliferation and anti-terror strategies illustrate that enforcement in cases of non-compliance remains difficult: Though the MS have a "EU Strategy against the proliferation of materials and weapons of mass destruction" (2003), the EU's agreements have tied conditionality

only to fulfillment of *existing* non-proliferation obligations, and do not apply in cases where a new state acquires nuclear weapons.

Moreover, though the MS allow for the possibility of coercive sanctions and also strongly emphasize commercial and economic incentives to bolster the non-proliferation norm, the possibility of military enforcement in case of nuclear non-compliance has not been agreed upon: Even though the Lisbon Treaty mentions “joint disarmament operations”, EU military cooperation does not include counter-proliferation (Quille 2008). Likewise, a post 9/11 EU Action Plan on terrorism consists of a host of measures to improve the criminal justice and law enforcement systems of the MS, but includes no forceful measures against terrorist groups abroad (Schroeder 2009: 495).

Lastly, EU security strategies are often akin to “laundry lists” driven by a logic of feasibility; many of the EU’s strategic priorities in security emerge “by stealth” in the sense that various actors of the EU polity often put in place the capabilities necessary in the fields of external and internal security before the MS discuss the *ends* of policy (Schroeder 2009). In the absence of strong political leadership, the MS tend to “muddle through”, leading a variety of mid-level actors to shape the EU’s security strategies in an incremental, technical way (Lindblom 1959). This allows us to transition to the Afghan case with the term of “potluck strategies” introduced earlier (see section i.9).

3.1.4.a. EU “strategies” in Afghanistan

As noted in the introduction, a potluck dinner denotes the practice of throwing leftovers in a pot in hopes of producing an acceptable-tasting stew. Similarly, European strategy making in security mostly follows a capability-driven, not a strategic logic: Tools are shared while waiting for a policy to manifest itself. This “muddling through” may lead to quasi-strategies “by default”, but not by design (Fescharek 2015a). Applied to the MS’ collective strategy making, this means they tend to contribute tools to broad common objectives according to an *on the shelf* logic: The MS often turn the classic means-to-end logic of strategy upside down,

because in the absence of a political project, the process of strategy making is mostly not driven by ends, but existing means.⁶⁸

The case of EUPOL, including its pre-history and context, will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, but the way its original mandate came about illustrates an argument that is part of this chapter, which warrants a short foray into EUPOL.⁶⁹ When the European police mission was launched, its mandate made no mention of counter narcotics (where the UK, which helped push for EUPOL's creation, had gained experience since 2002, see Chapter 4), nor corruption or migration – some of the only interests European states actually *have* in Afghanistan. Though the MS were interested in “institution-building”, the Afghan Ministry of Interior's procurement option, that is, how it puts equipment out to tender, was left untouched because the EU could muster no public finance management experts. “For fear of being measured”, clear benchmarks (as in US Afghanistan strategies, which have repeatedly set clear numerical goals) were either avoided or kept very large.⁷⁰

For instance, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) found in its 2015 EUPOL assessment that

“before 2013, each MIP [mission implementation plan, which translates an Operational Plan into specific tasks, milestones and indicators] included too many milestones (up to 600). This made it impossible for the mission's management to use the MIP for steering the mission in an efficient manner. ... In addition, results indicators have not been sufficiently based upon a thorough needs assessment or linked to EUPOL operational milestones. Some indicators have focused on outputs rather [than] outcomes” (ECA 2015: 20).⁷¹

EUPOL's mission documents (not only the early mandate, but later ones as well) read like activity-based job descriptions that describe in what *fields* and *how* EUPOL intends to be active, but they are not clearly outcome-oriented. For instance, the Joint Action on EUPOL's establishment stated EUPOL would “work on strategy development”, work “towards a joint overall strategy of the international community in police reform”, “support the Government of Afghanistan in coherently

⁶⁸ See also Chapter 4 for this point.

⁶⁹ For the following, see Fescharek 2015b.

⁷⁰ Phone interview with EEAS official on 09.02.2010.

⁷¹ However, the ECA also analyzed “the most recent MIPs (covering the period 2013 and 2014) and noted major improvements compared with older plans, including in particular the addition of background information on activities, as well as clearer links between objectives, tasks and milestones and cross-references between similar activities” (ibid.; see Chapter 6 for EUPOL's improvements).

implementing their strategy”, “improve cohesion and coordination” and support “linkages between the police and the wider rule of law” through “monitoring, mentoring, advising and training” (Council Joint Action 2007/369/CFSP 30.05.2007).

Other European Afghanistan strategies, such as the EU’s 2009 “Afghanistan-Pakistan” Strategy, have remained equally vague, while the 2014-16 EU strategy, though more forthcoming of sub-goals, cloaks itself in vague allusions to “stability” and thus depends to a great extent on the wider security situation. For instance, statements such as that “increased regional economic cooperation, in particular the development of intra-regional trade and infrastructure, in addition to agreed frameworks for the more efficient exploitation of shared natural resources, will provide benefits for all countries in the region” describe goals that are too generic to be operational (Council of the EU 20.07.2015).

Hence, the verdict of a French official vis-à-vis the 2014-2016 EU strategy is that it is “not a true strategy” and certainly “not a strategy that means to actively shape outcomes”.⁷² According to various Commission officials interviewed since 2009, “we [the MS] always wait until the Americans make their decision regarding the future of their engagement [in Afghanistan]”.⁷³ This further strengthens the logic of feasibility mentioned above: In Afghanistan, the MS entirely abandoned the idea of collectively defining specific goals, preferring instead to contribute available tools under a strategic US lead and in a technical manner (see Chapter 5).

EUPOL’s insistence on a “civilian policing” model during the Afghan war, one of the most brutal conflicts in recent history, is a case in point. Some Afghan members of ANP pointed out during interviews with this author that while EUPOL’s approach was useful, focusing on gender sensitivity or forensic science in ANP should not be a priority given ANP’s wider problems.⁷⁴ Thus, what the MS allowed for was a EUPOL “strategy” that carved out a niche in which the narrative of the EU’s “comprehensive approach” was unthreatened (see below), and where EUPOL could provide some expertise, mainly via top-level advising and training, and largely in disregard of the overall strategic situation of the country.

The fact that many CSDP missions engage in *tactical* “niche” activities of

⁷² Interview with French diplomat in Paris, 19.01.2015.

⁷³ Interview with EU Delegation officials, Kabul, 05.02.2013.

⁷⁴ Focus group discussion with ANP recruits on Training Center in Mazar-e Sharif, 11.12.2011.

minor importance is one reason why it is problematic to speak of a European *strategic* culture, which brings us to the last part of this section.

3.1.5. CSDP and European strategic culture

In recent years, a group of authors has turned to CSDP missions to investigate what they reveal about the normative-ideational ground of a possible European strategic culture. In a 2011 Special Issue of *Contemporary Security Policy*, Charles Pentland found that Operation Concordia in Macedonia and European Union Force (EUFOR) Althea in Bosnia-Herzegovina revealed basic components of a distinctive European strategic culture because the EU displayed a preference for “soft power” and focused on “effective multilateralism” as a guiding principle (Pentland 2011). Alessia Biava, Margriet Drent and Graeme Herd also argue that the EU has a strategic culture and that it is “based on an enlarged vision of security and on a comprehensive, multilateral and internationally legitimated approach to threats, implying the use of all sorts of instruments (military and civilian) in an integrated manner” (Biava, Drent and Herd 2011: 18).

Biava develops this argument in another article, writing that the EU’s “emergent strategic culture” reveals itself through CSDP missions and is based on force projection in multilateral frameworks, focused on international legitimacy and local ownership, flexible, dynamic, long-term, and based on the integrated use of civilian and military means. On the military side, the EU’s strategic culture is based on the restricted use of force, short mandates and strict exit strategies (Biava 2011: 57).

Similarly, Arnold Kammel has looked at four CSDP missions in the Balkans (the EU Police Mission EUPM in Bosnia and Herzegovina, EUPOL Proxima, the EU Police Advisory Team EUPAT and EULEX Kosovo) and concludes that ESDP/CSDP missions conducted so far give “evidence that there is a European strategic culture”: “The missions and operations so far deployed under the framework of ESDP”, he argues, do not only display a whole-of-government approach and a “visible tendency to react rapidly to crises, especially in postconflict stabilization”, but they also “match

to a large degree the ideas laid down at the declaratory level” (Kammel 2011: 639, 640).

Though it is undeniable that CSDP missions are indeed rooted in a shared ground of norms, there are several problems with such arguments: Firstly, the argument that a European strategic culture is based on “soft power” and restricted force is problematic when one considers that many of the MS, from the Netherlands to Denmark and of course France and the UK, do not share other countries’ cautious attitudes to the use of force.

The argument is also flawed when one considers that “soft” European contributions (via and also next to CSDP) to a “hard” US policy in Afghanistan that aimed at decimating the Taliban’s leadership may be soft in form, but are certainly not soft in their indirect impact. When it comes to the MS’ purported “reflexive multilateralism”, the next chapters show that a great number of parallel MS contributions should not be confounded with multilateralism, and that the later years of the Afghan intervention were marked by European support for a US project that was strongly *unilateral*. Turning to the EU’s comprehensive approach, section 3.2.3 of this chapter shows how far a cry the MS are away from translating this approach into policy.

It is also problematic to take the CSDP’s “strategic culture” at face value when many of the 34 CSDP missions that were launched until October 2014 reflect lowest common denominator compromises between the MS, rather than positive choices (CSDP Map 2014; Haine 2011). For instance, the EU’s ambitions in its legal mission to Kosovo continue to be circumscribed to a narrow technical mandate, mainly because several MS cannot agree to recognize Kosovo (Kammel 2011; Jacobs 2011). The EUPOL mission in Afghanistan will also show that if CSDP missions often formulate mandates based on “soft” approaches, this has much to do with a “lowest common denominator” logic. However, if many of the EU’s actions and ambitions in security are a result of constraints, not purpose, then the concept of European strategic culture is of limited usefulness in the analysis of European security and defense (see also Tardy 2015).

Based on the background that was already provided in the Introduction, we can now turn to the Afghan theater without lengthy transitions. Revisiting the beginning of the intervention in 2001, the following sections show that the MS' normative agreement about the necessity of a "comprehensive approach to security" provides insufficient ground for a common strategic culture and can therefore be no strong foundation for a common security policy in a transatlantic division of labor.

3.2. National strategic cultures and the framing of the Afghan mission

3.2.1. Different relationships with the US

As explained in the introduction, the US led the response to the 9/11 attacks and launched an offensive on the Taliban roughly one month after the events in New York and Washington. While the US emphasized counter terrorism via OEF, it let the European states lead ISAF, which was focused on stabilization tasks, not involved in major combat and thus able to promote a narrative of reconstruction and humanitarian tasks. Many European countries contributed to OEF as well, but most European resources went into ISAF.

This section explains why the different strategic cultures of the UK, France and Germany led the three heavyweights of European defense to pursue different agendas, and it analyzes how the thorny issues of relations with the US, NATO's purpose and civil-military relations hampered a common political approach.

3.2.1.a. The UK

After US President Bush heard the British offer to contribute to OEF, he reportedly advised his Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to "give [the UK] a role"

(Woodward 2002: 63). In this “window of opportunity” to play a lead role, the UK became the most important US partner among European allies, both in terms of military support and political momentum (Dorman 2015). Important UK-US tensions notwithstanding, the way the UK defined its role in the coming years was to keep the US engaged as a leader in Blair’s internationalist agenda (which Afghanistan was only one piece of). Thus, if the UK tried to influence US foreign policies, it was from the *inside*, and this did not always help to find common ground with European partners.

UK Prime Minister Tony Blair’s case for a strong response to the attacks went almost unopposed in the October debates of the UK House of Commons in 2001. The 1999 Kosovo crisis and now 9/11 seemed to vindicate the UK’s 1998 Strategic Defence Review and its focus on force projection. The leaders of both Conservatives and Liberal Democrats declared their full support for Blair’s course (House of Commons 04.10.2001, Cols 676, 678, 680). Tony Blair had proclaimed his “Doctrine of the international Community” during a speech in Chicago in 1999, in which he argued that in the face of new threats, sovereignty needed to be discarded as the guiding principle of international relations.

One of Tony Blair’s close advisers, Robert Cooper, even advocated a new type of “imperialism”, an “imperialism of neighbours”, which would respond to “instability in your neighbourhood” (Cooper 07.04.2002). If failed states became “too dangerous for established states to tolerate”, 9/11 had made it “possible to imagine a defensive imperialism” (Cooper 07.04.2002). For Blair, victory in Afghanistan

“would not and does not require simply a military strategy to defeat an enemy that is fighting us. It requires a whole new geopolitical framework. It requires nation-building. It requires a myriad of interventions deep into the affairs of other nations. It requires above all a willingness to see the battle as existential and to see it through ...” (Blair 2010: 349).

This globalist outlook was not only driven by Blair’s belief that the US was the “leader of the free world” (*ibid.*), but by the widely held belief in New Labor that globalization was making the world more interdependent and potentially dangerous (Bennett 2014). The best way to counter the new threats emanating from refugee crises or rogue regimes was to foster international cooperation; this was based on the notion that “conditional sovereignty and the democratic peace made intervention in

the national interest because the more foreign countries resembled the West, the safer everyone would be” (Bennett 2014: 503).

The Blair government commissioned an addendum to the 1998 Strategic Defence Review, in which UK Defense Secretary Geoff Hoon argued that the enemies needed to be engaged “at a time and place of our choosing and not theirs” (UK Ministry of Defence 2002: 5). As Hoon had stressed, however, “opportunities to engage terrorist groups may be only fleeting, so we need the kind of rapidly deployable intervention forces which were the key feature of the [Strategic Defence Review]” (ibid). To effectively counter global terrorism, the US would necessarily have to be on board and Blair now saw an opportunity to engage the US in his broad international agenda.

As Blair later wrote in his memoirs: “I saw my role as that of galvanizing the maximum level of support”, and this included also other allies (Blair 2010: 352). Hence, the Prime Minister embarked on a round of shuttle diplomacy, discussing matters with Italy’s Silvio Berlusconi, Chancellor Schröder and French President Chirac, though he noticed “with a little anxiety that Jacques Chirac particularly was urging caution in respect of any response” (ibid.). This “caution” was not coming out of nowhere, as US President Bush’s State of the Union Address indicated that the war on terror would be a radical endeavor way beyond Afghanistan.

European allies, almost across the board, reacted with caution, decrying the “go-it-alone tone of the State of the Union address” (International York Times 31.01.2002). However, the UK government expressed staunch support. In a debate in March 2002, Defense Minister Geoff Hoon referred to an “Axis of Concern” (US President Bush had spoken of an “Axis of Evil”) and added Libya to the three countries Bush had mentioned. This possibly extended the scope of the UK’s role in the “war on terror” (Dorman 2015). Hawkish statements were now coming from Blair, too, and although Foreign Office Minister Bradshaw had previously told the House that there was no link between 9/11 and Iraq’s President Saddam Hussein, the UK’s government now enacted a substantial change in policy on this topic as well (Dorman 2003: 73).

In Afghanistan, the UK government’s objectives were tightly connected to this incremental broadening of the agenda. As Tony Blair stated before Parliament on 14

September 2001, the UK government's Afghanistan goals would be threefold: Firstly, the Blair government sought to prevent any more attacks of the scale of 9/11 and bring the perpetrators to justice (House of Commons 14.09.2001). Secondly, an alliance had to be formed to combat terrorism more widely (ibid.). Third, Blair argued "we need to re-think dramatically the scale and nature of the action the world takes to combat terrorism" (ibid.). The international community needed to "strike at international terrorism wherever it exists", "at every level, national and international, in the UN, in G8, in the EU, in Nato, in every regional grouping in the world" (Blair quoted in The Guardian 02.10.2001).

In other words, if Afghanistan was where this "new kind of threat" had manifested itself, it would also be the "laboratory" where the use of armed force would be adapted to the global security requirements of the 21st century. The UK's military forces would thus need to be flexible. Consequently, the UK became one of the most vocal proponents of Bush's "Prague" or "transformation" agenda, trying to enable NATO to confront threats *globally* (see Introduction). The UK's military contributions to OEF, but also its PRT model shows how the UK wished NATO to evolve (see Chapter 4).

There was ground for consent with European states however. Despite a considerable degree of closeness, important tensions between the UK and the US administrations soon also appeared. Blair, who had been concerned about US aloofness during the Balkan crises, would deploy much energy in the coming years to obtain US approval for addressing the Palestinian issue or giving the UN a role in Iraq. Another major source of potential tension with the US was Blair's intention to make sure the US's "War on Terror" would not stray too far from British interests. This notably concerned humanitarian aid and state building (Schmitt 2014).

In fact, the more the Bush Administration distanced itself from state building, the more the Blair government took the lead in arguing that the "international community needed to commit itself to nation building" (Dorman 2003: 72). "The international community has got to remain committed to helping Afghanistan", and it had to "put in place the stability for the long term ... helping Afghanistan to becoming a stable partner in the region and a proper member of the international community" (The Economic Times 07.01.2002).

This meant that the UK's tried to fill "the vacuum left by the American plan", in "a strategic decision by the Blair government to support the United States in their action in Afghanistan", according to a UK diplomat (Schmitt 2014: 203). Avoiding confrontation with the unilateralist discourse that was taking shape in Washington, Tony Blair's government put its bet on a policy of back chamber influence, visibly convinced "it would have greater influence than other allies and that its alliance with the United States would yield prestige" (Davidson 2011: 107). Thus, under Blair the UK embarked on a niche policy under the US's leadership, trying to correct it with an emphasis on more humanitarian aid or state building, but expressing no major dissent on the US' primarily military focus and OEF, in which the UK was fully engaged. Wielding influence from a position of political proximity was very different from the way France and Germany defined their relations with the US.

3.2.1.b. France

As in all of Europe, French solidarity rose to unprecedented heights after the 9/11 attacks. On 13 September, President Chirac and Prime Minister Lionel Jospin attended an emotional service in the American Church in Paris and Chirac was the first leader to be received by George W. Bush a week after 9/11 (Malici 2008: 82). However, by spring 2002, the French media expressed concern about the US' *hyperpuissance*, a term coined by Foreign Minister Védrine (McAllister 2003: 90). Unconditional support for US actions, as expressed by German Chancellor Schröder, or Tony Blair's "shoulder to shoulder" rhetoric were no option for either the right or the left (ibid: 91).

Leading political figures expressed not only uneasiness with the "war on terror", but also with respect to a US policy seen as one-dimensional and short-term. Alain Juppé from the right-wing *Rassemblement pour la République*, for instance, insisted that more than simply hunting terrorists, the root causes of the evil needed to be treated; François Hollande, at the time the first secretary of the Socialist Party, stressed that France needed to insist on its "singularity": "With regard to decisions

that may be premature or words like “crusade” we must keep our French identity” (*L’Humanité* 18.09.2001).

When the Chirac government decided to partake in OEF’s counter terrorism mission, it disallowed French planes to station inside Afghanistan, despite the fact that the US had already set up important bases in Mazar-e Sharif, Bagram and Kabul. Militarily speaking this complicated matters, but it served a clear political purpose, which was Chirac’s desire to retain a small footprint, while being seen as a reliable ally (Merchet 2008: 108). For Paris, autonomy came before control over the mission’s goals and outcomes. From military bases outside Afghanistan (in Dushanbe, Tajikistan and Manas, Kyrgyzstan), the French Air Force participated in air strikes in Gardez (in Eastern Afghanistan), where Al Qaida fighters were thought to hide. Tensions with the US surfaced soon because French airplanes were almost never authorized to drop bombs, preferring “show of force” sorties (Merchet 2008: 107).

The French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine grandiloquently evoked a French “Action Plan Afghanistan” and emphasized it was “necessary to assist in the political reconstruction of this country and this is why [the Action Plan] aims to create favorable conditions to allow the Afghans to take control of their own destiny” (Assemblée Nationale 09.10.2001). On the whole, however, the French stayed relatively uninvolved – French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin even later acknowledged, “Afghanistan was not our war” (Le Nouvel Observateur 07.09.2011). With the exception of the later Iraq crisis (2003), nothing would bring Chirac to engage more ground troops than the five hundred initially sent to Kabul in 2001 as part of the Kabul Multinational Brigade (KMNB). Even then, support remained lukewarm – and secret: in 2003, Chirac met with Bush at the Evian Summit and agreed to a top secret Special Forces mission (“*Arès*”) to Afghan Spin Boldak on the Pakistani border region.

When NATO decided to spread out and cover the whole country (see chapter 4), France clung to its RC-Capital (i.e., Kabul) and declined any further engagement. A few hundred French soldiers were protecting Kabul airport, “but this was the kind of menial jobs the Macedonians, the Czech or the Greek would later assume, *une mission de seconde zone*”.⁷⁵ Chirac also pulled back the two hundred Special Forces

⁷⁵ Interview with French Ambassador de Ponton d’Amecourt, 11.12.2014.

operating in the dangerous east in February 2007, shortly before French elections. When the British encountered difficulties in Kandahar, Helmand, and Uruzgan provinces, he refused flatly to commit more troops.⁷⁶ In private conversations with his military and diplomatic staff, Chirac contemptuously referred to the American state building project in Afghanistan with the words: “*Tout ça, ce sont des conneries américaines*” (“all of this is American bullshit”) (interview with high-ranking French official 2014).

Hence, only a few years after Saint Malo, the two leaders on European defense, France and the UK, held widely different views about appropriate relations with the US and about the overall mission. This fundamental disagreement between the UK, for which Afghanistan was a first step in building a “whole new geopolitical framework”, and France, which displayed prudence, meant that Belgian Foreign Minister Louis Michel’s suggestion that ISAF should not be based on contributions of the MS, but organized by the EU itself, remained an illusion (Gross 2009: 2).

3.2.1.c. Germany

Germany’s reaction to 9/11 and the military campaign in Afghanistan displayed a peculiar mix of new-found ambitions and prudence vis-à-vis potential implications, as well as an uneasy coexistence of Atlanticism with deep-seated ambiguity about the US’ global leadership. Soon after the attacks, foreign minister Fischer worked on a response based on multilateral diplomacy and a “political solution” to international terrorism, initiating a round of diplomatic trips in and around the Middle East.

In a widely noted UN speech, Fischer stressed the need to analyze the root causes of 9/11 and argued the UN was in a “unique position” to lead an “effective” counter strategy to terrorism, because it offered “the necessary forum for a universal coalition. Only [the UN] can lend legitimacy to the reaction to terrorism” (Fischer 12.11.2001). In line with French and UK admonitions directed at the US, he argued social and economic reconstruction needed to be stressed (ibid.). Fischer mentioned

⁷⁶ This part is adapted from Fescharek 2015c.

the ongoing OEF campaign only passingly, but stressed the necessity of a “clear political and humanitarian perspective for Afghanistan”, and the importance of helping refugees and the civilian population. With respect to the international community’s “response to terrorism”, Fischer argued a

“new coalition has been born. It must now be strengthened and developed into a true partnership. If this succeeds, then September 11th could enter history not only as an appalling day for humanity, but the *beginning of a new era of cooperation and multilateralism*” (Fischer 12.11.2001; emphases added).

This was especially important for Fischer since US President Bush had officially requested a German military contribution. On 8 November 2001, almost a month into the ongoing OEF mission, Chancellor Schröder asked the German Bundestag for permission to deploy up to 3,900 men to OEF. 1,800 of those were Navy forces, and only one hundred German Special Forces (Kommando Spezialkräfte, KSK) would actually be deployed to Afghanistan. All others were sent to the Arabian Peninsula, North-Eastern Africa or were deployed on the seas (Hilpert 2014: 44). Schröder tied this move to the *Vertrauensfrage*, or vote of confidence. Opposition in his own ranks ran high, however, and in the end, the vote was extraordinarily close: 336 members of parliament voted in favor, and 326 voted against. The vote made it clear that important German cleavages would put heavy restrictions on Germany’s contribution (Buras and Longhurst 2004).

Schröder refused to take over ISAF’s lead from the UK and he made sure German military participation would bear all the insignia of the German “*Zivilmacht*” concept, somewhere between reliability and prudence: Germany, he said, would make a “substantial” contribution, because as a part of the coalition against terror, German credibility as an international partner was on the line. Because Germany had regained its full sovereignty in the international arena, Germany’s allies had reminded it of new obligations (“*neue Pflichten*”): “What is at stake is ... our political reliability, our reliability vis-à-vis the citizens, our friends in Europe and our international partners” (Schröder 16.11.2001; author’s translation).

He also took great care to emphasize that the solution was not only military in nature, and that the German government was therefore pushing for humanitarian aid:

“Where it was necessary, objectively possible and justifiable for us, we have participated in the interventions of the international community militarily, as we do,

for instance, in the Balkans. We will continue to do so in the future. We have never agreed to a Bundeswehr mission without an accompanying, sustainable engagement in the political, economic and humanitarian domain” (ibid.; author’s translation).

With its strong emphasis on multilateralism, civilian approaches and the root causes of poverty, Schröder sent a very clear message to the US; this marked the beginning of Germany’s reluctance and opposition of the coming years to what was perceived as the US’ heavy-handed approach to the GWOT. While Germany committed troops to ISAF it also drew a clear line between ISAF and OEF. The Inspector General of the Bundeswehr, Harald Kujat, most clearly expressed how Germany’s vision clashed with US policy:

“We support the Interim Administration in Afghanistan, in order to stabilize the country and to allow for reconstruction and a democratic process. Contrary to the crisis management of Operation Enduring Freedom, this is part of a pre-emptive security policy” (quoted in Von Krause 2010: 141, author’s translation).

Thus, while Germany fielded the third contingent of international troops to ISAF, it also did so within the confines of its well-known role conceptualization as a “civilian power”. Most importantly Schröder announced he would refuse “adventures”, based on a fear that the US may “overreact and respond unilaterally in a knee-jerk fashion, leading, potentially, to an uncontrolled escalation of conflict in the wider Middle East” (Buras and Longhurst 2004: 231-232). The German government presented an image of post-Taliban Afghanistan that was essentially based on the requirement of placating German public opinion: “We do not face a war”, German Defense Minister Scharping said in 2003, when parts of the country had already re-descended into violence, “[we] face the question of what is an appropriate response” (Hyde-Price 2003: 101). Thus, the paradox was that while asking the *Vertrauensfrage* and fielding a relatively high contingent of soldiers, the German government placed severe restrictions on what they would be allowed to do. This became a major limitation in Germany’s relation with the US and other European allies, most importantly so with Germany’s self-imposed limitation to the calmer Northern regions.

In sum, the three European allies were in disagreement about the appropriate degree of closeness to the US, the military leader of the counter terrorist mission. British government officials made it clear that Afghanistan was but the beginning of a radical remake of international relations under a US leadership that might have to be “corrected” from the inside, but was not questioned in principle, including in its military dimension. The governments of France and Germany were much more prudent and largely opted out of OEF. There was space for some overlap, notably in stressing non-military issues, but these different agendas also carried potential for conflict, as we will see with the debates about separating ISAF and OEF (Chapter 4) or how to operationalize the vague PRT concept (see below).

This European mix between attitudes of closeness or distance vis-à-vis the US also concerned other European states. For instance, Poland’s alliance behavior throughout the years is an example of closeness, while the Dutch example is one of both conflict and cooperation with the US (see Chapter 5). As chapter 4 will show, the US’ military leadership was what allowed most MS to deploy, because it constituted the necessary military guarantee in case things went wrong. At the same time, this very US lead constituted a major problem in trying to align European contributions on one another, because important differences in strategic cultures were making it difficult for the European allies to find consensus on how to frame the relation with the US’ lead and, consequently, to agree to a common European approach of substance.

3.2.2. Different ideas about NATO’s purpose

The different visions many European states held about NATO’s purpose in the world after 9/11 constituted another problem for the coordination of their policies and of their civilian and military tools. In the context of the GWOT, the Bush administration strongly insisted that NATO needed to become a *global* alliance. At the 2002 Prague Summit, NATO allies aimed to improve NATO’s “ability to adjust to new priorities and to adapt its capabilities in order to meet new challenges” (NATO 2003). Proposals were put on the table concerning a reform of NATO’s command

structure, the improvement of NATO's capabilities (under the so-called "Prague Capabilities Commitment", PCC) and a "NATO Response Force".

Concerning the command structures, the allies decided that the existing regional commands needed to be replaced by functional ones. Two new commands were created, an Allied Command for Operations (ACO) and an Allied Command for Transformation (ACT).⁷⁷ ACT was charged with improving interoperability through common concepts and doctrine, joint training and improved capabilities. Its role was based on an internal NATO review process that followed an earlier US initiative to bridge capability gaps with European allies, the "Defense Capabilities Initiative" (DCI).⁷⁸ Only about half of the DCI, NATO now stated, could be met if (European) defense spending continued to be so low. NATO noted that one particular weakness lay in the level of deployable troops:

"We recognize that the ability of the Alliance to fulfill the full range of its missions in the changing strategic environment will depend largely upon our ability to increase substantially the proportion of our combat forces and support forces that are available for deployment on operations beyond home territory or where there is no substantial host nation support" (NATO 06.06.2002).

In contrast to the DCI, the new PCC was more focused on essential capabilities for the conduct of contemporary expeditionary operations, including intelligence, surveillance and target acquisition, deployable and secure command, control and communications, combat effectiveness, strategic air and sea lift or deployable combat support and combat service support units (Medcalf 2008: 145). Specific deadlines were set for national commitments and states agreed to periodic evaluations.

Another key project coming out of Prague was the NRF mentioned earlier, which US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld suggested should be a permanent NATO force of between 5,000 and 20,000 highly mobile troops. If NATO did not have a "force that is quick and agile, which can deploy in days or weeks instead of months or years", he said, "then it will not have much to offer the world in the twenty-first century" (Rumsfeld quoted in Kempin 2002).

⁷⁷ Merging Allied Command Europe and Allied Command Atlantic created the ACO. It oversees three operational commands: Joint Forces Command in Brunssum and JFC in Naples (both for land operations) and Joint Headquarters in Lisbon (for sea operations).

⁷⁸ It consisted of a list of 58 force goals to be met in areas such as deployability and mobility, sustainability or interoperable command systems.

One implication of NATO's "transformation" was that projecting forces to conduct "war amongst the population" entails rethinking the appropriate relations between military and non-military aspects of intervention and post-conflict management (R. Smith 2006). Notably on this second point, the discord between France and Germany on the issue of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan is a good illustration of how differently the two key European allies were thinking about such issues. As a reminder, although Afghanistan was not initially a NATO mission, NATO assumed command in 2003, and when it spread out from Kabul to all of Afghanistan's regions, it did so based on the PRT infrastructure.

More will be said about the PRTs in chapter 4, but for now it suffices that in the Afghan context, PRTs were designed as fortified military outposts; they were inhabited by interdepartmental teams with the aim to coordinate, develop and fund local projects in close coordination with Afghan authorities (Chiari 2014a: 11). This necessitated the close integration or coordination of civilian development work with military tasks and it expressed the problematic bet that reconstruction and development would be a "primary means of expanding the central government's authority beyond Kabul and would provide a security dividend" (Stapleton 2007).

3.2.2.a. A Franco-German clash over the PRTs

For reasons that will be developed in the next chapter, Germany took the lead in committing NATO to a more important role via ISAF in 2003 and it led by example with a PRT in Kunduz, although many European allies were uncertain about NATO's ability to play a role outside of Kabul (Rynning 2012: 98). For the Germans, who had chosen the calm region of Afghanistan's north, the PRTs were an ideal occasion to mend fences with the US after the fall-out over Iraq (see Chapter 4) and to stress their concept of "networked security" and the primacy of development and non-military approaches.

However, the French government dismissed the German idea of a PRT-based NATO expansion beyond Kabul as unrealistic and dangerous and it disliked the PRT concept, prompting NATO Secretary General George Robertson to pay a visit to

President Chirac in Paris. While the *Quai d'Orsay* (the French Foreign Ministry) was undecided, the General Staff of the French Army stressed the extreme vulnerability of those military outposts, and thus pressed the president to refuse. A major reservation concerned the risk of distorting international efforts to establish local governance: According to the French Ambassador to NATO, Benoît d'Aboville, France “saw a contradiction between NATO’s policy to secure Karzai’s authority outside Kabul and the disastrous effects on the local level of the disproportion between the PRTs’ means and those of the local governor.”⁷⁹

The French have a long history in “comprehensive”, civil-military approaches, notably due to the so-called “*sections administratives spécialisées*” in Algeria (Brower 2000). Hence, the fundamental point Chirac stressed was not that civil-military integration was a bad idea *per se*. Rather, he argued that PRTs were an act of imprudence because as lightly armed, isolated military outposts, they were unable to act as a security guarantee behind the high-flown rhetoric of “democracy promotion” if things turned ugly.

An event in 2005, on which NATO has been very discreet, shows that Chirac’s worries were not unwarranted: A Norwegian-led PRT was almost overrun by angry locals, and it was only saved through show of force sorties by US planes. Secondly, French prudence was based on the assessment that development efforts led by rich foreign PRTs would seriously undermine political authority of local leaders. This brought the French into conflict with the Germans: While Germany’s policy was that PRTs would “bolster NATO’s role in a transatlantic division of labor”, the French policy “directly undermined the PRT track that was so important to German and NATO policy” (Rynning 2012: 100).

As the next section shows, this problem was not only Franco-German, but had implications for the EU’s collective attempts to promote local governance in a spirit of civil-military integration.

⁷⁹ Personal email communication with former French ambassador to NATO, Excellency Benoît d’Aboville on 1 July 2015.

3.2.3. Different logics of crisis management

Related to the above issue between France and Germany is another key aspect in the MS' difficulties to achieve collective actorness: The clash between different MS' philosophies about crisis management, concerning not only the integration of civilian and military tools, but also conflicts between short-term security-related goals and long-term development objectives.⁸⁰ Despite the EU's stated ambition to develop a "comprehensive approach" in crisis management, bureaucratic infighting inside the relevant administrative services has long hampered its emergence.

As stated in Chapter 2, the EU has long advocated its own version of the comprehensive approach, notably at the 1999 Cologne and 2000 Feira summits. Today, the comprehensive approach is ubiquitous in the EU's multilateral agreements, such as the Commission's efforts on migration⁸¹ or the Council's efforts on drugs (see EU Drugs Strategy 2005-2012). Acting "comprehensively" requires the Council and the Commission to collaborate closely, and it necessitates tight integration of CSDP's military and civilian dimension.⁸²

This last point is exactly where things become complicated, however, as the two following examples show. The first example concerns CSDP's general equipment policy for EUPOL. Whereas the US trained and equipped the ANP, EUPOL only trained and advised them, meaning that EUPOL provided no weapons or bullet-proof vests for the ANP, which continues to suffer high attrition rates (Planty and Perito 2013). The European Commission, which has a say in CSDP when it comes to the CSDP budget, intervened on numerous occasions to restate its authority and prevent donations from being "dual use", for instance even walkie-talkies, fearing they may also be used in counter-insurgency operations.⁸³ German, Dutch, Swedish and Finnish resistance to anything that veered off EUPOL's civilian mandate reinforced the Commission's position on this issue.⁸⁴ Early on, some MS opposed EUPOL's involvement in areas such as border management or human trafficking because this

⁸⁰ See Fescharek 2015b for some elements of the following section.

⁸¹ European Commission quoted in Wendling 2010 (footnote 56).

⁸² On the European Council's CMCO concept, which stresses the "need for effective co-ordination of the actions of all relevant EU actors involved in the planning and subsequent implementation of the EU's response to the crisis", see, *inter alia*, European Council 07.11.2003 and Khol 2006.

⁸³ Interview with EU official in Brussels, 04.02.2015.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

would have brought the mission closer to the grey zone of conflict and a more robust security involvement.⁸⁵ This gives an idea of the ongoing difficulties the EU faces when it comes to civilian-military relations, despite its elaborate concepts of CMCO.

Another way to expose the fault lines between the MS' comprehensive approach rhetoric and reality is to look at the "Support to Provincial Governance Programme Afghanistan" (SPG). This program was implemented in Afghanistan between 2007 and 2010 to enhance political stability in Afghanistan through support to "service delivery, political participation and security in selected provinces" (EU SPG Evaluation 2010: iv). The program is noteworthy because it gave the European Commission the responsibility for governance implementation within the MS' PRTs – a potential blurring of the lines between civilian and military efforts. Importantly, the Commission's SPG funds were associated with the PRT's "civilian wings" as "lead elements for these said PRTs, who ultimately held the primary oversight and coordination roles in the implementation of grants" (EU SPG Evaluation 2010: iv).

The choice of the International Organization for *Migration* (IOM) as executing agency for the "Support to Provincial Governance Programme Afghanistan" gives us important insights into the blurring between development aid and military missions. As the below quote shows, the choice of IOM was justified on the grounds that the return of migrants was connected to wider questions of security and stability:

"Community stabilization is important in the context of migration because returning refugees, IDPs and reintegrating former combatants often return to communities where both community social networks and public infrastructure require urgent improvements. Community stabilization programming serves as an effective means to integrate returning populations while improving badly needed community infrastructure. Additionally, community stabilization programming allows communities to link with regional and national governments, building trust as a base for productive relationships leading to longer term stability, recovery and development, further encouraging the return of migrants" (EU SPG Evaluation 2010: 10; author's emphases).

However, the SPG evaluation shows very clearly that different MS, but also actors inside the Commission itself, often held very different ideas about the way the program should be realized. This became immediately clear when, based on person-

⁸⁵ Ibid.

to-person contacts between the staff of NATO and the European Commission's Directorate-General for External Relations (DG RELEX), an informal meeting on 21 November 2005 explored possible "synergies" for the Commission's "providing some support to EU Member State-led PRTs towards enhancement [of] stability in Afghanistan" (EU SPG Evaluation 2010: 3). The European Commission noted possible fields of tension in this regard, writing that

"[e]xperiences made with ISAF/CIMIC⁸⁶ constitute a valuable reference for any further co-operation with military partners in Afghanistan. However, a simple replication seems not to be appropriate as the PRT approach is different from that of ISAF/CIMIC. The first step to define possible co-operation with PRTs would be a clear identification of tasks they [PRTs] could ensure as implementing partners for EC development aid. Assessment of past experience (even if ISAF/CIMIC are not directly comparable with PRTs), *compatibility with the mandate of PRTs* (...), comparative advantages of PRTs compared to other implementing partners and *risks involved when mixing up military duties with civilian engagements* are the main issues to be addressed in this regard (ECHO⁸⁷ has expressed strong reservations for such an approach)" (EU SPG Evaluation 2010: 3; emphases added).

Strong reservations also came from the French government, which was alarmed "about what might be perceived as relations between the Commission and NATO", though the External Relations Director General wrote to Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner that "[o]n substance, these [reservations could] readily be addressed: our funding would be via an agreement *with the member states concerned and not via NATO per se* (EU SPG Evaluation 2010: 5, emphasis in the text). Reservations were also visible inside different services of the Commission: a Financial Proposal developed in collaboration with the EU Commission's Delegation to Afghanistan argued the PRTs comparative advantage was that military protection allowed them to operate; however, another Financial Decision by the Commission raised very different expectations "in terms of SPG activities being aimed at serving the needs of displaced or uprooted people or otherwise concentrating efforts on *root causes*", not the *symptoms* of insecurity (EU SPG Evaluation 2010: 11, emphasis added).

This civilian-military conflict and the clashes between short-term and long-term perspectives become most visible when one contrasts the EU's two Country

⁸⁶ "CIMIC" is short for Civil-Military Cooperation, or the means by which military commanders connect with civilian agencies in a theatre of operations.

⁸⁷ ECHO stands for the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department, formerly known as the European Community Humanitarian Aid Office.

Strategy Papers (CSP) for 2003-2006 and for 2007-2013. As the Final Evaluation of the SPG program notes, although SPG “fell under EC’s 2003-2006 Country Strategy Paper (CSP), the governance aims established for SPG and as reflected in the Call for Proposals seem more related to the 2007-2013 CSP” (EU SPG Evaluation 2010: 13). These two documents, the Evaluation Report noted,

“could ultimately be employed to formulate *two very different projects*: a long term approach to institution building or one that was more responsive to increasing concerns over a worsening security situation and carrying greater prospects for short term ‘security’ effects” (EU SPG Evaluation 2010: 14; emphasis added).

The 2007-2013 CSP had a state building focus; it stressed the strengthening of the Rule of Law, good governance, public administration reform and democratization and argued that Afghanistan’s “economic and political development depends on the progressive strengthening of a functioning state, governed through accountable, democratic institutions, and able to ensure security and the rule of law over the entire national territory” (CSP 2007-2013: 22).

As the Evaluation Report notes, however, assuming that these *foci* were the basis of SPG’s long term perspective on Afghan institution building, these concerns were entirely disconnected from what the EU’s “2004-2005 National Indicative Programme” had to say, namely that “real progress towards creating a democratic, stable and prosperous Afghanistan is seriously threatened by the significant deterioration in security, and by the exponential growth in opium poppy production” (quoted in EU SPG Evaluation 2010: 13).

Given that the SPG was hampered by such an underlying goal conflict (between short and long term and between security and development), it is not surprising that the MS resisted a strong supra-national element in its implementation, preferring to remain in control in SPG’s “Working Group”, which evaluated and approved grant proposals. Their often very different visions of appropriate civil-military relations led to a

“lack of clearly defined targets and indicators [for the entire SPG]. Its log frame did not establish any clear targets at the outcome level whereas its indicators were mostly unusable because they were either too vaguely formulated and too broad to be measurable and objectively verifiable” (EU SPG Evaluation 2010: v).

Given these difficulties, the MS often simply ignored the SPG: A French civil-military mission in the French area of responsibility, for instance, undertook a needs assessment for its own national policing mission “resulting in four police infrastructure grants”, but *without* “having contacted or consulted EUPOL”: “no reference to EUPOL [could be] found in the PNA [Provincial Needs Assessment]” (EU SPG Evaluation 2010: 26). The Swedish embassy, rejecting its co-financing contribution to SPG in a letter from 3 February 2009, informed the IOM that Sweden would not take part in a Working Group meeting out of concerns over the separation between civilian and PRT activities (EU SPG Evaluation 2010: 34).

A last problem with the MS’ attempts to have a “comprehensive” logic of coordination guide their collective security actions concerns the pronounced tendency among the MS to “hand over” inefficient missions to the European Commission as an exit strategy. According to one source, the Commission funded two of EUPOL’s projects in the field of policing and Security Sector Reform, the Crime Management College and the Staff Management College in Kabul, after intense pressure from Germany, which wished to have “something to show for in ‘its’ flagship mission EUPOL” before the mission would end.⁸⁸ Earlier, the Commission had been very reluctant to acquiesce in MS pressure to fund the UN-administered Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA) with millions of euros because spending on salaries and “running costs” did (and does) not correspond to its long-term development vision. According to one EEAS official, the MS “try to offset budgetary pressures by getting EC-managed instruments to ensure ‘complementary’ capacity building measures in the future. This allows the phasing out of a specific CSDP action – in particular when we are facing ‘new’ priorities or when the missions are ‘overdue’ and no longer justifiable in terms of ‘crisis management’”.⁸⁹

In other words, the EU’s comprehensive approach is often turned upside down: it is not a common inter-institutional strategy with clear benchmarks that determines which players or institutions will commit what resources to common goals; on the contrary, in the absence of common goals, the MS draw in the Commission to fund activities such as training and mentoring, or simply running costs. However, the most fundamental problem that plagues the EU’s comprehensive

⁸⁸ Interview with EEAS official in Brussels, 16.05.2015.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*

approach is its apolitical nature: The comprehensive approach is a tool of coordination, not a policy, and the different philosophies, strategic cultures, approaches and policies of the MS keep it from becoming one (see Fescharek 2015b).

This apolitical role in crisis management can also be shown in the area of aid and reconstruction, which the final section of this chapter briefly deals with.

3.2.4. European action in humanitarian aid and reconstruction: Common or parallel?

As we saw above, the Blair, Schröder and Chirac governments all emphasized the humanitarian and aid dimension in the Afghan endeavor to a greater extent than the US administration. Many other European countries were equally keen to stress the softer dimensions of post crisis management and reconstruction, such as human rights and gender issues (Kaim 24.01.2011). Though on paper, European aid and reconstruction spending was indeed considerable, a true division of labor – between the MS “doing the dishes” and the US taking care of the “cooking” – did not emerge because a common European political project could not be found.

The EU’s core documents for development and humanitarian spending in Afghanistan were based on superficial analysis, which contributed to a vague and contradictory roadmap for Afghanistan and therefore broadly defined lists of activities. European actions in aid and reconstruction were “parallel” but not “common”, and this left them bereft of the degree of impact that would be necessary if the “division of labor” scheme was to have any sense.

European admonitions about the necessity to complement the US-led military campaign with reconstruction, humanitarian and capacity building measures were not only rhetoric: Important European financial commitments followed quickly after 9/11. At a donor conference in Tokyo in 2002, hosted jointly by Japan, the United States, the EU and Saudi Arabia, international donors pledged \$ 1,8 billion to rebuild Afghanistan in 2002, and a total of \$ 4,5 billion over the next five years (Relief Web

2002). Together with a conference in Berlin in March 2004, the EU's collective pledge grew to € 3,1 billion for reconstruction over the time span from 2002 to 2006 (EU 2007). In fact in 2002 alone, the EU and its MS committed a total of € 836 million for reconstruction and humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, the European Commission pledged € 200 million per annum for a 5-year period and by March 2003, total disbursements coming from the EU stood already at € 804 million (European Commission 25.06.2003).⁹⁰

A EU factsheet claims the EU accounted for 44 % of total foreign pledges until 2006 (European Commission 25.06.2003). Only Turkey, Serbia, Ethiopia, the Palestinian Administered Areas and Morocco received more from the European Commission between 2002 and 2008 (Cirovski and Pistor 2010: 4). Much of EU assistance went through international trust funds (for instance € 2,5 million for a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) trust fund to re-establish Afghanistan's civilian administration). In 2005, the EU contributed € 65 million to LOTFA to fund police salaries since May 2005 (ICG 2005a).

Since NATO spread out across the country and European allies started to take over PRTs throughout Afghanistan, the MS, especially the heaviest spenders, started to argue about the regions where European funds would be allocated.⁹¹ In addition, a complex institutional set-up made it difficult for the EU to gain leverage: A EU Special Representative (EUSR) was appointed in December 2001 (Klaus-Peter Klaiber, replaced in June 2002 by Francesc Vendrell). The EUSR was technically supposed to coordinate with the Delegation Commission and the MS.

One central issue was the difficult relationship between the EUSR and the Council as well as the MS: "Who is he speaking on behalf of? He is not getting the agreement of member states, and this can cause confusion in the minds of people without a detailed understanding [of the EU]", as a European diplomat put it (ICG 2005a: 7). Most importantly, until the Lisbon Treaty solved some coordination issues by merging the Delegation of the Commission and the Office of the EUSR, institutional coordination was a great European issue in Afghanistan, and this affected

⁹⁰ In fact, Community contributions outstripped the pledges at Tokyo: For instance, in 2003, the Commission delivered over € 280 million, including € 72 million from ECHO, and in 2004, the Commission gave more than € 300 million, which included € 50 million for police salaries and training, and € 55 million from ECHO. Hence, in both 2003 and 2004, the Commission outspent its own pledges (EU 2007).

⁹¹ Phone interview with EU official, EUSR office, January 2012.

the EU's overall performance in aid and development spending.⁹² The ICG deplored the “absence of formal coordination mechanisms between the EUSR, with its in-depth political analysis, and the EC delegation, one of the largest donors” (ICG 2005a: 8). Lack of information sharing equally hampered effective cooperation in aid and development: “most European missions and agencies are unfamiliar with each other’s reports and research” and many MS would not have access to the COREU network (*Correspondance européenne*) and the Commission email system (ibid.).

In addition, a number of authors have long denounced the superficial nature of Western context analysis that informed development spending. As renowned Afghan analysts Antonio Giustozzi wrote in his 2009 book on the “New Taliban”, “[e]very age has its follies; perhaps the folly of our age could be defined as an unmatched ambition to change the world, without even bothering to study it in detail and understand it first” (Giustozzi 2009: 1). NATO General McChrystal, whom we will encounter in Chapter 5, maybe most dramatically expressed this when he said in 2011:

“We didn’t know enough, and we still don’t know enough. Most of us, me included, had a very superficial understanding of the situation and history, and we had a frighteningly simplistic view of recent history, the last 50 years, the personalities, the actions that occurred” (The Guardian 07.10.2011).

Though the EU’s CSP contained a few pages analyzing the “political, economic and social situation”, this crucial document was extremely superficial. It vaguely spoke of “enormous challenges over the next two years (CSP 2003: 10) and offered largely technical solutions, namely that a “new constitution must be written and approved”, the “legal, logistical, and cultural grounds for ‘free and fair’ elections must be prepared”, or that a national “armed force of up to 70,000 must be trained and deployed while up to 200,000 faction-based soldiers are demobilized” (CSP 2003: 11). Analysis glossed over the country’s past and the consequences of the civil war with commonplaces such as that “continued political volatility leaves the outlook even more uncertain” (ibid.).

The document contained no analysis of the battle over pastures or the numerous land conflicts that the country’s upheavals since 1973 had brought

⁹² Phone interview with EU official, EUSR office, January 2012.

(Dorrnsoro 2003; Roy 2004; Adelkha 2013; Alden 2013; Centlivres-Demont 2015). This tallied with the Bonn Agreement, which had remained extremely vague on economic reconstruction, urging “the United Nations, the international community, particularly donor countries and multilateral institutions, to reaffirm, strengthen and implement their commitment to assist with the rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction of Afghanistan, in coordination with the Interim Authority”, and which the EU recognized as the “basic roadmap for the political future of Afghanistan” (Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan, Annex III.2; Council of EU Foreign Ministers 15.04.2002).

The extremely vague and ambiguous way international donor goals were formulated led to very broad definitions of tasks: The CSP singled out “capacity building” for the Transitional Authority, rural development and food security, as well as health and economic infrastructure as “areas of concentration”. For instance, € 15 million were earmarked to build "capacity within key Government Ministries and help drive public administration reform, including by strengthening the revenue position" (CSP 2003: 2). “The problem with this capacity building”, one interview partner said to this author, “is that we know virtually nothing about the fast-changing nature of Afghan politics” (interview with EUPOL officers, Kabul, October 2011).

Tonita Murray, former Director of the Canadian Police College and working as Senior Advisor to the Minister of Interior of Afghanistan in 2011, described the MS’ efforts at building capacity in the Ministry of Interior (MoI) as such:

“What I see is that the MoI still continues to operate according to Afghan ways quite separate from what it is doing with the International Community. So it is almost like there are two MoIs. (...) It has gone on undisturbed in its own way, while at the same time working with the International Community on reform processes. *And occasionally something will migrate from our ideas for a reform process and maybe get adopted into the Afghan MoI, but we haven’t had an awful lot of impression on how they do their work.* (...) Often times we build their capacity to interact with us Europeans, but no Afghan capacity that will enable the Ministry to function independently from us (...). If you think of capacity of something that is giving them boots and guns and buildings etc., we have done a good job, but we have not taught them the capacity to look after the material things we have given them. So cars go missing, and the cars cannot be maintained, they are driven until they can’t be driven anymore and then they are thrust to one side. It is the same with any piece of machinery. So we have given them the equipment but we have not taught them how to take care of it: The capacity to look after what they use” (interview with Tonita Murray 17.10.2011; see also Murray 2007).

In addition to the vagueness of goals and activities, much of the development aid the MS offered via the EU lacked equivalent funding. For instance, the EU's April 2002 Council conclusions promised to "offer training and advice in establishing an efficient public administration", to assist the Afghan Interim Authority (the AIA, which the Bonn Agreement created)

"in establishing a legal system and other necessary mechanisms to ensure respect for the rule of law, democratic principles, respect for the rights of all ethnic groups, as well as of the human rights of women and children, and other human rights and fundamental freedoms including freedom of expression" (Council of EU Foreign Ministers 15.04.2002).

The EU also offered "to assist the AIA and its successor in establishing national and local structures, both governmental and non-governmental" (*ibid.*). The sum the EU pledged for this purpose, however, was a mere € 2,5 million via a UNDP trust fund for the re-establishment of an Afghan civilian administration (ICG 2005a: 5). In other words, even if the overall sum of money was high, the great variety of simultaneous projects, all in themselves worthy of decades of commitment, often made sure that initiatives remained underfunded.⁹³

In addition, Afghanistan did not dislodge other pressing European concerns, such as stability in post-war Ex-Yugoslavia: If an "aid per capita" view is taken, the above numbers do actually not compare well to previous post-conflict missions the EU was involved in, from Bosnia-Herzegovina to Kosovo and East Timor: Although Afghanistan is much poorer and more populous than Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina together, the three countries received roughly the same (Korski 2009: 11). As a RAND study shows, Afghanistan received € 38,5 per capita between 2002 and 2004, while Bosnia received € 458,6 per capita (Dobbins, Jones, Crane et al. 2005: xxii).

Initially, European humanitarian aid and reconstruction spending stood against the US' pledge of \$ 296 million in reconstruction aid for Afghanistan for fiscal year 2002, and thus compared relatively well (see Gladstone 2001: 25). However, in 2003, the total amount of US pledges directed towards humanitarian aid and reconstruction stood already at \$ 3,3 billion (GAO 2004). US non-military assistance grew during the following years, to \$ 350 million in fiscal year (FY) 2003 and \$ 720 million in FY

⁹³ Early on the World Bank came out with a critical assessment of the Tokyo pledges, stating Afghanistan would need about three times more than pledged in Tokyo, i.e. \$ 15 billion over the next five years for reconstruction alone, not counting relief and security assistance (CFR 2003: 2).

2004. This compared to, respectively, \$ 14,7 billion invested in war spending in 2003 and \$ 14,5 billion in 2004 (GAO 2005).

The overarching point here, however, is not to compare donor spending, but to stress that absent a clear political project going beyond the propping up of Afghan institutions in order to secure popular support, external aid amounted to “throwing money at the problem” (Horne 2012): As a senior member of the EC delegation pointed out during an interview,

“we were all very naïve when we started ‘reforming’ Afghanistan. We thought that we just needed to provide the country a massive boost in support and money, and then the pieces would sort of fall together on their own, the political process would follow because it was evident that nobody would want to return to the old days after so many years of war”.⁹⁴

This is connected to the convergence argument in this dissertation, namely the fact that parallel MS *actions* can occur without a common political *project*, and this vagueness contributes to make action possible in the first place: European development and aid spending illustrates the phenomenon that MS action, in this case aid and development spending during the early years, was parallel without being common.

⁹⁴ Phone interview with EU official, Brussels, January 2012.

3.3. Conclusion

This chapter took the analysis forward from the 1990s to the early years of the Afghan intervention. In the first part, it argued that discussions about the normative ground on which a common European strategic culture could draw do not sufficiently take into account the fact that common norms do not solve the deeper political problem that no political project exists. The lack of political will to work toward “collective actorness”, and to provide this project with the necessary means, institutions and procedures, makes sure that those norms, interests and threat perceptions that are shared cannot be translated into a meaningful security strategy. In the current set-up, parallel actions are possible, but a common and specific political project for these actions is impossible to achieve.

The main issue identified in the second part was that national elites (in this case those of the UK, France and Germany) framed security issues in Afghanistan very differently, because their analyses were rooted in different national strategic cultures. Therefore, vague normative constructs such as the necessity to act “comprehensively” and “coordinate” could provide no basis for common policy (see also Rynning 2012). The field where consensus was highest among the MS, namely the area of aid and reconstruction, did suggest that the transatlantic division of labor was indeed real, but without the possibility to agree to a clear political project, this merely amounted to the MS and the US all throwing money at the same problem without common strategy.

Based on this chapter, the following one analyzes how the MS’ limited means and will enabled them to proact only on questions of form, not content, and how this led to a transatlantic division of labor that was akin to niche acting under US leadership. This is a necessary part of the demonstration, because the challenges of “acting” and “proacting” are similar but not entirely the same. An actor can act even when *reacting*, but the issues of setting, promoting and controlling an agenda are different, and this is what the next chapter turns to.

Chapter 4. Proactive Procrastination: The early years of the intervention

4.0. Introduction

This chapter analyzes an aspect of the MS' collective actorness that was not discussed so far: While Chapter 3 dealt with the way diverging strategic cultures can hamper the MS' ability to act under a meaningful common security strategy, what needs to be analyzed is not only their ability to act, but also what happens when their ability to collectively initiate and lead, i.e., to be a proactive leader in security, is concerned. At first sight, this might seem a redundant question: Logically, if the MS and the EU have difficulty acting collectively, the same will likely be true for their ability to proact. However, although the category of "proactive leadership" also tells us something about the MS' difficulty to transcend their strategic cultural differences for the sake of common policy, it does more than that.

It tells us whether there is the will and ability to *set an agenda* and determine a situation – or not, and if so, what hinders the MS from proacting in security. It also tells us how the MS relate to the agendas and/or leadership of other actors. This distinction between "acting" and "proacting" is important because the criteria for "acting" can all be fulfilled even if an actor is only *reacting* (to an external lead or unfolding events for instance).

However, a group of states aspiring to become a collective actor in international security cannot expect to be confronted only with situations where reaction is the appropriate course, or where the agenda is already set; it must also be prepared to lead proactively based on a political vision. The political vacuum during the Afghan intervention's early years and strong US encouragement for a European role in the "so-called 'nation-building'", as President Bush referred to it, offered the MS an opportunity to do just that (The White House 11.10.2001). Given the mission's military nature and the US' role in the campaign, this chapter analyzes how the MS' ability to proact relates to, and may be conditioned by, these two factors.

4.0.a. Definitions: Proactive leadership

A “proactive” policy is defined here as a policy aiming to create a situation rather than only responding to it once it has occurred. It aims to prompt and determine pre-defined outcomes through differentiated planning and purposeful action. Whether the policy is “successful” in the long term or not matters for the dimension of “shaping” which will be discussed in Chapter 5, but it is not, strictly speaking, relevant for the category of proactiveness: Being proactive means taking the initiative and set the agenda. For instance, with the ENP, the MS clearly formulated a proactive policy in the sense that they took the initiative and set the agenda with a pre-determined policy to establish a ring of friends. The fact that ENP is largely a failure does not matter to the argument that it was a proactive policy.

Next, “leadership” is defined as follows: The first dimension of “leadership” implies the elaboration of a strategy, which was dealt with in Chapter 3. In addition, a leader must have the ability to

1) Share a strategy with others so that they will follow willingly: In this case, persuade others to follow, for instance the US, the Afghans, or the UN.

2) Provide the resources, knowledge and methods to realize a vision. This not only concerns the provision of adequate information, research and intelligence about the field, but also the degree to which red lines are enforced to ensure compliance.

3) Coordinate and balance the conflicting interests of all group members and stakeholders.

4.0.b. Argument and structure

The US administration’s policy of neglect vis-à-vis the question of state building and its strong encouragement for the EU to get involved, as well as the UN’s unwillingness to create another protectorate after Kosovo and East Timor, created an opportunity for the MS to drive the process of reconstruction, to set – or at least

considerably influence – the agenda and prop up the Bonn process with strong support for the new Afghan government. Importantly, what this chapter refers to as a “political leadership vacuum” and a US policy of neglect during the early years designates not only the lack of US funding and military footprint going beyond Special Forces to hunt Al Qaeda, but more importantly the US’ political under-investment in stabilization for the new Afghan government and the lack of a political “state building” project that would accompany military efforts once the immediate questions of installing a new Afghan government were settled.

European leaders, by contrast, emphasized the importance of a “political approach” and of complementing the military OEF campaign with development and assistance for the new Afghan government. However, despite the fact that three European nations, Italy, Germany and the UK, took over key tasks in core areas of national sovereignty, the justice sector, the police sector and counter narcotics, an integrated European state building project was never energetically pursued. What is more, when a strong focus on “institution building” did finally land on the agenda (with the 2006 “London Compact”) it was put there by the Bush administration, which conflated “state building” with “army building”.

Hence, if a proactive policy is one that aims to create a situation rather than only responding to it once it has occurred, and if a leader is an actor who tries to persuade others to follow a vision, who provides the information, resources, knowledge and methods to realize that vision and who coordinates and balances the conflicting interests of all group members and stakeholders, then the early years revealed the MS’ great difficulty, and in fact, unwillingness, to provide proactive security leadership in a field where the MS supposedly excelled, i.e., civilian state building.

What explains this outcome? This chapter argues that if the MS failed to provide proactive leadership, it was because their actions were not determined by positive choices to prompt and then guarantee the rule of law, accountable government and “democracy”, in sum to determine the agenda of state building, but adapted to two main constrains: These constrains were, firstly, the limited political will to act and shape collectively (“as the EU”) and therefore reap the benefits of joined-up European action, due to very different cultural sensitivities and strategic cultures, and secondly, the low level of military capabilities that could act as a

guarantee in case of failure, which resulted in extreme political and military dependence on US security guarantees and infrastructure.

The chapter looks at three specific examples to provide substance to the above arguments: The MS' political-military underinvestment around the time of the Bonn Agreement (4.1), their lack of coordination in SSR (4.2) and their refusal to resort to conditionality (4.3). European states neither invested sufficient political (4.1.a), nor military capital (4.1.b) to take possession of post-Taliban Afghanistan and shape the country's future according to their preferences.

On the political side, the MS waited for US leadership at the Bonn conference, even if this leadership largely only concerned the short-term question of choosing a new Afghan leader. Their military under-investment not only limited their "shaping" ability in Afghanistan – it also indirectly undermined ISAF's stabilization mandate and implicit state building purpose, because the US-led counter terrorism mission OEF, to which the MS pledged political support "until it ha[d] reached its objectives", had extreme distorting effects on the build-up of a strong central state based in Kabul (NATO 06.12.2001). Military under-investment also made it difficult for states like Germany or the UK to "convince" the US administration of the supposed "superiority" of the "British ways of dealing with insurgents" or the German "networked security" approach.

Next, European security and state building contributions were mostly organized nationally and not coordinated (4.2.a) and initiatives to streamline the European PRTs were blocked (4.2.b). The examples of Italy's experience in the justice sector and the UK's experience in the drug sector illustrate this point.⁹⁵ The example of the various European PRTs serves to illustrate how different MS adapted the mission to the different requirements of their divergent national strategic cultures, which equally hampered coordination.

Lastly, even when benchmarks were clearly not met, or important donor redlines crossed, did European development and aid money continue to flow (4.3.a). Money was spent, and security assistance accorded, without serious fact finding

⁹⁵ Although it would fit into this chapter thematically, the German experience with "police building" will not be dealt with in this chapter, but in Chapter 6.

missions, in other words planning or strategic thinking: “*La stratégie*”, as one French military officer put it in an interview with this author, “*c’était d’en être*” (“the strategy was to be a part [of the mission]”) (4.3.b).

An important exception to the argument that the MS were not interested in proactive leadership is the fact that they did shape and proact when it came to the “form” of the mission: Most of the MS invested significant political capital to limit their input, to devise elaborate schemes of force protection or caveats, to erect walls between counter terrorism and peacekeeping/state building (i.e., OEF and ISAF), and to portray the security environment to their home audiences as benign, even when there was no more peace to keep.

When the Germans and the Dutch created momentum to bring in NATO in 2003, expand it beyond Kabul and throughout the country, they did so for reasons that had not much to do with Afghanistan *per se* and in a way that made sure the mission fit their capabilities, not the requirements of “state building”. The paradox of such European proactivism was that it sought to limit European responsibility for, and ownership of, this campaign’s outcome. In other words, this was proactivism of form, not content; it did not intent to shape outcomes, but input – while limiting this input at the same time.

4.1. Early European contributions: Failing to create critical mass for a “European” policy

4.1.a. Political under-investment: The Bonn conference (27 November – 5 December 2001) and its aftermath

A popular explanation for the “West’s failure in Afghanistan” is that the international community became over-ambitious after 9/11; it tried to bring a model of centralized democracy to a country that was not ready for it, and the West’s inglorious retreat is the prize for trying to impose alien ideas on a tribal society that resisted externally-led state building.

However, as Vanda Felbab-Brown shows in an excellent study, such arguments mistake rhetoric for reality. In fact, from the beginning accountable government and the rule of law were subordinate to the requirements of “security”, which in reality meant the GWOT and Western security. The emergent Karzai regime very soon turned into a rapacious and corrupt regime based on the discrimination of tribes, “predatory behavior on the part of government officials and power brokers closely aligned with the state” (Felbab-Brown 2013: 15). Due to the necessities of the US-led GWOT, local Afghan strongmen were used as allies to hunt down Al Qaeda or fight “insurgents”, and “alliances were made that conflicted with the principles of good governance (important for peacebuilding) as well as the establishment of a monopoly of force (central to statebuilding)” (Suhrke 2008; Suhrke 2011: 18).

Hence, when Felbab-Brown argues the US-led coalition “systematically underemphasized good governance and subordinated it to short-term battlefield priorities, pushing it aside and postponing focus on it, unable to muster the resources and persistence needed to improve governance”, this is not to argue that no measures were taken at all to improve governance, only that the logic of counter terrorism took precedence over stabilization and that the means provided by the US or the MS for governance or “state building” paled in comparison to the challenge (Felbab-Brown 2013: 16).

Hence, the existence of two simultaneous projects, counter terrorism operations on the one hand, pursued by a limited number of US troops, and on the other hand “security assistance” (which was later turned into “state building” when the US administration fully embraced the term), is crucial to understand European political and military investments in Afghanistan from the start to the end.

Formulating a common European project of “state building” to counter the negative “side effects” of OEF (i.e., the political cost of casualties and the undermining effect local alliances with warlords had on central state authority) would have required confronting the US administration – however, the MS’ extreme military dependence on US security guarantees in Afghanistan made this an unattractive option, especially since contributing in Afghanistan became a good way to mend fences with the Bush administration over the transatlantic fallout over the Iraq invasion (2003).

One way to demonstrate the European passivity that resulted from this dynamic is the way the Bonn Agreement came into being: Firstly, its democracy agenda resembled a vague promise for a better future based on new institutions, but there was little European will to guarantee the settlement autonomously, because even if the US made clear it would stay out of ISAF, European governments devised their contributions to ISAF in ways that made sure it would rely on US security guarantees and infrastructure.

Secondly, after the Bonn conference, the main decisions, those on the new Afghan leadership and those on security provision, reflected the US’ short-term priorities in the context of the GWOT, namely a new government that would not interfere with the necessities of counter terrorism operations, and a peacekeeping mission which the European states would take care of without US involvement and despite the US administration’s prior refusal to consider NATO involvement.

4.1.a.i. Governmental arrangements and security provision for post-Taliban Afghanistan

The German government convened an international conference at the Petersberg in Bonn from 27 November to 5 December 2001, in order to find arrangements for Afghanistan's political future. German foreign Minister Joschka Fischer deployed much energy to host the donor conference that he envisioned as a demonstration that Germany was a mature and responsible member of the international community. As Fischer frequently stressed, Germany was home to an expat community of about 80,000 Afghans and it had headed a donor group called the Afghanistan Support Group during the 1990s.

A report by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, close to Chancellor Schröder's SPD party, described the past that linked Germany and Afghanistan and stressed the special role Germany could play, notably based on the fact that it did not have "the negative burden of a colonial past in the region", guaranteeing it a "high reputation in Afghanistan" and "the confidence of all parts of the society" (Wieland-Karimi 2001). Until 1979 there had been a friendly partnership between Germany and Afghanistan, and Germany had played a major role in Afghan development in the 1970s and even during the war in the 1980s. German assistance had been focused on Paktia province, south of Kabul, and on twinning programs between German and Afghans universities fostering scientific exchange (Wieland-Karimi 2001). Thus, the report argued, Germany could take up a "prominent role within the framework of its international involvement as mediator between the competing interests" (ibid.).

However, long before the conference started, the OEF campaign had already created facts on the ground. If Germany became the first European government to make a (non-binding) offer for a future peacekeeping mission, and the UK became the first European government to agree leading it, the Bonn agreement made clear these contributions would be firmly set inside the overall paradigm of the US-led GWOT; although some European diplomats and UN officials expressed the wish to include tribal leaders in the post-Taliban settlement as "positive agents of change", the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had already chosen a policy of direct support to so-called warlords or local strongmen in their campaign to hunt down al Qaeda operatives (Rashid 2008: 136).

These *faits accomplis*, created by a combination of Special Forces, not more than a few hundred CIA operatives backed up by air power and the so-called Northern Alliance, a grouping of anti-Taliban fighters, mostly Tajiks, but also Uzbeks, Hazaras, and Pashtuns, had an important impact on the two key decisions taken in Bonn, concerning the new Afghan leadership and the international security assistance force that would prop it up (Rashid 2008).

Concerning the thorny question of how post-Taliban Afghanistan could be governed, the freshly appointed UN Special Envoy for Afghanistan Lakhdar Brahimi declared that a solution must be “home-grown”. “The UN is not seeking a transitional administration or peacekeeping or anything like that”, he declared; its role should merely be to help and assist in the formation of a government (Suhrke 2011: 29). Hence, it was up to the Afghans to

“constitute a transitional administration, which would be far more credible, acceptable and legitimate in the eyes of the population, than a transitional administration run by the UN or another constellation of foreigners. Parachuting a large number of international experts into Afghanistan could overwhelm the nascent transitional administration and interfere with the building of local capacity” (UN 13.11.2001).

Brahimi suggested creating an Afghan-led “Provisional Council” instead of a full-blown UN administration, which would place more demands on Western donors. The provisional Council would be “composed of a fairly large and representative group of Afghans” (ibid.). In the language of the Bonn agreement, this became the “Interim Authority”, which was established on 22 December 2001. It consisted, inter alia, of an “Interim Administration” and a Special Independent Commission for the convening of an Emergency Loya Jirga (or “grand assembly”), which would be organized within six months (Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan 2001).

At this Loya Jirga, Afghan representatives would decide on a “Transitional Authority”, “including a broad-based transitional administration, to lead Afghanistan until such time as a fully representative government can be elected through free and fair elections to be held no later than two years from the date of the convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga” (ibid.). The Interim Administration was given the main prerogatives of state power, including the printing of a currency and the establishment of a Central Bank (Maley 2006: 32). Lastly, a “Constitutional Loya Jirga” would be

convened within eighteen months of the Transitional Authority's establishment to adopt a constitution. A "broad-based gender-sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully representative" government was spelled out as the main goal (ibid.). Presidential and parliamentary elections would be held in 2004 and September 2005, respectively, bringing the Bonn Process to a formal end.

While the Afghans would be in the lead, the "international community" would support and "cooperate" with the fledgling government to "combat international terrorism, cultivation and trafficking of illicit drugs", although Bonn contained no provisions on specifics (Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan 2001). The Bonn Agreement was concluded in just over a week and because it contained no detailed provisions it has been described as a "framework rather than a detailed settlement" (Suhrke 2011: 2013).

The most pressing question was who would be leading this "transitional administration". Time was pressing, because the MS and the US had already announced a donor conference at the end of 2001 to commit to Afghanistan's reconstruction – donors needed to know "whom their money was going to" (Jones 2009: 261). Colin Powell, who accompanied the Bonn process (he reportedly said "We need to get this done – speed, speed, speed"), sent career diplomat James Dobbins as Special Envoy to the Afghan Opposition (Fields and Ahmed 2011: 9). Before and during the Bonn conference, one of his tasks was to forge an agreement between four groups of Afghans, mostly *émigrés*. The other core task was to promote the Pashtun Hamid Karzai as the new figurehead of the Interim Administration.

This became evident from day one of the conference, when delegates were asked to be silent and listen to Hamid Karzai's intervention, calling from Uruzgan and on a satellite phone provided by US Special Forces (Jones 2009: 258). Afghan delegates in Bonn expressed dismay, as they understood that the US was merely asking them to endorse the new leadership. However, by a deft game of alliances and back-channel influence and backed by Lakhdar Brahimi, who also felt that it was necessary to rally the Pashtuns as the largest constituency that had initially followed the Taliban, US diplomats made sure the Afghan delegates finally settled for Karzai (Jones 2009: 260, 261).

The second key decision that needed to be taken concerned external security provision for the new government: Who would provide Karzai with security guarantees? The Bonn participants merely pledged their “commitment to do all within their means and influence” to ensure security, which left considerable space for interpretation. Most importantly, they emphasized “the responsibility for providing security and law and order throughout the country resides with the Afghans themselves” (Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan 2001). To assist the Afghans, it was decided (and endorsed a few days later in the UN Security Council), that an “International Security Assistance Force” (ISAF) would be created.

The Bush administration made clear it was uninterested in becoming involved in a mission that smacked of state building and therefore merely encouraged “other countries who have an interest in peacekeeping to participate in the International Security Assistance Force to the extent they want to” (US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld quoted in Peace Operations Factsheet 2002). European diplomats insisted particularly on the word “assistance”, because it made clear that ISAF was not about war, but helping a fledgling government (Rynning 2012). ISAF would thus “assist” “in helping the new Afghan authorities in the establishment and training of new Afghan security and armed forces” (Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan 2001). Until this goal was achieved, ISAF’s mandate was to “assist in the maintenance of security for Kabul and its surrounding areas” (ibid.). ISAF “*could*, as appropriate, be progressively expanded to other urban centres and other areas”, but the Bonn agreement did not go into more detail (ibid., emphasis added).

This lukewarm security commitment corresponded to the role European foreign ministers intended to give the EU in Afghanistan: The EU recognized the Bonn Agreement as the “basic roadmap for the political future of Afghanistan” and, stating that the UN had “been entrusted with a central responsibility for the peace process in Afghanistan”, the EU’s role in Afghanistan was described as seeking to “*promote and support* the efforts of the UN Secretary-General and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) under the authority of the Secretary-General’s Special Representative, as set out in UNSCR 1401 (2002)” (Council of EU Foreign Ministers 15.04.2002, emphasis added). The EU’s first CSP for the time period 2003-2006 equally stated the EU’s role was firmly set within the context of the

Bonn accord; hence the EU would essentially play a facilitating role in an Afghan-led electoral and democratic process (CSP 2003).

To immediately prop up the “Bonn process”, the EU activated a package of € 4,93 million from an instrument called the Rapid Reaction Mechanism (RRM) that serves to provide “flexible and rapid funding in crisis situations for primarily civilian initiatives” (ICG 2005b: 39). A second RRM program was released in 2002 with the stated intention to enhance the Interim Administration’s credibility among ordinary Afghans (ICG 2005a). The EU appointed a EUSR to Afghanistan, the German Klaus-Peter Klaiber, through a Joint Action on 10 December 2001, only a few days after the Bonn conference.⁹⁶ His mandate was to support

“the Union's contribution to achieving the International Community's objectives on Afghanistan as set out in UN Security Council Resolution 1378 and other relevant UN Security Council resolutions, through close liaison with and support for UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General Brahimi” (Council of EU Foreign Ministers 11.12.2001).

His successor Francesc Vendrell’s mandate was equally broad as Klaiber’s:

“encourage positive contributions from regional actors in Afghanistan and from neighbouring countries to the peace process in Afghanistan and thereby contribute to the consolidation of the Afghan State; and support the pivotal role played by the UN, notably the Special Representative of the Secretary-General” (Council Joint Action 10.12.2002).

These vague mandates and the limitation to a support role were difficult to square with the rhetoric about the pressing need for a “political solution” (see Chapter 2) and the great financial burden the MS accepted to carry during the series of international donor conferences (see Chapter 3): The European Commission alone pledged € 200 million per annum for a 5-year period and by March 2003, total disbursements coming from the EU stood already at € 804 million (European Commission 25.06.2003). While this was a heavy financial commitment, politically speaking it was another version of what UN Special Representative Brahimi referred to as the “light footprint” (see below) i.e. a very limited political commitment on the side of the MS to forge a clear common project for Afghanistan. As the next section will show, the European’s political prudence had a clear military reason.

⁹⁶ See Chapter 3, section 3.2.4.

4.1.b. Military under-investment

The below sections do not intend to tell the complete history of European military engagements during OEF's and ISAF's early years, but to show that the MS' different engagements to "shape" the new Afghanistan were not the expression of a clear political project, but were cast as vaguely defined "contributions" in a wider scheme of multi-national governance. With respect to ISAF this meant that force levels and capabilities were not adapted to the challenges of externally-led state building or possible resistance, but to domestic audiences, low levels of capacity and national strategic cultures. For instance, the Dutch Director of Operations of the Defense Staff Commodore Pieter Cobelens considered that a vital condition for a Dutch PRT set up in the Northern Baghlan province was that the situation remain stable, as the Dutch PRT would not itself be in a position to create a secure environment: "If there is no longer a permissive environment (...) the [Dutch] PRT will be withdrawn" (Van Loo 2014: 180).

4.1.b.i. OEF

The military campaign OEF started on 7 October 2001 with about 50 Tomahawk cruise missiles launched mainly from US aircraft. Long-range B-1, B-2 and B-52 bombers started bombing areas around Kabul and Kandahar, as well as Mazar-e-Sharif, Kunduz and Jalalabad (International Herald Tribune 08.10.2001). During the initial bombing campaign, European engagement was negligible because European nations had debilitating capability issues in a war that almost exclusively relied on high-end technology and high-precision lethal air power. Some European countries were able to provide valuable capabilities at later stages, notably for manhunts and raids such as Operation Anaconda in the spring of 2002, but on the whole, European military assets, including those of France and the UK (see below), were non-essential and offered in a piecemeal fashion. Their totality created synergies

under US command, but their haphazard nature limited the MS' political influence on the campaign's conduct. One quote from German Major General Bühler, speaking about Germany's contribution to OEF, captures very well what must be seen as a wider phenomenon:

“There was no encompassing consulting with regards to strategy, but mostly things were handled in private. ... it did not happen as you would imagine. First we define our interests and then we consider the necessary means with which to do things. It was simply done pragmatically; [the German Chief of Defense General Harald] Kujat needed something to offer, we needed something to show the Americans and so on. This is how Operation Enduring Freedom came about” (Major General Erhard Bühler quoted in Hilpert 2014: 42).

Special Force contributions for Operation Anaconda came from Denmark, Germany, Norway and the UK, and European governments often waited until the spring of 2002 to make their use known to the public. European air forces, such as Dutch, Danish or Norwegian F-16 planes helped with reconnaissance. The UK fired Tomahawk missiles from their Royal Navy submarines, and Italian, Spanish and Greek naval assets were deployed to support the anti-terror operation (Bensahel 2003: 13).⁹⁷ Another maritime contribution was the so-called Task Force 150, a naval interception mission commanded, inter alia, by Germany and Spain. Its goal was to intercept Al Qaeda or Taliban forces fleeing to Africa with more than 15,000 queries of ships (ibid.).

A wide range of smaller European states also contributed various military and other assets for an often very diverse range of motivations. Lithuania, for instance, deployed a special operations team to OEF in 2002 and later to ISAF when it was a NATO member (Alasauskas and Anglickis 2010). It deployed military personnel with the German hospital in Kabul, logistics and transport personnel to the Kabul airport, communications teams, airlift support and medical detachments (Corum 2014: 270-271). The most visible role the MS played in OEF, however, concerned European contributions far from the Afghan theater: European-manned Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS) relieved American ones that were sent to Afghanistan (Siegel 2009: 464-465). NATO fighter aircraft continuously flew patrol missions over

⁹⁷ See also US Central Command. Coalition Countries. <http://www.centcom.mil/en/about-centcom-en/coalition-countries-en>. Accessed on 14.10.2015.

New York and Washington DC and together US Air Force and NATO air crews flew more than 13,400 sorties over US territory (Jones 2009: 239).

In sum, despite the MS having agreed to activate Article 5, US policy makers actually preferred to use most NATO assets on American soil, not in the combat theater. It is particularly telling in this regard that the Pentagon ultimately turned down most of the offers of combat forces coming from European nations because their utility was deemed minimal, and because they would have to be sustained by US logistics and transportation networks (Bensahel 2003: 9). Spain's and Italy's military offers were actually not even considered at all by the US (Blindenbacher and Koller 2003: 140).

As noted, the UK and France, Europe's military avant-garde countries, played a more significant role in OEF, but even here, influence on campaign conduct was more one of military *savoir-faire* than a political impact on the campaign's goals.⁹⁸ When the US-led coalition started attacking Al Qaeda and Taliban targets on 7 October 2001, the UK participated from the very beginning under the code name *Operation Veritas*. The UK played an important support role in military operations as the primary European country to contribute to early OEF through air assistance to US strikes (Siegel 2009: 464). Other UK contributions included air-to-air refueling tankers in support of the US Navy or reconnaissance aircraft (Dorman 2015). Britain provided support aircraft, launched Tomahawks from its submarines and provided the US access to the Diego Garcia base in the Indian Ocean. It acted as a "force multiplier", namely for US aircraft carriers.

Interestingly, the system used by the US air Force was incompatible with that used by its own Navy, and Britain was able to provide fuel by mid-air refueling (Dorman 2003). On 18 March 2002, the UK announced it would deploy a national Battle Group of about 1,700 soldiers who participated in operations against Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters in three major operations in early 2002, providing assistance to Australian Special Forces or directly engaging Taliban or Al Qaeda fighters (Bensahel 2003).⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Chapter 6 returns to the difference between "European political influence" and "influence of European *savoir-faire*".

⁹⁹ Operation Snipe, Operation Condor and Operation Buzzard, all three in May and June 2002.

The French military contributed to the elaboration of the combat plan, following formal requests from the Bush Administration during the first days of OEF. On 6 November, President Chirac announced to the French public that some 2,000 French military personnel were involved in military operations, and that he was ready to send in some Special Forces, provided the French remained associated to the planning of operations (a request which the British did not make, see Dorman 2015). In addition to French naval forces in the Pakistani coastal region, combat planes started their first missions in October, about two weeks into the mission. France was the only country to directly support US ground personnel with air bombing, since the UK did fire some missiles but did so from a navy vessel (Bensahel 2003).

In December 2001, French troops intervened alongside US forces in Mazar-e Sharif and by January 2002, 5,500 French troops were deployed in the region. The aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle was sent to the Indian Ocean. However, severe shortfalls limited French participation from the outset. For instance, because the French Army lacked heavy transport aircraft, it had to borrow Russian Antonov 124 aircraft for \$ 80,000 per flight (Libération 29.06.2002). Importantly, about 200 French Special Forces (kept from the French public eye) worked with the US in hunting down Al Qaeda fighters from 2003 to 2006, based in Spin Boldak, in Kandahar Province.

Neither of those two contributions altered the US' campaign plan, however. Asked about the French influence on the US's conduct of war, for instance, French Ambassador Jean de Ponton d'Amecourt (2008-2011) reminisced:

“All of our Special Forces rotated through Spin Boldak (...) Though our political influence on the campaign was almost non-existent, in Spin Boldak one could speak of a real French influence: It was a concrete, on-the-ground type of influence, an influence on the conduct of operations in the theater. For instance, our guys developed excellent relations with local dignitaries in the region around Spin Boldak. One day, insurgents came to one of the villages around Spin Boldak, and they started shooting at the villagers. The village elders asked for an American intervention. Instead of striking some houses with precision, the Americans bombed the entire village. (...) For us, that meant one year of work destroyed in a few minutes. It meant that all our good relations with the Afghans were literally dead. The French went to the Americans and said: “*Are you crazy ?!*” (...) The Americans recognized that our Special Forces were excellent. It was a slow influence, not through words, but through action” (interview with Ambassador de Ponton d'Amecourt, Paris, 11 December 2014).

In sum, it is fair to say that, like the British commandos taking part in the attacks on the cave complex at Tora Bora, where Osama Bin Laden was hiding, European contributions to OEF, especially the French and British ones, were appreciated by the US, but not successful in securing a clearly defined political influence on the mission. The little influence of those European countries fighting along the US was one of a military *savoir-faire* on an operational level, acting as force multipliers on different scales.

The case of ISAF presented a different picture than OEF, notably because of the great number of MS that contributed to it.

4.1.b.ii. ISAF

As seen in Chapter 3, the German and British governments were particularly vocal proponents of the idea that “alternatives” to the military campaign were necessary in Afghanistan. For Tony Blair, the post 9/11 era required “a whole new geopolitical framework” and notably “nation-building”, and the more the US government distanced itself from it, the more Blair argued for a strong commitment of the “international community” to Afghan state building (Blair 2010: 349; Dorman 2003: 72). For the German government, not only were social and economic reconstruction important, but participation was justified with explicit references to state building experience in the Balkans: Chancellor Schröder, for instance, declared that “[w]e have never agreed to a Bundeswehr mission without an accompanying, sustainable engagement in the political, economic and humanitarian domain” (Schröder 16.11.2001; author’s translation).

As we saw earlier, since the Balkans numerous authors and policy makers evoked the MS’ “unique advantages in dealing with situations in a holistic way - including political, civilian, nongovernmental organization, and economic instruments - that NATO cannot match”, envisioning a scenario where the US was “primarily responsible for war fighting and Europe responsible for reconstruction and stabilization” (Hunter 2002: 141; de Wijk 2003: 202). NATO documents promoted a “genuine strategic partnership in crisis management between NATO and the EU” and High Representative Solana cited the EU’s readiness to take over military operations

in Macedonia and its military role in Bosnia and Herzegovina as proof for a new “strategic partnership” that would bring NATO and the EU “closer together” (NATO 2000: § 28; Solana 2002).

Given this rhetoric about the ESDP’s potential “added value” in peacekeeping, reconstruction and state building, it was striking that ESDP was kept out of the security picture from the start and that ISAF’s first mandate allowed for merely 5,000 peacekeepers that were confined only to one city of the “failed state” Afghanistan: the capital Kabul. From the beginning, European capacity shortages and the US’ unwillingness to get involved in ISAF greatly affected European troop commitments: Though in January, the UK became the first of ISAF’s lead nations in Operation Fingal (its 3rd Division providing the command structure), capability shortages forced it to envisage a mere three-month long lead (although in the end it agreed to a six-month leadership role), and it was clear from the outset that Tony Blair was moving into Afghanistan to move out quickly (Mattelaer 2013: 117; Rynning 2012: 85). Despite recent defense reforms, the UK had a limited capacity for a mission implying the large-scale occupation of a country at more than 5,500 km airline distance from London. Most important for Blair was that the US’ refusal to assist ISAF logistically extended to the possibility of extracting the contingent in case of emergency (Suhrke 2011: 34).

For Jack Straw, Tony Blair’s Foreign Secretary, a convenient way of designing a limited UK military presence was to invite a Turkish lead role in ISAF, because, he argued, as “a member of NATO, Turkey [was] the obvious candidate to lead an Islamic force” to guarantee the new post-Taliban order (The Irish Times 24.10.2001). According to Straw, Turkey had “a pivotal historical, geographic, political and military role to play” (The Wall Street Journal Europe 19.10.2001). The UK’s outreach also extended to other countries, such as Bangladesh or Morocco. However, Turkey did not respond favorably to UK requests for an early lead role in ISAF (Rynning 2012: 85). The Turkish Ecevit government did take the lead of ISAF, but only in June 2002, and it was adamantly opposed to larger commitments of an expanded ISAF (ibid.). Other European governments were equally faced with important capacity shortfalls. For instance, before the debate about ISAF’s expansion beyond Kabul gained more traction, the German defense minister Scharping

explained that an ISAF expansion was “not feasible for us” (quoted in Robotham and Röder 2012: 179).

Hence, ISAF’s limited troop size and carefully circumscribed mandate was not only the result of the Pentagon’s wish to save troops for the impending invasion of Iraq. The MS’ small ISAF contingents also contributed to the “light footprint”: In 2005, European states were providing about 8,700 of approximately 10,000 ISAF peacekeepers, with 2,207 from Germany, 598 from the UK, 635 from Spain, 2,135 from Italy and 1,068 from the Netherlands (ICG 2005a). Other European contributions were smaller, with 22 Austrians, 372 Belgians, 62 Czechs, 173 soldiers from Denmark and about 580 from France, for instance (ibid).¹⁰⁰ Sweden initially contributed about 45 Special Forces to ISAF for intelligence gathering, then considered deploying a military police company, only to become distracted by a mission in Liberia (Honig and Käihkö 2014).

These limited contributions further increased the MS’ dependence on the US, thus limiting what ISAF could do: The Bonn Agreement and the UN Security Council Resolution UNSC 1386 emphasized that ISAF would be an *autonomous* force, but for air cover and evacuation ISAF de facto depended on US Central Command (CENTCOM), which was “in ‘overall command’ even if invisibly so from an official ISAF point of view” (Rynning 2012: 85). ISAF had only symbolic powers for coercion: “its punch lay in its association with the vast and recently demonstrated US military power, particularly in the air” (Suhrke 2011: 76). In this context of dependence on a reluctant military leader, the MS found it challenging to deploy even the initial 4,500 peacekeepers that were allowed under the UN mandate. This force projection challenge helps explain the great contrast to the roughly 55,000 peacekeepers that different MS had agreed to send to Bosnia in 1995 (ICG 2005a: 3–4).

¹⁰⁰ Estonia fielded 14 ISAF soldiers, Finland 48, Greece 129, Hungary 162, Ireland 7, Latvia 10, Lithuania 113, Luxembourg 10, Poland 9, Portugal 211, Slovakia 14, Slovenia 55, and Sweden 105. Figures provided by NATO on 30 October 2005, quoted in ICG 2005.

4.1.b.ii.i. ISAF expansion

Although the Bush administration initially refused expanding ISAF beyond Kabul, it eventually reversed course with the violent aftermath of the Iraqi invasion, now asking for more European troops and a stabilization mission beyond Kabul, in order to focus its own efforts on Iraq (which it would invade in March 2003). The MS now also changed course on ISAF expansion: For instance, while German defense minister Scharping had argued in 2001 that expansion was not feasible for the Bundeswehr, his successor Peter Struck (working under the same Chancellor) stated in 2003 “We follow the opinion of the Americans, who are absolutely right in their assumption that securing the capital is not sufficient” (Robotham and Röder 2012: 180).

The reason why this policy change was met with positive reactions on the side of European allies was that the latter were eager to get past the heated discussions over the invasion of Iraq, which had divided the MS and driven a wedge between Washington on the one hand and notably Berlin and Paris on the other. On 30 January 2003 the governments of the Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom had signed the so-called Letter of Eight, in which they expressed support for coercive action against the government of Saddam Hussein. Meanwhile, the governments of France and Germany had been the most outspoken critics of the war, meeting on 22 January to reaffirm their treaty of friendship and coordinate their opposition to the war.

In a newspaper contribution, German Chancellor Schröder wrote: “In the crises involving terrorism, Iraq and North Korea, our peoples can count on the governments of Germany and France to join forces to preserve peace, avoid war and ensure people's security” (The Guardian 22.01.2003). In February 2003, France, Germany and Belgium blocked Turkey's Article 4 request to deploy NATO AWACS aircraft, missile, chemical and biological defense systems to Turkey, which the US supported (NATO 19.02.2003). The US' Ambassador to NATO Nicholas Burns called this particularly divisive time in NATO a “near death experience” for the transatlantic alliance (Pond 2004; Rynning 2012: 87).

This is not the place to recount the transatlantic fallout over Iraq, which has been abundantly analyzed (Gordon 2002; Neuwahl 2003; Lindstrom 2003; Gärtner

and Cuthbertson 2005; Boyka and Miller 2007). What matters in this context is that NATO allies, only a month after the start of the invasion, decided collectively to relieve the US in Afghanistan and let NATO take command of ISAF. “Our commitments were stepped up as a diplomatic gesture. We [the French and the Germans] went [to Afghanistan] as the prize to pay for opposing the war in Iraq” is only the most candid statement this author has collected during interviews.¹⁰¹

Having refused during February 2003 to consider a NATO takeover of ISAF, the French government reversed course in March and agreed to contribute a small contingent to the expanded ISAF, a commitment which reached its peak in 2004 when France, Germany, Spain, Belgium and Luxembourg took ISAF Command in the multinational “Eurocorps” (from August 2004 to February 2005) and when French forces were sent to Kabul as part of the Franco-German brigade (Rynning 2012: 99). In October 2003, the UN Security Council authorized “NATO ISAF” to expand to “areas of Afghanistan outside of Kabul” and notably Germany and the Netherlands took a proactive lead in expanding NATO across the country (UNSC RES 1510).

However, many European commitments to ISAF came with strings attached: This was most visible with the so-called “caveats” and questions of risk-sharing, as well as diplomatic battles to keep the chains of command of OEF and ISAF separate. More generally, despite ISAF’s roll-out, many of the MS, notably the Dutch and the Germans, under-invested militarily and insisted on portraying the mission as peace keeping even when the insurgency had fully erupted.

For German Defense Minister Struck and Foreign Minister Fischer, the challenge was to convince NATO allies that ISAF expansion was feasible for NATO, while making sure the US remained present as the ultimate security guarantee, since “the more the United States emphasized Iraq, the less viable ISAF expansion appeared because it would lack US attention and support” (Rynning 2012: 97). Both the German and the Dutch governments wished to stress the importance of multilateralism to underline their disagreement with the unilateral way the US had invaded Iraq.¹⁰² Germany and the Netherlands wanted to take the lead of one of ISAF’s six-months rotations, but contrary to Turkey and Britain, who had deployed national divisional headquarters, they wanted to deploy a multinational corps

¹⁰¹ Interview with a high-ranking French official, Paris, February 2014; see Fescharek 2015c.

¹⁰² Phone interview with German diplomat, Berlin 12.12.2013.

headquarters, which was a “bigger and more complex affair”; hence, “unless NATO stepped in, force generation and coordination, logistics, and operational command would all fall on the two host nations” (Rynning 2012 86-87). They therefore asked NATO to step in, though many European allies were skeptical about NATO’s ability to take on such a task (Rynning 2012 86-87; Rashid 2008: 351).

NATO was rolled out in several rounds, finally expanding to the insurgency-affected east and south in July and October 2006. This expansion was done based on the so-called PRTs, which would be run by voluntary “lead nations” who were free to shape their PRTs according to their own requirements. To reach a concentration of armed forces comparable to the levels of the Kosovo Force (KFOR), an overall contingent with six-figure personnel strength would have to be deployed, but no country was willing to send such a contingent. The PRT concept offered a way out of the dilemma because it allowed for expansion based on a loosely connected web of military outposts, undertaking state building “through a network of small bases with a strength – depending on the individual local security situation – of not more than 100 soldiers and civilian reconstruction experts” (Stachelbeck 2014: 161).

Only a few European countries ultimately chose to become engaged in the dangerous areas, while most European PRTs were located in the calm regions. Meanwhile, ISAF’s mandate grew increasingly ambitious, expanding ever deeper into the domain of state building. By 13 October 2003, ISAF, which had originally been designed to keep the peace in Kabul’s streets, was to provide security for the “performance of other tasks in support of the Bonn Agreement” and its mandate stressed the

“importance of extending central government authority to all parts of Afghanistan, of comprehensive disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of all armed factions, and of security sector reform including reconstitution of the new Afghan National Army and Police” (UN SC Res 1510).

Hence, the mandate was now sufficiently broad to include “virtually any activity covered by the letter and, if need be, the spirit of the Bonn Agreement to end collective violence and lay the foundations for a peaceful new order (Suhrke 2011: 85). However, with expansion ISAF also inevitably entered the realm of local conflict and politics. In the north, for instance, the militias of the warlords Mohammad Atta

and Abdul Dostum continued to fight each other even after the defeat of the Taliban, and the presence of foreign troops had a polarizing effect on local populations (Schmunk 2005). Foreign troops needed to deal with local leaders who posed as “friends” but had strong incentives to keep a distance vis-à-vis Kabul and could count on a steady flow of cash from the CIA in the context of counter terrorism operations.

As the following pages show, the MS’ political and military investments never matched the complexity and scale of the task that awaited ISAF, but were carefully crafted to allow pursuing small to medium-scale projects on a local level without being responsible for the bigger picture, for instance when it came to the relation with OEF. Though the US quickly requested merging OEF and ISAF chains of command, Germany, the Netherlands, but also France and the UK, wanted ISAF clearly separated from counter terrorism activities (Dumbrell 2009).

The German government was particularly outspoken in separating the two missions. Next to the “bad” OEF mission, German governance officials portrayed ISAF as the “good” mission, focusing on “state-building and reconstruction, drilling wells, and walking little girls to school” (Kaim 2008: 613). The parliamentary debates in December 2001 clearly showed the German government’s position: Minister Fischer and MP Christian Ströbele from the governing Green Party explicitly stressed ISAF’s nature as a peace mission and the Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul stated:

“In order for us to be able to find the way from a coalition against terrorism to a coalition for development, the mandate for the international security force has been clearly separated from participation in OEF. It is good that this [separation] has been realized. [ISAF] secures the political peace process and hence economic reconstruction and the economic peace process, so that setbacks can be avoided” (Deutscher Bundestag 22.12.2001: 20847; author’s translation).

For the German government, this separation remained clear-cut even long after Afghanistan had re-descended into violence. In a speech before the Bundestag, German defense minister Struck argued in 2005: “Afghanistan would not have made the successful political developments of the last four years without the ISAF forces. We do not conduct a war but a peace mission” (Deutscher Bundestag 28.09.2005:

17574). To underline this narrative, the German Bundestag even discontinued the German Special Forces' participation in OEF in 2008.¹⁰³

Because of such opposition to allow for ISAF's involvement in tasks outside of "stabilization", ISAF could officially play no role in Special Operations or counter narcotics, and though the European allies agreed to think about guidelines concerning the treatment of prisoners, they refused to have ISAF run a prisons system of its own. The US continually pressed on, however, and throughout 2005 allies started thinking about solutions to create "synergies" between OEF and ISAF while keeping them separate (Rynning 2012: 106). The compromise found in October 2005 was that ISAF's commander would have three deputies for stabilization operations, air operations and for security. The deputy for security would be a "double-hatted American officer working both in the ISAF and OEF chains of command to 'deconflict' missions" (Rynning 2012: 106).

In June 2008, US General McKiernan enhanced unity of command of American troops serving in Afghanistan under separate chains, pulling all US commanders under ISAF's lead (*ibid.*: 164). This way, US General McKiernan became the "supreme voice in Afghanistan and the one talking to both SACEUR¹⁰⁴/NATO and CENTCOM/Washington, unifying the message and the effort" (*ibid.*). The most controversial aspects (prisoners and OEF) still remained outside of NATO's purview, but when the US government later acquired the institutional and capacity advantage in Afghanistan to proceed in a way that dovetailed with what it wanted to do, the MS resisted the ISAF/OEF merger only formally, but did not oppose ISAF's undermining (see Chapter 5).

Moreover, as ISAF and OEF increasingly operated in Afghanistan's south and east, the distinction between the two missions became largely superficial: both did what it took to "deal" with an insurgency. For instance, ISAF chief of staff Major General Bruno Kasdorf explained in 2007, "in difficult situations, where it is necessary to enforce something militarily, OEF can operate next to ISAF, if this is covered by the OEF mandate" (FAZ 15.11.2007).

¹⁰³ This was ironic, given that President Bush had awarded the German Special Forces the Presidential Unit Citation for their "heroic efforts while serving in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) from October 2001 to March 2002".

http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=16216. Accessed on 21.01.2016.

¹⁰⁴ SACEUR stands for Supreme Allied Commander.

This fine line between official policy and reality is also visible when considering that although the allies refused to widen NATO's mandate to cover Pakistan, the two theaters were in fact one. Former German State Secretary in the Ministry of Defense Lothar Rühl, for instance, noted in 2009 "the Afghan war has long spilled over the borders [to Pakistan] and has begun merging both [Pakistan and Afghanistan] into one combat theater South-West-Asia" (FAZ 24.05.2009, see also Lösing and GUE/NGL 2009). From a purely military standpoint, NATO's confinement to Afghanistan was absurd, since the Taliban enjoyed safe havens in Pakistan and used them to launch attacks on foreign forces in Afghanistan (Rashid 2008).

Another way to illustrate the MS' limited political-military buy-in to the big picture is to look at the issues of caveats and risk sharing in the alliance.

4.1.b.iii. Caveats and allied risk sharing

The term "caveats" refers to rules of engagement for military personnel that restrict where they are allowed to operate, with whom they are allowed to interact and/or what they are allowed to do. Since many of them are secret, it is difficult to do research on this issue but a NATO Parliamentary Assembly in 2009 concluded that there were about 62 national caveats, 45 of which had a "negative impact on ISAF operations", banning night-time operations, restricting the geographical mobility of national forces, requiring consultations with national capitals when making tactical decisions, or excluding specific categories of activity (Sperling and Webber 2009: 509). Independent researchers have concurred; it is generally assumed that there were between 50 and 80 restrictions for NATO commanders in the field (Auerswald and Saideman 2009: 1).¹⁰⁵

Examples for European caveats are numerous: For example, Danish MLOTs (Mobile Liaison Observation Teams) were not allowed to conduct guard duty, the

¹⁰⁵ Auerswald and Saideman base this figure on statements by Supreme Allied Commander Europe General James Jones at a Council on Foreign Relations conference in Washington DC on 04.10.2006 and a World Security Network interview with General Karl-Heinz Lather, Chief of Staff of SHAPE on 30.06.2008.

Croatian MLOTs had no clearance to partake in crowd control and riot tasks, the Lithuanians were not allowed to operate outside of their assigned area and could not be used for counter narcotics operations (Corum 2014: 277).

Unsurprisingly, US military officials were not amused by such caveats; as former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld complained, various “restrictions on national forces make it enormously difficult for commanders to have the flexibility to function” (quoted in Auerswald and Saideman 2009: 7). According to US General Bantz Craddock, these caveats increased “the risk to every service member deployed in Afghanistan”, brought “increased risk to mission success” and were “a detriment to effective command and control, unity of effort and (...) command” (ibid.: 1). As Flanagan et al. noted in a widely quoted study,

“the refusal of about half of European governments and parliaments to modify these restrictions has exacerbated divisions both across the Atlantic and among European NATO members over the increasingly evident inequities in risk-sharing, as well as burden-sharing, in Afghanistan” (Flanagan, Cipoletti and Tuninetti 2011: 195; see also Mattox 2011).¹⁰⁶

European countries partly relaxed their caveats at the NATO Riga summit in 2006, agreeing that their forces could be used “anywhere in Afghanistan *in extremis*”, but diligently omitting to specify the precise meaning of *in extremis* (Deni 2007: 97). This basically institutionalized a situation where “NATO commanders simply [could not] plan for the use of such contingents, making them far less helpful than they might appear” (Auerswald and Saideman 2009: 8; see also Barat-Ginies 2011: 68 and Brattberg 2013).

The question of caveats is closely related to the question of troop commitments. If one looked at OEF in 2003, the picture was one of a European opt-out: A whopping 67,7 % of the OEF burden was carried by the US (Sperling and Webber 2009: 503-504). Though some allies such as Germany or France provided about 9,1 % and 4,6 % of the OEF forces, those contributions were often determined

¹⁰⁶ It would be erroneous, however, to see the caveats as a purely transatlantic problem – it is also an intra-European one: For instance, in September 2009, national caveats prevented Spanish troops from intervening to support Italian forces in an insurgent attack (Youngs 2010b: 83). The British and the Dutch have also bitterly complained about other European nations, notably Germany, staying out of Afghanistan’s troubled south (Smith and Williams 2008a and 2008b).

by the caveats just described. The other major OEF contributors were Canada (4,6%), Italy (6,3%), the UK (3,9%) and Australia (3,5%), but even with these numbers, the burden of OEF was carried by a small group of seven states out of 28+ NATO members and partners (Sperling and Webber 2009: 504).¹⁰⁷

ISAF naturally showed a different picture during the early years, with European NATO allies accounting for almost 60% in 2003, for instance (ibid.: 503). On the whole, if European commitments to Afghanistan were compared to those in the Balkans, they practically mirrored each other, which leads some analysts to speak of transatlantic burden sharing (Webber, Sperling and Smith 2012: 187). However, this ignores the fact that most ISAF contributors were stationed in rather safe areas (see below). Moreover, this comparison simply cannot dispel the fact that European troops were much less forthcoming when the situation worsened, and when US President Obama requested more European troops during the Strasbourg NATO summit his calls were “met with an almost deafening silence from US allies in Europe” (Siegel 2009: 461). A great number of governments flatly refused, others, such as the Dutch, insisted on withdrawal by late 2010 (ibid.).

Finally, another way the MS avoided risk was to choose areas in Afghanistan’s North and West that were safe compared to the southern and eastern regions. Within a few years, and with the exception of the US in Farah Province, the MS ran *all* PRTs in the calm RCs North and West (Chiari 2014a: 13). In August 2005, 22 PRTs were already operating in Afghanistan; thirteen of those came under OEF command and nine under ISAF. Eight of those nine ISAF PRTs were led by EU member states: The UK headed those in Mazar-e Sharif and Meymaneh, Spain had taken one in Qala-e Naw, the Lithuanians ran one in Chaghcharan, Italy one in Herat, Germany oversaw two in Faizabad and Kunduz, and the Netherlands ran one in Pul-e Khumri (ICG 2005a: 11).

In 2006 Germany was appointed “lead nation” of RC North and began running the RC North Command HQ and supply base in Mazar-e Sharif (Behr 2011: 46). In 2007, the number of PRTs had grown to 25 and by spring 2007, Czech, Danish and Swiss troops supported the German PRT in Feyzabad, the PRT Mazar-e Sharif

¹⁰⁷ NATO counted 19 members when it entered Afghanistan. In 2004, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia joined NATO. Albania and Croatia joined in 2009.

counted Swedish, Finnish, French, Danish, Romanian and US troops, Norway led PRT Meymaneh, and Hungary ran a PRT in Pol-e Khumri in Baghlan province (Gauster 2008: 16).¹⁰⁸ In sum, even before the 2009 “surge” of the Obama administration, approximately 3,000 soldiers were present in RC North and 2,100 in RC West, and the overwhelming majority of those were European troops (NATO ISAF placemat 20.04.2007).

After the 2009 US surge, European troop contributions in RCs North and West again grew in importance: Under German command, RC North (with its headquarter in Mazar-e Sharif overseeing five PRTs) had about 11,000 soldiers under its command. Under Italian command, RC West oversaw 4 PRTs and approximately 6,000 troops (NATO ISAF placemat 06.08.2010). This was while British and Dutch NATO troops experienced some of the fiercest battles since World War II in southern Afghanistan (see Chapter 5).

More importantly, these geographic caveats prevented the MS and NATO as a whole to think strategically about the campaign, since the clear-cut separation between “counter terrorism” and “stabilization”, between “Afghanistan” and “Pakistan” and between the “north” and the “south” was the product of politics, but not reflective of the campaign’s reality.

The next section explains more specifically why MS contributions to “state building” could not amount to a “European role” in non-military affairs. Despite three European nations taking formal lead responsibility for central domains of Afghanistan’s fledgling state, these contributions were underfunded, very poorly coordinated and ultimately taken over by the US, which then subordinated its own state building agenda to the requirements of COIN. “European proactivism” on state building fell prey to the MS’ reluctance to coordinate.

¹⁰⁸ Only the Dutch, the British and the Danes, and to a lesser degree the Poles, Rumanians and Lithuanians, later accepted contributing in the eastern and southern regions, see Chapter 5.

4.2. Fragmented European security contributions

On 19 September 2001, German Chancellor Schröder had made a strong case for active European involvement in Afghanistan, because Europe needed to speak with a common voice “especially now”. However, only a few weeks later he acknowledged that because “the wishes of our friends in America are addressed to the nation states in Europe, to Britain, France and Germany, Europe does not play a role. That is because Europe is not ready yet to satisfy these wishes” (Schröder quoted in Toje 2008a: 119). While it was true that the US filed requests to individual nations and not the EU as a whole, the next section shows the MS’ difficulty to find common ground for action was also rooted in their different strategic cultures and general unwillingness to act under a clearly defined common political project.

Ahead of a EU summit meeting on 19 October 2001 in Ghent (i.e., less than two weeks after the beginning of OEF), the German Chancellor Schröder, French President Chirac and British Prime Minister Blair met separately to discuss their military involvement in Afghanistan. The reaction of the smaller MS and of EU officials to this “mini-summit” was extraordinarily negative. Commission President Romano Prodi stated the summit undermined the desire of the EU to speak with one voice (EU Observer 19.10.2001). The Italian government was particularly angered and called the meeting a “shame” (The Guardian 19.10.2001).

Austrian Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel said the smaller EU Member States would never accept being ruled by a select inner circle, and Antonio Guterres, Portugal’s Prime Minister, said all EU countries had to work against terrorism together, adding “I want to say very clearly that this should only be discussed by the 15” (Gegout 2010: 178; The Telegraph 20.10.2001).¹⁰⁹ However France, Germany and the UK unanimously played down the event. British officials argued it was normal for the three to meet because they were the strongest supporters of OEF: “There is no real role for anyone else”, said one British EU official (The Guardian 19.10. 2001).

The EU Summit of the 15 Member States that followed this trilateral mini-summit revealed that military matters were too divisive for the EU to consider

¹⁰⁹ The EU welcomed ten more MS on 1 May 2004: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

reaching a common position. While the US quickly made clear OEF would result in regime change, European leaders could not agree to call for the overthrow of the Taliban. Instead, the 15 leaders decided to demand the “elimination of the terrorist al-Qa'eda network as responsible for the terror attacks on the US” (The Telegraph 20.10.2001). An earlier draft of the text, prepared by the Belgian presidency, stated that the overthrow of the Taliban regime was a “legitimate objective” of OEF.

However, according to one diplomat, “several countries suggested erasing this paragraph because of its diplomatic implications” and a Scandinavian official said: “It is not normal in diplomacy to call for the overthrow of states. We demanded a more civilised formula” (ibid.). This was not an isolated voice; the traditionally neutral MS Ireland, Austria, Finland and Sweden had already rejected unconditional support for the US as a kind of “carte blanche” in the fight against terrorism (Blindenbacher and Koller 2003: 141). Although Blair stressed that the summit had reached the “unanimous view that military action had to be seen through to a successful conclusion”, EU diplomats changed the wording to emphasize “support for helping the United Nations establish a stable and legitimate government in Kabul” (The Telegraph 20.10.2001).

These fissures translated into a lack of will to invest political capital in the forging of a common European strategy and portended significant challenges regarding the coordination of a collective lead on the ground. The lack of this coordination is what this chapter now turns to as another sign that the MS were neither willing nor able to live up to their “global security actorness” rhetoric, despite their recent grandiloquent summits suggesting ESDP was gaining “in importance and relevance in terms of the future development of the EU” (Toje 2008a: 120).

4.2.a. The Geneva framework for reconstruction

In the spirit of the “light footprint”, the Western allies divided up major responsibilities between them at a donor meeting in Geneva in 2001 for the reconstruction of post-Taliban Afghanistan. At this meeting, it was decided that “lead nations” would “synchronize” their efforts in several “sectors”; Italy took

responsibility for reforming the “justice sector”, Japan pledged to take on the issue of disarming Afghan militias, the US was designated as the leader of army reform, Germany took responsibility for the “police sector” and the UK for counter narcotics.¹¹⁰ Several other European countries volunteered to help the Afghan government rebuild its “security sector”, especially after Donald Rumsfeld announced in May 2003 that major combat was over in Afghanistan (CNN 01.05.2003).

In theory, the MS agreed to coordinate with the goal of improving the impact of their contributions by streamlining and cooperating closely. The European Commission, for instance, aimed to develop a “portfolio of ‘EU wide’ programmes with member states”, with the UK on drugs, Italy on justice, France on health issues, a Kabul-Jalalabad-Torkham road project in cooperation with Sweden, electricity rehabilitation of Kabul in cooperation with Germany and co-financed CIMIC operations with Finland and Sweden (CSP 2003: 22). Several coordination mechanisms were set up. The “Afghan Reconstruction Steering Group” (chaired by the US, Japan, Saudi Arabia and the EU) was meant to provide strategic direction of reconstruction efforts.

The great number of portfolios that foreigners intervened, however, increased the coordination difficulties exponentially. For example, based on an official demand by the Afghan Transitional Authority (ATA) that “each donor should focus their activities in no more than three sectors and, in addition, that 50% of each donor’s total expenditure (excluding any support for the recurrent budget) should be allocated to one ‘major’ sector”, the European Commission identified sectors where it could “make a significant contribution to stability and poverty reduction by supporting the process of recovery and development” (CSP 2003: 8,1).

However, the CSP also noted that the Afghan-led National Development Framework (NDF) comprised three main “Pillars”, namely “Human Capital and Social Protection, “Physical Infrastructure” and “Trade and Investment, Public Administration and Security”. Within these pillars, there were no less than twelve priority programs. As a chart in the CSP shows, the European Commission was engaged in all of those (CSP 2003: 7). This dispersal gave the Commission “presence” but it also reduced its focus (ICG 2005a; see also Chapter 3).

¹¹⁰ The French opted out of this arrangement, preferring instead to contribute to the training of the new ANA under US lead (see Chapter 5).

Moreover, although the European Commission's Kabul office set up a European donor forum "to ensure that the Commission and member states develop a co-ordinated EU approach to key issues and meetings", the below section, dealing with the Italian involvement in the justice sector and the British experience in counter narcotics, shows that this did not happen (CSP 2003: 23). To the contrary, faced with the Afghan inability to force donors to streamline donor efforts, European states used the Geneva framework to purposefully conduct their missions independently from one another and without much consideration to the overall campaign, let alone any sort of "European impact".

4.2.a.i. Italy's experience in the Justice Sector

Afghanistan's 2001 legal system was, in all fairness, in a sorrow state when the Italian government decided to get involved (Rashid 2008; EU EOM 2005). The UN Development Program published a widely quoted assessment on the state of justice in Afghanistan:

"The physical infrastructure of [the justice] institutions has been destroyed during the past decades of war and political upheaval and requires rehabilitation. In addition, and more critically, the country's legal "software" – the laws, legal decisions, legal studies, and texts of jurisprudence – are largely lost or scattered across the world" (UNDP et al. 2003: IA).

Under the Bonn Agreement, which called for the Interim Administration to "rebuild the domestic justice system in accordance with Islamic principles, international standards, the rule of law, and Afghan legal traditions", the Afghan Interim Government established a Judicial Reform Commission (JRC) in May 2002 to oversee and coordinate the efforts (Jones 2009: 241). The Italian government was quick to point to good official relations with Afghanistan going back to 1922, as well as its diplomatic "capital" due to the Shah's exile in Rome between 1973 and 2002.

Italy set up an "Italian Justice Office" (IJO), attempting to assist institutional reform via technical assistance through mentors in the Ministry of Justice, the Supreme Court and the Attorney General's Office. According to the Bonn Agreement,

Italy's task was to help train lawyers, prosecutors and Ministry of Justice officers, establish a body of laws and build necessary infrastructure such as detention facilities. During the first phase of its engagement, the Italians collaborated with Afghan authorities in the elaboration and drafting of the Afghan Constitution.¹¹¹ With the help of the *Ufficio Italiano Giustizia* (Ministry of Justice), Italian legal experts were involved in providing the necessary support for the writing of the interim Penal Code, a legal framework for minors and the new penitentiary law (Rossoni 2007). Following the 2006 London Conference and its accompanying document, the interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy (“i-Ands”), Italian efforts turned to rehabilitation and construction of infrastructure, training of judges and attorneys in the Afghan Ministry of Justice.

However, several factors hampered Italy's efforts. Firstly, Afghan politics naturally “intervened” frequently; the JRC was disbanded only a few months later because of concerns over its composition and agenda, only to be re-established in December 2002 (Jones, Wilson, Rathmell et al. 2005: 77). Throughout the whole process, religiously conservative conceptions sat uneasily with international experts' secular agendas (Burke 2014).

Furthermore, Afghan state weakness added to the divergences in Western agendas to make sure coordination remained utopic: For instance, Afghanistan's director for SSR at Afghanistan's National Security Council, Daoud Yaqub, complained early on that officials had to negotiate among four different tracks: between Afghan ministries, between international donors, between the donors and the Afghan ministries, and within the donors' own agencies: “When disagreements broke out between the donors and us, the donors would come to me and say quite matter-of-factly: ‘It's our money. We'll do with it what we want’. There was little I could do” (Jones 2009: 240).

Secondly, while the IJO claimed to help with legislative reform, training and construction, Italy staffed its justice reform efforts with a team of only 4 to 5 experts (!) since its early involvement in 2002 (Korski 2008:12). Interview partners in European institutions told this author repeatedly that the Italian's level of competence and English proficiency was “catastrophic” (interviews, Kabul 2011). In all fairness,

¹¹¹ French legal experts also played a role in drafting the constitution.

Italy did organize a donor conference for the justice sector in December 2002, which helped raise \$ 30 million, and nominated a “*consigliere speciale*” to oversee the efforts in February 2003 (although he was quickly replaced in late 2004; see Tondini 2008: 2). In collaboration with UN agencies, the Italians initiated roughly 30 reconstruction projects between 2002 and 2008 (Tondini 2008: 3). Italy claims to have trained 1,200 judges and prosecutors (Gross 2009: 38, 39). However, the overall budget speaks volumes: Italy is estimated to have spent only € 71 million on the justice sector between 2001 and 2008 (Tondini 2008: 4).

A third factor that hampered a substantial European contribution to Afghan state building was the lack of coordination between Italy’s contributions on “justice reform” with the other donors. Formally at least, Italy was charged, jointly with the UN, to coordinate the i-ANDS working groups in the justice sector and to facilitate donor cooperation with the UN, the World Bank and NGOs, but most importantly, the German and British governments (Rossoni 2007). However, interaction with either the Germans or the British was so paltry as to be almost non-existent, not least because of the limited size of the Italian, but also the German and British efforts (see below). In fact, “donors were vying for visibility – and with very limited budgets, coordination always means potential compromise and fewer ‘deliverables’”¹¹².

Studies confirm this picture: Although as lead nation, the Italian government was supposed to facilitate overall coordination, it worked at arm’s length not only from European donors, but also from the Afghan institutions. “Rather than support Afghan-led decision-making, the Italian effort ... preferred to choose and implement its projects with limited consultation” (Jones 2009: 241). An Afghan judicial reform strategy paper, entitled “Justice for all”, bluntly pointed out in 2005: “[A]lmost nothing has been accomplished to provide resources for the justice system” (quoted in Gross 2009: 22). This was confirmed by an interview with a later Afghan Minister of the Interior, General Patang, who complained about the failure to link up the “justice sector” with the training in the “police sector”:

“Each of the more than 40 countries that come to Afghanistan brings their own way of thinking. They introduce their own systems. Everything differs from one country to another country (...) They never come to the Afghans and ask them what their requirements are.”¹¹³

¹¹² Phone interview with EEAS official, 01.09.2010.

¹¹³ Interview with General Ghulam Mujtaba Patang. Kabul, ANPA, 05.12.2011.

Italy lost its “lead nation” status during the time following September 2006, when the Italian Justice Ministry abandoned its “coordination” role and was downgraded from “lead nation” to “key partner” (Tondini 2008: 2). The European Commission tried to take the lead from the Italians in 2007, but a *European* lead on justice did not come about, as there was a conflict between

“those international advisers who advocated a common law system and a continental law system – UK police officers, for example, saw the police as the primary agency investigating crime whereas other European rule of law advisers insisted that the job of investigation is for a magistrate to fill” (Burke 2014: 12).

The US, which spent only about \$ 10 million to justice sector reform in 2004 (out of a total of \$ 2,1 billion in assistance, see Jones, Wilson, Rathmell et al. 2005: 78), finally took ownership of the justice sector. In 2007, US Government assistance to the justice sector stood at \$ 77,35 million (\$ 55 million in International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) funding and \$ 12,35 million in United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funding). For fiscal year 2008, projected INCLE funding for justice was \$ 68 million, while USAID projected to provide \$ 4 million (US DoD 2008). This level of funding made the US Government the most important donor in the field of justice, although these figures do not even take into account money spent by the US DoD. Though in 2015, US DoD was “unable to account for the total amount of funds it spent to support rule of law development” since 2003, it is estimated that together, US DoD, US Department of Justice, US Department of State and USAID have spent more than \$ 1 billion “on at least 66 programs since 2003 to develop the rule of law in Afghanistan” (SIGAR July 2015). In other words, the “lead on justice” became Americanized.

4.2.a.ii. The UK’s counter narcotics efforts

In parallel, the UK was in the lead in counter narcotics under the Geneva framework since the beginning of international aid efforts. The story bears many resemblances with the Italian example: British under-investment in their niche and

lack of preparedness further reduced incentives to cooperate with others. Starting in 2002, the British tried several approaches to the issue of counter narcotics: Initially focused on buying back illicit crops, the UK government's approach later switched to a direct collaboration with Afghan governors in an effort to eradicate poppy production (Felbab-Brown 2005). The UK pledged roundabout £ 2 million for manual eradication by provincial governors (Charles 2004).

The British focus was on drug law enforcement, the reduction of demand and so-called "capacity building", notably in support of an Afghan "interdiction unit". In 2004, an Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics was established in Kabul, and with British support, the Criminal Justice Task Force was established in 2005 to work with the so-called Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan. UK assistance in the drug sector could be described as an attempt to help set up an "institutional framework to begin a counter narcotics program" (Perito 2004). For instance, the Afghan Transitional Authority issued an Afghan National Drug Control Strategy (ANDCS) in 2003, for which the UK provided drafting help.

Five key elements of the strategy were "the provision of alternative livelihoods for Afghan poppy farmers, the extension of drug law enforcement throughout Afghanistan, the implementation of drug control legislation, the establishment of effective institutions and the introduction of prevention and treatment programmes for addicts" (UK Parliament, Select Committee on Foreign Affairs 2004). A Counter Narcotics Directorate was established in 2002, a public awareness campaign conducted in 2003 and "Drug Demand Treatment Centers" established in Kabul or micro-credits made accessible "to the poor" as alternatives to poppy (ibid.). The UK confidently predicted that opium production would be cut by 70 % by 2008 at the latest (Bird 2013: 129).

It did not work out this way: poppy production exploded in the years after the invasion. In 2003, the crop was the second largest since 1994 (when surveying started), and in 2004, it was estimated to have reached 3,600 tons (an increase of 6 % compared to 2002 and 570 % more than in 2001; see Sedra 2004). The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported in January 2003 that opium production had resumed at high levels and now accounted for more than three quarters of global opium production (UNODC 2003: 5). When the 2007 figures demonstrated that opium cultivation was now at a staggering 8,200 tons (i.e. more

than global production in 2006), the UK government discreetly revised downwards its ambitions (Bird 2013: 129).

The UK's financial contributions in their "pillar" were as inadequate as Italian spending: the UK government disbursed about £ 70 million between 2001 and 2004 – that is, until the US saturated the field with millions of US Dollars. Confronted with growing criticism on the domestic front, in particular from Senator John Kerry, who presented the exploding opium trade as evidence of President Bush's "colossal misjudgment" on the war, the US administration stepped up its counter narcotics efforts in Afghanistan (Los Angeles Times 04.10.2004; Felbab-Brown 2005). An official testimony by the Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, Robert B. Charles, revealed the fine line on which the US was walking with respect to the UK's timid efforts and achievements:

"It would be inaccurate (...) to say that we are in complete agreement on all aspects of our eradication efforts and on ways to achieve the essential, critical and mutual goal of eradicating a measurable and significant quantity of heroin poppies" (Charles 2004).

Despite recognition and praise for UK-sponsored eradication efforts of drug laboratories in Badakhshan (in northeastern Afghanistan) and destruction of up to two tons of opium and heroin, the signal was clear: The US was not worried about partial differences in strategic approaches (as they arose about eradication through aerial spraying, favored by the US embassy, but to which the UK was opposed), but the abysmal degree of the UK's under-investment. The New York Times reported that an internal US memo had "faulted Britain, which has the top responsibility for counter narcotics assistance in Afghanistan, for being 'substantially responsible' for the failure to eradicate more acreage" (International New York Times 22.05.2005). According to the same cable, areas assigned to the UK "were often not the main growing areas and that the British had been unwilling to revise targets" (ibid).

The Pentagon made its first decisive step on counter narcotics in March 2005, when it requested more money than in 2004, i.e. a record sum of \$ 257 million for military assistance to counter narcotics, and issued new guidelines that allowed for more active US eradication efforts. In sum, the US efforts went from non-involvement to the most radical of all solutions, i.e. eradication (Felbab-Brown 2005: 61).

The drug problem affected not only the general security situation but also police building efforts. The previously cited counter narcotics strategies remained paper tigers as long as there was no efficient police. In 2003, a perfectly satisfied EU CSP stated that the police was “progressing well” (CSP 2003). However, this was not how independent research organizations portrayed the ANP, one report describing the police as “untrained, ill-equipped, poorly paid (or unpaid), and loyal to local warlords or militia commanders” (Perito 2004).

What is more, collaboration between the UK’s haphazard efforts and the German’s timid training remained virtually non-existent until 2006 (Korski 2008:12). As one interview partner from EUPOL stated, “the British did not like the German police project and refused to interact with it” (interview Kabul 2011). The British “either ignored or deliberately circumvented the police and justice reforms put in place by the Germans and Italians” (Korski 2008:12). As a result of these failures to coordinate it became widely acknowledged that the pillarization of aid had been a major mistake (Burke 2014: 4).

With respect to the MS, the Pentagon’s assessment was severe: Particularly referring to the Germans, the British and the Italians, Under Secretary of Defense Douglas Feith said: “This ‘lead nation’ strategy produced mixed results, but overall it was a failure” (quoted in Jones 2009: 241).

Lack of coordination was, of course, not only a European problem. Though by 2009, the EU, NATO, the UN, the International Red Cross and numerous NGOs were working and “coordinating” in Afghanistan, it is generally acknowledged that coordinating international contributions was next to impossible: As one Dutch Defense adviser put it,

“We contribute to NATO, the budgets of the EU and the UN, as well as substantially to many of the NGOs on the ground in Afghanistan. Yet none of them can manage to coordinate with each other. Instead, it seems like they are working against each other. It is absurd” (M.J. Williams 2011: 123).

In sum, despite a broadly shared goal of building a viable security sector, scant cooperation was one major reason for the failure to lead a European “state building project”. The Geneva framework created a truncated donor landscape and artificial separations between the sectors of police, justice and counter narcotics. This approach

led to rigid aid allocation by the European donor nations, who frequently hoarded funding in their own sectors and failed to link up their respective projects. Lack of coordination was in itself an indirect consequence of low European spending, because the drive for national visibility created additional incentives to prioritize national goals over coordination, which, given the bad security, was a complicated affair.

The hubris of professing big change with small means was not only reserved to the Italians, the Germans or the British of course, nor was it confined to the sole sectors of policing, justice or counter narcotics. To mention just three examples, in the case of the Swedish PRT in Mazar-e Sharif, which Sweden took over in 2006, about 100 soldiers were initially tasked to provide “security” and support governance in an area with 2,5 million locals stretched across 56,000 square kilometers (about one and a half the size of the Netherlands) (Honig and Käihkö 2014). The UK’s PRT in Meymaneh, which according to official rhetoric was supposed to assist in “nation building” also consisted of around 100 personnel covering an area of operations of almost 2,3 million (a soldier/inhabitant ration of 1:23,000) (Larsdotter 2008). The German PRT in Kunduz province initially contained only 90 infantry soldiers, far “too few to conduct regular patrols throughout the entire province (Behr 2011: 49).

Together, these under-investments led to an almost complete US takeover across the entire security sector: As the RAND Corporation noted, in 2006 the US spent

“seven times the resources to counter-narcotics activities provided by the United Kingdom (the lead nation for counter-narcotics), nearly 50 times the resources to the police provided by Germany (the lead nation for police reform), and virtually everything for training the Afghan military (for which the United States was responsible)” (Jones et al. 2006).

The engine that drove the US’ embrace of “state building” was a growing realization that its “war on terror” needed more reliable allies in Afghanistan, and that a well-organized and structured Ministry of Interior and a Ministry of Defense could serve this goal. As noted, Major General Karl W. Eikenberry, who took charge in the Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan (OMC-A) in October 2002, concluded that what was needed was more than the provision of training, but “constructing an entire military edifice to include the Ministry of Defense, a General Staff, and all the

other institutions and facilities that fall under that type of structure” (Wright, Bird, Clay et al. 2010: 232).

This major conceptual shift was officially formalized with the 2006 “London Compact”, a document which replaced the Bonn process and pledged to “(b)uild lasting Afghan capacity and effective state and civil society institutions” (The Afghanistan Compact 2006). The EU now also announced a shift “from infrastructure development to governance-focused aid” (Burke 2014: 8). However, as chapter 5 will show, once the US started officially promoting “state building” in a reversal of its prior approach, this led to a heavily militarized focus in support for Afghan institutions, and thus the subordination of “state building” to the necessities of “COIN” – in sum, a version of “state building” that was a far cry away from the Italians’, the Germans’ and the British rhetoric commitments to the rule of law.

This was a significant development, given that an important element in the rhetorical drive to create a European defense had always been the “Euro-Gaullist” idea that Europe must pull together not as a goal in itself but to multiply forces: In Afghanistan, European forces were only multiplied if the US would agree to lead. Given their small contributions, the MS shied away from challenging the US, leading the European Special Representatives to complain that while “member states encouraged them to work on anti-corruption and human rights strategies”, this was only to discover later that “these same countries did little to back their efforts if these were not strongly embraced by the US” (Burke 2014: 6).

The next section deals with the PRTs, and though it equally exemplifies a lack of European coordination, it also stresses a related point: Even successful coordination cannot replace the formulation of clear *political goals*, which is where the NATO Member States most blatantly failed.

4.2.b. National PRTs

Official NATO documents did not venture beyond the generalities of the Bonn Agreement when it came to defining how PRTs fit into a wider strategy. Although there were lists of acceptable activities the PRTs could engage in, there simply was no detailed strategic plan for *what* they were supposed to *achieve*. Because NATO operates by consensus, the 26 states that were part of NATO in 2003 were simply unable to settle for a specific strategy, and the North Atlantic Council vaguely defined ISAF's goals as creating a "self-sustaining, moderate and democratic Afghan government able to exercise its sovereign authority, independently, throughout Afghanistan" (Stapleton 2007; Münch 2011; SHAPE SACEUR OPLAN 10302 December 2005).

Given such ambiguity, all the Operation Plan (OPLAN) could do was to define a total of five phases after which the goals should be reached: During Phase 1 and 2, ISAF would be prepared and expanded (until October 2006). The third phase would be "stabilization", the fourth "transition" of responsibility to the ANSF and the coalition would exit the country as phase 5. What exactly "stability" meant, however, or concrete goals and sub-goals, was never clarified: The OPLAN vaguely stated that "stability operations" would result in "stability" and that "security operations" would bring "security" (ibid.; Münch 2011). ISAF's official position on the PRTs was that a "one size fits all" approach would not do Afghanistan justice, and that PRTs needed "flexibility in order to be effective in the diverse operating environments they functioned in" (Stapleton 2007). Hence, during the first years, there was no doctrinal document to bring clarity about the PRTs' purpose.

The US government published an "Army Field Manual 3-07" in 2008 to clarify the issue, but it was vague: "The principle of the PRT itself should focus on stability, using instruments of national power to establish a safe and secure environment" (Tvinnereim 2010: 36). ISAF HQ later followed suit with a "PRT handbook", which listed a number of guiding principles and vaguely stated that the PRTs "assist the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to extend its authority, in order to facilitate the development of a stable and secure environment in the identified area of operations, and enable Security Sector Reform (SSR) and reconstruction efforts" (NATO 16.05.2010: 3).

A strong central coordinating authority of the PRTs was resisted, by European nations in particular. There were a number of attempts by the US military and NATO officials to streamline the PRTs and impose standards and in 2004, allies formally agreed to better coordinate their efforts via the creation of a so-called PRT Executive Steering Committee (PRT ESC 2004). It represented ambassadors of PRT contributing countries, the Afghan Ministry of Finance, the Commander of US Forces in Afghanistan and a World Bank representative.

However, the more heavyweight European nations such as Germany “deflected these efforts, preserving the flexibility of the concept and providing cover for smaller PRT contributors” (Rotmann and Harrison 2014: 54). Consequently, the “PRT Charter” put out by the ESC found no consensus on a precise definition of task or purpose, defining PRTs vaguely as “civil-military entities mandated to enable the extension of the reach and influence of the Afghan authorities on a country-wide basis”, with the aim of assisting in “promoting and consolidating security, stabilization, reconstruction, development, good governance, and security sector reform efforts”, operating “in an integrated approach, through interaction with Afghan central and sub-national officials” (quoted in Hochwart 2009:10).

To be fair, the vagueness of the PRT concept did not account for all coordination problems – logistical reasons were also important: For instance, helicopters to establish regular physical contacts between PRTs were often absent; an increasingly hostile security environment drained resources away from development to force protection and limited budgets increased national pressures to emphasize visibility over coordination. For instance, a German police trainer complained in 2011: “I would like to send my teams to liaise with the French at Wardak or the UK in the South, to see how they train and to find out what their experiences are, but we do not have the necessary transportation capacity”.¹¹⁴

The transfer of knowledge between PRTs also constituted a problem. When, for instance, the Dutch left their PRT in Pul-e Khumri (Baghlan Province), handing it over to Hungary, they reportedly “took what they had learned and achieved (...), without passing on their lessons (...) to the Hungarians who then had to basically start from scratch” (Chiari 2014a: 20). Similarly, though expectations had initially been

¹¹⁴ Interview with German police trainer in Mazar-e Sharif, December 2011.

high that Finland and Sweden would cooperate closely to display their “Nordic peacekeeping model”, Swedish and Finnish forces, “though collaborating amicably in the field (...) retained very strong reservations about multinational operations and integration of efforts [mostly because of] strongly entrenched bureaucratic preferences, coupled with the deployment of very limited resources” (Honig and Käihkö 2014: 209, 210).

The most important problem, however, was that the malleability of the PRT concept made sure PRTs could remain expressions of particular, nationally constructed approaches: The PRT concept “allows for multiple narratives of the same effort” (De Graaf, Dimitriu and Ringsmose 2015; Dommersnes 2011: 3). While the US’ PRT approach was “based on traditional military ideas of counter insurgency operations”, the German PRTs expressly emphasized the political and civilian focus (Chiari 2014b: 162). Differences between the German Bundeswehr and the Dutch army hampered the early project of operating on the German PRT in Kunduz under Germany’s command: The “working methods and viewpoints of the Bundeswehr regarding the PRT concept deviated considerably from Dutch ideas about provincial reconstruction” (Van Loo 2014: 180). In the eyes of the Dutch the Germans were “too actively involved in reconstruction work” and too preoccupied with force protection (ibid.). Finally, the German and Dutch Ministers of Defense had to announce in Brussels “that the Netherlands would not take part in provincial reconstruction under the German umbrella” (ibid.).

A British-led PRT in Mazar-e Sharif (later replaced by Sweden in 2006) was initially focused only on security sector reform rather than reconstruction (Chin 2007: 204). While the Swedes and the Germans would emphasize sustainable development, the UK’s approach was based on “robust military diplomacy”, capacity building and support to the SSR as well as DDR. For the Norwegians, military and civilian budgets were entirely separate (Harpviken 2011: 161). As Rotmann and Harrison aptly summarize: “Particularly during the initial phase of the stabilization effort in Afghanistan, when coalition members were struggling to reconcile differing philosophies and manage massive coordination challenges within and across country teams, the nebulous PRT concept offered a convenient way to work apart, together” (Rotmann and Harrison 2014: 56). Given this very limited will to compromise on national strategic cultures, it is little surprising that a proactive European stance, be it

on support for governance or common models of development, did not come about, despite the significant military infrastructure the MS owned in wide regions of Afghanistan.

As the next part shows, another major difficulty when it came to setting the agenda is that most assistance spending, from humanitarian aid to “capacity building”, was weakly incentivized and based on vague benchmarks, leading to “aid capture” through “state capture” by Afghan elites without the MS securing “value for money” (Van Bijlert 2009).

4.3. Spend first, talk later: The policy of “presence”

4.3.a. Vague goals and benchmarks

As we saw in the previous chapter, the EU’s CSP 2003-2004, adopted by the Commission on 11 February 2003, was too vague a roadmap to allow the MS to set the agenda in the domain of state building. The Commission’s strategy was firmly set into the Bonn process, the EU development strategy reflecting “the priorities identified in the National Development Framework and the October 2002 Development Budget” (CSP 2003:1).

Quoting the General Affairs Councils of December 2001 and April, July and December 2002, the EU’s objectives were the following: First, contributing to the provisions of the Bonn Agreement, “cooperation with neighbouring countries” and “democracy and the functioning of public institutions” or in other words state building. Moreover, “the protection of Human Rights” needed to be “promoted” (CSP 2003: 3). Support had to be provided for “civil, social and military structures and services” and aid extended to “all those in need, especially refugees and displaced persons”, while giving “special attention to the inclusion of women as equal partners in Afghan society” (CSP 2003: 3). The EU’s overall strategy would be to “contribute to poverty reduction through recovery and reconstruction” (CSP 2003: 3). In other words, this was a list of desirables, but as with NATO’s “strategy” above, it did not

provide strategic guidance in the sense of spelling out how specific means were to be used to reach objectives.

In the absence of clear goals, the CSP was focused on ways of operating and activities in which the MS claimed to be able to add value. For instance, the Commission noted that it intended to focus on “those sectors where the European Commission has expertise” (CSP 2003:1), which not only included a potential for tension between Afghan demand and European offer, but also indicates that the EC’s strategic posture was to offer what was “on the shelf”.

Secondly, the CSP stressed the importance of establishing *benchmarks* – “in particular to monitor progress towards a self financing recurrent budget and for reform of the public sector” (CSP 2003: 14). The way this was to be done was through a proposal by the ATA for “a broad set of benchmarks to underpin macro-economic stability at the Consultative Group meeting [an international donor body] in March 2003. These [would] cover the banking sector, the payment system and currency reform. In addition, they [i.e. the ATA] may wish to consider monetary and inflation targets” (CSP 2003: 14-15). The CSP further demanded the creation of “a robust macro-economic and monetary framework” and expected the ATA to tackle “difficult issues such as public administration reform” and to increase “the flow of revenue from the provinces to central Government” (CSP 2003: 23).

Reading the CSP, one might get the impression that such benchmarks were full of substance. For instance, the CSP claimed that donors and the ATA had “agreed to develop clear benchmarks and timelines for the full implementation of the Bonn Agreement” and at a December 2002 meeting, the EU’s General Affairs Council “reiterated the need to make progress on drugs”. Moreover, the ATA itself indicated that it would “use the Consultative Group process to set development benchmarks” (CSP 2003: 23). At a Council meeting in 2002, EU Foreign ministers formally introduced the notion of conditionality, stating that

“[r]econstruction assistance [would] be *conditional on all Afghan parties positively contributing to the process and goals agreed in Bonn* with the aim of establishing peace, a representative government and stability in Afghanistan, as well as eliminating terrorism and the illicit production of narcotic drugs and drug trafficking” (Council of EU Foreign Ministers 2002, emphases added).

As the years would show, however, the ATA and the later Afghan Government proved to be very adept in circumventing such benchmarks, and the MS never stopped spending. The National Indicative Program 2003-2004 made clear where the problem was:

“The medium term goal is to channel EC support as much as possible via direct sectorial budget allocations. *However this requires more effective management and financial control capacities than currently exists* in those target ministries through which EC funds would be channeled, notably the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development.... Therefore, [u]ntil such a time as sectoral support is possible, *EC aid will be implemented directly by the Commission* (including via NGOs) or via the Ministry of Finance *using EC procedures*” (see CSP 2003: 15-16, emphases added).

Similarly, the Afghan Ministry of Finance would manage the funds “covered by the Financing Agreement including undertaking procurement”, but “*according to Commission rules and supervision*” (CSP 2003: 16, emphases added). In other words, while officially making aid conditional on progress in good governance, the MS and the EU also dis-incentivized it by spending their money outside government structures.

In the words of an EU official, the “unwillingness or inability of development agencies to conditionalise aid within a reform context was a fundamental problem. There was also an intense pressure to spend development budgets on time regardless of the results” (Burke 2014: 2). For instance, in October 2002, the ATA presented its Recurrent Budget and its Development Budget for 2002 and 2003. The CSP noted that a financing gap remained for budget year 2002-2003, and that the ATA was “likely to continue to rely on significant external funding for 2003/2004” (CSP 2003: 8). Despite much evidence that equipment was often not used, donations continued.¹¹⁵

The following example of Afghanistan’s 2005 elections illustrates most clearly that European support for the Bonn process was not tied to attaining clear European goals.

¹¹⁵ To provide just one example, a German trainer replied to a question about conditionality in the training programs: “During the shooting lessons they take only one of the dozens of donated ear protections and use them for the General, then they buy two cheap ones on the market [for assistants], but the lower recruits don’t get any. Also, we are sitting on hundreds of police manuals and books. This is because they prefer not to hand them out to their recruits, because they fear that they will come back in bad shape” (Fescharek 2013: 21).

4.3.b. The first Afghan elections (2004 and 2005)

A good way to illustrate the way European money continued to flow despite dissatisfaction with outcomes is the example of Afghan elections. As noted, the Bonn agreement was to culminate in presidential elections in 2004, followed by the 2005 National Assembly and Provincial Council polls. The European Commission committed € 22,5 million to the 2004 presidential election and € 17,5 million to the 2005 elections. An additional 2,000 European troops were flown in during the weeks ahead of the election to secure the process. The EU constituted an Election Observation Mission (EOM) in 2005, the largest team of international observers during the election, led by a Member of the European Parliament (EU Delegation 26.07.2005). It was fielded from July to October 2005 to “monitor the elections for parliament (*Wolesi jirga*) and provincial councils” (EU EOM 2005: 3).

The ICG has produced an insightful account of how little interest the MS had in securing influence for their money (ICG 2005a). The total cost of the two rounds of elections (2004 and 2005) is estimated to have been about \$ 300 million. The MS and the EU paid over 40% of the bill. However, while € 40 million for both elections came from the Commission, the other rough € 80 million came from the MS, who had diverging political agendas (ICG 2005a: 12). As the ICG wrote, with “this commitment of resources, Europe could have exercised considerable influence over the electoral process but only did so demonstrably when counting began at the end of the National Assembly and Provincial Council elections” (ICG 2005a: 12). The EOM played an active public role and pushed for transparency, publishing a document entitled “Transparency Needed in Handling Cases of Fraud”. However, as the case of the Single Non-Transferable Voting System (SNTV) illustrates well, its overall influence remained very limited.

National Assembly and Provincial Council elections (2005) were held under this SNTV system. Under SNTV, every candidate stood as an

“individual in multi-member constituencies”. This resulted in “little incentive to form pluralistic, broad-based parties” (ICG 2006a: 6). The EU had long expressed grave reservations against this voting system. The EOM noted after the 2005 election:

“The version of the Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) election system (...) means that all candidates compete against each other as independents ... [The] SNTV system has placed considerable strains on many aspects of electoral administration, including the need to produce huge ballots in several provinces and generally driving up the costs in a substantial way. Moreover, under SNTV, the relationship between share of votes received by a party or community and its level of representation in parliament may be very weak. This can produce problems for the legitimacy of institutions produced by the election system. The particular version of SNTV chosen in Afghanistan may hinder the development of political parties and there are also concerns that it may lead to a fragmented parliament. Given these concerns, it would be advisable for the choice of electoral system to be reviewed in advance of future elections” (EU EOM 2005: 3).

It is generally understood that SNTV was installed against the reservations of most European governments as a meeting of minds between President Karzai and US Ambassador Khalilzad, whose interests were “best served by a weak and divided parliament, which the SNTV voting system nearly guaranteed” (Mazurana, Jacobsen and Andrews 2013: 248). Meeting with UN officials and diplomats in Kabul, Khalilzad intervened to declare that, having just spoken with US President Bush, the latter had said, “SNTV is the choice. SNTV is going to happen” (Kent 2007: 11). As noted earlier, a strong Afghan presidency “suited Washington’s primary policy objective in Afghanistan, which was not to promote political democracy but to eliminate terrorists and Al Qaeda” (Suhrke 2007: 11).

What matters in this section is not only that an American preference trumped a European one, but that in the face of difficulties, the MS recoiled from making their electoral support conditional on voting rules they deemed appropriate, making them unable to convert their shared preference into political outcomes: The EUSR attempted several times to convince President Karzai of a “better” voting system, but SNTV prevailed. One representative of a MS was quoted by the ICG as saying: “If we pay we are at least partly contributing to the [perceived] legitimacy. But it is not Europe’s style to be critical and refuse to pay. That should have been the threat over SNTV.... Sometimes Europe is too good to be true” (ICG 2005a: 12).

Most importantly, when it became public that the election for the National Assembly would cost even more than planned, the EU's reaction was to make up for the funding gap. On a trip to Afghanistan, European Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner announced € 9 million of *additional* funding only two weeks ahead of the poll. An observer concluded:

“On balance, it was considered there was sufficient interest in these elections happening and Europe being associated with them to cough up the money. Otherwise there could have been no election or we could have been frozen out. It could have undermined [the elections' legitimacy] and that was an unattractive option” (ICG 2005a: 12-13).

The ICG stated:

“[The] democratic transition would have been better served had member states leveraged their assistance sooner and more firmly. Aside from its glaring political disadvantages, SNTV is also expensive and technically challenging. And Europe, not the Afghan government, was picking up a hefty part of the bill. At the least, an early cap on funding might have emphasised the EU's strong opposition to SNTV and helped focus minds on the choice of a more appropriate system” (ICG 2005a: 13).

As Edward Burke has noted, this lack of conditionality even became worse in 2009, when another EOM was sent to Afghanistan. As Dutch Member of the European Parliament Thijs Berman noted with respect to the 2009 election: “There was fraud everywhere. We discovered whole books of voting slips thrown into ballot boxes without being separated” (quoted in Burke 2014: 7). However, European leaders could not be brought to denounce this fraud, and the EOM's observations were not picked up on the political level: “If you send an EOM that finds widespread fraud you need to back it politically”, but this is precisely what did not happen (ibid.).

4.4. Conclusion

The very early post-Taliban intervention looked like a textbook example of a transatlantic division of labor: The US had prompted regime change and it took primary responsibility for rooting out al Qaeda (via OEF), while the MS assumed primary responsibility for post-crisis management, peacekeeping and governance support (via ISAF). However, in a situation where the US basically abdicated a leadership role going beyond short-term goals, and although US government officials requested and encouraged an active European role, “the reality is that the EU also failed to provide positive leadership on what is arguably an international problem” (M.J. Williams 2011: 127; see also UK Foreign Affairs Committee 2009: 5).

Instead, Afghanistan’s “security sector” saw the parallel use of different European tools, not a European policy within a transatlantic bargain. Though individual MS would indeed invest resources and pursue projects with an intention to leave a mark on particular areas (the sector for the Italians, the police sector for the Germans, or the drug trade for the British), they were too disorganized collectively and too insignificant individually to create momentum or to “lead to follow” and rally others behind their projects. In the “security sector”, the US ended up taking over each sector formerly led by a European state.

This happened because the MS, even those with a bigger footprint, essentially went to Afghanistan to “contribute”, not to take ownership of (and responsibility *for*) the campaign, let alone organize a “European response” and put it on the agenda. Hence, the MS’ goals were, paradoxically enough for an out-of-area mission, defensive, in the sense that they were dominated by security considerations: The West was “defended at the Hindukush” (in the words of the German defense minister Peter Struck), but this implied that Afghanistan needed to be prevented from becoming a safe-haven for terrorists again, not a true commitment the construction of an Afghan democracy, which would have implied, *inter alia*, using conditionality and adapting force posture and outlook to the mission, not the mission to the sensitivities of national strategic cultures.

Coming back to the theoretical implications and the main idea of a European role convergence, this chapter was pitched as the first step in a two-step argument: As

the following chapter will show, the MS' contributions in Afghanistan remained as technical or apolitical under US leadership as they were before, in the sense that they were offered as different services without a European political project. However, what changed was the overall security situation and the US' leadership role, and this enabled the MS to play a very different role than before.

This points to the fact that US leadership may be one potential enabling factor for a collective European security role: As we saw in Chapter 2, for instance, the MS' state building efforts in the Balkans happened under a security framework that was largely pre-determined by Washington. The next chapter turns from the notion of European proactivism to the fourth Collective Foreign Policy Potential of shaping, in order to investigate how European shaping connects to US leadership.

Chapter 5. The niche allies: Pre-decisional diplomacy and post-decisional co-shaping

5.0. Introduction

As we have seen, the MS' parallel activities during the early years of the Afghan intervention amounted to “proacting without agenda setting”: Though the MS took initiatives in various sectors, and although they contributed individually in their respective fields of expertise or geographical niches, they failed to have collective impact on the agenda. To the contrary, it was the US that ended up setting the agenda, prompting and leading a focus on state building when the security situation deteriorated.

This chapter's notion of shaping is connected to proactivism, but it adds an important nuance: A policy that “shapes” events is a policy that not only initiates projects, but a policy that changes the status quo according to a vision that is different from this status quo. It makes events develop in a premeditated way, in line with pre-formulated interests and goals. Shaping is therefore a more exigent concept than proactiveness, which implies taking the initiative and formulating an agenda but is vague about achieving outcomes.

This chapter shows that during the later phase of the war, a more focused and substantial US leadership ended up allowing for more collective MS impact on the ground than during the early years of the intervention. To put it succinctly, Chapter 4 showed “*proacting* without agenda setting”, while this chapter shows “*shaping* without agenda setting”:

The years of the outgoing Bush administration saw the MS actively contributing to a steadily growing US lead, conceptually and politically. The Obama administration then fully reoriented the leaderless campaign with two strategic reviews and successive troop surges in 2009. This “Obama strategy” was deeply flawed and ambiguous itself, but it provided a new sense of leadership and direction. The MS' approaches and strategic cultures obviously still diverged, only now their opt-ins and even their opt-outs were embedded politically, bound together and streamlined better than before and supported by more capable military US

infrastructure. Using this foreign lead in reaction to the insurgency, the MS' attempts at shaping became individually more efficient and collectively more streamlined.

However, their collective impact was the product of parallel European *behaviors*, not a political project to collectively shape Afghanistan according to a specific vision. These parallel MS contributions to complement the US' "shaping" policy are best described as "shaping without agenda setting" or "co-shaping" as the confluence of European *savoir-faire* under US leadership.

5.0.a. Question and structure

All of this begs the central question of the MS' collective ability to shape: Can the MS shape their security environment collectively? This requires two remarks. Firstly, many of the reasons why the MS were unable to *pro-act* collectively (Chapter 4) are similar to the reasons why they have difficulty shaping collectively: Their strategic cultures lead them to frame security problems differently, which makes the emergence of a common political project a difficult affair. Furthermore, their insufficient military capabilities make them dependent on others in cases that require security guarantees. This is why the question in this chapter is not "Why do the MS have difficulty shaping collectively", but rather "How do they co-shape and what is the impact of co-shaping"?

Secondly, just like the previous chapters, this chapter does not aim for generally valid "laws": Since this thesis is a single-case study, it would be inappropriate to extrapolate from the COIN operations under the Obama administration by making the statement that since the MS refused a collective shaping role in this case, European shaping is generally impossible. Therefore, this chapter limits itself to explaining the specific conditions and particular circumstances that allowed for co-shaping to emerge: The MS shaped in niches and on the operational level and they did so often for different national reasons.

How, then, did the role of co-shaping come about and what does this tell us about the MS' ability to shape in a military operation? Firstly, the MS helped widen NATO's portfolio to become the lead actor that would bring about success in

Afghanistan, and this enabled the US' lead as a default option (5.1). Conceptually, this change from "NATO as a stabilization mission" to "NATO as a COIN mission" had yet to be made when President Obama took office. This meant that NATO needed to accept the vocabulary of COIN, to become engaged in training, ministerial advice (i.e., state building) and even development – quite a lot of new terrain for a formerly purely defensive military alliance. Slowly but steadily NATO went from being an organization that simply tried to organize European and American force contributions for a military mission to becoming an organization that would "enable" the US's leadership, as Sten Rynning has put it in his important study (Rynning 2012).

The MS either passively "let it happen" or even promoted this conceptual change to allow for a (US) leadership to emerge (5.1.). They did not stake any claim to play a role in the review processes, accepting their sidelining and confining themselves to vocal support (5.2.).

Many European states either carved out or deepened their engagement in topical niches they were comfortable with, such as policing or army training. The German role in policing and the French role in the ANA will serve to illustrate this point. The MS also tried to play a role in reconciliation with the Taliban, which is a good example of pre-decisional European diplomacy to convince the US of an approach that it was yet unconvinced about. It was only once the Obama administration had decided to explore this option more fully that the MS supported and co-shaped the US' reconciliation efforts in a post-decisional way (5.3.a-c.).

Next, many MS actively supported the US military strategy through active participation in the COIN effort (5.4.a-d.). The cases of some smaller nations, and the cases of France, Germany and the British "COIN machine" serve as examples to illustrate this point (Farrell and Gordon 2009). The US, in the words of one US official interviewed in Kabul, "could have fought the COIN campaign without the allies, but some of them were indeed very helpful".¹¹⁶ In many cases, this required a bottom-up process of "military adaptation", in other words a "change to tactics, techniques or existing technologies to improve operational performance" (Farrell 2010b: 569).

¹¹⁶ Interview with Department of State Official. US Embassy Kabul, September 2011.

5.1. MS enabling of a NATO and US lead role

As we saw in the Introduction of this dissertation, the Afghan campaign became substantially “Americanized” over time. During a first period that encompassed the years 2006-2008, the outgoing Bush administration put more resources into Afghanistan to respond to a deteriorating security situation. The US government tinkered (and failed) with several approaches, including a handover to the UN, and it pushed the allies to invest more military resources, which most of them refused (Rynning 2012). Only the Canadians, the Dutch, the Danes and the British increased their contributions substantially (The Guardian 03.02.2006).

Starting with air strikes in March 2006, Operation Mountain Thrust was launched to weaken the resistance of the insurgents. In addition to a contingent from the ANA, some 10,000 NATO allies were engaged in hostilities in a territory comprising four Afghan regions, i.e., Uruzgan in the North, Zabul and Kandahar in the East and Helmand stretching from the South to the North. However, most of the MS essentially “passed the buck” and only started recognizing the nature of the campaign much later.

In the absence of substantial European troop enforcements, there was another theme on which the US could push the MS, and this concerned NATO’s role and portfolio. For Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who took office in November 2006, following Donald Rumsfeld’s dismissal over the Abu Ghraib scandal,¹¹⁷ NATO would have to undergo significant changes. Consequently, key US officials, such as Defense Secretary Gates or Joint Chiefs Chairman Mullen worked to improve the civilian-military interface and allow NATO’s mandate and portfolio to face up to the reality of the campaign.

NATO’s mission, they argued, was no longer one of stabilization and peacekeeping (which both implied there was a peace to keep), but “COIN”. This word was still officially taboo for many European governments, and it would take NATO until 2009 to officially accept the terminology of COIN. However, on the operational

¹¹⁷ As revealed by a 2003 Amnesty International report, personnel of the CIA and the US Army had abused Iraqi detainees in the Iraqi Abu Ghraib prison following the invasion.

level, many national military leaders as well as key NATO figures were already preparing the ground (Rynning 2012: 186). The MS made this change possible and this is how “co-shaping” came into being, because it focused on enabling the US’ lead, thereby largely renouncing to lead a response.

5.1.a. NATO’s portfolio extension

5.1.a.i. COIN

NATO’s founding fathers had not created the North Atlantic Alliance for the purpose of projecting force to fight insurgencies in Central Asia; the natural business of the NATO alliance had historically been territorial defense and deterrence of conventional or nuclear attacks. Today’s concern for “post-conflict management” was no primary concern for NATO planners either. Rather, strategists were concerned with a nuclear standoff, and because this would likely lead to mutual annihilation, “post-conflict management”, “state building” or “winning hearts and minds” did not figure prominently on their to-do lists. Also, most European militaries were geared towards protecting their homeland, not force projection – contrary to the US military, which needed a military infrastructure ready to support overseas force projection if it wanted to play a role in Europe.

This European unpreparedness did not escape American officials. In an interview in early 2008, US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates made the point that “[m]ost of the European forces, NATO forces, are not trained in counterinsurgency; they were trained for the Fulda Gap” (Reuters 17.01.2008). Moreover, he explicitly compared the inglorious recent experiences of the British, the Dutch and the Canadians in Afghanistan’s south to the “progress” US troops were supposedly making in Eastern Afghanistan. Vowing not to let the alliance “off the hook” he called for an overhaul of NATO’s strategy, shifting its “focus from primarily one of rebuilding to one of waging a classic counterinsurgency against a resurgent Taliban

and growing influx of al-Qaeda fighters” (The Washington Post 12.12.2007). Gates was not alone, of course, as other key figures in ISAF were trying to promote change as well.

One of them was General Richards, ISAF Commander from May 2006 until the beginning of 2007. His tenure began with the British-Dutch-Canadian-American offensive in southeastern Afghanistan, where he developed an approach that was very close to the one that NATO would later adopt. First, Richards wanted the military effort to be focused on “Afghan Development Zones” (ADZs), that is, densely populated areas. Second, the role of the military was as much the hunting down of “bad guys” as the facilitation of Afghan reconciliation and military diplomacy, which de facto placed the military in a political role. Third, General Richards initiated a so-called Policy Action Group to guarantee political buy-in from the Afghans.

These were core tenets of classical COIN and while many allied ground commanders were supportive of such change, the political level in Europe was not. For instance, through his insistence on the ADZ, Richards had stepped on many European toes “because it implied the presence of a dangerous environment and the need to mass forces to achieve reconstruction and development” (Rynning 2012: 119). This was the opposite of the light footprint and the “reconstruction” narrative according to which the country was ready for imported progress, the core assumption of the Bonn agenda. The NAC later replaced General Richards by a more “conventional” critic of his, but this did not solve the problem.

The most decisive change in NATO’s slow evolution from being a “stabilization mission” to becoming a “COIN operation” occurred with General Stanley McChrystal’s assumption of ISAF command in June 2009.¹¹⁸ He was asked by US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates to assess the situation in the field and this resulted in a document called “Initial Assessment”. Before looking at allied responses to the assessment, a look at the assessment itself is warranted.

McChrystal had surrounded himself with an almost exclusively American team of military advisors.¹¹⁹ In the assessment, he warned that at this point in the

¹¹⁸ The US had attempted to conduct a COIN campaign in Afghanistan earlier than that, in fact. However, first COIN experiments came to an end in 2005, when NATO fully assumed responsibility throughout Afghanistan, allowing the US to redeploy to Iraq. See Mattelaer 2013: 119.

¹¹⁹ Some had first-hand experience in COIN in Iraq, or extensive commandment experience in Afghanistan. In addition to members of the US military, General McChrystal also brought in several

campaign, “neither success nor failure [could] be taken for granted” (McChrystal 26.06.2009: 1-1). Although the campaign was under-resourced, the “key take away from this assessment [was] the urgent need for a significant change to our strategy and the way we think and operate”. Allies had to “conduct classic counterinsurgency operations in an environment that is uniquely complex” (ibid.). Despite the European armies’ strong focus on conventional warfare, this new “strategy [could not] be focused on seizing terrain or destroying insurgent forces; our objective must be the population” (ibid.).

This was a poisoned gift to the MS, because while it acknowledged the counter-productiveness of over-reliance on force, it also meant several inconvenient things: First, time was of critical importance, as “failure to gain the initiative and reverse insurgent momentum in the near-term (next 12 months) - while Afghan security capacity matures – risk[ed] an outcome where defeating the insurgency [was] no longer possible” (ibid.: 1-2). In other words, McChrystal was planning to escalate the war. This would result in more risk-taking for the allies: “Pre-occupied with protection of our own forces, we have operated in a manner that distances us - physically and psychologically - from the people we seek to protect” (ibid.). Because ISAF was “poorly configured for COIN, inexperienced in local languages and culture, and struggling with challenges inherent to coalition warfare”, ISAF’s operational culture needed to change (ibid.).

What General McChrystal was indeed asking the European allies to do was a complete overhaul of the way they conceived of war making. On 20 September 2009 the allies discussed the Initial Assessment, leading to the revised ISAF OPLAN 38302 (Revision 4). It read:

“ISAF, in partnership with the Afghan Government and the international community, conducts comprehensive, population-centric counterinsurgency operations, and supports development of legitimate governance, Afghan National Security Forces, and socio-economic institutions in order to neutralize the enemy, safeguard the people, enable establishment of acceptable governance, and provide a secure and stable environment” (US DoD 2010).

Thus, ISAF’s campaign strategy now focused on three main efforts:

civilian experts from American think tanks. The only internationals in this review process were the Frenchman Etienne de Durand, director of the French think tank IFRI, and Spaniard Luis Peral, working as Senior Research Fellow at the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS).

- “Gain the initiative by protecting the population in densely populated areas where the insurgency has had significant influence”;
- “Separate insurgency influence from the populace and support Afghan Government sub-national structures to establish rule of law and deliver basic services”; and
- “Implement population security measures that connect contiguous economic corridors, foster community development and generate employment opportunities” (ibid.).

Hence, the concept of operations was “to conduct decisive ‘shape-clear-hold-build’ operations concentrated on the most threatened populations to neutralize insurgent groups and to establish population security measures that diminish insurgent influence over the people” (ibid.).

Two things were important to note in this respect: Firstly, though the allies took the decision to embrace the language of COIN *before* US President Obama had even finished the strategic review he was conducting at that moment, there was also “no detailed discussion of the resource implications”. Those were postponed to “a later stage” (NATO 23.10.2009). The Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) now drew up a list of 32 recommendations and tasks. It was not expected, however, that all NATO nations would have to agree to all of them. The categorization of these recommendations in terms of their political acceptability to the MS “effectively created a sort of opt-in mechanism”, as Mattelaer notes (Mattelaer 2013: 131). In sum, the ISAF Commander would get much wider authorities, but individual nations would not be expected to participate in all functional efforts” (ibid.).

Hence, the MS accepted McChrystal’s “COIN strategy” precisely because it was no strategy at all and created lots of space for opt-ins or opt-outs: As with ISAF’s previous OPLAN, McChrystal’s plan contained an unclear strategy with imprecise benchmarks. The consequence of this was that rather than defining clear goals and sub goals, what the allies referred to as “strategy” was a list of activities and ways to proceed. The centerpiece of the McChrystal assessment was shaped in a bottom-up approach, “without a clear articulation by NATO or the United States of their political

objectives and hence of their strategies, it could not be anything else” (Strachan 2010: 173). The Initial Assessment’s “attention was on the how rather than on the why; its focus was on the means, as the ends with which it was concerned were, in the standard hierarchy of military plans, essentially operational, not strategic, even if they posed as strategy” (ibid., see also Schreer 2012).

In the absence of a clear strategy that had hampered the entire mission since its beginning, decisions needed for ISAF’s strategic action and operational implementation were delegated to the lower echelons in the field. Because the field was now so heavily dominated by the US, the US’ COIN strategy became the document of reference. The fact that ISAF’s new strategy was “formulated by a military officer on the operational level, only two months into the job” and not by the NAC tells us much about the imbalance between US and European forces on the ground (Edström and Gyllensporre 2012: 1).

As we saw in the previous chapter, the US commander had authority over both US soldiers in OEF and ISAF by 2009, which brought the US American contingent in ISAF to 90,000. Despite the fact that between February 2009 and February 2010, an additional 6765 soldiers from EU countries arrived in Afghanistan, the ratio between American troops and European ones was very unfavorable for the MS once the US took possession of Afghanistan (Brattberg 2013: 7).

This explains how ISAF’s OPLAN was nearly identical with the US American COIN doctrine, as laid out in the US Army’s Counterinsurgency Field Manual FM 3-24, published in late 2006, or in other US Army doctrinal manuals such as “FM 3-0, Operations”, and “FM 3-07, Stability Operations” (see Gentile 2009: 5). In addition, as McChrystal had no intention to let the NAC block strategy making, he created a new command: ISAF Joint Command. If the MS accepted this, it did not necessarily mean a wholesale endorsement of COIN as such, only that in the face of serious imbalance in the field, they let it happen. As section 5.4 will show, the levels of adaptation to COIN varied, and so did the reasons to adapt.

5.1.a.ii. Training

NATO allies did not only allow the organization to adopt COIN language. At the Bratislava Ministerial Meeting mentioned above, they also reaffirmed that “training of the Afghan National Security Forces is crucial to a transition to Afghan lead and that the NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan (NTM-A) will need to be fully resourced in order to build the capacity necessary” (NATO 23.10.2009). The question of “partnering” between NATO and the ANSF had long been on the agenda of US generals, especially of General McKiernan’s (ISAF Commander from June 2008 to May 2009), who tried to push NATO along those lines.

With NATO allies now agreeing to speed the capacity building of the ANSF, it became clear that the question of partnering was raised in new ways: Training would be more effective if it was linked to operations, and this meant that a credible ANSF buildup would require allied troops to “partner” with ANA troops. The trouble was that as things stood in 2008, training was not part of what ISAF was allowed to do – it was handled by OEF. Under OEF, the so-called CSTC-A (Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan) had so far trained the ANA, and the separation between CSTC-A and ISAF had been upheld at the explicit insistence of European NATO allies. The target for ANP stood at roughly 100,000 in 2008 and it was further raised to 134,000 in 2010 (Mattelaer 2013: 125).

This inevitably raised the bar for training and numbers to be produced. In December 2008, NATO Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer was “particularly concerned about deficits in numbers of police and army trainers and mentors”, adding that “the Alliance has taken no concrete steps toward increasing its role in Afghan National Police (ANP) development” (Wikileaks 17.12.2008).

European allies started discussing the possibility of bringing in training on NATO’s agenda during 2008. The change became manifest in the preparations to the 2009 Kehl/Strasbourg NATO meeting of heads of state and government, when NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) was created. SHAPE produced a list of 18 tasks that NTM-A could be charged with. Those comprised equipping and training the ANP in schools, mentoring them in the field, and finding a financing arrangement via the trust funds (led by NATO for the ANA and the UNDP for ANP). France vetoed

only two tasks, the mentoring of the ANA and the ANP, at a ministerial level (Mattelaer 2013: 123).

Another important ally that had to change its position was Germany. German officials had often raised concerns about the establishment of NTM-A. The official German position was that it did “not favor creating new structures or doing anything that might require the government to seek a new parliamentary mandate before the September Bundestag elections”; however, after the US shared a “Food for thought paper” in March, the Germans changed their mind: Germany was now “on board with the idea of NTM-A”, “as another welcome step toward the goal of bringing all military operations under one command (ISAF) and thereby improving unity of effort” (Wikileaks 27.03.2009). Thus, despite some reservations, European support for NTM-A was forthcoming: The proposal for NTM-A was authorized even before the exact mission content was even known (Mattelaer 2013: 123).

Hence, contrary to earlier resistance to the words COIN and a NATO engagement in training, European support was key to adapt NATO’s portfolio to the growing US lead. As the level of European troops continued to be far below US requests, this support was arguably limited but nonetheless crucial, because it enabled NATO to evolve conceptually and therefore support the US lead that was coming about. The next section shows that the MS’ support for the growing US lead was not only conceptual.

5.2. MS vocal support for US strategy and acceptance of marginalization

As we saw above, the year 2009 saw three important events with respect to the Afghan strategy: The Strasbourg/Kehl NATO meeting, the Riedel review and the later Obama review that led to the West Point Speech on 1 December 2009. Throughout the two reviews, the MS’ role was passive and essentially consisted in either validating the results or highlighting important aspects afterwards. According to NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, the Riedel review process in Washington

“was extraordinarily complicated, and the big strategic lines were not fully prepared by the time that the Alliance readied itself for the Strasbourg-Kehl summit. The

NATO allies and the NAC knew of the process and had insights into it, but they essentially took a wait-and-see approach” (quoted in Rynning 2012: 182).

Despite this limited European input, reactions to the Riedel review were positive in Europe and, on the whole, marked by the claim that “European” views were finally triumphing. “I believe that the president's announcement today will strike a very strong chord with Europeans,” said British Foreign Minister David Miliband, expressing satisfaction that the new Obama strategy provided a better balance between civilian and military elements (Deutsche Welle 27.03.2009). For French President Sarkozy, this was a “triumph of the European vision with more focus on ‘building Afghan capabilities than on killing the Taliban’” (quoted in Flanagan, Cipoletti and Tuninetti 2011: 192). German Defense Minister Franz Josef Jung equally welcomed the growing US emphasis on providing security in the Pakistani borderlands and European foreign ministers praised the Obama strategy at an informal meeting in the Czech Republic on 27 March 2009, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier arguing that “[President Obama's] new strategy comes very close to the European ideas about the mission in Afghanistan” (Focus Online 27.03.2009a; Deutsche Welle 27.03.2009).

The European foreign ministers pledged to step up their civilian efforts in support of the “new way forward”, the EU Commission held out the prospect of providing more money for Kabul, and European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighborhood Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner announced an additional € 24 million for 2009-2010 to support “economic growth and governance” and the “promotion of alternative livelihood to combat poppy production” (Ferrero-Waldner 31.03.2009; Focus Online 27.03.2009b).

The NATO Kehl/Strasbourg Summit on 4 April reaffirmed the four guiding principles of the 2008 Bucharest Summit (long-term commitment, Afghan leadership, a comprehensive approach and regional engagement) and stressed that an even “stronger regional approach that involves all Afghanistan’s neighbours and, as this is not a purely military endeavour, greater civilian resources”, were needed (NATO Strasbourg/Kehl Summit Declaration 04.04.2009). As seen above, the allies agreed to “establish a NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan (NTM-A) within ISAF to oversee higher level training for the Afghan National Army” and noted that the “European

Gendarmerie Force (EGF) could play an active role in this regard” (NATO 04.04.2009). They also pledged to “provide more trainers and mentors in support of the Afghan National Police” (ibid.).

This European support and claim to have succeeded in convincing the US that more “civilian aid” was needed was at least remarkable: Following the Riedel review, US military sources announced that within the next six weeks, the US would be sending a combat aviation brigade (consisting of some 3,500 soldiers with more than 100 helicopters, doubling the number of US helicopters in Afghanistan), and 8,000 more US Marines would arrive over the next two months with another 50 helicopters; along with an armored infantry brigade of between 3,500 and 4000 troops (Deutsche Welle 27.03.2009).

In other words, despite a Presidential rhetoric of a “civilian surge”, it became clear early on that US military commanders would in fact continue to “emphasize combat operations and the destruction of Taliban forces” so that “the goal of defeating the Taliban and al Qaeda rather than enhancing the safety and security of the Afghan people” remained at the center of efforts (Cortright 2011: 38).

Not long after the Riedel Review and the Kehl Summit were over, US President Obama announced he would, again, re-assess his options and refine his strategy. As we saw already, President Obama sent an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan to “regain the momentum” and conduct “population-centric COIN”. The core points of the Riedel review remained unchanged, but Obama stepped up the pace: After “18 months, our troops will begin to come home”, he announced (The White House 01.12.2009).

With his strategy, President Obama effectively shed previous rhetoric (shared by the MS and George W. Bush alike) about the promotion of a Western-style democracy, focusing instead on the narrow goals of “preventing Afghanistan from reverting to a haven for global terrorists” (Korski 2010: 24). This was only a belated recognition that what the MS had once so pompously promised, namely assisting the new Afghan government with state building, now definitely belonged to the past (ibid.).

One of the most important single sources on President Obama's strategic review is veteran US journalist Bob Woodward's account "Obama's Wars" (Woodward 2010). His book gives a detailed account of the protracted debates inside the Obama administration and the profound disagreements between key actors of the Pentagon, the White House and the Department of State. European input to this second review was as inexistent as for the Riedel review. High-ranking US officials, such as National Security Advisor James Jones, repeated several times that they thought the war in Afghanistan should not only be an American affair, but no MS was present in the discussions and as NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer stated in a later interview "there was not a heavy footprint from NATO" (Woodward 2010: 135; de Hoop Scheffer quoted in Rynning 2012: 182).

Other sources have confirmed this picture. According to Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, ambassador of the UK, "most of it is inside baseball between the players in Washington and on the ground" (House of Commons FAC 2010-2011: Q94, Ev. 121).¹²⁰

In fact, when the Obama review took longer than expected, European foreign ministers actively pressed the Obama administration to clinch its protracted review process. The Daily Telegraph reported of "growing frustration in Whitehall at the US president's prolonged deliberations over Afghanistan", quoting Whitehall officials who complained that "until we have some clarity from Obama, it's going to be hard for us to explain to people what we're doing there" (The Daily Telegraph 05.11.2009). A spokesman for Gordon Brown was quoted as saying: "Obviously, we are waiting for the US to announce the outcome. Let's hope we can come together soon", and French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner complained that lack of leadership was dangerous: "What is the goal? What is the road? And in the name of what? Where are the Americans? It begins to be a problem" (ibid.).

Hence, the MS broadly accepted the review processes and strategic impetus coming out of Washington and sought no influence on the strategy, instead pretending the US had accepted European viewpoints, despite early evidence that a major escalation was coming into being.

¹²⁰ Cowper-Coles' personal book also contains a confirmation of the account that the US was driving the strategic review (Cowper-Coles 2012).

In this situation, the MS essentially developed two tactical behaviors: They either opted *out* (which is a role behavior Chapter 6 shall have more to say about) or they opted *in* via deepened commitments in niches in which they could provide added value. This is where the attention turns to now.

5.3. “Punching hard on a narrow front”: Opt-ins, niche acting and professionalization

In economics, the word “niche” usually refers to small but profitable segments of the market, in which marketers offer their products in order to address unmet demand or needs not being addressed by competitors. This section shows that European governments tried to carve out “niches” for themselves during the war. They sometimes deepened previous engagements, but they often restricted themselves to technical support roles and they always acted below the strategic level.

Such niches could be geographical, as we saw in chapter 4, for instance when rules of engagement would not allow troops to leave certain sectors, as was the case, for instance, for the Spaniards in Herat Province (under Italian-led RC West) (see Burke 2010). Niches could also be of a topical nature, as the below section shows. Within such niches, some European countries, such as Germany, would often try to defend their national “models”, deemed superior to the US’ approaches, but their ideas would not amount to a true counter-project because taken in isolation, national European contributions were too small to leave a decisive mark on the overall campaign. European contributions would often professionalize over the years and add value to the common effort through what could be called “punching hard on a narrow front”.¹²¹

Hence, the ability and willingness to “shape” was certainly there, but shaping happened in small areas, niches or on the operational level. However, the renewed level of resources and infrastructure, and the allied effort in NTM-A also provided an overarching structure that led to considerably more synergies between allied contributions than before.

¹²¹ A British EUPOL officer used this formula in an interview at the ANPA in Kabul, October 2011. See Fescharek 2013.

5.3.a. France

Because the way the French have carved out a niche role is an important example, it requires some context remarks.¹²² The French were involved in the training of the ANA and of the Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) since 2001 and 2008 respectively. ANCOP is a hybrid police force combining civilian order control and counterinsurgency, in the European tradition of state-controlled police forces with military status. It is one of the three major police forces that make up the Afghan National Police (ANP), the other two being the Afghan Border Police (ABP) and the Afghan Uniform Police (AUP). The way the French seized the opportunity at the 2009 Kehl Summit to train them has often been described as a mere exit strategy, but this would be too simplistic.

After training three of the first six ANA battalions in 2002, Operation Épідote started focusing on higher-ranking officers.¹²³ Alongside the US, the French have also played a role in the Kabul Commando School. They deployed the first of ultimately seven French Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLTs) to Afghanistan in 2006 to supervise the 1st brigade of the 201st ANA corps in Wardak and Logar.¹²⁴ Initially, French OMLTs worked only in Kabul, but in 2008 one OMLT went to Uruzgan, a more volatile southern region (since April 2012, OMLTs were called *Advisory Teams*). One hundred thirty French senior military personnel were stationed at ANA schools. According to the Ministry of Defense, by 2012 French forces had helped instruct about sixteen thousand men.¹²⁵

At the height of their engagement in Kapisa province and the Surobi district, the French had armed five Police Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (POMLTs) in Kapisa and Surobi, working with Task Force Lafayette in Tagab, Nijrab, Memouderaki, Tora, and Kapisa. POMLTs were concerned not so much with training but with on-the-job mentoring. In the training center in Wardak (which the French left in March 2013), mentoring also spread out from police *savoir-faire* to wider

¹²² Parts of the following are based on Fescharek 2015a.

¹²³ French training has undergone the same transformation as all Afghan training and mentoring missions: What used to be a direct training mission subsequently focused more on training trainers, who would themselves carry out the training under French oversight.

¹²⁴ “*Le dispositif Français pour l’Afghanistan*”.

<http://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/afghanistan/dossier/le-dispositif-francais-pour-l-afghanistan>.

Accessed on 09.01.2016.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

management tasks on how to run a camp or take care of logistics, for instance. In October 2011, 120 of 200 French gendarmes were part of a POMLT, while approximately 80 worked with National Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) in two major training centers (Regional Training Center Mazar-e Sharif and the National PTC Wardak, with a total capacity of 3,000 and for which France temporarily accepted lead-nation status).

A particularly interesting example of French niche acting concerns ANCOP. The increased French commitment in ANCOP needs to be seen in the context of a French re-orientation toward NATO under President Nicolas Sarkozy. Despite some critical campaign remarks about the necessity of the Afghan war, he quickly made it clear after his election that he would seek full reintegration to NATO's strategic command. Despite 55 % disapproval by the French of the US surge,¹²⁶ President Sarkozy announced at the 2008 Bucharest Summit that an additional 700 men would be deployed to Kapisa province, bringing the overall number of French troops physically present in Afghanistan to 2,800 (about 5 % of the overall military presence) (*L'Express* 03.04.2008).¹²⁷ At the Kehl Summit in 2009, Sarkozy further announced that 200 French gendarmes would be deployed to Afghanistan to work alongside the French army.

The French gendarmerie has acted along three main lines: Training, mentoring and what they called "*appui à la création d'un État de droit*" (support for the rule of law). French gendarmes trained the entirety of ANCOP leaders and AUP basic soldiers in two distinct training centers, the Regional PTC in Mazar-e Sharif and the *École Nationale d'Entrainement* in Wardak (Kim 2014).¹²⁸ Second, French gendarmes accompanied Afghan police in their daily work via the POMLTs. More specialized gendarmes were dispatched to Kabul or Bagram to help build Afghan counter IED capacities. Third, French gendarmes were "embedded" into NTM-A and counseled Afghan Generals. Between 2010 and 2013, three French colonels

¹²⁶ "55% des Français contre l'envoi de renforts en Afghanistan,"

<http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/societe/20080405.OBS8345/55-des-francais-contre-l-envoi-de-renforts-en-afghanistan.html>. Accessed on 10.10.2015.

¹²⁷ About 60 of these troops operated under OEF, in close cooperation with the US. The core of French forces headed the RC-Capital (Kabul), while roughly 190 were stationed on the Kandahar air base and about 355 in six OMLTs, in addition to 230 airmen in Dushanbe and 40 in Manaz. In May 2011, French forces peaked at about 4,000 (including French military on outside bases), placing France on the fourth rank of troop commitments.

¹²⁸ Battalion commanders, Company commanders, junior officers and SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) teams.

counseled General Paikan Zamary, head of ANCOP. This presence within NTM-A and next to the French army “gave us [the French] an Afghan-wide presence”.¹²⁹

ANCOP has generally received good marks and is often presented as a success story of NTM-A. ANCOP forces are better paid, better trained and much less corrupt than other Afghan police. Though they were generally held to be overburdened with operations in Marjah in 2010, their “superior training, firepower, and mobility were recognized (...), along with a “surge” of U.S. military forces, to reverse the Taliban’s hold on key areas in southern Afghanistan” in 2010 (Perito 2012). French military interviewed for this dissertation have often cited the events of 21 February 2012, when an angry Afghan mob descended into the streets following the burning of a Koran by US soldiers in Baghram, as a sign that the French influence has had an impact on ANCOP’s professionalism. Colonel Kim, who at the time was ANCOP program director in NTM-A, recalled during an interview:

“The day we sent our ANCOP forces to control these angry crowds, I was worried. They had been used for counter insurgency until then. But they did a very good job, because the riot control skills taught by French gendarmes in Mazar-e Sharif and Wardak were efficient. There were some casualties during the riots, but those who were killed during the events were killed by isolated ANP or panic-stricken members of Private Security Firms. They were not killed by the ANCOP guys who acted professionally”.¹³⁰

Naturally, the French “influence” in ANCOP is difficult to gauge, given that NTM-A was so heavily US-dominated. Nevertheless, there are clear signs that the US military appreciated the French contribution. Apart from the great number of Afghans trained, the Gendarmerie also caught the interest of General William Caldwell, Commander of NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan at the time, because “[t]here is something in them that makes all the difference, something I did not find neither in the military police units nor in the private military companies” (quoted in Kim 2014: 54). In fact, the US, which created the ANCOP to be a “civil order police” focused on crowd control, had increasingly used the force as a COIN tool. However, the Americans were well aware of the fact that these forces would ultimately have to readapt to lower levels of violence and other techniques than simply killing the

¹²⁹ Interview with Colonel Kim, Paris, July 2015 (see below).

¹³⁰ Interview with Colonel Kim. Paris, July 2015.

enemy. A French colonel interviewed in Kabul in October 2011 describes the French attitude vis-à-vis the US:

“The way we try to have an impact [on the NATO mission] is two-fold: First, we try to convince through quality by deploying high-ranking gendarmes. The US does not have such an instrument as the *gendarmerie nationale* and they appreciate it. So while we have to acknowledge that we are small, what we do bring to Afghanistan, and to the US mission, is a “civilian police” vision [*le regard policier*”]. The US has many excellent COIN experts and advisers. But there are not enough policemen capable of coming up with a coherent security scheme for the time once combat ends.”¹³¹

According to Colonel Kim,

“the French influence was obviously difficult to assess, given that we were in a NATO general staff. However, when the US started reducing the number of advisers in NTM-A, the American General [General Kelly Thomas, head of Senior Advisors in NTM-A] needed an officer to replace the US officer [who was ANCOP program manager at the time]. General Thomas chose me in order to have an officer who could simultaneously work as ANCOP Program Manager and function as the personal adviser of ANCOP Commander Major General Zamary. I was ANCOP program manager from July 2011 to August 2012, with several dozens of millions of US funds at my disposal to train and equip ANCOP battalions at the explicit demand of the US. To justify their choice they said: “*pour former des flics, il me faut un flic*” (“to train cops I need a cop”).¹³²

Summing up, two things seem important in the context of the theoretical arguments of this dissertation. Firstly, it is fair to say that at the end of the day, it is not so much a “French” influence that can be discerned, but a “*policing influence delivered by the French*”: The gendarmerie model is one that is historically typical of Europe, and in the security environment of Afghanistan it convinced the US much more than what EUPOL, for instance, or the early German Police Project Office (GPPO) (see below), brought to the field. Secondly, though the French coordinated with other allies and EUPOL, the French role in gendarmerie and army training was not driven by a European logic. Rather, it was a national and bilateral contribution: Based on experience and personal links acquired during previous years, French gendarmes were able to deepen a niche role within ANCOP after the NATO summit in Strasbourg/Kehl.

¹³¹ Interview with a French military official, Kabul 2011.

¹³² Interview with Colonel Kim. Paris, July 2015.

5.3.b. Germany

Some remarks are in order when writing about the German policing contribution. The first is that the growing professionalization of the GPPO/GPPT (German Police Project Team)¹³³ that will be described here was not a mere reaction to growing US pressure to “do more”. Other factors, the deteriorating security situation, the under-performance of EUPOL (see Chapter 6), the focus on training the ANSF as part of a withdrawal strategy, and the wish to make a valuable contribution to an international effort, must equally be taken into consideration. That being said, it is undeniable that German professionalization grew with the US lead. The massive increase of German means through 2008, 2009 and 2010 enabled the German government to claim a lead role in the multinational machinery of NTM-A, which by 2010 was running an annual budget of \$ 9,5 billion (the bulk of which was coming from the Pentagon, see House of Lords 2011: 14). According to the British Embassy in Kabul, NTM-A spent about \$ 3,5 million annually on ANP development (ibid). Despite these sums, in 2013 Germany was estimated to oversee around 10 % of all training, especially via the “Train The Trainers”-program.¹³⁴

Compared to their small-scale approach during the early years, the Germans’ participation in a paramilitary police program such as the Focused District Development (FDD) was a major U-turn and reflected the desire to provide a contribution to the US approach, while respecting core tenets of national strategic culture and the organizational culture of the German police (Friesendorf 2013; see below). The way the Germans carved out a niche in the so-called FDD program, which the US developed since about 2006, is a very good example of the type of niche acting that is described in this chapter.

The Germans had conceptions about the police that were substantially different from those of the Pentagon, which effectively oversaw police training since 2005. While never stepping out of their niche role, this led them to bend their contribution to domestic and cultural requirements. At the same time, the Germans

¹³³ The name of the GPPO was later changed into GPPT.

¹³⁴ Interviews with GPPT officer and German officials, Kabul and Berlin, September 2011 and August 2013.

never challenged the US approach frontally or even tried to change it. Change was always promoted from within the US paradigm.

As briefly stated in chapter 4, Germany assumed "lead nation" status in the Geneva framework and took responsibility for the police sector.¹³⁵ The decision was made in December 2001 and the German mission started in March 2002, as an "understandable assignment for the Germans with their preference for limited use of force" (Mattox 2015: 96). The name of the project was German Police Project Office (GPPO, see above). In the words of a German EUPOL officer involved in the early years of GPPO, the Germans were "very bold to raise their hands at this point":¹³⁶ There were serious doubts in the Ministry of Interior about Germany taking on such a role and questions on whether Germany even had the "capacity to do capacity building" in Afghanistan:¹³⁷ Though Bosnia had brought some experience in post-conflict policing, Germany was virtually starting its mission on policing in Afghanistan from scratch. The government contributed twelve personnel, based on the fallacious premise that their role would be to use the existing ANPA and act as a "multiplier in a snowball system".¹³⁸ The focus was on officers of the Afghan National Police (ANP) and so-called non-commissioned officers at the ANPA (Friesendorf 2013: 337).

GPPO started out mainly as a consulting organization for the ANPA, placing mentors in the Afghan structures and supporting the training organized mostly by the US. In the ensuing period much was made of a supposed philosophical difference between an American militarized approach and a German "human rights-focused" approach to police training:

"There were big philosophical differences in approach by the Germans (...) and Americans. German training was primarily focused on a civilian law and order force with little acknowledgement of the security environment. The US squarely focused on producing an auxiliary security force to supplement their own troops" (Grono 2009).

¹³⁵ Parts of what follows are based on Fescharek 2013.

¹³⁶ Interview with member of GPPT, Kabul, November 2012.

¹³⁷ Interview with German Ministry of Defense official, March 2009; Interview with German Ministry of Interior official, June 2010.

¹³⁸ Interview with member of GPPT, Kabul, November 2012.

While this is true, the real fault line was between quantity and quality. Germany did not concentrate on producing numbers, but on long-term training; it focused on the high ranks but neglected the basic police. It proposed both 9-month and 3-year courses with the intention of creating the dorsal spine of the police.

In 2006, an Interagency Report of the US Department of State and the US DoD noted diplomatically that while Germany had concentrated its efforts to restore the ANPA in Kabul, it was becoming obvious that “the country’s pressing security needs [call] for a greatly intensified training program” (US DoS/DoD 2006: 7). To be fair, initial force number goals had been modest, and under the 2006 Afghanistan Compact, only a police force of 62,000 was authorized. However, several US-initiated “quick fix” solutions raised those numbers, for instance the Afghanistan National Auxiliary Police (ANAP), a force of over 11,000 locally recruited police deployed to the South after *ten* days of training.¹³⁹ By late 2006, the US advocated a raise from 62,000 to 82,000, which was approved by the so-called Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB), a coordination body in the area of policing, in April 2007 (Wilder 2007). In 2009, this goal was raised to 96,800, later to 135,000, and it settled in 2012 at around 157,000 (which does not count the additional 30,000 Afghan Local Police (ALP) and 30,000 Afghan Public Protection Force, APPF) (US DoD 2009: ii).

US investment started dwarfing the German financial and personnel input with multi-billion dollar contracts. In 2005, the Pentagon formally took over ANP training and restructuring from the INL (and thus the Department of State).¹⁴⁰ The US committed ten times more personnel than Germany and, depending on the estimates, outspent the Germans by 50 or even 100 times (Friesendorf 2013: 338). In 2009, for instance, the US spent € 700 million for policing alone (Fescharek 2011).

The Germans did slowly grow into a more significant policing role, but in an incremental way and not as a mere function of the US’ growing lead. In its “*Afghanistankonzept*” 2007, the German government stressed the worsened security situation in Afghanistan and spelled out its goal of stepping up the training of the

¹³⁹ “The US was sending them, excuse me, as cannon fodder to the south”, was the comment of one GPPT officer quoted above.

¹⁴⁰ The US State Department did continue to oversee MoI mentoring and reform, as well as the contracts for police training. See Friesendorf 2013.

police (Deutsche Bundesregierung 2007: 3). The government increased its appropriations by € 20 million to € 100 million; for 2008, the government announced an increase to € 125 million in the civilian domain and its policing budget grew from 12 to 35,7 million (ibid.: 12). In 2010, the German government announced it would deploy 260 police officers to Afghanistan, i.e. 200 for GPPT and 60 for EUPOL (GPPO had become the German Police Project *Team* in the meantime) (Friesendorf 2013: 338).

Ahead of the 2010 London conference on Afghanistan, the German government announced it would double down its help for civilian reconstruction and strengthen its commitment to the ANSF. € 430 million were now to be invested annually for Afghanistan's civilian reconstruction (Auswärtiges Amt 26.01.2010). In 2012, GPPT employed 200 police and its budget was € 77 million.¹⁴¹

Police construction aid went to Kabul and the northern provinces. In Kabul, Germany helped finance the new headquarters for the border police and the traffic police, and the Germans inaugurated a building for the border police at Kabul International Airport in July 2011. In the Northern provinces of Kunduz, Takhar and Badakhshan, the Germans constructed new buildings for the traffic police, checkpoints and other facilities (Deutscher Bundestag 2007, Drs. 16/7434). This was consistent with the German government's goal to decentralize training, i.e. to go beyond Kabul (Deutsche Bundesregierung 2007: 19).

In 2007 and 2008, activities were still mainly focused on financial support and the building up of infrastructure, due to the fact that the GPPT continued to be too under-staffed to play a significant role in training. In March 2008, for instance, only nine German police officials worked in Germany's bilateral police project (Deutscher Bundestag, Drs. 16/8580, 2008: 5). However, as the numerical goals for ANP continued to be raised, and EUPOL was very slow to get off the ground, Germany grew increasingly involved in the training as well. In the spring of 2009, 38 of the 59 GPPT officials were working as trainers (Deutscher Bundestag, Drs. 16/12968, 2009: 13).

¹⁴¹ See: Germany's support for rebuilding the Afghan police force. http://www.auswaertigesamt.de/EN/Aussenpolitik/RegionaleSchwerpunkte/AfghanistanZentralasien/Polizeiaufbau-dt-Engagement_node.html. Accessed on 08.09.2015.

Another change occurred with respect to the target audience of training: GPPT started dispensing basic training to the so-called patrolmen, i.e. basic policemen. This contrasted with its focus of the earlier years, when German police training concerned only the higher echelons, resulting in lower numbers. Now, the German government planned to train about 3,000 police during the year 2009, from the lower to the higher ranks (Deutsche Bundesregierung 2008: 47). Amidst this US-led push for large paramilitary ANP force, experts started worrying about the “risks of expediency” (Giustozzi and Isaqzadeh 2011).

While the Germans recognized they did not have the critical mass to change this, they tried to “reconcile the trend towards a larger and stronger Afghan police with ‘sustainability’” (Friesendorf 2013: 339). In GPPT’s conceptualization, a sustainable police was one based on the principles of “civilian policing”, not paramilitary techniques. Hence, the Germans focused their efforts on the Criminal Investigation Departments of the Afghan Uniformed Police, the largest pillar of the ANP. According to the official MoI documents, these men were barred from COIN operations (ibid.).

Another good example of Germans seeking “niches inside their niche” is their participation in the massive rollout of the US’ FDD program. As stated above, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) became involved in policing around 2003, training lower ranking police in Kabul and at seven locations around Afghanistan. The US government contracted DynCorp International, a private military contractor, to construct and staff those training centers as mentors or trainers. In June 2006, INL had “constructed and staffed the Central Training Center (CTC) in Kabul and all seven Regional Training Centers (RTCs)” (US Dos/DoD 2006:7). On these centers more than 60,000 police recruits and policemen had been trained (ibid.). The same report noted “potential limitations” of this approach however, notably due to the fact that

“while the current level of police mentors (when properly distributed) may provide mentoring for the top levels of ANP management in each of the five regional police commands, it is an insufficient number to make an impact at the local police stations. Every police station would benefit from continuous, dedicated mentorship on a

routine basis. Experienced police mentors could have a great impact at the line level” (ibid.: 25).

Hence, the report proposed to “develop, staff, and implement a comprehensive international police mentor program for Afghanistan. This program must coordinate international mentoring and training at local police districts, both inside the station house and on patrol” (ibid.: 26). This later became the so-called FDD. Under this initiative, ANP units were concentrated in a single district at one time. While the district police units were in training, an ANCOP (“gendarmerie”) unit would replace them for the duration of their training. FDD was designed “to counter the ineffectiveness of the previous approach under which newly trained police returned to their previous duty stations to serve under untrained and corrupt superiors” (Perito 2009: 5).

For the Germans, the trouble was the use the Americans and the Afghans made of the police. For instance, a 2009 US DoD Report noted: The

“success of the ANP at the local level depends on being able to play its role in both countering the insurgents and supporting the rule of law, since together they are key to developing the commitment of the Afghan people in support of the national government” (US DoD 2009: 110).

This led the US government to rid the training manuals of many “civilian” or “community policing” components that had previously figured there. The police was increasingly deployed for “high-risk missions”, including the manning of checkpoints or in areas with high insurgent activity. FDD curricula focused on military skills, weapons handling or training to raise the awareness for improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Out of eight weeks of training, seven were devoted to military tactics, and one week to policing skills (Bayley and Perito 2010: 152-153; see Friesendorf 2011: 86). This has led some observers to complain that the police learned

“little about policing ethics, criminal procedures, the Afghan constitution or human rights, especially after November 2008, when training on community and democratic policing, as well as domestic violence and women’s rights, was removed from the FDD curriculum and replaced by military training” (Friesendorf 2011: 86).

Despite these issues, Germany participated in FDD since 2009. It accepted its main approach, but deliberately tried to emphasize some civilian aspects more than the US approach. For instance, the Germans asked NGO workers and development experts to contribute to the assessment in the police districts ahead of a training cycle. Another small difference with the US was that while the US focused only on training, the Germans tried to raise acceptance of the training program through measures aiming to enhance the living standards in the district (Deutscher Bundestag, Innenausschuss 2008: 35-36). GPPT was restricted to safe areas, and its members could not stay outside of the camps overnight.

Although FDD was a NTM-A project, GPPT trainers operated outside the NTM-A chain of command. This had legal reasons: Putting German police under the command and control of a military operation violates important principles of the German constitution (see Regler 2012). Although ANCOP was an important part of the FDD program (ANCOP officers held the police districts while the police units were being trained), the Germans were not allowed to train ANCOP. “[C]ompllicated arrangements had to be made to limit contact between ANCOP and the GPPT” (Friesendorf 2013: 341). Moreover, when the US shortened the training cycles, the Germans refused to compromise on the quality of their training (ibid.). The German approach was intricately related to a safe operating environment: “We can only make sure our work has high quality if our personnel is not permanently preoccupied with force protection”, is how one GPPT leader in Mazar-e Sharif put it in an interview. When the Germans discontinued their FDD participation, they did so because the safe areas where the German government would allow GPPT to operate had become too sparse.¹⁴²

In sum, it must be said that the Germans added significant value inside/next to the NTM-A, which had become the major player in police training since Kehl/Strasbourg. EUPOL, which was earlier touted as the alternative to bilateral approaches, was basically abandoned by Germany once the Federal Government realized how ineffective it was (see Chapter 6). The evolution of GPPO’s/GPPT’s role was to a large extent driven by the way domestic politics responded to security demands in Afghanistan and the lead of the US.

¹⁴² Interview with GIZ official, Kabul, November 2011.

This gave way to a focused, professionalized “*Qualitätsprodukt*” (“quality product”).¹⁴³ While generally disapproving of the US’ push towards paramilitarization of the police, the German government made no attempt to match US funding or lift geographical caveats on GPPT activity. Rather, the Germans carved out “niches inside the niche” of policing and tried to convince through expertise: GPPO/GPPT underwent important steps of professionalization, be it in the selection and preparation of trainers, mandatory aptitude tests and pre-deployment training, or a relatively rigorous preparation process that was put into place over the years. GPPT also generally used high-quality police from Germany; for instance, German trainers needed a minimum of eight years of service in the German police before they were allowed to volunteer.¹⁴⁴ As noted, GPPT officials estimated that Germany, with its 200 personnel strong mission, oversaw roughly 10 % of overall training in Afghanistan.

While unrelenting in its criticism of EUPOL, for instance, the UK House of Lords praised GPPT’s contributions as significant, and US officials have equally expressed high opinions for the German contribution of the later years (House of Lords 2011: 14).

5.3.c. Talks with the Taliban: The MS’ pre-decisional diplomacy and post-decisional co-shaping

The way “talking to the Taliban” became a presentable idea is another good case to study both the limited influence the MS had on US policies and the use of diplomatic *savoir-faire* by several MS, primarily the UK and Germany, in order to slowly entice the US to a policy of reconciliation with the Taliban. The case shows that though the MS had no leverage to bring the US to initiate talks, they were able to offer their services most efficiently once the US had embraced the idea, i.e. in a post-decisional way that recalls what Winston Churchill is supposed to have said: “You can always count on Americans to do the right thing - after they've tried everything else”.

¹⁴³ The expression was used by several GPPT leaders in interviews with them.

¹⁴⁴ Interviews with GPPT officers and officials from the German Ministry of the Interior, 2011-2013.

Contacts between coalition forces and the Taliban existed throughout the conflict. For instance, in 2009, several newspapers reported the Italian Army had supposedly bribed the Taliban to avoid attacks on Italian soldiers (The Guardian 16.10.2009; Daily Mail 16.10.2009).¹⁴⁵ The Norwegians, the Germans, the office of the EUSR, the Canadians and the British, not to mention Pakistan and the Karzai administration, all played different roles regarding talks. However, the US was the last to come around to the idea of direct talks, and as long as the US government was hostile to it or undecided, not much happened.

For instance, the UK Foreign Affairs Committee urged that the UK should “re-double its diplomatic efforts to bring whatever influence it can to bear on the US to highlight the need for US leadership on the issue” (House of Lords 2011: 9). It further stated that the UK’s “most strategically important task is to convince the US of the merits of moving swiftly towards an endorsement of, and involvement in, talks with the Taliban leadership” (House of Lords 2011: 56). Despite a well-orchestrated diplomatic campaign, however, former UK ambassador Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles remarked in his personal account that “the net results of all our efforts to encourage a more political approach may only have been to get the United States to accept reconciliation ... a bit sooner than it might otherwise have done” (Cowper-Coles 2011: 285). Basically, though the US “listened politely... [it] had other fish to fry” (ibid.: 70).

In fact, the idea of contacts with the Taliban was the source of many British-US tensions in Afghanistan. In 2006, British ISAF forces created a de facto situation of deals with the Taliban, when British forces and the Taliban agreed with the elders of Musa Qala (in the southern province of Helmand) to withdraw forces from the town. The US criticized the deal, though far from being “peace talks”, British General Richard’s ultimate goal was to “put the tribal elders back in control of Musa Qala (...) we will kick out the Taliban and defeat them” (The Guardian 04.02.2007). The UK’s policy was ambiguous: In December 2007, Prime Minister Gordon Brown said his government would “not enter into any negotiations with these people”, but only a few

¹⁴⁵ These allegations were later proven to be correct. According to a leaked cable, on 6 June 2008, the US Ambassador told Italian president Berlusconi: “We continue to receive worrying reports of Italians paying-off local warlords and other combatants. Berlusconi agreed this should be stopped”. See The Australian 12.08.2011.

weeks later it was disclosed that the MI6 was involved in secret negotiations with the Taliban (The Telegraph 27.12.2007).¹⁴⁶

The main reason behind Brown's official denial was that 2006 saw the UK deploy 6,000 troops to Helmand in an effort to support the US strategy to seize the momentum and reverse the Taliban's recent advances (see section 5.4). As a series of reports of the House of Commons shows, UK officials were slow to recognize the necessity of systematic talks, due to "the prevailing belief in the ability of military force to defeat the insurgency" (Waldman 2014: 1054). According to Matt Cavanagh, a Special Adviser to Prime Minister Gordon Brown, by the summer of 2009,

"although some senior military figures had realised that things were not going to plan, their reaction was to press for greater resources and urgency. Defeat was said to be unthinkable, 'even if the more thoughtful and intellectually honest of them weren't sure if victory was achievable either' (House of Commons FAC 2010-2011: 89).

In 2009, a report by the UK Foreign Affairs Committee still noted that while

"a negotiated, Afghan-led political settlement with broad popular support represents the only realistic option for long-term security and stability in Afghanistan", "there can be no serious prospect of meaningful discussions until Coalition Forces and the Afghan National Security Forces gain, and retain, the upper hand on security across the country, including in Helmand, and are then able to negotiate from a position of strength" (UK Foreign Affairs Committee 2009: 26).

Thus, the Foreign Affairs Committee concluded, "the current increased military activity is a necessary pre-requisite for any long-term political settlement" (ibid.).

Importantly, this was concurrent with the US' focus on "splitting" the Taliban movement, not negotiating a settlement with them. The US' approach to "reconciliation" accepted the idea that the war could not be won without some form of reconciliation, but only with "non-ideologically committed insurgents" (The White House April 2009). In other words, "Mullah Omar and the Taliban's hard core that have aligned themselves with Al Qaeda" were believed to be non-reconcilable (ibid.), which is why the US encouraged the Karzai administration to reach out to "mid to

¹⁴⁶ As Cowper-Coles noted in his memoirs, the British Embassy "started to do some serious thinking in the summer of 2007 [about] reconciliation [and] efforts to bring over local or tactical level insurgents, either individually or in small groups. Our analysis made much of the different strands in the insurgency. Many of those we were fighting were said to be motivated more by greed than by ideology" (Cowper-Coles 2012: 67).

low-level” Taliban fighters only. The American position was dominated by the fallacious perception that 70 % of the Taliban could be reintegrated and the 2010 London donor conference reflected this approach when it announced a new peace and reintegration fund of \$ 140 million to integrate moderate Taliban.

However, a shift in the US approach was becoming palpable. The White House sent signals in the summer of 2010 that it was embracing the idea of “negotiating with senior members of the Taliban through third parties” (The Guardian 19.07.2010). In February 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made an important speech in which she announced a shift towards dialogue. Instead of speaking about “reintegration”, she talked about “reconciliation” with the Taliban. Talks needed to involve “not just low-level fighters”, but there needed to be a “responsible reconciliation process”. While the US had previously insisted that the Taliban, as a *precondition* to talks, end the insurgency, abandon their alliance with Al Qaeda and accept the Afghan constitution, now these demands were only “necessary outcomes of any negotiation” (Clinton 2011). In June 2011, President Obama finally declared the US would encourage and support initiatives of reconciliation that included the Taliban (Waldman 2014: 1058).

What roles did the MS play in this process? Generally speaking, the European diplomats and officials interviewed by this author on the German, British and French side all concurred that the European role was to make use of diplomatic *savoir-faire*, but that one could not claim the MS were in any way driving the process. One of the first actors to shift from co-optation and “reintegration” to peace talks was the UK government. In a speech in March 2010, UK Foreign Minister Miliband had stressed the necessity of a “political settlement” with the Taliban (see Waldman 2014: 1058). The Germans also tried to speed up the thinking in the US, but had to realize they “could not go faster than the Americans were willing to, and the Americans moved slowly” (Rashid 2012).

Under German AfPak representative Bernd Mützelburg (February 2009- May 2010), first meetings with a contact man had taken place in Dubai in September 2009. On 20 November 2010, the NATO Lisbon Summit announced, for the first time, a firm withdrawal date for NATO troops, thus adding even more urgency to the idea of finding a settlement to the conflict (NATO 20.11.2010). On 28 November 2010 Mützelburg’s successor Michael Steiner arranged a meeting in Pullach, Germany,

between two US representatives and Taliban emissaries.¹⁴⁷ This German activism represented a U-turn with the position the Merkel government publicly defended only about a year earlier, i.e., before the Obama administration changed track during the summer of 2010. For instance, in March 2009, Chancellor Merkel stated that

“We must work more closely with those who want to reconstruct their country, who respect the standards of the rule of law, whatever they may call themselves ... But those who fight against reconstruction, who ride roughshod over human rights with violence and terror, cannot be our partners” (Deutsche Welle 27.03.2009).

British intelligence officers also continued to conduct secret negotiations with Taliban representatives (Daily Mail Online 18.06.2013). More rounds of meetings followed in February 2011 and in May 2011, in Doha and Pullach, respectively. In August 2011, it was agreed that the Taliban open an office in Doha to institutionalize the talks.

The French have also organized talks in Chantilly, north of Paris. On 20 – 21 December 2012, representatives of the Karzai government, the Taliban and Hizb-e Islami met in Gouvieux, close to Chantilly in French Picardy, to let participants “express themselves, to have them listen to each other in the best possible conditions”, according to Camille Grand, President of the *Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique*, which organized the meetings (France 24 20.12.2012). According to a French defense official, the French goal was to

“create the possibility of contacts between Afghans to see what happens. There is no doubt that Europeans did things that the United States could not do at the time. The ultimate goal of Taleb was probably to send a delegation to the USA, but the US could not accommodate them on American soil for symbolic reasons. For us, it was much less problematic”.¹⁴⁸

More recently, the Norwegians have also hosted Taliban delegations in Norway, based on a strong tradition of mediation (NBC News 16.06.2015; Moolakkattu 2005). At the time of writing, however, no peace deal has been brokered.

In sum, despite longstanding behind-the-scenes diplomatic preparations, the MS did not play a decisive role in the peace talks. European diplomacy has been

¹⁴⁷ The British, who had just ridiculed themselves when the MI6 fell prey to an impostor pretending to be a Taliban emissary, were not informed of the talks (The New York Times 22.11.2010).

¹⁴⁸ Interview with French Defense official. Paris, January 2015.

called “vital” for the future of peace talks, but this is arguably a very malleable statement (Brattberg 2013). Apart from the Afghans and the Pakistanis, the key players were in Washington and in the US Embassy in Kabul.¹⁴⁹ It was not because some MS had slowly prepared the idea that the US adapted it, rather it was *once* the US administration had come around to “talks” that previous work proved valuable.

After the Obama administration officially embraced talks, France and Germany and the UK in particular grafted their efforts on the new momentum that seemed to build up, which is another example of what this thesis calls “co-shaping”: European shaping happened *via* the US, not independently, autonomously, via the EU or as a coalition or group of MS. European diplomats often held very critical views of the US’ chimera that “moderate” Taliban could be bought off, but at no point was European diplomacy willing or able to make the US change its course.

The next section turns to European contributions to US-led efforts in COIN. Examples include the French, German and British, but also the Dutch, Polish, Swedish and Danish experiences, among others (each case selection is explained below).

5.4. MS support to the US COIN strategy through post-decisional commitments

Under the US lead, most European militaries were able to preserve operational freedoms, but they followed the overall strategic lead of the US, which set the agenda concerning the benchmarks, the goals and the speed of training, COIN, counter terrorism and transition. This sub-section shows that under President Obama’s military lead, many European governments accelerated adaptations in their military contributions, offering important practical support to the US lead (mainly through war-fighting, military adaptation to the techniques of counterinsurgency, and commitment to partnering and training). European military contributions provided

¹⁴⁹ The focus on European good offices and diplomacy in reconciliation with the Taliban is not to suggest that the MS were the only player in “reconciliation”, far from it: First and foremost, Pakistan must be mentioned, because it had (and continues to have) direct access to both the Taliban and the Afghan government. Saudi Arabia and Qatar have played a very important role in facilitating contacts. So has, more recently, China.

momentum and contributed to decimate the insurgency, but these contributions happened on an operational level only. Note that the fact that not much of this seems to have been sustainable, and the fact that in many districts, violence flared up after international troops left, is, strictly speaking, irrelevant to the argument of “added value” during the military campaign; the section is only concerned with the European military impetus to US-led COIN.¹⁵⁰

Importantly, though US demands to invest more resources and accept the language of “war” and “COIN” played an important role in adaptation and escalation, the below examples show that “mission creep” as well as domestic dynamics in reaction to deteriorating security environments were generally the most important factors driving national contributions. In fact, European military commanders were often practicing COIN well before it became NATO’s official doctrine, though this was most often unrecognized by their respective political leaders in European capitals.

Also, once the US upped the ante and deployed 17,000, and then another 30,000 troops in 2009, this also meant that a whole new infrastructure of support and cover was brought to the field, supporting European militaries’ COIN versions or even sometimes “helping the MS to help the US”. Thus, there was a double dynamic at play, the MS adapting to COIN *and* the US belatedly providing an infrastructure that helped European campaigns in important ways. This renewed focus and infrastructure also helped bundling the MS’ contributions together more effectively than before, namely in training via NTM-A. However, *European* logics of common programming to elaborate a common response to the insurgency played no role, even though the MS “owned” a significant portion of the military infrastructure in the North and the West.

In sum, the collective military role of the MS was rendered more efficient because they reacted in similar ways to the insurgency and because new US leadership enabled more robust responses. With respect to the theoretical arguments of this thesis, this again stresses the point that not cultural convergence, i.e. the convergence of national strategic cultures (which remained very distinct throughout

¹⁵⁰ Literature dealing with Western militaries’ operations in Afghanistan has sufficiently exposed the absurdities and often-grievous impact of uninformed Western military operations on local dynamics and civilians. For two examples, see Münch 2011, and Dorransoro and Baczko 2016. Hence, when this section argues that European militaries have improved their abilities to conduct COIN operations, this is meant as a descriptive statement, not uncritical endorsement.

the years), but concrete *events* (an exploding insurgency and a renewed US lead) led to a constellation where a European role by default occurred.

5.4.a. The British “COIN machine”

The UK’s military adaptation to the war in Afghanistan and the requirements of COIN was a complex development. The media has often presented US General David Petraeus as the “father of COIN” and General McChrystal as the General who “imported” it to Afghanistan. The reality is different; many authors have shown how during the early years, lack of leadership by American or European elites led to a situation where local commanders were able to apply COIN well before politicians even officially acknowledged the term. This points to the fact that European militaries were often able to shape their respective Afghan “areas of responsibility” precisely *because* the political level pretended not to notice and thus made a COIN contribution possible (King 2010, Münch 2011, Noetzel 2011, Rynning 2012, Chandrasekaran 2012).

This holds true for British military commanders as well, who adopted an operational approach that was “focused on protecting the population and working through Afghan partners” long before McChrystal’s “Initial Assessment” (see Farrell 2013: 119-120). When the UK agreed to “assume responsibility” for the Helmand region in May 2006, it sent its 16 Air Assault Brigade with 3,300 troops and some civilian personnel.¹⁵¹ British Defense Secretary John Reid initially declared that in case the Taliban attacked the British, they would “attack back”, but the British military’s official mission was one of peace support, and not actively pursuing insurgents or COIN (The Independent 25.04.2006). Spread thinly across platoon houses in Helmand, British forces emphasized kinetic operations and, because of dispersion, were at first unable to clear centers of insurgent activity to “provide” governance or development – an important COIN element. While operational leaders of the UK army were indeed fighting under the assumption that they were engaged in a COIN mission, the British Labor government clung to the theme of a peace operation (Marston 2008: 237).

¹⁵¹ The British troops were assisted by the militaries of Denmark and Estonia, as well as the ANA.

For instance, in a statement on 26 January 2006, Defense Secretary Reid told the parliament that the UK was in Afghanistan to “ensure that we provide Afghanistan with a seamless package of democratic, political, developmental and military assistance in Helmand” (House of Commons FAC 21.07.2009). UK Prime Minister Blair described the British troops’ mission as such:

“support the Afghan government, army and police to allow them to take responsibility for their own security; strengthen national and local institutions and support the search for political reconciliation; support reconstruction and development” (ibid.).

COIN was not at all in the official books, in other words. As Anthony King has convincingly shown, the British Helmand campaign was in fact initially marked by a strong “lack of strategic political guidance from the UK government and poor inter-agency coordination in Britain” (King 2011a: 31). Hence, “cultural and organisational factors within the British military had a more immediate influence on the campaign” than political guidance or alliance pressures (ibid.: 28). This led John Lorimer, the commander of the UK’s 12 Brigade, to understand “the recurrent attacks he mounted in 2007 as ‘mowing the grass’: there was no suggestion that they would have any lasting effect on the Taliban” (ibid.: 30). In the absence of clear political guidance, King writes, a plausible answer to the question why the British commanders chose to disperse their forces “is likely to be found in professional motivations and self-understandings of the British commanders” (ibid.: 32). This confusion resulted in major criticism from the US: In a famous Wikileaks cable, the US Embassy in Kabul wrote as late as 2008 “we and Karzai agree the British are not up to the task of securing Helmand” (The Guardian 02.12.2010).

However, considerable learning occurred in the UK military as the campaign went along. One major step in the British shift to a “population-centric” COIN approach occurred with the deployment of 52 Infantry Brigade in the fall of 2007. As the British government disengaged from Iraq and refocused on Afghanistan, it approved a new plan in early 2008 entitled the “Helmand Road Map”, in many ways validating earlier approaches of British commanders such as General Richards (see section 5.1.a). The new approach was based on so-called “Afghan Development Zones”, or populous areas in which the protection of the population was stressed over

the application of kinetic effects (Egnell 2011: 307). Between 2007 and 2009, the civilian staff on the British PRT grew from 25 to 80 (Egnell 2011: 308). UK military officers also finally received more adequate troop levels to “hold” terrain once it was “cleared”: The UK’s troops in Afghanistan grew to 5,200 in January 2007, they stood at 8,745 in December 2008 and at 9,500 in June 2010.¹⁵²

In line with US President Obama’s strategy, the “Road Map” sought to build trust in the Afghan government and to “stimulate local governance structures and enhancements to their capacity to draw down both national programs and the work of line ministries” (Farrell and Gordon 2009: 672). 52 Infantry Brigade borrowed from the US’s draft Field Manual 3-24 in defining the concept of operations as “clear, hold, build” (ibid.: 674). A UK military officer quoted by military writer Frank Ledwidge exemplifies this shift, stating that the next officer willing to measure progress by the number of dead Taliban would be on the “earliest available flight home” (Ledwidge 2011: 91).

Theo Farrell and Stuart Gordon concluded in a prominent 2009 assessment of the UK’s “COIN learning” that since the military had “received more resources and become significantly better at COIN” and there was “significant progress in the development of the inter-agency approach”, what the US found in Helmand when it surged in was a “British COIN machine: a little creaky perhaps, but one that is fit for purpose and getting the job done” (Farrell and Gordon 2009: 665).

The most important game changer for the British campaign, however, was that during the summer of 2009, President Obama deployed about 21,000 fresh US troops to Afghanistan, 10,000 of which were quickly sent to the “UK’s” region, Helmand (10,000 more US soldiers would follow later). Their mission was described by the Pentagon as securing “the local population from the threat of Taliban and other insurgent intimidation and violence” and to provide

“security for population centers along the Helmand River valley and connect local citizens with their legitimate government while establishing stable and secure conditions for national elections scheduled for August as well as enhanced security for the future” (US CENTCOM 02.07.2008).

¹⁵² See <http://www.rs.nato.int/isaf-placemat-archives.html>. Accessed on 11.01.2016.

The basic idea of this “Helmand surge” was to secure the majority of the population in Helmand and connect it with the neighboring Kandahar province in an effort to create a zone of stability covering the south of the country.

The UK took part actively in those efforts: Two major operations were launched, Operation Strike of the Sword, led by US Marines, and Operation Panther’s Claw, which UK forces led. A few months later, in February 2010, US and ANA forces launched another major operation, this time in Marjah, a few miles away from Helmand’s capital Lashkar Gah. As this operation was ongoing, the UK launched its operation Panther’s Claw in Nad-e Ali district to “clear” Taliban fighters.

Together, the US’ advances on Marjah and the UK’s operations in Nad-e Ali were termed Operation “Moshtarak II”, they were the “‘opening gambit’ of NATO’s ‘surge’ in 2010 and the first test of the strategy put in place by the newly appointed ISAF commander, Gen. Stanley McChrystal” (Ucko and Egnell 2013: 100). King’s College Professor Theo Farrell has assessed the UK’s efforts in Nad-e Ali and reached the conclusion that

“the number of significant violent events in Nad-e-Ali ha[d] fallen to 15 per cent of that before Operation Moshtarak. Freedom of movement for civilians and security forces within the district ha[d]dramatically improved. The district [now had] an effective governor, and relations between the Afghan National Police and Afghan National Army [...] greatly improved. Most important of all, as a key indicator of progress, there was excellent local turnout (some 3,000) for at the three election shuras for the District Community Council, and a new, enlarged and more representative body was elected on 12 May” (Farrell 2010a: 9).

That this was only a tactical success will be shown below; nevertheless, the UK doubtlessly provided support and momentum to General McChrystal’s main idea: To regain the initiative.¹⁵³

Moshtarak II was followed by a US move to the north of Helmand in June 2010, and this was important news for the British, which had previously been in charge of those districts (Kajaki and Sangin) now taken over by the US Marines. From now on, the UK could retreat to the small central region of Helmand, which was more adequate to its limited force size (Dressler 2011: 19). A Marines battalion replaced

¹⁵³ There is a parallel here with the French momentum provided by President Sarkozy at the 2008 Bucharest NATO summit, see below.

another British contingent of 500 soldiers in Musa Qala later that year. This “Americanization” of the war effort has happened all over Afghanistan, but it led to serious charges vis-à-vis the UK military: “In 2009, just as had happened in Basra a year earlier, the US armed forces in the shape of 20,000 marines bailed out a British contingent that had shown itself ‘not up to the task’ of securing the province” (Ledwidge 2013: 5).¹⁵⁴

As Ucko and Egnell write in a major assessment of British COIN in Iraq and Afghanistan, as “the Americans had gotten more heavily involved, the first crucial difference was an increase in the level of resources available to complete this effort, specifically the addition of about 20,000 US Marines in Helmand alone” (Ucko and Egnell 2013: 101). The resources that the US now added

“critically allowed the British forces to focus more on the training and mentoring of Afghan forces as well as on leading and commanding the operations of others, often to good effect. This dissertation proved essential because it enabled more effective employment of local forces within the Afghan security apparatus – something that contributed greatly to the relative stabilization of Helmand in 2011 and 2012” (ibid.).

However, this statement also requires some qualifications that concern the UK’s adaptation to Helmand more broadly. While most observers seem to agree that the “mass arrival of US Marine forces did enable the second adaptive moment in the British campaign”, one should also note that the UK certainly showed itself capable of conceptual learning and adaptation: The “Helmand Road Map” of 2008, mentioned earlier, did reveal the Army’s leadership ability to recognize the nature of the campaign (Farrell 2013: 129).

More soldiers were provided by the political leaders, COIN was recognized at the political level, and efforts to “join up” the work of government departments, most importantly the Defense Ministry, the Foreign Office and the Department for International Development became more visible in the creation of the “Stabilisation Unit”, created in 2007 to support fragile states where close cooperation between international agencies, the military, and civilian personnel is needed. From a strictly military standpoint, the UK/US surge of the years 2009 and 2010 does seem to have increased security in some areas for a short while. Insurgent supply lines along the Helmand river valley were often interrupted and safe havens removed. In 2011, the

¹⁵⁴ The expression “not up to the task” is a reference to the Wikileaks cable cited earlier.

number of assassinations carried out by the Taliban in southern and central Helmand fell compared to their peak in 2009, and NATO officials spoke positively about the impact of training, allowing some ANA units to execute operations and patrols independently (Dressler 2011: 6). Based on such facts, Prime Minister David Cameron stated in December 2013 that when British troops would withdraw by the end of 2014, they would have accomplished their mission, that of leaving behind a basic level of security (BBC 16.12.2013).

However, between July and November 2012, attacks against the ANSF rose to 150 % and places like Nahr-e Seraj, Sangin, Nad-e Ali and Musa Qala each had 4 % of the national number of “enemy initiated attacks” between 1 April 2013 and mid-September 2013, according to a Pentagon report from November 2013 (House of Commons 26.03.2013:30; US DoD 2013). By December 2013, the head of the British Army General Sir Peter Wall told The Telegraph: “Vital territory won by British forces in Afghanistan risks being lost to the Taliban as Britain completes its military withdrawal by the end of next year” (The Telegraph 26.12.2013). In November, the Nahr-e Seraj district, which the British had controlled until October 2012, was Afghanistan’s most violent (Bennett 2014; Derksen 2014). What, then, is to say about the momentum the UK provided to the new American COIN strategy?

First, those areas where massive troop enforcements arrived do seem to have benefited from some temporal improvements in daily security. The return to insecurity after handover to the ANSF occurred not only in districts formerly controlled by the UK, but everywhere in the country. It seems certain that the UK, along with its Afghan partners and the US forces, was a useful ally in achieving tactical and temporary successes on the operational level. Enemy forces were cleared from some locations, and there are also examples where terrain was not only cleared but also held. Importantly, the British HQ 6 Division was in charge of operational planning and execution between November 2009 and 2010 during Operation Moshtarak II and Operation Hamkari in and around Kandahar (Egnell 2011: 309).

Thus, the British endorsed General McChrystal’s project of “reversing the Taliban’s momentum”. Given the considerable difficulties in Helmand during the early years, it is possible to make the case that, on a strictly operational level, the UK’s adaptation to the Helmand terrain came late, but nevertheless enabled it to support the US lead in ways the alliance leader found useful. Robert Egnell concludes

“although the British military does not have the forces to conduct large-scale counterinsurgency operations, it does seem to have the conceptual understanding and command power to conduct these operations in coalitions or by employing indigenous forces” (Egnell 2011:311).

Praising the UK for tactical achievements on the operational level also implies that the UK did not succeed in convincing its US partners about potential changes of course. This became most visible when major disagreements erupted between the US military and the UK military on fighting methods: Despite General McChrystal’s emphasis on avoiding casualties, his successor, General Petraeus, reversed this dynamic and again allowed for more missile strikes and special operations. Sources indicate that the UK grew alarmed that US raids and counterterrorism operations were alienating the population, but could not change it.¹⁵⁵

On the whole, the story is essentially one of a rescaling of UK ambitions and a focus on smaller operations, as well as training, in an entirely Americanized military infrastructure. Notably when the US sent another 20,000 marines to Helmand, one can say that the “US helped the UK to better help the US”. However, one should not underestimate the immense learning effort in the UK military, which amounts to a process of “military adaptation”, in other words a “change to tactics, techniques or existing technologies to improve operational performance” (Farrell 2010: 569). This enabled the UK to add significant added value in some areas.

The French contribution to the US-led counterinsurgency campaign, which we turn to now, is an important case because it signals that the European ally with the most “Europeanist” disposition came to embrace the US lead and counterinsurgency campaign. The French “conversion” to COIN, operated under President Sarkozy, is sometimes taken as an indication that Europe increasingly accepts US hegemony, because “even France” is adapting to US methods (Mawdsley and Kempin 2013). However, as the next section shows, a mix of ground factors and historic experience on previous theaters shaped French COIN practice in Afghanistan.

¹⁵⁵ Background interviews with UK officials, London 2015.

5.4.b. France

When President Sarkozy decided to send an additional seven hundred troops to Afghanistan, the army took responsibility for Kapisa province and the Surobi district.¹⁵⁶ Situated east of Kabul, Kapisa province is the smallest Afghan province with 1,842 square kilometers (only 2 % of the territory of Afghanistan) and an estimated population of 350,000 (De Féligonde 2010: 8). The northern part, mostly Tadjik, has been more inclined to support the French and US forces, whereas the Pashtun south has more often than not given “French forces a tough time, mostly through supporting the Gulbuddin insurgency.”¹⁵⁷ Notwithstanding its small size, the region is strategically important, especially for insurgent attacks against Kabul. This became clear every time French and ANA forces were able to apprehend attackers on their way to Kabul, sometimes hiding explosive belts under loads of Korans on trolleys.¹⁵⁸ However, given the small size of the area, this must be seen as a niche engagement.

On the operational level, the French approach to fighting went through several phases. In early 2008, a large-scale operation was set into motion in collaboration with the US to clear insurgents from Alasay Valley. At this time, the French “left their bases very often, be it to go look for weapons caches or to conduct larger operations in the lower parts of the valley”.¹⁵⁹ This was the first phase in a broader stabilization effort, relying on the ANP and the ANA to hold the area after combat and develop “governance.” However, as the US experienced many times, there was almost no competent ANP to secure the site, and shortly after, the ANA was reassigned to other areas (Foust 2011: 91).

At the end of 2008, French Colonel Nicolas Le Nen took over the command of the French forces in Kapisa province; his approach consisted of securing roads and pursuing rebels in surrounding areas. During Operation Dinner Out (March 2009), he had several outposts established in populated areas, following a so-called oil-spot model (Taillat 2010). The military approach soon changed and in fact evolved into something very similar to the US COIN approach. Indeed, a later task force under

¹⁵⁶ The following is partly based on Fescharek 2015a.

¹⁵⁷ Interview with French diplomat, Kabul, October 2011.

¹⁵⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ Interview with senior French diplomat stationed in Kabul in 2008, Paris 2012.

French battalion commander Colonel Francis Chanson (by the name of Task Force Korrigan) “changed the military stance toward Kapisa - rather than a policy of direct and intentional physical confrontation, it instead built relationships with locals to establish individual areas of security through controlling roads” (Foust 2011: 93). This essentially meant the focus was on “detering enemy attacks”, not directly confronting them proactively (Nagl and Weitz 2010:15).

However, it would be erroneous to assume that the French somehow adopted the US COIN model because the US “asked for it” (Taillat 2009). Often overlooked is that many of the French missions in Africa have pursued this tactic in quite similar circumstances. Moreover, General David Petraeus’ counterinsurgency manual draws heavily on French COIN thinker David Galula. Indeed, as in the case of Germany presented below, ground facts have shaped French adaptation more than alliance pressure.

Notably one incident accelerated the change from classic peacekeeping to COIN: the Uzbin ambush in August 2008, which killed ten French soldiers and had several consequences. First, politically speaking, Uzbin became a lightning rod in French politics, attracting the attention of the wider French public. Opinion polls before and after the incident indicate that French support or disapproval of Afghanistan was related to this loss - while a majority supported the French engagement in Afghanistan before Uzbin, a majority was opposed to the French fighting in Afghanistan thereafter.¹⁶⁰ Second, President Sarkozy took decisions that improved the French army’s ability to fight insurgents. As Jean de Ponton d’Amécourt, French ambassador in Kabul (2008–2011) recalls, Sarkozy visited him right after the attack and stated that he did not want a repeat.¹⁶¹

In the wake of the attack, French ground forces were granted the helicopters and drones they requested, and the necessary decisions were made to order laser-guided *César* cannons able to kill enemies at a distance of thirty kilometers. Importantly, French armored vanguard vehicles (VABs)¹⁶² were equipped with automatic gun turrets, allowing the soldier to remain inside during combat. In other words, the post-Uzbin level of force protection for the individual soldier increased manifold.

¹⁶⁰ “*Les Français disent non*”. L’Humanité. <http://www.humanite.fr/node/431828>. Accessed on 10.10.2015.

¹⁶¹ Interview with Ambassador Jean de Ponton d’Amécourt, Paris, 12 November 2012.

¹⁶² VAB stands for *Véhicule de l’Avant Blindé* (Wheeled Armoured Fighting Vehicle).

A third decision, and one that was relatively innovative at the time according to Ambassador de Ponton d'Amécourt, consisted of ensuring that Afghan forces be on the front lines as much as possible. Militarily speaking, this made perfect sense, as ANA troops were more familiar with the terrain. All in all, although President Sarkozy did not officially modify the caveats after Uzbini, the incident played an important role in forging a less confrontational approach.

Moreover, although military cooperation with the US initially posed some logistical problems, most of these problems seem to have been resolved over time. For instance, US and French forces occasionally encountered each other on patrols, without having been informed both were running operations at the same place and time (Foust 2011: 93). Interestingly, US forces running the local Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) would occasionally call in French fire support when engaged in combat - a unique partnering situation which reveals a degree of pragmatism and close cooperation that contrasted with the earlier Afghan years, when the US military refused to give French Special Forces a command of its own, in an attempt to punish the French over non participation in Iraq (Foust 2011: 92; Merchet 2010).

On the whole, the picture that emerged from background interviews is one of a very focused military cooperation and burden sharing based on military *savoir-faire*. Throughout 2010, the US PRT focused on the northern half of Kapisa, while the French focused on the Taghab. According to the French colonel quoted earlier:

“I do not believe that there are essential differences with the US approach (...). Simply put, we do not situate our support at the same spot on the time line. That means that the Americans have elections coming up and they want to leave in 2014, so they want to see immediate results. They need to secure big parts of the country before they can go further conceptually [toward less COIN-oriented approaches to ANSF and police training]”.

In summary, it was not so much Sarkozy's decision to join NATO's Strategic Command in early 2009, but on-the-ground cooperation, the deployment of seven hundred additional troops (freeing US troops to help the hard-pressed Canadian troops in the Afghan south), and their engagement in real combat that made France become a

trusted ally again (The Guardian 11.03.2009; Hoehn and Harting 2010; Schmitt 2014). French transformation of weaponry and conceptual convergence toward Afghan-style counterinsurgency provided a clear signal to the NATO alliance that France's role was one of fighting the Taliban. Five years after its serious clash with its US ally over Iraq, France was able to demonstrate that not only had it taken on real responsibility - it was also capable of conceptual adaptation to a "new" kind of war. Statements from US commanders who have praised the capabilities of French soldiers confirm this picture (Nagl and Weitz 2010:15).

5.4.c. Germany

The example of German military adaptation provides another valuable insight into the way European militaries have contributed along the lines of the newfound US leadership under the Obama administration. As the Americans surged up to 5,000 new US soldiers into Afghanistan's north, they embarked on "capture and kill" missions to decimate the middle echelons of insurgent leadership. From 1 December 2009 to 30 September 2011, ISAF press releases reported a total of 3,157 incidents, including 2,365 capture-or-kill raids killing 3,873 and leading to the detainment of 7,146 (Van Linschoten and Kuehn 2011: 1).

Given that German armed forces displayed great reluctance to get involved in combat during the earlier years, this "Americanization" and escalation should logically have led to a more passive German approach, for instance choosing niches in development or police training. However, the opposite occurred: The Germans participated in escalation in and around Mazar-e Sharif and Kunduz.¹⁶³

The German adaptation to COIN goes back to 2006 and 2007, but it was only after 2009 that the German political leadership allowed the Bundeswehr to officially say what it was doing next to the Americans. In a bottom-up process, the German Army underwent a change in tactics and techniques that improved the Bundeswehr's military performance in RC North. As in the previous French and British cases, German adaptation to COIN was driven by ground factors more than allied pressure and it is also a good example for the way the political and military leadership of the

¹⁶³ Only in Feyzabad, where the Germans were also present, did they retain a low profile.

Federal Republic attempted to provide added value to the US-led military escalation after 2009.

As described in Chapter 4, the Federal Republic went into Afghanistan describing the mission as “peace keeping” (as did many other European governments, such as the Spanish or the Italians, for instance; see Coticchia and de Simone 2015 and Grenier 2015: 8). For Germany’s Defense Minister Rudolph Scharping, who oversaw Germany’s early engagement, Afghanistan was not a war, but a “fight against terrorism ... cleanly separated from other missions in Kabul that are to help the civilian government” (Der Spiegel 18.03.2002, author’s translation). Next to a strong emphasis on transatlantic solidarity, the Bundeswehr’s presence should also represent a “soft” approach, as part of a peacekeeping force with a UN mandate, engaged in humanitarian aid (ibid.). The German armed forces were allowed to use lethal force only in ways that were strictly controlled and in November 2008 the German government rescinded the mandate for German KSK Special Forces to serve in OEF operations in Afghanistan (Deutsche Welle 13.11.2008; see chapter 4). During the early years, German field commanders were explicitly told to avoid casualties at all cost (Zapfe and Rid 2013: 202). Famously, Defense Minister Franz Josef Jung issued orders in 2006 that all German “personnel leaving the fortified bases should ride in at least lightly armored vehicles” (see Zapfe and Rid 2013: 202).

However, as the Taliban started infiltrating the Northern region around 2006-2007, the security of the German-led RC North started deteriorating (Giustozzi 2007). In May 2008, more foreign soldiers were killed in Afghanistan than in Iraq for the first time (Frankfurter Rundschau 27.08.2008). Taliban cells started building up in Pashtun villages in the north, leading to increased numbers of suicide, rocket and IED attacks on German soldiers among others (Der Tagesspiegel 03.07.2008).

The first reaction of the Bundeswehr to suicide attacks in May 2007 that killed 3 German soldiers (among others) was to reduce patrols to a strict minimum and increase force protection (Nachtwei 2010: 8). Nevertheless, insurgent attacks continued, and as a result German commanders started conducting *offensive* operations along the lines of “clear, hold and build” (Behr 2011: 51). In May 2007, about 2,000 Afghan, German and Norwegian troops launched a two-part offensive called Harekate Yolo to stabilize Badakshan, Badghis and Faryab. Though the bulk of

international forces came from Norway, the Germans provided leadership, planning and logistical support (Nagl and Weitz 2010: 11).

In autumn 2007, the Bundeswehr launched Operation Harekate Yolo II and another counter-insurgency operation in the region around Kunduz, which was supported by German Special Forces and air strikes (Spiegel Online 10.01.2008). Those operations, both conducted in support of Norwegian and Afghan forces, aimed at “driving the Taliban militants out of Badakhshan and Faryab provinces (Behr 2011: 51). A year later, the Bundeswehr assumed responsibility for the Quick Reaction Force (Stachelbeck 2014). In Operation Mohstarak, the German-led PRT Kunduz tried to regain control over key districts through “cordon and sweep” measures (Chiari 2014b: 149). During the summer of 2009, German forces received new rules of engagement: Soldiers were now allowed to use force not only in self-defense, but also to prevent future attacks (Zeit Online 27.07.2009).

On the side of political leaders in Berlin, however, the Taliban still went by the designation of “militant opposition”, not “insurgents” or “enemy fighters” (Schröder and Zapfe 2015: 183). Nevertheless, the narrative began to change; at the funeral of two German soldiers, Defense Minister Jung for the first time used the expression “fallen” soldiers, which implied Germany was fighting a war (Spiegel Online 27.10.2008).

A much more substantive escalation of German force posture came after the September 2009 Kunduz air strike, called in by a German Colonel, which killed close to 140 Afghans, many of which were civilians (Suhrke 2011). A few days later, chancellor Merkel’s address to the Bundestag contained the word “Kampfeinsatz” (“combat mission”), not the word “Stabilisierungseinsatz” (“stabilization mission”) used by her Defense Minister. Paradoxically, the Kunduz incident did not lead to a more passive German force posture - far from it. Incoming Defense Minister Zu Guttenberg embarked on a public relations campaign with the aim of explaining to the German public why General McChrystal’s counterinsurgency strategy was sound. At the Security Conference in Munich, he stated

“We have learned from the mistakes of the past, and we need to explain the rationale and the strategy of our mission better to our publics: We must explain what exactly our soldiers are doing. “Counterinsurgency”, for instance, has no German equivalent: It is not the word “*Aufstandsbekämpfung*” because it neglects the essential elements of counterinsurgency. Because it is about nothing less than the comprehensive

suppression of the opposing influence, the recovery of security and trust, and thus a prerequisite for Afghan ownership” (Zu Guttenberg 07.02.2010).

In February 2010, the German Bundestag made the necessary step to allow the Bundeswehr to engage in COIN operations. The mandate read that in the future, Germany would “put the focus of its military involvement even more strongly on the protection of the Afghan population and the training of Afghan Security forces” (Deutscher Bundestag Drs. 17/654 09.02.2010). Although the mandate stressed continuity with the previous mandate, it reinforced the German contingent by 850 soldiers (to 5,350 soldiers) (ibid.).

This led to two changes: First, German commanders were now allowed to project a regular presence among the locals, and secondly, the mandate allowed the Bundeswehr to support the ANSF through common training, mentoring, equipment support and partnering. The concept of “partnering” was new for the Bundeswehr. It meant that the German armed forces would be able to link battlefield experience with training, as they would now patrol and fight side by side with the ANSF. German forces would be reorganized to form training battalions (*Ausbildungs - und Schutzbatallione*) of 700 personnel, operating along the Afghan forces since late 2010 (Behr 2011: 55).

These developments meant that while the Bundeswehr’s adaptation during the years 2007 and 2008 happened under the political radar, confined to operational levels, the country’s leadership was now publicly acknowledging COIN techniques. German officers of RC North who would brief Berlin on operational plans were now being told “Just do it!”, instead of being held back (Zapfe and Rid 2013: 207). During the summer months of 2010, the German infantry in the QRF 5 and the ANSF fought back insurgent attacks of a new outpost in the corridor between Kunduz and Baghlan (Zapfe and Rid 2013: 192).

This escalation inevitably meant that the “specific” approach Germany had long claimed it was following in its PRT Kunduz was “partially marginalized” both out of “military necessity and compliance with the American ISAF command” (Stachelbeck 2014: 155). Police forces trained for “civilian” tasks were now more often integrated into combat operations by the ANSF themselves. Concepts like “good governance”,

democracy or minority rights lost much of their significance in the face of US-led COIN and training efforts (ibid.: 156).

Not surprisingly, the new mandate came with a blood prize: Between 2010 and 2011, 16 German soldiers fell in combat, and many more were wounded (Tagesschau 06.10.2013). As numerous observers have described, the Kunduz event was used by the incoming defense minister Theodor Zu Guttenberg to clinch an ongoing debate within the German Bundeswehr pertaining to the future of the armed forces, with one camp arguing that the Afghanistan experience should be seen as a model, and the other arguing it should be framed as an exception or misadventure.

As one observer noted, the “struggle about the future orientation of the Bundeswehr [especially concerning the role of expeditionary operations] was becoming increasingly influential for the future course of German defence politics” (Noetzel 2011: 408). The Kunduz incident “paved the way for a strategic legitimization of a protracted process of military adaptation and learning that had been triggered by operational pressure and expectations from German officers and commanders in the field and from the United States” (ibid.: 398). Against the backdrop of Obama’s shift towards a COIN strategy “the internal balance of power within the German Ministry of Defence began to shift towards those prepared to confront head-on the challenge posed by the insurgency”, which led to heavy confrontations with insurgents in 2010 (ibid: 409).

That escalation was largely driven by domestic politics is most clearly demonstrated by the fact that repeated US demands for more troops and enablers were refused (Spiegel Online 23.09.2010). For instance, given that the number of German trainers had gone up from once 280 to now 1500, German Defense Minister Zu Guttenberg proclaimed Germany did not have to react to anyone’s pressure (Spiegel Online 23.09.2010).

Despite such friction, Germany’s contribution has received a lot of praise. While during the previous years US Defense Secretary Robert Gates had often severely criticized the Germans, the US government now shifted its attitude towards the Germans. On a trip to Berlin, General Petraeus hailed the Bundeswehr’s role in Afghanistan as “central” to the common effort (Deutsche Welle 23.11.2010). In an interview with Spiegel Online, he acknowledged German casualties and said:

“The Germans have done wonderful work. Not long ago, a German battle group battalion conducted a very impressive counterinsurgency operation in a portion of Baghlan province. I think these are the first counterinsurgency operations conducted by any German element after World War II. And they did a very impressive job” (Spiegel Online 19.09.2010).

However, as in the case of the British, it should not be forgotten just how crucial the US’ surge was for the German COIN efforts. In the first six months of 2010, the US stationed 5,500 more troops in Afghanistan’s formerly calm north, 2000 of which were tasked with police training – Germany’s erstwhile “lead nation” task. The US also brought 50 helicopters to the Northern region, which, according to one German Oberstleutnant (Lieutenant Colonel), “was the best example to show that the German armed forces could not have operated in the North region without the Americans’ ability to come to the rescue [with search-and-rescue helicopters] in cases of emergency” (see also Nachtwei 2010: 9 and Zapfe and Rid 2013: 206).¹⁶⁴

As US troops “increased the operational tempo”, due to increased airmobile capability for transport and medical evacuation or close air support, this made “larger and sustained operations” possible in areas that “previously had been off limits as enemy strongholds” (Zapfe and Rid 2013: 204). Most importantly, the US’s “capture or kill operations” in the region were stepped up (Chiari 2014b: 151). “We might not like it, but those raids do keep our back free for the other work we do”, is the way a German member of the armed forces put it in an interview (see also Van Linschoten and Kuehn 2011).¹⁶⁵ As in the case of the UK, one might again use the formula that the US often “helped the Germans help the US”.

A second reservation about the German COIN role is that, comparable to the case of the UK, the German Bundeswehr did not have sufficient forces to suppress the enemy on a grand scale. In the words of a German commander of the Kunduz PRT, German troop numbers were “not sufficient to sustainably improve the situation and to achieve an effect in remote areas at the same time. It thus became impossible to maintain a clear operational picture of actors, forces and the area” (quoted in Chiari

¹⁶⁴ Phone interview with German Oberstleutnant, 07.12.2015.

¹⁶⁵ Interview with German member of the Armed Forces. Camp Marmal, Mazar-e Sharif, December 2011.

2014b: 149). Tactical success, such as those of Harekate Yolo, could often not be exploited because of a lack of means (Nagl and Weitz 2010: 11). Thus it should be stressed that while the operational level certainly adopted more proactive counterinsurgency tactics, the strategic-political level in Berlin was far from fully embracing COIN as a major task for the Bundeswehr, withholding the necessary means (Schreer 2010: 97).

This criticism notwithstanding, the Bundeswehr improved and adapted on the operational and tactical level and the German contingent was given enhanced combat capabilities to react to the insurgency. These developments are significant in that Germany has supported the US COIN strategy despite being arguably one of the most reluctant European allies when it comes to the use of force. This again drives home the theoretical point that a focus on European strategic cultures is necessary but ultimately insufficient to explain policy outputs.

To give the argument of European “co-shaping” a broader basis, the remainder of this chapter presents a few cases of smaller European nations’ experiences with the insurgency in Afghanistan. The cases briefly presented below confirm the picture of similar and parallel reactions to common security problems, as opposed to a “European” policy. This is not to say that military cooperation was inexistent – in fact, there are good examples of very close European cooperation and military learning through integration in NATO (Schmitt 2015). However, at the end of the day, what drove decisions to escalate and to adapt force posture, doctrines and military equipment were national responses to local dynamics, not direct US government intervention or international policy coordination resulting in common policy.

5.4.d. Smaller European nations

The actions of smaller European nations, the Dutch, the Danes, the Poles, the Swedes and the Turks for instance, display trends of “niche acting” that are very similar to the cases above: While the exact nature of different smaller European

countries' escalation strategies vis-à-vis the growing Afghan insurgency often differed, the overall direction of those contributions to the US-led "COIN strategy" was one of accommodation, complementing, and support for the US lead. Some, such as Denmark and the Netherlands, for instance, chose to integrate with the US and fight the insurgency in the south and/or east. This was not a case of direct US strong-arming – these MS *chose* to do so. Other European countries wound up in safer northern or western PRTs, as noted, initially to stress a distinction with (or an opposition to) OEF's and the US' "brutal ways" in the south. Nevertheless, the majority of MS ended up escalating and adapting aggressive forces postures.

The Swedish case is instructive: Drawing on a long tradition of UN-mandated peacekeeping missions, Sweden's participation in ISAF poignantly illustrated the hiatus between ambition and reality of the so-called "Nordic peacekeeping model". Sweden originally conceived its PRT with a focus on "upholding consent by maintaining impartiality and applying minimum force" (Honig and Käihkö 2014: 211). In November 2005, for instance, when a Special Forces reconnaissance party was attacked and two soldiers were killed, Swedish military officials were surprised, as the attack occurred despite their vehicle "being clearly marked as Swedish" (*ibid.*).

However, ground dynamics took the same toll as in most other cases: the Swedish force posture changed with the deteriorating security situation in 2009; though the Swedes sent a "Swedish Senior Civilian Representative" to Mazar-e Sharif in May 2010, the military equipment that arrived enabled the Swedes to conduct more robust operations, including the heavy CV90 armored infantry fighting vehicle, armed with a 40mm cannon (Honig and Käihkö 2014: 214). The other Nordic country, the supposed "Peace Nation" of Norway, has followed a similar trajectory, illustrating once more that strategic cultures alone do not account for allied behaviors in Afghanistan (Suhrke 2011).

Besides individual national stories, there also is a story of collective European impact: The accumulated contribution of those small European nations helped to build a significant military infrastructure in the north and the west of the country. This essentially European military infrastructure in the north and the west contributed to US escalation "through creating and re-creating a division of labour that allowed British and US forces to be centred in southern Afghanistan" (Angstrom and Honig 2012: 638). For instance, having been present in Northern Afghanistan since joining a

British-led PRT, the Swedes took over Mazar-e Sharif PRT in early 2006, with the explicit purpose of enabling the UK to “take over the PRT in Helmand” (House of Commons 23.10.2007: Ev. 7).

Similarly, a Wikileaks cable from 19 May 2005 gives insight into Turkey’s “positively considering a request by HMG [Her Majesty's Government] to assume responsibility for the UK PRT in Mazar-e Sharif to help free up resources for the UK to lead a PRT in ISAF's Stage 3 expansion region, according to the Turkish MFA [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] and confirmed by the British Embassy in Ankara” (Wikileaks 19.01.2005). In other words, a European military infrastructure played an important role in rendering operations in the south possible or supplying ANA forces engaged there with new recruits, mostly through the massive assumption of PRT responsibilities in the north and west.

According to a NATO media backgrounder, under NTM-A command, there were 149 OMLTs in early 2012 (NATO Media Backgrounder February 2012). Of those 149 OMLTs, US forces staffed 77, and EU countries (counting Denmark) 59.¹⁶⁶ On the side of the POMLTs, trainers from the MS mentored and taught, and when needed, supported operational planning and ANA employment in 44 Police OMLTs or “POMLTs” (counting Denmark). This stood against 279 POMLTs led by the US (ibid.).¹⁶⁷ Hence, European support to training and mentoring in the north and west was a significant contribution to achieving the force goals NATO had set for itself. NTM-A’s main selling point was that it integrated all ongoing training efforts under a single structure, thus greatly increasing coherence among ongoing efforts. As with the shift from ISAF lead nations to a NATO mission in 2003, NTM-A essentially displays the advantages of institutions over uncoordinated “ad hocery”. Sarah Chayes, for instance, a former special adviser to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen, described in a 2007 op-ed contribution to the New York Times how

“after watching [US] rotation after [US] military rotation cycle through here since late 2001, I see NATO as an improvement over its American predecessors... One key

¹⁶⁶ The other European nations running OMLTs were Croatia (3), Norway (1), Turkey (6). There were also five multinational OMLTs with trainers from Armenia, the Netherlands, Finland and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

¹⁶⁷ Norway and Turkey also each led one POMLT. Whether those forces trained will be up to the job, or split into parties fighting each other (and there is considerable room for doubt on this point, see Bennett 2014), is, again, not a question this chapter is concerned with.

difference is NATO's training program, born of the challenge of gathering troops from different countries, speaking different languages, into a cohesive fighting force" (Chayes 10.07.2007).

Chayes' argument goes beyond the familiar theme that MS contributions greatly benefit the US in that they augment the US foreign policy's legitimacy (Clark 2002; Hallams 2009). As Chayes argued, "American troops' training, in contrast [to NATO's], seemed ad hoc, usually carried out by each unit on its own, rather than by a dedicated training staff"; therefore, one of NATO's advantages was

"continuity, despite its multinational makeup. I observed rivalry between American units lead to confusing policy reversals each time new troops came in. The best American commanders were those who understood that Afghanistan is no toy-soldier battlefield, that they would have to bone up on anthropology, diplomacy and civil engineering. But such commanders were rare, and their replacements – seeking to make their own mark – usually undid their work within weeks... NATO has tried to reduce the disruption of replacing troops and officers en masse. Rotations are staggered. This may cause some logistical headaches, but it reduces abrupt changes in direction" (Chayes 10.07.2007).

By January 2012, international training efforts had produced 2,760 ANA instructors and 1,000 ANP instructors, and the ANSF were in lead security responsibility for more than half of the Afghan population, leading planning and executing operations (NATO Media Backgrounder February 2012).

Coming back from the collective level to individual contributions of small European states, one can see that small state contributions added value to the campaign in important ways. In the Danish case, a Defense Reform in 2004 had spurred a wholesale transformation of Danish defense toward partial professionalization and an expeditionary model. This was in line with the establishment of the Danish International Brigade in the mid-1990s (creating a 4,500 strong expeditionary brigade). The Danish Army's participation in Afghanistan was defined by the armed forces' wish to test and realize "the army's transformation in the Helmand theater of operations", a motive seemingly unquestioned by the wider public, which has displayed the highest rates of support for the engagement among all allies (Rasmussen 2013: 136; Jakobsen and Ringsmose 2015).

Danish troops first arrived in Helmand in the spring of 2006, imposing no

significant caveats on their troops (Ringsmose and Rynning 2008: 62). When the Danish government withdrew its contingent from Iraq in 2007, the Danish troop level in Helmand was raised to the size of a battalion, about 700 soldiers (ibid.).¹⁶⁸ As with an earlier contribution of a six-man strong patrol team to the British-led PRT in Mazar-e Sharif in late 2003, the later military contribution to Helmand was essentially conceived as a *co*-deployment with the British ally. Danish support was explicitly modeled on the British approach, using the same patrolling techniques as the British, from quick impact projects to “trust building” in the villages (Jakobsen 2005: 41). Danish strategic communication about the war effort was striking for its military assertiveness, illustrated by the justifications used by Foreign Minister Møller and Development Minister Tørnæs, arguing that “through the effort in Helmand, Denmark has chosen to put our force where it makes the most difference” (quoted in Dommersnes 2011:19).

That Denmark would adopt a proactive military attitude was clear early on. Defense Minister Søren Gade stated in 2007: “We do not go just to show the flag. We want to make a real contribution and to make a difference” (quoted in Thruelsen and Jakobsen 2011: 78). The Danes’ aggressive stance brought them a great deal of allied praise for fighting insurgents, but Denmark also suffered the highest per capita casualties in NATO (40 dead soldiers and 153 wounded by early 2011) (The Washington Post 14.03.2011). The Danish contribution took place in a geographical niche: Between 2007 and 2011, the Danes tried to stop the insurgency from infiltrating the upper valley of Gereshk, North of Lashkar Gah. Along with the British, the Danes did so from several bases along the Helmand River.

The Danish case is interesting because despite being one of the MS with the most overtly interventionist strategic cultures, the Danish government also did not possess and invest sufficient resources in Afghanistan to be able to “set strategy and shape operations independently of their British superiors” (Giegerich 2006; Rynning 2013; Rasmussen 2013: 139). The Danish government contented itself with pushing for principles concerning the operational level, most notably the “comprehensive approach”. If such principles “suited an Anglo-American agenda” (which they did), “that was all the better for the Danes, who then could entrench cooperation on the

¹⁶⁸ Though most Danish soldiers were deployed to the UK-led Task Force Helmand/PRT in Lashkar Gah (Helmand), Denmark also stationed some forces in Kabul, at Kandahar airfield and in PRT Chaghcharan.

operational level on the strategic level as well” (Rasmussen 2013:152).

When the Danish government published the “Helmand Plan”, a document demanded by the Danish opposition to explain Denmark’s objectives, it coordinated its content very closely with London. Rasmussen even argues the existence of a British plan “made it possible for the junior partner in Copenhagen to make a plan in the first place” (2013: 153). Thruelsen and Jakobsen reach a similar conclusion: For them, “Danish contingents essentially followed British orders” and “the principal factor shaping the evolution of the Danish involvement [was] the directives and shifting priorities emanating from the British-led brigade that the Danish contingents were a part of” (Thruelsen and Jakobsen 2011: 79). Indeed, Copenhagen “gave the Danish commanders a free hand to “plug and play” with the British-led brigade” or even run “errands” for the British (ibid.: 90).

However, some hiccups seem to have occurred when it comes to information sharing between the UK and the Danish military: The first unit deployed to Helmand explained in a report that the British denied the Danes official access to intelligence computers (though this seems to have been granted as informal favors). This led the Danish commander to advise the succeeding units to be fully integrated in the British chain of command (Rasmussen 2013: 145). There also was significant tension between the UK and the Danish contingents, related to the British tendency to overrule Danish reservations: Stretched thin itself, the British commanders insisted on deploying Danish contingents outside of the Danish areas (Thruelsen and Jakobsen 2011: 99).

It was the arrival of the American forces that finally eased the tensions between the Danes and the British, enabling them to move from “clearing” operations to the “training” and partnering part (ibid. 98). To sum up, the Danish case is a good illustration for a small country’s interest to “learn by doing”: The proactive Danes chose to fully integrate with and serve under a UK (and later US military structure) to modernize their armed forces. While this was a very strong support for American strategy, it also served clear interests defined by the Danish military and political leadership and it sought operational impact, but not a say in the overall strategy.

On the side of the Eastern European countries, Poland, but also the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary added value to the military efforts but contributed

mostly in a bargaining logic, seeking to trade in their contributions against security reassurances elsewhere, as “chess pieces”, as Hungary’s Chief of Defense Colonel General Tibor Benko put it (see Biehl, Giegerich and Jonas 2013; Ulrich 2015: 163). None of them made substantial claims regarding the overall strategy of the campaign.

When ISAF assumed responsibility for the Afghan south in August 2006, the Polish government answered NATO requests with a 600 infantry battle group, bringing the number of Polish troops to 1,100 troops in February 2008, stationed on PRTs across the country (NATO ISAF Placemat 06.02.2008). The arrival of the Tusk government in 2007 brought the number of soldiers up to 2,025 at the end of 2009 (NATO ISAF Placemat 01.10.2009). Tusk’s Civic Platform party had campaigned on the promise to “bring Poland back to the heart of Europe”, to rebalance Poland’s relationship with the United States, slow down the move towards missile defense and withdraw Polish troops from Iraq (Swieboda 2007).

In order to increase visibility, the new government decided to relocate Polish soldiers in Afghanistan and concentrate them in one single Afghan province (Ghazni in Afghanistan’s east), and Poland joined a US-led PRT there in June 2008 (Polish Ministry of National Defence 2010). In line with the Obama administration’s surge, the Polish government decided in 2010 to increase its commitment of troops to 2,519 in November 2010 (NATO ISAF Placemat 15.11.2010). The Polish government argued that without active participation in the NATO mission “Poland’s voice in shaping the policy of NATO in areas it considered vital would be weakened” (Kulesa and Gørka-Winter 2011: 221).

This corresponds with a widely noted theme amongst Baltic and Central and Eastern European states, namely the “desire to generate reliable security guarantees for themselves” and the perceived need to “build up credit in the expectation that partners will reciprocate should the need arise” (Biehl, Giegerich, Jonas 2013: 391). In the Polish case, it was “openly admitted” that Polish troops in Afghanistan served the goal of “keeping the United States interested in NATO”, based on the perception that President Obama was less interested in the region than his predecessor, particularly since the reset policy with Russia (Kulesa and Gørka-Winter 2011: 222).

A second goal was to make sure that NATO’s 2010 Strategic Concept would stress the preeminence of Article 5 and territorial defense and that the financial crisis

would not affect NATO's military presence in Poland. NATO's Strategic Concept shows that these goals were attained, despite the fact that Poland's contributions in Afghanistan (such as, for instance, contributions to protect the Kandahar-Kabul road) were never substantial. In sum, notably the Eastern European examples show that dynamics of alliance dependence must always be seen in close relation to the overwhelming evidence that national defense elites also used their considerable legroom to obtain security assurances elsewhere (Ulrich 2015).

The Dutch case stands a bit apart, because the Dutch contingent was withdrawn in early 2010, at the moment when the US embarked on its escalation campaign. This withdrawal came on the heels of heated domestic debates and the collapse of Prime Minister Balkenende's cabinet over the Dutch engagement in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the Dutch case is another good illustration for military adaptation and integration in a US-led campaign. This is because Dutch military adaptation and contribution to COIN occurred despite the fact that the Dutch military sought as much doctrinal and operational distance as possible from the US military. As several observers have shown, the Dutch forces, who operated alongside the Australian forces, chose a niche in order to operate at

“arm's length from the British and the US ... in their own way, by a careful choice of theatre of operations and combat troops, they also sought to escalate through integrating as closely as was possible given domestic political constraints with the US-dominated international effort in Iraq and Afghanistan” (Angstrom and Honig 2012: 677).

One major element underlying the Dutch contribution was a “keen political interest in differing from the US approach, which was considered too much focused on kinetic actions” (Kitzen, Rietjens and Osinga 2013: 165). For instance, the Ministry of Defense wrote to parliament that “the international military presence over the past years has been directed at combating the opposing Military Forces instead of improving the living conditions of the population” and according to the Dutch Minister of Defense,

“[a]mong large parts of the population there is no support for the behavior of coalition forces which is considered to be inappropriate. Their actions seem to impact the local situation negatively instead of positively. An operating style of ISAF, explicitly focused on winning the hearts and minds of the population is therefore necessary” (both quotations in Kitzen, Rietjens and Osinga 2013: 166).

Upon taking responsibility for Uruzgan's PRT (in the Afghan Uruzgan province bordering Kandahar) in 2006, the Dutch had just completed a highly controversial mission in the Iraqi province of Al Muthanna (2003-2005) and could thus claim to have acquired important experience in the challenges of expeditionary missions. The Dutch government invoked a role of responsibility to carry the "Dutch share of the burden" in the alliance and assumed lead nation status in Uruzgan between 2006 and 2010 (Rietjens 2011: 84).

This made the Dutch one of the few European militaries willing to deploy to more dangerous areas, with an initial force number lay at 1,200 soldiers which grew to 2,000 in 2008 (De Graaf and Dimitriu 2015: 241). The story of disconnect between Dutch field commanders, who not only used COIN language but also conducted COIN operations, and political leaders who presented the engagement as "stabilization", is essentially the same as in other European countries: For instance, when Dutch General Dick Berlijn stepped down in April 2008, he was asked if the Dutch were engaged in a COIN operation in Afghanistan. His answer was a "categorical 'Yes'", though the term "COIN" was still "carefully avoided by both the ministers of Defense and Foreign Affairs and seldom used in discussions in the Dutch lower house" (Dimitriu and de Graaf 2010: 433).

Despite this, the adaptation of the Dutch force posture is not dissimilar to that of other European allies: Between 2006 and 2010, the Dutch conducted several large operations and the military approach changed and adapted to the environment during Operations Perth, Operation Spin Ghar and Operation Tura Ghar. Hence, what makes the Dutch case interesting is something else: Despite being conceived as explicitly different from "counterproductive" US behavior (the Dutch put more emphasis on pre-deployment training and local assessments than their coalition partners, for instance), the military *savoir-faire* of the Netherlands nevertheless was a very skillful contribution to the COIN campaign.

A 2009 assessment by the Economist, for instance, came to the conclusion that the Dutch military had contributed to make Uruzgan a "flicker of light", due to an "ink-spot" approach focused on controlling three central districts with 70 % of the province's population of 627,000. For instance, after battles in late 2007, the Dutch

“built patrol bases (...) and then stood back for a year, content to study the complex dynamics of the area from afar. (...) They were then able in late 2008 to occupy the whole valley without serious opposition” (The Economist 12.03.2009).

The Dutch case, in sum, illustrates both the importance and limitations of national strategic culture in analyzing a national contribution. The US was both the senior military partner on which the Dutch would rely for ultimate backup and the *alter* against which to construct a national role conception. Value was added while stressing a difference, but this always added value in small niches and did little to determine the framework of the intervention.

What can be said to sum up the above military contributions? Not counting Malta and Cyprus, all EU member states have contributed to ISAF. Following Obama’s December 2009 announcement to deploy 30,000 more troops to Afghanistan, several MS pledged about 7,000 additional European troops and only a year after the announcement, EU troop contributions to ISAF totaled 32,481, about 25 % of the total ISAF troop count (Flanagan, Cipoletti and Tuninetti 2011: 192). As Selden rightly pointed out as early as 2010, in terms of effective deployment, European militaries learned immensely and have therefore become better at adding value in serious campaigns: There is a stark contrast between “the inability of European militaries to cope with the demands of the Balkan wars of the 1990s and their ability to operate in the distant and unforgiving environment of Afghanistan” after the Obama “surge” (Selden 2010: 411).

What is important for this chapter’s argument is not only the military adaptation that has occurred, but the fact that it was deliberately put under a US lead only a few years after European ambitions to become an autonomous actor surfaced as a result of the Balkan wars. While European allies have always been extremely sensitive about France-led CSDP missions in Africa, for instance, European nations seemed to have less of a problem to engage in escalation under US leadership with a total of now 847 EU casualties, 544 of which occurred after 2009, the year of the surge.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ This number includes Denmark. See <http://icasualties.org/oef/>. June 2015. Adding Turkey (14), Norway (7), the number increases to 565. The icasualties Website lists another 18 casualties as “NATO casualties”, but gives no nationality.

Under this *non*-European leadership, and despite a great deal of national sensitivities and strategic cultures, European militaries threw their support behind the US-led counterinsurgency campaign. European militaries chose different degrees of proximity and distance with US forces, but their contributions in training, partnering and fighting added value despite cultural differences. Though European militaries did not act as “Europe”, their combined weight has undoubtedly contributed to decimating the insurgency, and to reducing its hold on the south.¹⁷⁰

The reasons for participation were numerous; they ranged from interests to increase interoperability with NATO and US forces (for instance Denmark) to bargains for security guarantees (for instance Eastern European countries). However, US pressure cannot account for escalation; domestic and operational reasons were usually a more important driver.

Synergies were also created between the MS themselves. Though much military cooperation happened on the operational level, under the political radar so to speak, there is ample evidence that European militaries cooperated more pragmatically with each other in the years of the insurgency than before (Suhrke 2011; Mattox 2015; Schmitt 2015).

¹⁷⁰ Interview with Etienne de Durand, Director of the Centre des études de sécurité (Ifri) from 2006 to 2015, Paris, 28.05.2013. See also d’Amecourt 2011.

5.5. Conclusion

Under the late Bush and the incoming Obama administration, the situation in Afghanistan changed from lack of leadership to a US lead and focus on COIN and Afghan institutions able to prop up the US-led COIN effort. This chapter analyzed the MS' conceptual enabling of a NATO role in the domains of COIN and training and it then looked at the MS' operational opt-ins under this renewed US lead: They chose various niches, geographical or topical, in which they could provide added value on an operational level. The MS' contributions within this new leadership paradigm, described as co-shaping, were bundled together more effectively under US leadership and had more impact in the Afghan theater than their previous attempts to proact without US leadership (see Chapter 4).

However, the MS were unable to weigh on the US' lead. As we saw in the previous chapter, some nations lobbied early on for changes in NATO's approach; for instance, the Germans long advocated more NATO emphasis on "networked security", UK troops had debates with the US over the US's often indiscriminate use of force and the French lobbied for NATO to remain an alliance focused on military matters only. However, their efforts had little effect unless the US took possession of an idea and promoted it. The case of negotiations with the Taliban is an example where the MS realized they had no influence unless the US hopped on board.

The fact that countries with very different strategic cultures all supported the US strategy in a complementing way has important theoretical implications: It suggests a "European security role" may not emerge from top-down European designs or the convergence of strategic cultures, but as a result of on-the-ground behavior in a given case, leading to what one may call *tactical convergence*, or *behavioral convergence*. This leads to one factor in European security and defense studies that deserves to receive much more attention: Leadership, and in this case US leadership.

As this chapter has shown, the most important driver of European behavioral convergence to form a "security role by default" was the combination of renewed US military infrastructure and leadership on the one hand, and the considerable space it left for national elites to define opt-ins and opt-outs on the other. The US did not

strong-arm the MS into conducting COIN operations. To the contrary, such decisions were largely marked by national dynamics.

The following chapter takes the discussion from the “operational opt-ins” of this chapter to the “strategic opt-out” of EUPOL and therefore the CSDP as a foreign policy tool.

Chapter 6. EUPOL and collective inertia

6.0. Introduction

Chapter 5 showed how individual decisions by the MS created a *de facto* collective opt-in to the COIN campaign. The word “*de facto*” is important because this was not a “European policy” the MS agreed to in Brussels, and it was even less a policy that “Brussels” imposed – it was the occurrence of aligned MS behaviors that pulled into a similar direction, and this created synergies based on an accumulation of largely independent decisions to “opt in”. This was a form of role convergence that happened without and *next to* the EU.

Chapter 6 moves from “*de facto* opt-ins” to “*de facto* opt-outs”: It shows how the sum of individual MS decisions resulted in a *de facto* collective “opt-out” from a more substantial European contribution in the field of police reform. Contrary to Chapter 5 this was not “role convergence *without* or *next to* the EU” but “role convergence *despite* the EU”: This opt-out from a substantial contribution happened inside the EU’s structures, but CSDP’s consensual nature was precisely what precluded a common policy.¹⁷¹

Though EUPOL has been analyzed quite abundantly, the fundamental fact appears nowhere that EUPOL cannot be called a “failure” if the MS’ individual decisions *purposefully* kept EUPOL insignificant (Mawdsley and Kempin 2013, Larivé 2012, House of Lords 16.02.2011, Perito 2009, Burke 2014, Pohl 2013, Chivvis 2010, Gross 2009; Peral 2009). The resulting collective *de facto* opt-out is important to underline, because it adds nuance to the fact that the MS are fully subservient to US policy.

¹⁷¹ Another possibility to investigate the mismatch between the MS’ rhetoric and their actions would have been to look at the meetings of the European “AfPak” Representatives. Many MS created such “Special Envoy” positions following the Riedel review in 2009, in order to liaise with US Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke. If this thesis has opted *not* to focus on these meetings, this is because the story of EUPOL provided a much richer source of material.

For instance, Jocelyn Mawdsley and Ronja Kempin argue the EU appears “both directly and through the prism of NATO to uncritically adopt US ideas on defence and security” (Mawdsley and Kempin 2013: 56). Based on the works of Bruno Charbonneau and Wayne Cox, the two authors suggest that US “military hegemony has become accepted as desirable and unchallenged among NATO members [and this] may lead to a situation where this prevails even when CSDP has developed independent doctrine (as in the case of the EU police training mission in Afghanistan)” (Mawdsley and Kempin 2013: 57; Charbonneau and Cox 2008). Arguing with Frédéric Mérand that NATO is a major venue where European military officers socialize and exchange best practices, Mawdsley and Kempin suggest “this produces a European military (and connected defence industrial) community that is predisposed to accept and adopt changes in US strategic culture and is thus the primary place where the USA can exercise hegemony in the Coxian sense” (Mawdsley and Kempin 2013: 58; Mérand 2008).

A quite similar argument comes from Lorenzo Cladi and Andrea Locatelli, who argue that *bandwagoning* is “the main strategy that European states have followed under unipolarity”, meaning that the MS go out of their way to support US security policies and avoid antagonizing it “because they have little choice” (Cladi and Locatelli 2012: 264-265; Posen 2004: 7).

As this chapter demonstrates, such arguments reveal only half of the picture: The MS’ great lack of military autonomy in security does not lead to full dependence on the US, as the MS have a considerable capacity to opt out of particular US demands.¹⁷² In Afghanistan, the MS refused until the end to take the steps that would have been necessary to allow EUPOL to make a significant contribution to the campaign and thus help the US reach its goals: Despite great rhetorical MS commitments, US demands to beef up the mission were never met.

As in the previous chapters, however, this was no “European policy”, as this did not happen by design but rather by default. Again, this is why it is inadequate to speak of EUPOL’s failure, which implies taking EUPOL’s supposed ability to succeed at face value (see Larivé 18.07.2011 and House of Lords 16.02.2011).

¹⁷² Other forms of opt-outs were described in Chapter 4.

Because the de facto European opt-out happened by default, not by design, this chapter takes issue with the argument that the MS thwart US policies or “balance” against the US on the world stage.¹⁷³ Such claims often come with the argument that a European “model” of crisis management exists and that it is explicitly designed to contrast with US approaches.

For Eva Gross the US and the EU set fundamentally different priorities “when it comes to the civilian aspects of post-conflict reconstruction”; their respective engagements reveal “enduring differences over the manner in which each partner approaches the challenges of security and post-conflict reconstruction” (Gross 2011: 96, 97, 89). Hence, while the EU is focused on institution building, the rule of law and “civilian contributions”, the US neglects this and is focused on counter terrorism. One manifestation of these opposing worldviews is the differing “conceptions of the role of the police” between the US and the EU (ibid.: 92). Unlike the US, the EU is working with a long-term perspective, and it favors structural change over short-term police training (ibid.: 94). Two things are implicit in such arguments: That the MS practice some form of counter policy vis-à-vis the US and that they possess collective “agency” or a “self” in security. Sven Biscop and Per Norheim-Martinsen express both ideas when they write that “CSDP is, indeed, a pertinent example of how culture binds rationality”, because

“when acting within the auspices of CSDP, all actors are induced or compelled to do so in a way that falls within certain premeditated conceptions of how the EU as a collective should behave. That is, the way in which to act has become a source of a European ‘self’. The ‘other’, as the omnipresent contrast against which an identity is often shaped, is in this logic to be found across the Atlantic” (Biscop and Norheim-Martinsen 2012: 78).

This chapter will take a view that differs from those who argue there is a European “model” of crisis management and those who argue the MS “balance” or construct CSDP “against” the US. Of course, as the previous chapters show, the combined weight of European reluctance or inertia on a particular policy item can sometimes temporarily “entrap” the US in alliance dynamics and slow down the pace

¹⁷³ As we saw in Chapter 1, the “balancers” argue the MS “use nonmilitary tools to delay, frustrate, and undermine aggressive unilateral US military policies” (Pape 2005: 10). Because the MS fear “abandonment” by Washington or “entrapment” in US foreign policies, they band together to establish a “pact” to restrain US foreign policy and alter its course (Press-Barnathan 2006). For a refutation of the balancing thesis see Howorth and Menon 2009.

with which it wants to proceed (Rynning 2012: 128). For instance, many European states persistently refused to budge on the ISAF-OEF merger, erecting political “firewalls” around OEF (ibid.: 103). However, the MS also allowed the US to proceed in ways that created the merger in everything but name, which discards the thesis of a collective project to actively thwart the US’ conduct of OEF, to cross its course purposefully, frustrate it systematically, to foil, block, obstruct or impede it.

This chapter will argue it is better to discard the notion of balancing or the idea that the MS elaborated a counter model because this pre-supposes too much agency for them to agree to a specific common policy in a security environment such as Afghanistan. However, the MS were able to *de facto under-perform*: They engaged in very strong rhetoric about CSDP’s *finalité* or the added value of their CSDP missions, while in reality their individual decisions resulted in a de facto opt-out. Far from challenging US leadership, such opting out perpetuates it. Hence, what we are left with is not “purposeful counter-performance”, but “de facto under-performance”. This is no policy, but the unplanned alignment of opt-outs that has the effect of collective inertia.

6.0.i. Structure

To provide substance to these claims, the chapter starts with EUPOL’s “case history”, i.e., preliminary events leading up to its creation. We will see that the MS did not integrate previous experiences acquired by Italy, Germany and the UK in the Afghan justice and police sectors. The section shows how European leaders talked up EUPOL’s contribution but actually restricted it from the start, and it analyzes the important role Germany played in EUPOL’s creation, handing over its own inefficient bilateral police mission to the European level (6.1.a-c.).

Next, the chapter shows that the MS did not allow EUPOL to make a significant contribution, as the mission was not allowed to operate with a clear strategy and mandate. It was never intended to set the policing agenda, but only to contribute in a very small niche, and it was not free from rivaling national policing contributions (6.2).

Moreover, EUPOL never received the means necessary to come anywhere near a contribution that could change the tide of battle, so to speak, as it was never adequately staffed, equipped or funded. It remained dependent on the US' military infrastructure, and it was not given what Saint Malo called for, namely the "capacity for analysis of situations, sources of intelligence and a capability for relevant strategic planning" (Saint Malo Declaration 04.12.1998). A complicated decision-making system also affected EUPOL's ability to be reactive (6.3.a-e.). This resulted in a mission output that is severely criticized (or "grotesque" in the words of one European ambassador) (6.4.a-b.).

6.1. EUPOL's background

6.1.a. Accumulated EU expertise and experience prior to the creation of EUPOL

As we saw in chapter 4, the EU was a key Afghan donor from the outset. Early European support programs were not only established in the realm of humanitarian assistance, but also to tentatively support governmental structures via “capacity-building” programs on behalf of the Afghan Transitional Authority.¹⁷⁴ Continued activity in those programs provided the EU with on-the-ground expertise and this was one of the main arguments for EUPOL's advocates in 2006 and 2007. The EU's assistance foothold in capacity-building programs can be seen in a 2003 European Commission paper covering 2003-2006, which laid out the Commission's assistance in various sectors. While the Commission's commitments were vast, a key priority was given to “building capacity within key Government Ministries” and helping “drive public administration reform” via a total commitment of € 80 million for 2003-2004 (CSP 11.02.2003: 2).

Two of the main fields of EU commitment were justice and police. For instance, the Commission contributed € 130 million to an UN-managed trust fund for the reform of law enforcement, LOTFA, between 2003 and 2006. It also donated about € 10 million to European PRTs across Afghanistan to support justice and Rule of Law-related programs (Gross 2009b: 35; EU November 2010). The German, Italian and British projects in policing, justice and counter narcotics in particular were important early experiences in which *savoir-faire* was gathered (though seldom shared). For instance, around 2008 the US, Norway, Italy, the UK, Germany, the European Commission and three UN agencies were organizing 221 bilateral projects, in addition to the 396 justice projects that were finalized until March 2008 (Tondini 2008: 6).

In line with such European engagements, a Joint Declaration between the EU and the Afghan government in 2005 promised more European experts and assistance for the Afghan police: The “EU and its Member States will continue to support the

¹⁷⁴ As noted in Chapter 4 however, the MS' contributions in what was vaguely conceptualized as capacity building were small-scale and uncoordinated, resulting in the US' take-over of state building in Afghanistan.

international effort to assist the Government of Afghanistan develop the justice sector, which would result in a strong framework for the establishment of rule of law in the country” (Council of the EU 16.11.2005: 4). Among others, the European Council reaffirmed its commitment to build “strong and accountable institutions at national and provincial level free from corruption, which promote the rule of law and ensure democratic oversight” (ibid.: 3). The Joint Declaration remained vague and did not significantly increase European aid levels for the justice sector, but it was important in that it provided the first basis for formal cooperation and regular high-level exchanges between the Afghan government and the EU.

Due to Italian underperformance, the EU became more involved in Justice Reform in 2006 following the London Conference of the same year. The so-called Afghanistan Compact of 2006 emphasized that the international community needed to focus more on making sure that the institutions put in place with the Bonn process had the capacity and expertise to deal with a post-conflict country. This was a conceptual shift from the political framework of the Bonn process to a broader agenda than during earlier years, now much more focused on embedding the various capacity building programs into a broader governance framework,

“based on the premise that, despite having a constitution, a new presidency, parliamentary mechanisms, regular election cycles, and an elaborate system of sub-national governance, the Afghan government lacked ‘capacity’ to sustain its formal structures with adequate democratic architecture, qualified civil servants and the necessary bureaucratic skills” (Fescharek 2013: 12).

Hence, EU papers now followed the US’s move towards “state building” and indicated that the “guiding principles for EC assistance” would be to utilize “[g]overnment structures wherever this is feasible in implementing programs and to provide ongoing support for existing national programs (CSP 2007-2013: 19). For instance, on justice, the Afghanistan Compact noted that “(r)eforming the justice system will be a priority for the Afghan Government and the international community” (The Afghanistan Compact 2006: 3). It put particular emphasis on “completing legislative reforms for the public as well as the private sector; building the capacity of judicial institutions and personnel; promoting human rights and legal awareness; and rehabilitating judicial infrastructure” (ibid.: 3).

The Afghan intervention was now officially and fully about “state building”,

which, in addition to previously acquired MS /EU expertise, provided quite fertile ground for a police mission such as EUPOL.

6.1.b. Transatlantic debates preceding the creation of EUPOL

To understand EUPOL's creation it is important to return briefly to the combined after-effects of the Iraq invasion in 2003, the growing insurgency around 2004/2005, the US-led trend towards militarization of the Afghan police and the effects this had on European policies. The Bush administration, which had been planning for troop reductions in Afghanistan until late 2005, was discussing a possible "surge" in Iraq throughout 2006 (Miles 21.12.2005). In January 2007, President Bush announced a troop enforcement of another five US brigades, i.e. roughly 20,000 soldiers to Baghdad and Anbar province. The years 2004-2007 had brought a very sharp rise in US (and allied) casualties in Iraq, jumping from 486 in 2003 to 849 in 2004 and remaining at about this height until 2007 (iCasualties 2009).¹⁷⁵

At the same time as the US was experiencing turmoil in Iraq, the Bush administration sought to increase the pressure on the MS to stabilize Afghanistan. Donald Rumsfeld's departure from the Pentagon at the end of 2006 did not relax the US' pressure on its European allies. Throughout 2007, Rumsfeld's successor Robert Gates worked on an integrated strategy for Afghanistan, with the aim of folding reconstruction, development, counter narcotics and security efforts into a coherent counter-insurgency framework. During a speech in Germany Gates stated that while "progress in Afghanistan [was] real" it also remained "fragile" (Gates quoted in Miles 25.10.2007).

The MS needed to commit more resources to Afghanistan: According to Gates, many allies were "unwilling to share the risks, commit the resources and follow through on collective commitments to this mission and to each other", and this was putting achievements at risk (ibid.; see also Suhrke 2008). He declared before the

¹⁷⁵ <http://icasualties.org/iraq/ByYear.aspx>. 2004: 849; 2005: 846; 2006: 823; 2007: 904. Source: 2009 iCasualties.org. Accessed on 08.10.2015.

US House of Armed Services Committee that he was not ready to let the allies “off the hook” (quoted in Suhrke 2008: 227).

When the Bush administration decided to add 3,200 marines to present US ground troops in Afghanistan, one of its justifications was precisely to “leverage additional allied contributions” (ibid). At the same time, statistics show that the overall European troop commitment to Afghanistan remained low throughout 2006 and 2007 (see chapter 5).

In Brussels, this increased US pressure was picked up by important EU players: notably the British and Dutch delegations to the PSC were eager to increase the European profile in Afghanistan, and both looked at a possible European mission as a practical means to “deliver” European commitment and support.¹⁷⁶ Given many European countries’ interest in developing civilian EU tools, policing was thought to be a less controversial possibility to mobilize European support. Thus, despite the French being skeptical and the Germans (the lead nation in policing) initially rather hostile to a potential “rival” (see below), both countries joined forces to obtain a mandate for a European Fact Finding Mission in early 2006.

As this talk of Europe’s civilian contributions made it clear that its *military* contributions would not be easy to obtain, the idea of delivering European support via a greater *civilian* presence also gained traction in the US during 2005 and 2006 (Keohane 2009: 133). In a replay of debates about a transatlantic “division of labor” (see Chapter 2), European security expert James Dobbins wrote in a blog for the RAND Corporation in September 2005 that although NATO was “the world’s strongest military alliance”, its “capacity to support the next step in Afghanistan’s reconstruction is limited”:

“Unlike the United Nations or the European Union, which also do peacekeeping, NATO is not equipped to undertake the myriad of civil functions, from police training to voter registration to economic development, that ultimately determine the worth of any military intervention” (Dobbins 30.09.2005).

¹⁷⁶ Phone interview with UK diplomat, 14.12.2012. Out of 16,900 European troops at the beginning of 2007, 13,350 were coming from only five European nations: France 1000; Germany 3000; Italy 1950; Netherlands 2200 and the UK 5200. Other European nations: Austria: 5; Belgium 300; Bulgaria 100; Czech Republic 150; Denmark 400; Estonia 90; Finland 70; Greece 170; Hungary 180; Ireland 10; Latvia 35; Lithuania 130; Luxemburg 10; Poland 160; Portugal 150; Romania 750; Slovakia 60; Slovenia 50; Spain 550; Sweden 180. See NATO ISAF Placemat 02.01.2007.

Therefore, it was time to

“stop asking what NATO can do for the EU, and begin asking what the EU can do for NATO. And Afghanistan is the place to start. This might best be done in a triangular dialogue between NATO, the EU and the United States. The goal would be to ensure that both European and American civil assets are deployed throughout Afghanistan in a manner that complements NATO's peacekeeping role and takes advantage of the security that organization will be providing to push forward the country's reconstruction” (Dobbins 30.09.2005).

During 2006, the European Commission became involved in NATO's PRTs through a program that funded some PRT activities.¹⁷⁷ The volume of this project was small and concerned only non-military activities, such as support for judges, aid workers and administrators (Keohane 2009: 133). However, the symbolic significance of the move was considerable.¹⁷⁸ The corresponding catch phrase was “Berlin Plus in Reverse”: NATO would draw on the EU's civilian capabilities. This was meaningful because voices were starting to be heard in the US that if the Afghan war “was going badly, it was because Europe was not paying enough attention to Afghanistan” (Burke 2014: 4).

For instance, former US Ambassador to NATO Robert Hunter wrote in a 2006 commentary for RAND that “for Europeans who claim equal status with NATO for the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, this is the time to put up or shut up”; the EU had to “to take full charge of meeting Afghanistan's requirements for external civilian help” as “the one institution with the collective means, skills, resources, and – potentially – the leadership to relieve NATO and ISAF of burdens for which they are not suited”. However, the EU was holding back (Hunter 18.11. 2006, see also Burke 2014).

Thus, the US administration's pressure on European allies was an important element in the context that led to EUPOL's creation, in the sense that the mission helped deflecting pressure in the military realm. This European “deflection” was possible because the US was asking for *both* civilian and military capabilities, as the two following quotes show: US Ambassador to NATO Victoria Nuland demanded in December 2007 that EUPOL be raised to the size of 5,000 European police experts,

¹⁷⁷ This was via the SPG program discussed in Chapter 4.

¹⁷⁸ Phone interviews with two EEAS officials, March and May 2015.

trainers and advisers, and US Vice President Joe Biden stated at the 2009 Munich Security conference that the bargain the US was seeking was one based on more equal military burden sharing:

“We’ll listen. We’ll consult. America needs the world, just as I believe the world needs America. But we say to our friends that the alliances, treaties and international organizations we build must be credible and they must be effective. That requires a common commitment not only to listen and live by the rules, but to enforce the rules when they are, in fact, clearly violated” (Wagner and Lösing 23.10.2009; Biden 07.02.2009).

The MS found it difficult to acquiesce on the dimension of military troops, but were able to move, at least rhetorically, on the second. The European Council Secretariat made numerous calls for more contributions to EUPOL (14 calls alone by 2009, see RUSI 2009), and several EU-Afghan conferences, for instance the EU-Afghanistan Conference in Berlin 2010, have underlined “the importance of capacity building of the Afghan Police by training the Afghan Forces, and equipping them through EUPOL so that gradually responsibility will be transferred to Afghanistan” (EU-Afghanistan Conference 20.06.2010).

It is equally important to note that the EU’s rhetorical commitments did not concern EUPOL alone: As we saw earlier, a number of European Councils in the late 1990s and early 2000s, especially the 1999 Helsinki Council, the 2000 Feira and Nizza Councils and the 2001 Goteborg Council, put European policing tools on the fledgling ESDP’s agenda. The ESS 2003, for instance, stated that the EU needed “greater capacity to bring all necessary civilian resources to bear in crisis and post crisis situations” (ESS 2003: 12). The 2008 Civilian Headline Goals 2008 (decided upon at the European Council of 2004) laid out the EU’s ambition to develop the EU’s civilian crisis management capabilities, and “rapid response capabilities including the development of Civilian Response Teams (CRT) and rapidly deployable police elements such as Integrated Police Units and Formed Police Units” figured prominently among those goals (Final Report on the Civilian Headline Goal 2008: 2). The EU has also elaborated concepts for SSR (Gross 2009b: 10).¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁹ The EU adopted a “Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform” in 2006 (Council Doc 12566/4/05). However, the SSR framework played no explicit role in EUPOL. In 2009, out of 12 ongoing ESDP missions, only the missions in Guinea Bissau and Congo mentioned Security Sector Reform in the core language of their mandates. See Bailes 2011; Sedra 2006, 2011.

What is more, at the 2006 Riga NATO Summit the European allies had signed on to the Summit Declaration. This document made a decisive step toward what is today commonly called the comprehensive approach:

“Experience in Afghanistan and Kosovo demonstrates that today’s challenges require a comprehensive approach by the international community involving a wide spectrum of civil and military instruments, while fully respecting mandates and autonomy of decisions of all actors, and provides precedents for this approach” (Riga Summit Declaration 29.11.2006).

Therefore, “while recognising that NATO has no requirement to develop capabilities strictly for civilian purposes”, NATO allies called for improvement in NATO’s

“cooperation at all levels with partners, the UN and other relevant international organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations and local actors in the planning and conduct of ongoing and future operations wherever appropriate. These proposals should take into account emerging lessons learned and consider flexible options for the adjustment of NATO military and political planning procedures with a view to enhancing civil-military interface” (ibid.).

NATO’s 2006 Riga pledge was to promote the “comprehensive approach” and to place NATO in a triangle of security, development and governance: NATO would take the lead on military security, but other organizations would take responsibility in the other two fields, notably the UN and the EU. As Sten Rynning notes, EUPOL, created in Riga’s aftermath, was a ticket for the MS to “step up to the plate”, thus symbolizing “the reality of the comprehensive approach agenda” (Rynning 2012: 144).

In this context of comprehensive approaches, one of the main “selling points” European diplomats referred to when setting up EUPOL was its supposed ability to streamline and coordinate donor efforts in policing. The drive toward more coordination became most visible in a 2007 document entitled ‘A New approach for Improved International Coordination’, in which a so-called International Police Coordination Board (IPCB) was established to act as the “main coordination board” among the roundabout 20 donor nations involved in police reform at the time. Its goal was to “coordinate, prioritize and guide the international police reform efforts, with a view toward ensuring consistency between the strategic/policy and operational levels

for the Afghanistan National Police” (see IPCB). This IPCB would be supervised by the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) mentioned earlier, installed to “ensure greater coherence of efforts by the Afghan Government and international community (The Afghanistan Compact 2006: 15).

A last important point to note with respect to the pre-history of EUPOL is the role Germany played. Germany was instrumental, though not solely responsible, in making sure US demands for a robust police training mandate would *not* be met: EUPOL, the Germans quickly made clear, would be a continuation of the German “civilian police” orthodoxy.

6.1.c. Germany’s role in preparing EUPOL

As we saw earlier, even as police “lead nation”, Germany had not much to show for after a very rocky start, while US investment had increasingly sidelined the German financial and personnel input with multi-billion dollar contracts (Chapter 5). US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates was especially critical of Germany: According to him, NATO was “evolving into a two-tiered alliance in which you have some allies ready to fight and die in order to protect people's security and others who are not”, and those latter were notably the Germans, who were “performing the training and reconstruction duties they signed up for in the north of Afghanistan”, but “refused to move them into a combat role in the south against the Taliban, who are retaking the territory lost during the first American intervention into their country in 2001” (Gates quoted in *The New York Times* 01.11.2008). Tellingly, in 2006, the German government had finally acknowledged in its “*Afghanistan-Konzept*” that security had seriously deteriorated in the country, and that efforts needed to be intensified, including the German effort in policing (*Deutsche Bundesregierung* 2006: 3). Across the German political spectrum (excepting the left-wing *Die Linke*), members of Parliament pressed the German government to increase its quantitative commitment (see *Deutscher Bundestag* 2006 Plenarprotokoll 16/51).

A German Fact Finding Mission to Kabul in December 2006 was important in

determining the future of the German involvement. The mission's objective was to find out what had been achieved in the field of justice and whether Germany could find a role in this sector as well. According to an interviewee involved in the process, the result of this mission was twofold: "Firstly, [the German officials] realized that not much had been achieved, and secondly, coordination between the two fields was 'of paramount importance', in other words it had been neglected".¹⁸⁰

Hence, with the Riga agenda's increased focus on improving cross-pillar coordination, and with the growing US focus on building up the ANSF, including the police, a case was made in the German Foreign Office to turn the mission over to the EU level, since it was assumed that the EU would be able to "create more critical mass by streamlining the multiple efforts. Our idea was to benefit from the EU's greater potential to organize the coordination that we did not manage".¹⁸¹

The project of handing over GPPO to the EU level was initially met with resistance at the German Ministry of Interior, which considered GPPO 'its' mission, and feared losing "control over and credit for" police building (Buchet de Neuilly 2009: 86). However, by the time Germany had taken the presidency of the European Council during the first half of 2007, the position of the Auswärtiges Amt seemed to have prevailed and this accelerated the already ongoing evolution towards a hand over (Regler 2012).

Along the more pressing question of ending the stalemate around the European Constitution, one of the items mentioned by German Chancellor Merkel placed high on her list was a strengthening of transatlantic relations, especially concerning cooperation in civilian crisis management (Rüger and Wolf 2007: 5). The EUPOL mission's civilian contribution to a NATO war effort was very close to what Chancellor Merkel's formulated as her ideal vision for a comprehensive NATO approach to security, based on

"an inextricable link between our military approach and civilian measures. I do not want to advocate here a "civilian NATO" (...). But I do very much want to speak of NATO's self-understanding as part of an overall civil-military profile. This is, in my opinion, NATO's role in the 21st century" (Merkel 2007, author's translation).

¹⁸⁰ Interview with a German police officer formerly part of GPPO and later senior adviser for EUPOL. EUPOL compound, Kabul, 11.10.2011.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

The previous year, a German White book had made the same case, promoting a “comprehensive approach” (“*umfassender Ansatz*”) that “effectively combines civilian and military instruments” (Bundesministerium der Verteidigung 2006: 13, author’s translation). Presented this way, efforts like EUPOL were not about “serving” NATO, but the expression of a wider reconceptualization of security itself. Therefore, the hand-over to the EU did not imply an admission of flaws in the German approach *per se* – quite to the contrary, interviews with German police and the German government’s statements confirm that the basic idea was to “*continue the same mission* and just change patches from GPPO to EUPOL”.¹⁸²

In other words, Germany would “beef up” its contribution – but, the German Government noted, the CSDP mission was to “build on previous achievements”: “There won’t be a new approach but an international expansion and extension of existing commitments” (Deutscher Bundestag Drs. 16/4334 2007: 2; author’s translation). “This process, however, is not the expression of a “crisis in police building” (Deutscher Bundestag Drs. 16/6312 2007: 24, author’s translation). EUPOL would “continue” the German approach (*ibid.*), despite growing evidence that great parts of the security forces were bracing themselves for COIN, not the type of “civilian policing” of “helping elderly women to cross the street” that the Germans advocated.¹⁸³

Yet, how was EUPOL supposed to proceed and what exactly was EUPOL supposed to achieve? This is what we turn to now.

6.2. EUPOL’s Mandate and Strategy

Referring to the Joint Declaration “Committing to a new EU Afghan Partnership” and its commitment to a “secure, stable, free, prosperous and democratic Afghanistan as laid out in the Afghan Constitution adopted on 4 January 2004”, as well as to the Afghanistan Compact, which affirmed the international community’s

¹⁸² Group interview with EUPOL trainers at the EUPOL Staff College, Kabul, 14.12.2011. Emphasis added.

¹⁸³ Interview with German police officer in Mazar-e Sharif, Camp Marmal, December 2011.

wish to “work toward a stable and prosperous Afghanistan, with good governance and human rights protection for all under the rule of law, and to maintain and strengthen that commitment over the term of this Compact and beyond”, the European Council established EUPOL Afghanistan under Council Joint Action 2007/369/CFSP on 30 May 2007 (Council of the EU 16.11.2005:1; The Afghanistan Compact 2006:1; Council Joint Action 30.05.2007).

EUPOL’ June 2007 mandate was carefully framed: Paragraph 10 of the Joint Action stated that the “envisaged minimum time frame of the mission shall be three years”, but that due to the “unpredictability of the situation”, “the size and scope of the Mission should be subject to a six-monthly review” (ibid.). The mission’s initial objective was to “contribute”, and do so “significantly”, “to the establishment under Afghan ownership of sustainable and effective civilian policing arrangements” (ibid., Article 3). It stopped short of handing EUPOL full responsibility for the interaction with the justice system, given that the Commission was already engaged in this sector (Gross 2009b). Rather, it referred to the civilian policing arrangements for which EUPOL was responsible and “which [would] ensure appropriate *interaction with* the wider criminal justice system” (Council Joint Action 30.05.2007, Article 3, emphasis added; see below). Working on “civilian policing arrangements” essentially meant working on a “sustainable command structure from Kabul down to the Districts” (Head of Mission [HoM] Kai Vittrup quoted in Wikileaks 30.10.2008). Further, the Joint Action noted that EUPOL Afghanistan would aim to “support the reform process towards a trusted and efficient police service, which works in accordance with international standards, within the framework of the rule of law and respects human rights” (Council Joint Action 30.05.2007, Article 3).

Article 4.1 outlined EUPOL’s mandate, which displayed a mix of continuity and marginal innovation vis-à-vis the German police efforts. Several aspects can be distinguished: First, the mission was to work “on strategy development” (Article 4.1.a.) and “support the Government of Afghanistan in coherently implementing their strategy” (Article 4.1.b). Thus, EUPOL was not at all a training mission – rather, EUPOL mentors would assist Afghan authorities in writing a police building strategy and a national “policing plan” and methods for border management and criminal investigation (Steinicke and Kempin 2009: 155). This also meant that EUPOL was to focus on the higher ranks of the Afghan police, not the low ranking policemen. In

other words, EUPOL was about the transfer of technical *savoir-faire*.

Secondly, EUPOL should “improve cohesion and coordination among international actors” (Article 4.1.c) and “work towards a joint overall strategy of the international community in police reform, taking into account the Afghanistan Compact and the i-ANDS” (Article 4.1.a). Thus, the coordination aspect of EUPOL was of paramount importance.

This was also visible in the European Council’s invitation to third states. Article 12.1 noted that “[w]ithout prejudice to the EU’s decision-making autonomy and its single institutional framework, candidate and other third states may be invited to contribute” to EUPOL, which made it possible for Norway, Canada and New Zealand to partake. The mandate also noted that “a number of Mission staff will be deployed to improve strategic coordination in police reform in Afghanistan, as appropriate, and in particular with the International Police Coordination Board Secretariat in Kabul” (Article 5). The GPPO, which was heading IPCB at the time, agreed to hand over the leadership of the IPCB Secretariat to EUPOL (Steinicke and Kempin 2009: 154).

It is important to underline in this respect that though EUPOL would “coordinate”, there was no explicit mandate for EUPOL to create a *single* “European policing framework”. It is necessary to stress this point because the ECA’s evaluation deployed in 2015 that though EUPOL “has enhanced cooperation with the EU Member States on the ground and has genuinely sought to promote international cooperation”, it “did not manage to bring together all European actors under a single European framework to improve Afghan policing” (ECA 2015: 8). However, as the EEAS and the European Commission correctly point out in their reply to the ECA’s report, EUPOL was never explicitly mandated “to bring together all EU actors under a single European framework” (ECA 2015: 43). The EEAS is also right to consider that

“EUPOL’s mandate was limited to certain *fields* (civilian policing, MoI [Ministry of the Interior] reform, criminal justice); the Mission therefore had no mandate for an *overall lead* on the (coordination of the) entire MoI/ANP reform/strengthening support” (ibid., author’s emphasis).

Yet, although the MS did not give EUPOL an authoritative mandate to create

agreement on *one* European “policing voice”, one must note a great deal of ambiguity: EUPOL’s implicit assignment was nevertheless one of ensuring consistency and working toward a European approach as much as possible. This is clear, firstly, from EUPOL’s 2007 mandate: Working “towards a joint overall strategy of the international community in police reform”, as the mandate stipulated, did of course imply some form of leadership if one bears in mind the fact that EUPOL was shaped to “foster the achievements of the German Police Project Office” – and that GPPO was designed differently from the US’ policing support, which was training policemen for COIN, not civilian policing (ECA 2015: 15).

Secondly, the Joint Action that established EUPOL stated “[t]he Council and the Commission shall, each in accordance with its respective powers, ensure consistency between the implementation of this Joint Action and external activities of the Community in accordance with Article 3 of the Treaty. The Council and the Commission shall cooperate to this end” (see ECA 2015: 18). Obviously, “ensuring consistency” makes no sense if it does not mean elaborating a common European voice on policing.

Thirdly, the mandate also insisted on another coordination role, this time on training Afghan Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and MoI officials jointly and linking them institutionally, in sum “support linkages between the police and the wider rule of law” (Article 4.1.d). Thus, EUPOL mentors should try to facilitate and streamline interaction between the Afghan Attorney General Office and the MoI.

Fourthly, EUPOL’s ambition was to deploy its staff “at the central, regional and provincial level in light of the security assessment” (Article 5.2). This contrasted with the German approach, which had been confined to Kabul. It meant that EUPOL was ready to establish a presence in the south as well, opening up a whole new chapter of logistical challenges.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴ For the sake of completeness, it is important to note that the EEAS and the MS have regularly intervened during the years to adjust the mandate when priorities and/or situation on the ground changed. The 2007 OPLAN, EUPOL’s approach has been revised four times:

- In 2008, the Council committed to bring the number of staff up to 400,
- In 2010, EUPOL was reoriented more towards developing intelligence and criminal investigation capacity
- In 2013, in line with a “Ten-Year-Vision” of the Afghan MoI, EUPOL focused more than before on ANP professionalization, anti-corruption and the Rule of Law
- In mid-2014, the MS decided to phase out EUPOL by the end of 2016 (ECA 2015: 20).

Moving from the question of EUPOL's mandate (the "what" question) to the question of implementation (the "how question), EUPOL Afghanistan would "carry out its tasks through, amongst other means, monitoring, mentoring, advising and training" (Article 4.2.). Thus, as noted, it was not set up as an "executive mission", infringing on Afghanistan's sovereignty like EULEX Kosovo, the EU's Rule of Law mission in Kosovo, does.¹⁸⁵

The most important ambiguity one finds in Council joint action 2007/369/CFSP is the understanding that EUPOL would, on the one hand, assume a "lead role" in coordinating existing and future national policing contributions, and, on the other hand, the understanding that EUPOL was not set up as a mission that would lead on its field of expertise (policing), but merely to make a contribution to overall police training: EUPOL would "*contribute* to the establishment under Afghan ownership of sustainable and effective civilian policing arrangements" and "*support* the reform process towards a trusted and efficient police service" (Council Joint Action 30.05.2007: 2; emphases added). In other words, if the MS ever had the ambition of becoming a collective actor that leads and "shapes" its security environment, EUPOL did not reflect that.¹⁸⁶

A last important observation that must be made when it comes to EUPOL's mandates and strategies is that national rivalries and "side shows" have always accompanied EUPOL from the start. This is not to say that European countries have not, over the years, considerably improved their collaboration in EUPOL: For instance, the Dutch policing contribution enjoyed very close relations with the German GPPT and was active on the German Police Training Center in the Kunduz area (Thiessen 2012). However, this does not contradict the fact that divergent ideas and struggles for national visibility have often undermined the rhetoric surrounding EUPOL, and consequently its niche visibility.

One example from EUPOL's early period is telling in this regard. Though the numbers of German applicants were sufficient to staff EUPOL, the EU apparently did

¹⁸⁵ EULEX Kosovo has the right to exert some "executive responsibilities in in specific areas of competence, such as war crimes, organised crime and high - level corruption, as well as property and privatisation cases" (EULEX October 2014).

¹⁸⁶ See also Chapter 3 for EUPOL's lack of outcome-oriented goals.

not request them for fear of a German preponderance. As Dieter Wehe from the Police in Police Inspector in North Rhine-Westphalia explained at a parliamentary hearing in front of the Bundestag's Committee on Internal Affairs (*Bundestagsinnenausschuss*),

“It is an interesting finding (...) that Germany could have sent more, but they were not requested by the EU, because this would have reversed the ‘national balance’” (Deutscher Bundestag 15.12.2008: 32, author's translation).

Another example concerns the “Counter Narcotics Special Units” that the UK trained for a while. A UK House of Commons report noted in March 2006 that the UK had helped to “establish and provide training for the Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA)”; it was providing training for the Afghan Special Narcotics Force (ASNF), “an elite and highly trained force, equipped to tackle high value targets across the country” and it funded a £ 12.5 million “Institutional Development project” to strengthen the Ministry of Counter Narcotics (House of Commons 2005-06: Ev. 55). During an interview, a US Captain working inside NTM-A gave an insight into this British project:

“Look at the Counter Narcotics Special Units that the UK trains. These units are really good paramilitary Swat Teams; they snatch terrorist or drug dealers. But the Units aren't really integrated into anything in the MoI. Even if they pretend they are. All it is is that the Brits wanted to train this unit the way they wanted to train it, and they didn't want to connect it to a bigger thing, because they don't have enough staff and money to train that bigger thing. So they focus on the smaller unit and do what they want with it. Of course the MoI is always going to say “yes” when somebody says “I will give you money and equipment”. When it all goes to civil war in Afghanistan, they will have a unit to show that is loyal to certain persons in the MoI. And this is happening a hundred times. Everybody invests in small units. And you are not going to combine this all, because the Brits want that unit to be a shining example of the training that they do”.¹⁸⁷

Other European nations, such as Italy, the Netherlands and Denmark, were also running small projects next to EUPOL (House of Lords 16.02.2011: vi). Arguably, the possibility to run such “side shows” made it easier for states such as the UK to acquiesce to EUPOL even when the mission had already shown its limits, but they also expressed the MS' extreme difficulty to agree on a more explicit EUPOL

¹⁸⁷ Interview with A. Heather Coyne, ISAF HQ NATO, 04.11.2011. See also Grenier 2015 for quite similar examples on the US side.

mandate. For instance, according to an interview with former head of the secretariat of the IPCB Olivier Néola, “one of the greatest difficulties was that in the beginning, some European nations, such as the UK and the Dutch, would have liked to see a more robust police mandate in the area of counter-insurgency and a role for EUPOL in support of that mandate, while notably the Commission and Germany argued that EUPOL should focus only on civilian policing”.¹⁸⁸

6.3. EUPOL’s means

Turning to another important dimension in this assessment of EUPOL, the question of means needs to be discussed. Going back to the definition of actorness in Chapter 3, one must ask whether available means are both useful and sufficient to reach goals, in other words whether they are, firstly, adequate and, secondly, available in the necessary quantity. In the case of EUPOL, this obviously requires looking at budgetary aspects and staffing, but this chapter’s approach is a little larger: Firstly, the question of means is tightly connected to questions of autonomy, which is why this section also asks whether EUPOL gave itself the means to act, to reach out to the regions, to protect its staff and the like. Furthermore, any mission also needs good knowledge about the field, its officers need to be prepared for the terrain and possibly debriefed, and information must be collected and stored so that learning can happen. This is especially important in the beginning, so that path dependencies from previous missions can be avoided.

6.3.a. EUPOL and autonomy of action

That EUPOL was in no way seeking operational autonomy is clear from Council Decision 2010/279/CFSP of 18.05.2010, which stated: “Technical arrangements will be sought with ISAF and Regional Command/PRT Lead Nations

¹⁸⁸ Interview with IPCB Secretary General Olivier Néola, Paris, 05.06.2012. See also Néola 2012.

for information exchange, medical, security and logistical support including accommodation by Regional Commands and PRTs” (Council Decision 2010/279/CFSP: 5, see below). Another major factor restricting EUPOL’s autonomy of action consisted in EUPOL’s tight security rules. When the GPPO turned over its compound to EUPOL in May 2007, it soon became apparent that EUPOL’s security rules were even stricter than the German ones.¹⁸⁹ The 2007 killing of three German servicemen had resulted in a more comprehensive German security plan and heavier armors for vehicles. Preparatory class, during which potential civilian experts would be prepared for worst-case scenarios like kidnappings, went up from 2 to 4 weeks. In 2007, the heavily armored cars formerly used by the GPPO were turned over to EUPOL.¹⁹⁰ However, several member countries insisted that the German security arrangements be revised, because “the German mission had not yet reached the security standards that were common for other EU missions”.¹⁹¹

The issue of security was made difficult by EUPOL’s institutional arrangements as well. While working under the strategic guidance of the EUSR (Article 9 of EUPOL’s mandate noted that the PSC shall exercise “political control and strategic direction”, while the High Representative for CFSP “shall give guidance to the [HoM] through the EUSR”), EUPOL’s HOM would “exercise operational control over EUPOL Afghanistan and assume its day-to-day management” (Article 6). It would, however, fall to the member states to “bear the costs related to any of the staff seconded by it, including travel expenses to and from the place of deployment, salaries, medical coverage, and allowances, other than applicable per diems as well as hardship and risk allowances” (Article 7). All staff would “remain under the authority of the appropriate sending state or EU institution”. In all fairness, all staff was obliged to “respect the security principles and minimum standards established by Council Decision 2001/264/EC of 19 March 2001 adopting the Council’s security regulations”, but those were exactly that: *minimum* standards, and, what is more, difficult to operationalize: There was no legally binding EU-level security plan, and given that the MS would send most personnel, their nationals would be under different security plans.

¹⁸⁹ Interview with German EUPOL officer, EUPOL compound, 11.10.2011.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

The consequences of the MS' difficulties to come to a binding security arrangement became apparent to this author when, during a visit to the EUPOL compound in 2011, an alarm went off. Though some of EUPOL's staff did walk to the safe house that had been installed for cases of emergency, not every member of EUPOL had been informed of the exercise, and many remained in their offices. While he accompanied this author to the safe house, an exasperated British EUPOL officer explained:

“The MS have been unable so far to agree to a clear emergency plan that would establish a practicable hierarchy of decision making when we are under attack. [A few weeks ago], the Taliban attacked the neighboring compound. This was a frightening experience ... we actually thought the Talibs were in the compound. We were 212 people in this bunker for 14 hours ... There was no leadership initially, so myself and a couple of other EUPOL officers took charge in the bunker. We thought the security would come and take control, but they were up here [i.e. not in the bunker but elsewhere on the EUPOL compound]. And *I* was coming out for intelligence update and I could see fire flying over the compound.”¹⁹²

As the officer explained, the confusion had to do with the fact that the MS would not accept putting their nationals under a EUPOL security plan, and it seemed that the Germans and the Dutch were particularly hostile to the idea.¹⁹³ Other sources confirmed this picture: As a German MoI mentor explained, the German police mission, for instance, was not allowed to share relevant security information with EUPOL.¹⁹⁴

Related to this question of security, EUPOL's security agreements with the US and NATO forces stationed in Afghanistan may be the best way of enquiring into the question of autonomy.¹⁹⁵ As was shown above, though a NATO-EU agreement on the EU's use of NATO assets for CSDP missions existed at the time of EUPOL's creation (“Berlin Plus”), it remained effectively blocked by Cyprus but also Turkey (which, was deploying over 1,200 soldiers to Wardak, Eastern Afghanistan, by December 2007, see NATO ISAF Placemat 05.12.2007). With EUPOL's start in 2007, this

¹⁹² Interview with EUPOL Mentor, EUPOL compound, Kabul, 15.11.2011.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Interview with German EUPOL mentor in MoI, EUPOL compound Kabul, 11.10.2011. To be fair, according to several interviews, the question of harmonizing the security arrangement and emergency improved over the years.

¹⁹⁵ For what follows, see Fescharek 2015b.

became a source of trouble, as NATO headed the only reliable Western security presence beyond Kabul. One of EUPOL's goals was to work at the provincial level (Germany's GPPO had mostly been focused on Kabul), but this would require being hosted by a military base – hence, an arrangement with NATO needed to be found.

The trouble was that NATO's so-called "Blue Force" tracking system, which allows NATO to locate its personnel at any given moment, first did not include EU personnel (S.J. Smith 2011: 256). This later changed, as UK government response to a House of Lords report on EUPOL shows: "Blue Tracker functions effectively to allow ISAF aircraft to identify EUPOL vehicles and the new Operations Plan allows ISAF to carry out planning and operations in support of EUPOL activity".¹⁹⁶ However, the UK Government also recognized "that the lack of a *formal* agreement between ISAF and EUPOL, and arrangements for co-ordination between EU and NATO activity more generally, increases the risk of incoherence when it comes to planning".¹⁹⁷ Moreover, the House of Lords correctly pointed out that EUPOL's participation in the "blue tracking system which allows NATO aircraft to identify EUPOL vehicles on the ground to prevent friendly-fire incidents [was] narrow in scope" (House of Lords 16.02.2011: 26).

To take a step back, European Council Director General for External and Politico-Military Affairs Robert Cooper had requested NATO to grant EUPOL the benefits of force protection and information sharing relating to its security as early as July 2007 (Wikileaks 16.08.2007). However in 2015 an official 'technical agreement' officially facilitating ISAF-EUPOL cooperation had still not materialized, officially because of the Cyprus issue. As a result, EUPOL had to appeal to the services of a private firm, Hart International, the cost of which amounted to € 16 million in 2015 alone (out of a € 58 million budget for 2015; see below). According to a 2009 Wikileaks cable,

"NATO agreed *informally* to provide *in extremis* support based on ISAF's agreed operations plan, but the NAC [North Atlantic Council] was otherwise unable to

¹⁹⁶ See Government Response to House of Lords Select Committee on the European Union Report on EU's Police Mission – AFGHANISTAN. HMG Response. <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/eu-sub-com-c/afghanpolice/GovRespEUafghan.pdf>. Accessed on 11.11.2015.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

consider the requests officially due to disagreements concerning the use of existing NATO-EU Berlin Plus arrangements” (Wikileaks 22.12.2009, emphases added).¹⁹⁸

According to Kai Vittrup, EUPOL’s HOM at the time, NATO’s infrastructure was deemed a *necessary condition* for EUPOL, because “the absorption capacity of European PRTs” remained very limited and EUPOL could “better fulfill its mandate if deployed in US PRTs”, which were deployed more widely than European PRTs (Wikileaks 30.10.2008). However, US Ambassador Thomas Schweich was quoted as saying that the “negotiation of support to EUPOL at the Provincial Reconstruction Teams would be more ‘problematic’” than in Kabul because of the US’ “position which stipulated that negotiation of such agreements would occur only” via NATO (Wikileaks 13.12.2007).

As a result, EU officials repeatedly asked the US for support in resolving the ‘Cyprus problem’ in order to “allow the U.S. to support EUPOL and other ESDP missions” (Wikileaks 11.01.2008). In the end, the EU had to negotiate 14 separate memoranda of understanding concerning the protection of its PRT personnel – however, it should be noted, those agreements were not concluded between EUPOL and NATO, but, because they concerned EU personnel, between the EU *and its own MS* (S.J. Smith 2011: 256). Far from being an ideological problem, for instance a clash of diverging philosophies of policing, this was an issue of mission strength. The US continually made its support conditional on EUPOL increasing its commitment.

US General Petraeus, for instance, ISAF commander from July 2010 to July 2011, made an agreement dependent on EUPOL “increasing its size” (Wikileaks 20.02.2009). Besides the fact that a full technical EUPOL-NATO agreement to protect EUPOL staff never materialized, what is most important in this context is that key EU officials actively lobbied for NATO support, and de facto the US’ support. The cooperation that existed between EUPOL and NTM-A often needed to be informal to work. The UK Government’s response to the House of Lords is telling in this regard: “We recognise that an institutional relationship between the two organisations is unlikely in the absence of a Cyprus settlement. Therefore we have taken the lead in working within both the EU and NATO to progress relations *at an*

¹⁹⁸ It is interesting to note in this regard that recent publications seem to move away from the question of official EU-NATO relations to questions of informal staff contacts, see Drent 2015 and Gebhard and Smith 2015.

operational level” (see UK Government Response To House Of Lords 2011, emphasis added).

6.3.b. EUPOL’s staffing and budgetary limitations

Related to the question of autonomy is the matter of means and budgets. Several problems hampered EUPOL from the start, ranging from staffing issues to “resource rivals” such as national bilateral missions and other CSDP missions going on elsewhere in the world, the MS practice of “seconding” personnel to CSDP missions, and low budgets. EUPOL’s initial ambition was to grow to 195 staff (160 police and 35 administrative personnel) by April 2008 (Deutscher Bundestag 2007, Drs. 16/6703: 3). However, in October 2007, four months after mission begin, EUPOL was still operating with 80 staff, of which 33 were former GPPO members (Regler 2012: 62). In mid-June 2008, only 113 police were working for EUPOL (Regler 2012: 63). In December 2008, the Council doubled EUPOL’s authorized staff to 400 but in 2009, EUPOL was still far from reaching this goal (Islam and Gross 2009; Korski and Gowan 2009). EUPOL’s initial ambition was to become fully operational in Kabul and in some provinces by the end of March 2008, but this was not achieved (ECA 2015: 16).

It was only almost two years into the mission that EUPOL reached 200 international staff. EUPOL’s field offices were so poorly manned that only two, in Herat and in Mazar-e Sharif, were “consistently staffed by more than 10 persons” (ECA 2015: 17). As mentioned earlier, the Council launched a total of 14 calls over the years to reach the mandate’s staffing goals, but the mission never reached full strength: It attained a peak of 350 staff in January 2012 and then declined (ECA 2015: 16).

Only 15 of then 27 MS participated in EUPOL and only Germany, the UK, Denmark, the Netherlands, Spain and Italy were willing to second more than 10 police (Steinicke and Kempin 2009: 157). For some nations, such as France, EUPOL ranked very low: While France, for instance, had only two Frenchmen in EUPOL, it found 18 for an equivalent mission in Bosnia, 43 for a CSDP mission in Georgia and

176 for Kosovo, and though Portugal claimed to have 481 available police officers “ready to be deployed on ESDP missions”, the number of police it sent to Afghanistan was zero (Korski 2009: 9; RUSI 2009: 87).

Given that in 2007/2008, three European policing missions (EUMM Georgia, with a mission strength of roughly 200 staff, EULEX Kosovo and EUPOL) were all competing for staff at the same time, these issues were hard to solve. EULEX Kosovo, the largest civilian mission ever to be launched under the ESDP/CSDP, was launched in February 2008, it had a budget of 265 million € for the first two and a half years and a target of 1,800 personnel (EULEX Factsheet 2014). Especially the Kosovo mission became an important “resource rival” for EUPOL Afghanistan, as European police experts were more attracted by this mission, even leading the European foreign ministers to discuss tripling EUPOL Afghanistan’s salaries to induce experts to go to Kabul (Islam and Gross 2009: 3).

Moreover, EUPOL’s mandate foresaw that staff would be seconded to the mission from EU institutions and the MS. EU missions are almost entirely staffed by personnel seconded by the MS, which allows for greater national control than if there was a pool of readily deployable “EU personnel”; very few experts are hired on a contractual basis. For instance, in 2009, 1976 of a total of 2334 EU civilian experts were seconded, while only 358 had a contractual engagement with the EU (Major and Bail 2011: 22). In 1999, the European Council in Helsinki launched an inventory of available European civilian skills and tools. Various member states started developing training programs for civilian EU missions via the European Group on Training for civilian aspects of crisis management. However, European civilian experts cannot be “enlisted” and there is no European recruitment system, which means that there is no guarantee for the quality of personnel (Major and Bail 2011: 25).

Very few European states are seriously investing in the field of training for civilian experts, and in 2009, only Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK had even developed cross-governmental planning processes, debriefing mechanisms and/or obligatory training for civilians (Korski and Gowan 2009: 13). Institutions like the German ZIF (2002), the Swedish Folke Bernadotte Academy (2002) or the Finnish Crisis Management Center (2007) remain exceptions

in Europe (Major and Bail 2011: 25). In Germany, the so-called *Entsende-Gesetz*¹⁹⁹ was the first serious attempt to provide civilians in crisis management with insurance coverage, for instance. While the EU's Civilian Headlines Goals listed at least 5761 police and 631 Rule of Law experts, these numbers remained not more than political self-commitments when EUPOL was launched in 2007 (Council of the EU 07.12.2004). EU-wide training standards have long been developed in the so-called European Group on Training for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management, and the European Police College (CEPOL) tries to harmonize police education for police experts, but all of this remains non-mandatory for the MS (Major and Bail 2011: 24).

These staffing issues were especially acute given that EUPOL has operated on a low budget. The total cost of EUPOL from 2007 to 2014 approximates € 400 million (note that for the year 2015, € 57,75 million were committed). About one third of the € 400 million account for EUPOL's security, 43% of EUPOL's budget account for staff costs for seconded staff, international contracted staff and local staff (ECA 2015: 12).

6.3.c. EUPOL and knowledge: Preparation, learning, information and path dependencies

Another important aspect that needs to be presented is the way EUPOL was prepared as a mission and the knowledge that informed it. The PSC had been presented a Joint EU Assessment Mission report on the situation of the rule of law in Afghanistan in October 2006. It contained an analysis on how the EU could make a “strategic impact” on the rule of law sector, and recommended that the EU “could consider contributing further to support the police sector through a police mission, and that a Fact Finding Mission could be sent to Afghanistan in order to explore further the feasibility of such a mission” (Council Joint Action 2007/369: L 139/33). A so-called EU assessment mission was then sent to Afghanistan between 27 November and 14 December 2006, that is, for the duration of only a little over two

¹⁹⁹ *Gesetz zur Regelung von Sekundierungen im Rahmen von Einsätzen der zivilen Krisenprävention (Sekundierungsgesetz - SekG), 17. Juli 2009 (BGBl. I S. 1974).*

weeks. As a comparison, for EUPM, launched in January 2003, the planning phase had been 9 months (Merlingen 2009).

The mission's proposals that the EU add value through a civilian policing mission with linkages to the rule of law was, already in 2006, entirely disconnected from the reality of the country: Illiteracy rates among the police stood at about 80 % and given that the Afghans and the US were practicing COIN, the proposal reflected "what the EU could reasonably 'offer' given the consensual nature of CSDP, not necessarily what was requested by actors on the ground".²⁰⁰ The ambition of such a project was also out of step with CSDP's capacities: For instance, at the time when EUPOL was launched, i.e. only roughly six months later, EUPOL's *four* staff in Kabul had no access to internet, no vehicles and not even basic office material (ECA 2015: 15; interview with EUPOL officer, EUPOL compound Kabul, 13.10.2011).

Furthermore, it seems that the Fact Finding Mission was more concerned with internal EU politics. One important goal was to reassure the Germans that their civilian policing approach was correct and could be continued (Regler 2012). Following the Fact Finding Mission, negotiations between Berlin and European officials from both the CPCC and the PSC turned around the key issues of who would occupy key positions in the Afghan Ministry of Interior, as well as expanding the focus across the north and other regions and providing security for EUPOL personnel. On the first point (key positions), the German side agreed to a total hand over to EUPOL, once Afghan consent was acquired. The German position seems to have been weakened in intra-European discussions by pressure from Berlin to speed up the EUPOL mission during the EU presidency. As one participant stated, EUPOL's OPLAN was prepared with such haste that the draft

"still had 'Pristina' [the capital of Kosovo, where a European police mission was deployed as well] written all over it. The Germans had insisted that the mission be set up so quickly that they hadn't even had the time to replace 'Pristina' by 'Kabul!'" (see Fescharek 2013: 25)

The way EUPOL Afghanistan was set up raises a question of path dependency: How strongly did ideational transfers from previous missions influence EUPOL? The following example helps to shed light on the interplay between

²⁰⁰ Phone interview with EEAS official on 14.10.2013.

“European-level” path dependencies and German on-the-ground experience in Kabul. As the previously cited German official stated, “Brussels’ functionaries adapted the salary system from the Balkans, which almost doubled the locals’ earnings [in Kabul]. We at the GPPO said “are you crazy? Why don’t you ask us first?”²⁰¹ This indeed points to procedural path dependencies, in other words, though they were also due to the short time span in which the mission was set up. The mission’s later years however, do in fact reveal that as an institution, EUPOL was indeed capable of considerable learning and, to some degree, adaptation to country-specific needs, as the next section shows.

6.3.d. EUPOL’s learning curve

EUPOL has learned immensely as an institution, though the following section also shows how limited EUPOL’s outcomes and outputs are. Certainly, as a result of EUPOL’s more than eight years in the field, the EEAS and the Commission are today considering “the potential for obtaining greater efficiencies by centralising support functions under a single shared service centre” (ECA 2015: 21). There are also ideas “of developing centralised and integrated information management systems in the areas of human resources, IT and logistics encompassing all CSDP missions. Decisions are also pending on bringing the Warehouse for civilian crisis management missions,²⁰² which was established in 2012, within such a system. This has the potential to improve management of the assets of existing civilian missions” (ibid.).

Similarly, the CPCC and EUPOL have started examining “lessons learned” in order to improve CSDP’s methodology, and a mentoring handbook has now been used by the EEAS “to draft a detailed mentoring guideline that was distributed to all CSDP missions” (ECA 2015: 28, 21).

Going beyond institutional learning, there are numerous other examples where EUPOL’s performance improved over the years. This notably concerns an effort to

²⁰¹ Interview with GPPO official, EUPOL compound, Kabul, 15.11.2011.

²⁰² The “warehouse for civilian crisis management missions” was set up in 2012 to ensure “rapid deployment of equipment to existing and future civilian crisis management missions, strengthening its capabilities, in particular by seeking to ensure quick and continuous access to key assets” (ibid.).

focus the mission's activities over the years and improve its leadership: In the first 15 months of its existence, three different persons headed EUPOL: Brigadier-General Friedrich Eichele had been appointed as EUPOL's HoM in June 2007, but he left Kabul only two months later, to be replaced by Jürgen Scholz, another German. Both were rather unlucky during their tenures and in October 2008, the Danish Police Commissioner Kai Vittrup assumed leadership of EUPOL (Peral 2009: 328). According to virtually all interview partners asked about this issue, Vittrup's successor Savolainen seems to have succeeded in giving EUPOL a better sense of its purpose: Savolainen, who came in during the second half of 2010, was instrumental in refocusing EUPOL and steering it clear of mission creep. The two mandates will be looked at in turn to get a sense of EUPOL's incremental professionalization and focusing.

Kai Vittrup's mandate, from mid-October 2008 to March 2010, was marked by some of the MS' insistence to raise EUPOL's profile. Vittrup described his mandate as creating "visible results": "People should see police patrolling in the streets – a police force they trust" (Danish Ministry Of Foreign Affairs 18.10.2008). This dynamic of raising EUPOL's visibility coincided with the arrival of a new Afghan Minister of the Interior, Hanif Atmar, sworn in in October 2008. It is necessary to dwell on this Afghan politician, because his deft craftsmanship was to no small extent responsible for the great deal of dispersion of EUPOL's early activities.²⁰³

One of the main themes of the NATO Bucharest Summit in 2008 had been the Afghanization of the war effort. The US was equally interested in a significant numerical increase of the ANSF. Around the end of 2008, Atmar, who was surfing on a wave of US support, started convincing the European donor community to raise police numbers from 80,000 in 2008 to 134,000 at the end of 2011 (d'Amecourt 2013:

²⁰³ Prior to this post, Atmar had already served as Minister of Education and Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, and he is an example of the intellectual legacy of the Russian influence in the country, trained and formed in the official pro-Russian Party, Khalq, and later in the secret police, Khad. With two university degrees acquired in the UK, he understood his Western interlocutors well and was able to establish good working relations with the US. See a short biography of his on the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)'s website: http://csis.org/files/attachments/111109_Atmar_bio.pdf. Accessed on 10.11.2015.

201). French and German diplomats were reticent to develop an ANP that would exceed Afghanistan's fiscal abilities, but were tricked by Atmar into agreement.

Former French Ambassador to Afghanistan d'Amecourt relates an international meeting in which Atmar was able to present the German and French ambassadors and the EU representative with the *fait accompli* that police numbers would have to be raised, knowing well that European ambassadors would not be able to obtain responses from their capitals in the 24 hours that Minister Atmar required (d'Amecourt 2013: 205). With the UK, Canada and the US already convinced, the decision went ahead unchallenged by the German ambassador and Kai Vittrup. There are many other examples that show that Atmar was able to exploit EUPOL's limitations to his advantage. For instance, Afghanistan's second presidential election was scheduled for 20 August 2009. Minister Atmar approached Vittrup around February 2009, and suggested EUPOL could help training police officers to protect the electoral process. His assessment was that 45,000 policemen would be needed to protect the election, and that EUPOL could increase its profile.

The idea was simple: EUPOL would train 1,000 trainers in a few months. Those trainers would in turn train another 10,000 policemen in two weeks. The training would teach appropriate techniques to protect voting offices and the basic requirements of an electoral process. Crucially, prior to talking with his EUPOL partners, Atmar was able to convince the US that 20,000 more policemen would have to be formed in four months. According to one long-standing observer of EUPOL's, "When we received Atmar's request, EUPOL's staff rejoiced because this coincided with nearly everything we wanted: Skill transfer, a multiplying effect, some human rights elements in the training and low risk".²⁰⁴ Interestingly, when Minister Atmar had meetings with the Americans, he would ask for more "robust" help from them – something he knew EUPOL was not allowed to deliver. Similar initiatives that Minister Atmar promoted were the Staff College (see below) and women in police. Thus, Atmar was able to propel EUPOL on the main stage for the short time span of Afghan elections. In sum, as Jean de Ponton d'Amecourt recounts in his book, Atmar turned EUPOL into a useful ally to create consensus or to counter balance US influence when it hindered his objectives (d'Amecourt 2013: 203).

²⁰⁴ Phone interview with French EUPOL officer, 20.04.2013.

The backside of this activism was that EUPOL, with its unclear mandate, soon started to “put too many fingers into too many pies”.²⁰⁵ In November 2009, EUPOL was given a new “project cell”, “for identifying and implementing projects” (Council Joint Action 17.11.2009 842/CFSP). At the end of Vittrup’s tenure, EUPOL was assisting Afghan authorities in border control at Afghanistan’s airports, training policemen to deal with international diplomats, organizing election assistance, providing advice in the Rule of Law Sector and teaching criminal investigation techniques. It also had come up with a teaching program of 18 hours on how to file a complaint in cases of domestic violence. “In a sense”, one EUPOL staffer explained, “why wouldn’t we do all of this, because it is basically untouched land and it is so useful. Take the example of filing complaints on domestic violence; police officers have no idea how to do it, so it makes sense to offer something in this domain”.²⁰⁶

This situation of dispersal, however, also created momentum for a change in EUPOL, as the following section shows.

6.3.e. Brigadier General Jukka Savolainen

Brigadier General Jukka Savolainen was brought into office on 15 July 2010.²⁰⁷ As Catherine Ashton remarked upon his arrival, under Savolainen’s leadership, EUPOL would “focus more on training (specialized and leadership training)”, and it would seek “even closer cooperation with NATO and its training mission” (EU Delegation 15.07.2010). Concerning NTM-A-EUPOL relations, Savolainen commented after his mission that “improved relations with the main contributor, NATO Training Mission”, which gave him “direct contacts with several Afghan ministers and many leaders in the field of civilian policing and rule of law”, “may have been [his] most important achievement” (Ministry of Defence of Finland).

²⁰⁵ Interview with UK police officer, EUPOL compound Kabul, 15.11.2011.

²⁰⁶ Phone interview with former EUPOL officer, 05.05.2012.

²⁰⁷ Prior to this assignment, Savolainen had worked in the Finnish Ministry of the Interior as Assistant Department Director at the Finnish Border Guard Headquarters, and he was promoted to Brigadier General upon his arrival at the head of EUPOL. See <http://valtioneuvosto.fi/ajankohtaista/tiedotteet/tiedote/fi.jsp?oid=298879>. Accessed on 09.11.2015.

One of the most visible results of EUPOL's cooperation with NTM-A was that both organizations jointly developed a curriculum of ANP senior leadership. Another field was "gender integration" within the ANP: EUPOL teamed with New Zealand's PRT in Bamiyan province, where, according to an NTM-A White paper, "EUPOL was well suited to serve as the lead agency for the Bamiyan Police Training Center and reinforce gender integration in the ANP" (NTM-A/CST-A 2011: 10).

Going beyond EUPOL's relations with NTM-A, several smaller projects could be accomplished under Savolainen's leadership. For instance EUPOL started in 2010 to implement a project for an ombudsman office against human rights complaints against the police (Office of the Police Ombudsman - OPO). Five offices were set up in Mazar-e Sharif, Bamiyan, Kabul, Herat and Jalalabad with the help of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. While Vittrup had taken pride in EUPOL's official status as lead nation for 75,000 police out of (at the time) 136,000, Savolainen's approach was based on the assessment that leadership was "beyond EUPOL's capacities. However, what we can do is *concepts*, and the Afghans execute them".²⁰⁸

One of Savolainen's most important legacies is to have refocused EUPOL on linking up the sectors of policing and justice, based on the assessment that EUPOL could not credibly work on civilian policing if trained policemen and women would systematically fail to interact with (or even entirely ignore) the justice sector; EUPOL-trained police would, for instance, learn how to conduct an investigation and establish evidence, but the police would then have no knowledge about points of contact in the Justice sector. As Article 3 of the 2007 mandate read that EUPOL should "ensure appropriate interaction with the wider criminal justice system" and would work towards the establishment of a police, which should work "within the framework of the rule of law", Savolainen's initiative could count on the active support of Germany (Council Joint Action 2007/369/CFSP).²⁰⁹

An important project in this regard is the Coordination of Police and Prosecutors (CoPP). Financed by the Dutch government since 2010, conducted by the

²⁰⁸ Phone interview with French EUPOL officer, 20.04.2013.

²⁰⁹ Phone interview with former EUPOL officer, 05.05.2012.

GIZ (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit*)²¹⁰ and EUPOL on behalf of the Auswärtiges Amt, CoPP aimed to better coordinate police and prosecutors. By February 2012, some 250 police officers and prosecutors from 26 of 34 Afghan regions had undergone training in twelve such courses.²¹¹ In total, the CoPP project is estimated to have trained roughly 700 police officers and prosecutors from all 34 Afghan provinces (see EZ Afghanistan 2015). The training was run over three years and is estimated to have targeted about 1000 regional and district Criminal Investigation Department (CID) officers and prosecutors.²¹²

However, some Member States, notably France, were skeptical vis-à-vis this move towards Justice. In 2011, France circulated a non-paper to correct what it deemed a deviation of what should be EUPOL's focus, i.e. police training. Some countries, mostly Northern European, considered that EUPOL should also train and educate magistrates, judges and attorneys. The French position was different, and based on budgetary calculations: "We thought that given our limited means in Afghanistan, EUPOL should stick to training the police".²¹³ At the end EUPOL settled for a role of *facilitation*: EUPOL would try to facilitate the interface between justice and policing, but not take care of the justice sector as a whole.

This meant EUPOL's role in justice was only to define mechanisms by which police and attorneys could interact, and to identify a modus operandi of this cooperation and Standard Operating Procedures: A small niche where EUPOL could, in the expression of one British EUPOL officer, "punch hard on a narrow front".²¹⁴ This type of focusing led to projects like the Police Prosecutor Cooperation Manual, which the below section on EUPOL's output discusses. Before turning to outputs, however, one last paragraph is in order to mention EUPOL's difficult institutional make-up. The difficulty to make swift decisions in the CSDP framework are a rather well known problem concerning, and the clash between different logics of crisis management this leads to was already covered in Chapter 3. Nevertheless, a few words seem in order.

²¹⁰ *Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* translates into German Corporation for International Cooperation.

²¹¹ <http://www.ez-afghanistan.de/en/publications/press-releases/press-release/article/improving-coordination-between-police-and-prosecutors.html>. Accessed on 28.10.2015.

²¹² See EUPOL AFGHANISTAN. EUPOL-GIZ CoPP Project. <http://www.eupol-afg.eu/node/288>. Accessed on 10.11.2014.

²¹³ Interview with French diplomat, Paris, 11.08.2012.

²¹⁴ Interview with EUPOL trainer at the EUPOL Staff College, Kabul, 14.12.2011.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, missions like EUPOL operate under the authority of the PSC, which brings together representatives at ambassadorial level of all the MS.²¹⁵ Because it can be such a complicated process to bring the ambassadors to agree on clear policies, statements such as EUPOL HOM Kai Vittrup' following quote are not surprising: "If we had to follow all the rules, we would have never commenced. Given the high inertia that exists in the system of the EU, the war would have been over before we would obtain the green light from Brussels" (Courrier International 15.11.2010). The director of the CPCC, as EU Civilian Operations Commander,

"exercises command and control at strategic level for the planning and conduct of all civilian crisis management operations [such as EUPOL], under the political control and strategic direction of the Political and Security Committee (PSC) and the overall authority of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton".²¹⁶

The difficulties that result from this "multi-principal situation" have often been analyzed and are not new (Wallace, Young and Pollack 2010). One notable problem is that the "iterations of EU decision-making involve the constant weighing of pros and cons, bargains and compromises: a little bit of this for the Greeks and a little bit of that for the Poles", in Jolyon Howorth's words – and this greatly affects Brussels' ability to follow closely the situations in the field: Concerning EUPOL, the ECA has noted that while

"the EEAS has produced about 50 concept papers and guidelines relevant to EUPOL activities, EUPOL staff in Kabul expressed concerns that, although the documentation provides basic guidance (definitions and theoretical aspects), it is not particularly helpful for practical purposes. For example, the guideline on the implementation of benchmarking does not discuss in detail how to proceed at each stage, e.g. how to carry out a proper needs assessment or situation analysis. Nor does it give examples or templates that would facilitate the implementation of the methodology proposed" (Howorth 2011a: 10-11; ECA 2015: 21).

²¹⁵ See Fescharek 2015b for some elements of the following section.

²¹⁶ EEAS. Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC). http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/structures-instruments-agencies/cpcc/index_en.htm. Accessed on 06.11.2015. See also Chapter 3.

6.4. EUPOL's output and outcome

This final section deals with EUPOL's output and outcome. *Outputs* can be defined as the services and/or goods that are produced by a particular activity or project. Ideally, these outputs generate *outcomes*, which can be defined as a benefit for a certain target audience. When it comes to EUPOL's output and outcomes, the already-quoted ECA Special Report writes:

“EUPOL has been partly effective in delivering its mandate. Improvements were more notable in two of EUPOL's three main lines of operation. Concerning its activities, EUPOL has been largely successful in training but less so in mentoring and advising. Projects have had a limited contribution to the mission's objectives. While external factors may provide some explanation for this, other shortcomings can be attributed to EUPOL itself” (ECA 2015: 33).

ECA further notes with regard to the advancement of institutional MoI reform, EUPOL's Line of Operation 1, “the national police have made significant steps towards the development of civilian policing but they remain a highly militaristic organization” (ECA 2015: 22).

The ANP's rampant militarization has been described and analyzed abundantly (Cordesman 2010; Friesendorf 2011, 2013; Friesendorf and Krempel 2011; Gross 2009b; Peral 2009; Perito 2009; Planty and Perito 2013; Larivé 2012). Peter Kraska has provided a useful distinction between material indicators (such as weapons and technologies used by a given police force), cultural indicators (such as specific vocabulary, outward appearance and belief systems), organizational indicators (the use of Special Weapons and tactics – SWAT – teams and command centers that have a military style) and operational indicators (military-style gathering of intelligence, surveillance and high-risk missions) (see Kraska 2007 and Friesendorf 2011). Namely the FDD project (see Chapter 5) contributed to ANP's paramilitarization, which was flooded with AK-47s, 9mm pistols, machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades and armored vehicles (Friesendorf 2011: 86).

Many US trainers were either active or former soldiers, and ANP was given command structures that turned “regular ANP units into groups resembling special police forces” (ibid.), deployed for ‘high-risk missions’ in insurgency-affected areas. Thus, FDD's curriculum focused “heavily on the use of weapons and IED

(improvised explosive device) awareness, and seven out of eight weeks were devoted to military tactics, as opposed to one week for basic police skills” (ibid.).

As the ECA further notes in its report,

“While the Ministry of the Interior has produced many internal policy statements, to date few have been implemented countrywide. (...) Despite EUPOL’s support, gender and human rights concerns have recently surfaced as issues within the Ministry of the Interior. For example, women still account for only 2 % of national police officers” (ECA 2015: 22).

On EUPOL’s second Line of Operation, the professionalization of the ANP, it is appropriate to take a look at EUPOL’s concept of “community policing”, which “focuses on police building ties and working closely with the citizens”. ECA notes the concept

“has been partially implemented at a basic level in some areas and the concept is generally accepted as the desired model for future policing in Afghanistan” (ECA 2015: 22-23).

This may be so, but one should not forget that EUPOL’s “community policing” projects were very small scale. For instance, EUPOL ran a “community policing” project in Kabul, called PD3 (Police District 3), but in 2011, this was happening in *one* district in the capital and it was brought to only a few districts beyond Kabul since. The German police infrastructure in the north seems to have been one of the most advanced examples of a “community policing” philosophy; together with the GIZ and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, BMZ), GPPT worked to promote the concept; in 2011, the BMZ was running a Rule of Law program in the northern districts. As Jürgen Salow, head of GIZ in Afghanistan, explained in an interview, “these sporadic meetings deal with the concept of ‘community policing’, where we want to strengthen the link between the police and the community. You have to imagine something like ‘town hall meetings’”.²¹⁷

This particular program elaborated judicial texts, which GIZ would bring to the districts via alphabetization campaigns. Germany offered such alphabetization

²¹⁷ Interview with Jürgen Salow, GIZ compound, Kabul, 07.12.2011.

courses for ANP since 2009, which made it possible to offer courses on Human Rights in Policing with partner organizations. As Captain A. Heather Coyne, NTM-A's NGO and International Organization liaison officer, said during an interview,

“EUPOL pushed ‘community policing’ from the beginning, saying the [US] Army had militarized the police. They were the big voice for community policing. Some of the NGOs and research organizations were saying the same thing. But nobody was making NTM-A change, because NTM-A had most of the money and if you didn't convince NTM-A then nothing of these things that were happening around the edges would have an impact.”²¹⁸

Similarly, a British EUPOL trainer remarked,

“we are basically trying to exist in a paramilitary organization. The guys from NTM-A will always say ‘yes community policing is the right thing – do more of it’, but it still takes too much time to break through all the barriers. Because there are legal issues and funding issues. The US Senate funding is supposed to go to direct support to Afghan National Security Forces. So when we say ‘Police-Community Consultations’, they say we cannot give things like tea, materials or training to the *civilians*, because we can only give them to police. And we say ‘we are not giving these things to the civilians, we are just creating an environment where the police can do what they are supposed to do.’ But they don't get it.”²¹⁹

As Captain A. Heather Coyne remarked:

“For the police-community sports [an initiative to build trust between the police and the wider population], where joined teams are supposed to train together, they said ‘we can't use the coaches to train the community-members, because then we are providing a benefit to the community members, when we are *only* supposed to train the police’. They wouldn't see that this is a *part* of the police job, that anything you do to help the police deal with the community is direct support to the police. But they saw it as being a benefit to the public. It's just stupid.”²²⁰

EUPOL's Field Office in Herat is one of the places where EUPOL has tried to bring the concept of “community policing” into local communities beyond Kabul through “Community Policing courses” and training (EUPOL May 2015). On the whole, however, though EUPOL's insistence on “community policing” and “civilian policing” was never dismissed as such by any Afghan interlocutor, most of them argued “[our] country is not there yet”, and it is highly questionable whether the

²¹⁸ Interview with A. Heather Coyne, ISAF HQ NATO, 04.11.2011.

²¹⁹ Interview with EUPOL mentor, EUPOL compound, 01.12.2011.

²²⁰ Interview with A. Heather Coyne, ISAF HQ NATO, 04.11.2011.

concept will be an orientation for the ANP in the currently very tense security situation of ethnic tensions, appearances of IS fighters, and thug wars (see Al Jazeera 01.11.2015, 12.10.2015 and 23.10.2015).²²¹

Another concept EUPOL insisted on was so-called “intelligence-led policing” (ILP). ILP aims to “anticipate crime trends and proactively create prevention strategies while at the same time respecting citizens’ privacy rights” (Guidetti and Martinelli 2015). It calls for the organization of information in a preventive, not only reactive way. However, as ECA notes, though there are some conceptual successes, such as the fact that “[i]ntelligence-led policing has (...) been accepted as an effective tool to professionalise the national police”, ILP “is not used countrywide” (ECA 2015: 22-23). In fact, serious capacity issues hamper ILP implementation:

“Examination of crime data indicates that Afghan criminal police investigators have limited capacity to investigate and detect crime. The technical capacity and leadership ability of the criminal investigation department remains underdeveloped due to lack of information sharing and inadequate training records. The relationship between police officers and prosecutors is often weak and ineffective. The national police and the Attorney General have been encouraged and supported by the international community to cooperate both institutionally and operationally. Overall, the level of cooperation has improved but the number of cases referred by the Police to the Attorney General remains low. The police have shown that they are able to carry out large-scale operations in a professional manner (providing a secure environment to hold the recent elections was a great achievement), but *further assistance is needed with everyday policing, particularly the efficiency of response*” (ECA 2015: 22-23).

Finally, concerning the third Line of Operation, (connecting the ANP to justice reform), the report notes that though “limited support received from the international community”, the security situation, the insurgency, “lack of professionalism, inadequately trained prosecutors and corruption” are also to blame, this

“has been the most challenging area for EUPOL to show results. (...) Cooperation between police and prosecutors remains limited, and there are many challenges and gaps at institutional and individual level, especially in connection with the prosecution of corruption among high ranking officials. It is still difficult to protect and to enforce the rights of defendants and suspects in Afghanistan. With regard to

²²¹ Focus Group Discussion with ANP recruits on Training Center in Mazar-e Sharif, 11.12.2011.

the drafting, adoption and enforcement of criminal legislation, there has been some progress but basic international requirements in the areas of rule of law, anti-corruption and human rights have still not been met” (ECA 2015: 23).

In total, by late 2014, EUPOL had “developed and delivered” about 1,400 training courses for about 31,000 trainees (ECA 2015: 24).

6.4.a. The Staff College and the Police-Prosecutor Cooperation Manual

Apart from police numbers, two other EUPOL outputs, namely EUPOL’s Staff College and the “Police-Prosecutor Cooperation Manual”, can be noted. The Staff College has been dubbed a “milestone in the transfer of the police education system to Afghan leadership”, a “real success story”, including by EUPOL’s deputy HoM Geoffrey Cooper (ECA 2015: 24; EUPOL 10.10.2011). The Staff College opened in July 2010, and first courses were held on the facilities of the Afghan Border Police, but after EUSR Vygaudas Usackas signed a contract worth € 15 million with the IOM on 18 October 2011 for the building of a Police Staff College and a Regional Police Training Center (RPTC), the cornerstone was laid for the Staff College’s “permanent home” on 26 November 2011 (EUPOL 18.10.2011; EUPOL 31.03.2012). In 2012, EUPOL claimed to have trained 2,400 students on its facilities offering space for 300 students, with over 30 different courses, “ranging from conflict management to media engagement, and up to 250 students are enrolled at the same time” (ibid.). At the end of March 2012, i.e. only a few months after opening, 41 ANP trainers and 25 national and international trainers from EUPOL were organizing the courses (ibid.). According to EUPOL’s website, the Staff College “is about delivering high quality training, and not so much about high numbers of graduates. EUPOL is focusing more on the development of senior leaders, ranking from Lieutenant to General” (ibid.). Together with the Crime Management College (another € 3 million EU investment to provide “more efficient and up-to-date specialist criminal investigation training of a professional and committed Afghan National Police”) the Staff College is said to have educated 13,000 Afghan national police students since late 2010 (ibid.).

Lastly, to the Police-Prosecutor Cooperation Manual (PPCM) can be mentioned as one of the most concrete illustrations we have of EUPOL's training and mentoring activity. The PPCM, presented by the EU as a "milestone in the progressive consolidation of an evidence based criminal justice system" (EUPOL July 2012), was put in place with significant input from Finland.²²² The idea of the manual first surfaced in January 2009, and in April 2009, the Afghan Ministry of Interior and the Attorney General's Office jointly requested the Finnish government to fund this project through EUPOL.²²³ Examples in the PPCM are very concrete and mostly self-explanatory. The manual is aimed at the higher, literate ranks that EUPOL deals with. Some examples are provided below:

"Imagine you are a CID supervisor called Nasraddin. You are called to the PD [Police District] reception to talk to Sheirkhan, a villager who came to your PD to make a complaint about his cousin, Ikramulla. Sheirkhan says that he inherited a piece of land from his grandfather, but that Ikramullah claims it is his. "He's a thief!", he alleges. "Go and arrest him!" What is your reaction?" (Chapter 1, page 24).

Other examples ask participants to look up articles of the Constitution, try to communicate basic facts about police-prosecutor cooperation (for example, understanding "the difference between detection (*kashf*) and investigation (*tahqeeq*) set out in Article 134 AC and the respective roles of police and prosecutors during those stages") or provide cases studies with fictitious characters:

"Idress Aziz is Nasraddin's boss, the head of PD3. He is a 45-year-old experienced police officer, a *samunwal* (Colonel). He is hard working and friendly, and diligently carries out his duties. Idress does not feel at ease unless he fulfills his duties. He always respects his colleagues and maintains close contact with them. He respects Samuniar Nasraddin's expertise from the field and is always ready to support him. Idress has two young daughters and gets particularly angry when he witnesses violence against women and children" (Chapter 1, page 38).

In sum, the PPCM chapters give an overview of police prosecutor coordination, or advice on how to behave on a crime scene, how to process crime related information, and they give basic instructions about forensics and instruct Afghan police on

²²² See EUPOL AFGHANISTAN. Police-Prosecutor Cooperation Manual. <http://www.eupol-afg.eu/node/290>. Accessed on 03.11.2015

²²³ See EUPOL AFGHANISTAN. Police-Prosecutor Cooperation Manual now under Afghan ownership. <http://www.eupol-afg.eu/node/366>. Accessed on 03.11.2015.

prosecutor led investigations. Therefore, if the PPCM is presented as a “milestone”, it is also clear that this highly technical project symbolizes by the same token that a more “political” role for EUPOL, for instance the coordination or leadership role in policing mentioned above, was shelved.

One final output that needs to be presented is arguably the least tangible aspects of EUPOL’s output, namely mentoring.

6.4.b. Mentoring

As was said above, under Savolainen’s leadership EUPOL settled on a triple task of police training, linking justice and police, and mentoring. EUPOL’s mentoring practices deserve to be examined in more detail, because they reveal much about the way the EU positions itself and the limitations its influence encounters in Kabul. In general terms, mentoring has been described as a long-term relationship between persons, an “intimate, informal, friendship-like” relationship “as opposed to more prescribed forms of teaching, coaching, and supervision” (Rosén 2011: 153). Thus, the mentor is a “transitional figure who bridges life experiences in the reflexive knowledge-based production modes of modern liberal society” (ibid). Mentoring “can thus be seen as an attempt to accelerate “the circulation of knowledge to allow individuals to mature at greater speed” (ibid).

As Rosén argues the practice of mentoring during the era of post-1989 liberal interventions “has become the effective soft touch, the gentle civilizer, the many-father-home of liberal governance – also in statebuilding” (ibid). As such, mentoring is often described as discursive technology or a Foucauldian power technique, which turns the “receiving” individual or “mentee” into a toehold of liberal reform (Merlingen 2011; Foucault 2008). Michael Merlingen, who has written about European mentoring practices in Macedonia and EUPM in Bosnia and Herzegovina, sees a “CSDP technology of mentoring”: CSDP experts familiarize themselves with local conditions and ways of doing things, and this

“intimate knowledge of indigenous work routines based on near-permanent surveillance is important in the first, disciplinary phase of mentoring. It empowers mission experts to establish to what extent local staff conform to international and EU best practices, the promotion of which is the telos of virtually all civilian CSDP missions” (Merlingen 2011: 160).

Thus, mentoring is the EU “low-key way of correction”, based on a “truthful assessment” of mentees’ job performance via hand-on advice (ibid). It is easy to see that “EU mentoring” can be easily squared with archetypical portrayals of the CSDP as pursuing “milieu goals”, an expression of “a new form of power based on normative suasion” or a way of wielding influence by example, inclusion and arguing (Wolfers 1962; Youngs 2010b: 1; Risse 2000). Hence, for many academic authors mentors are the agents and promoters of liberal reform through which recipient states are effectively reshaped from the individual upwards.

To find out more about EUPOL’s mentoring practices, several interviews were conducted between 2011 and 2013 with EUPOL mentors. Contrasted with Afghan realities, the academic conceptualizations quoted above need to be recalibrated. EUPOL’s mentoring handbook is interesting in this regard. The 2015 Evaluation Report notes:

“Despite mentoring being one of EUPOL’s key activities, the mission had to develop its own mentoring handbook. However, this was done only in April 2013 [i.e. almost six years into the mission], as a compilation of existing concepts, methodologies and best practices adapted to the realities faced by EUPOL mentors” (ECA 2015: 21).

The report found that “EUPOL’s mentoring and advising did contribute to improving the professional skills of individuals employed at the relevant Afghan institutions (national police, Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Justice (ECA 2015: 25). However, despite being such an important part of EUPOL’s activity, mentoring was among the less successful EUPOL activities because of “significant shortcomings”:

“The selection of mentoring positions was not duly documented in the mentoring files. In none of the six files reviewed did the audit find a structured explanation giving the arguments for selecting the particular mentee. It is therefore difficult to establish with any certainty whether EUPOL targeted the most relevant positions for its mentoring, monitoring and advising. Neither was there an analysis of the perceived Afghan capacity gap or, consequently, a plan for addressing specific weaknesses”. (ECA 2015: 7, 26).

Some of EUPOL's, GPPT's and ANCOP's mentors underlined that in addition to issues concerning the choice of mentees, it was also difficult for EUPOL to stay in touch or learn about how training is applied in the field: "We are always happy when we see one of our mentees again, some years further down the line – but in most cases, we basically lose contact with them when they finish training".²²⁴ In addition to such issues the report quoted above deplored EUPOL did

"not put in place, on a systematic basis, clear and consistent handover procedures to ensure the smooth continuation of activity and avoidance of gaps and digressions that could jeopardise the mentoring relationship. The Court found that handover depended very much on the individual mentor and was often hampered by the late arrival of the new mentor and the absence of procedural consistency" (ibid.)

Interviews largely confirm this picture, though one may add that the EUPOL mission's eternal staffing shortfalls have also gravely affected EUPOL's mentoring practice to become satisfactory: EUPOL's handful of mentors, despite their often-advantageous position in the MoI, were always seriously under-represented compared to the several hundreds of US mentors in Afghan security institutions. In addition, while there seems to have existed an understanding between CSTC-A and EUPOL in the years before the Strasbourg NATO summit that US and EU mentors would go to their Afghan counter parts jointly, some EUPOL mentors indicated that "we could routinely see in the eyes of the minister that he was familiar with the US PowerPoint slides – he had been briefed prior to our meetings."²²⁵

Moreover, EUPOL's generous "rest and recreation" rules often made sure that European mentors would be on a two-week holiday every two months. This made it very difficult to speak of "friendship-like" relations or "permanent surveillance" of local counterparts (see above). One EUPOL mentor pointed out that because of the operational way Ministers of the Interior often conceived of their ministry, i.e. extensively traveling across the country and visiting police stations, EUPOL mentoring was severely hampered in its usefulness, because of the strict rules EUPOL imposed on its staff. As described above, EUPOL's mentoring ambitions were downscaled over the years: While EUPOL used to be involved in the shaping of organization charts, mentoring ambitions were lowered to "facilitating inter-Unit

²²⁴ Interview with EUPOL trainer, EUPOL Staff College, 14.12.2011.

²²⁵ Interview with EUPOL Mentor, EUPOL compound, Kabul, 15.11.2011.

communication and streamlining certain procedures”.²²⁶ All in all, as the already-cited report states, EUPOL’s mentoring record, though obviously difficult to measure, does not seem to have left a deep impact, and many of EUPOL’s mentors themselves have expressed doubts that their 6- or 12-months stints were able to create lasting impact.

One final argument about outputs and outcomes concerns, of course, the question of “sustainability”. Already in 2010, the World Bank wrote that the “extremely high level of current annual aid (estimated at \$15.7 billion in 2010) [was] roughly the same dollar amount as Afghanistan’s GDP and [would not] be sustained” and more recently, an EEAS paper (“Revised Concept of Operations for EUPOL Afghanistan”) from June 2014 stated that a staggering 86 % of the budget of the Ministry of the Interior and the national police were still provided by international donors (World Bank 2011: 1; ECA 2015: 29). Anthony Cordesman, who has published several studies on the ANSF, summed up the three main challenges for the future in a 2014 report: “[I]t is unclear what overall structure the ANP will have after the end of 2014, what kind of training efforts will exist after Transition, and what types of outside aid will be provided” (Cordesman 2014: 139). Donor commitments, in particular from the EU, are currently slated to last at least until 2016, but this does not change much about the fact that international police efforts will leave behind an MoI that presents

“major problems in terms of overall competence, corruption, leadership, extortion and civil abuses, and ties to powerbrokers and narco-traffickers. Some elements make deals with insurgents. The ANP presents additional problems because it is not supported by an effective justice system in most of the country, courts are also corrupt, the legal system is slow and unresponsive, detention methods lead to abuses, and detention facilities are poor or lacking” (Cordesman 2014: 139).

In sum, despite years of international commitment, “there is a serious risk the ANSF will fragment or collapse because of ethnic, sectarian, tribal, and regional differences” (Cordesman 2014: 5). This obviously is not EUPOL’s fault alone (EUPOL was too insignificant to be blamed for the failure of overall SSR) but it helps to put its rhetoric in perspective. For instance, a July 2015 note on EUPOL’s website stated EUPOL “faced needless ‘competition’ from other structures”, such as

²²⁶ Phone interview with former EUPOL officer, 05.05.2012.

“NTM-A, a Nato police-training project” (EUPOL Afghanistan 08.07.2015).

The fact of the matter is, as this chapter has tried to show, that European states de facto never put the EUPOL mission in a position to live up to the four Collective Foreign Policy Potentials. The words of the 2011 House of Lords report on EUPOL are therefore still valid: the

“mission was too late, too slow to get off the ground once the decision was made, and too small to achieve its aim; or perhaps, worst, too small to receive respect from other actors. This was an opportunity for Europe to pull its weight in Afghanistan in a discipline and skills area where it had great expertise. In this, despite the dedication and risks taken by those on the ground, the EU’s Member States have not (...) succeeded” (House of Lords 16.02.2011: 8).

6.5. Conclusion

This chapter was based on the premise that while NATO has always been plagued by conflicts over burden sharing, the more interesting story lies elsewhere (Sloan 2010): The often overlooked fact that Europe has managed to opt out of a global security role all the while rhetorically committing to it for more than two decades. The renunciation to a truly autonomous role for CSDP in security is essentially the result of lacking political will; though most MS “talk the talk” of “security actorness”, they opt out from a role for which the EU is not deemed fit (Santopinto and Price 2013).

As this chapter has shown, it is difficult to argue that EUPOL offers a fundamentally different approach to state building from the US’ vision, for two reasons: Firstly, the MS never allowed EUPOL to have a clear vision and mandate in the first place; goal conflicts and compromises accompanied the mission, which is currently mandated until 31 December 2016, from the start. This resulted in ambiguous mandates and this highly compromised nature of EUPOL makes it difficult to speak of a “European model” in its own right. Police interlocutors of this author therefore preferred to speak of a “policing influence” rather than a “European influence”. Second, the arguments that the EU is focused on the long term, or that the MS approach the challenges of security and post-conflict reconstruction much differently than the US need to be put in perspective: EUPOL’s collaboration with – and contribution to – NTM-A’s goals and efforts seriously undermines this proposition. All in all, this makes it difficult to suggest the MS collectively play “Athens” to the immature “Rome”, because it results in shaping based on *savoir-faire*, not a political project.

Hence, it is better to view missions such as EUPOL not as the ability to propose a European security project, but as the expression of another type of ability: That of not being taken too seriously as a collective player in international security, or to stay clear of a significant role. The example of EUPOL is no isolated case; as much

other research on CSDP missions has shown, CSDP missions have generally not been ambitious and their impact is marginal (Howorth 2014).

There are at least two wider implications, one for academia and one for policy. First, a “soft power Europe” is a contradiction in terms because it is conditional on strategic dependence, which MS inertia greatly contributes to, complements and thus de facto (though not as a purposeful strategy) perpetuates.²²⁷ If the MS have traditionally been the most vocal proponents of an international rules-based order (the *Verrechtlichung* of international relations), they are also, paradoxically, the most important supporters of a world order based on US preponderance, precisely because their unwillingness to become a credible security actor themselves perpetuates the US’ lead.

This is what Riccardo Alcaro and Ondrej Ditrych call the “European paradox”, namely that “the EU countries’ striving to reduce the role of power and augment that of rules in international relations (...) is offset by their determination to remain committed to the US bond or, which is the same, dependent on US power” (Alcaro and Ditrych 2014: 13). It is in this sense that collective political autonomy in security seems impossible as long as the MS does not share sovereignty.

Despite all of its economic and military resources, the EU is collectively predisposed to act as a niche player within the lead of a third state or organization. European insistence to defer to the UN, for instance in Africa, as a framework organization may actually be a necessity more than a choice: With its difficulty to agree on clear common strategies (chapter 3), its difficulties to proact (chapter 4), shape its security environment (5) and/or act in autonomy, the MS play a complementing role (see Conclusion).

Consequently, if the MS choose to selectively complement a US lead or opt out of it if it requires “walking the walk”, beefing up defense spending etc., this means that European self-depictions as a “soft power” are sloppy thinking: Even if EUPOL officials can rightly argue they are not responsible for turning ANP into a paramilitary organization (which may come to haunt Afghanistan’s near future), they

²²⁷ This is, of course, an innuendo to Hedley Bull’s famous quote that “civilian power Europe” is a contradiction in terms because “the power or influence exerted by the European Community and other such civilian actors [is] conditional upon a strategic environment provided by the military power of states, which they [do] not control” (Bull 1982: 151).

still participated in it; though often insisting on differences, they still actively subscribed to the project. Thus, Mawdsley and Kempin correctly suggest that the US' "hard power in the form of military hegemony might be intrinsically attractive, rather than merely coercive", and this "sits unhappily with mainstream understandings of hard and soft power in the academic literature" (Mawdsley and Kempin 2013: 58).

The same is true concerning "human security" (see Chapter 2). Especially after the Obama surge, the MS never elevated this "people-centered" concept into a strategic "European" approach, and EUPOL focused on assisting the US in "elite building". With their parallel support to the Afghan army and their propping up of what has now become an Afghan army with over 189,000 personnel, including slightly under 11,000 Special Forces, and an Afghan Air Force of about 6,800 personnel with a fleet of 102 fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft, the MS cannot reasonably claim to be the prime exporters of a specific "human security"-centered approach via CSDP (NATO 10.04.2014).

Outside of EUPOL, individual European states have supported warlords, "supported government restrictions on political parties" or "indulged in electoral fraud that favoured the incumbent President Karzai" (Youngs 2010b: 89). In short, though it was a small-scale mission, EUPOL has clearly helped empower "incumbent elites" via the build-up of the security apparatus, while "(o)nly six per cent of the Commission's aid budget is spent on 'conflict prevention and state fragility'" (Youngs 2010b: 86, 84). This is the opposite of "people-centered" security (Schroeder 2009: 502).

What this means is that academic writers would be well advised to stop taking EU rhetoric at face value. Both CSDP's critics and its enthusiastic supporters too often mistake "EU rhetoric for reality and fail[] to see that, in practice, the EU is not following through in its support for liberal international values" (Youngs 2010b: 2).

Chapter 7. Conclusion

7.1. The empirical arguments in a theoretical perspective

Concerning itself with the performance of the MS as a collective “foreign policy actor” in the domain of international security, this dissertation has analyzed the MS’ contributions to security provision during the Afghan military campaign (2001-2015). While the MS displayed no will to fully realize the four Collective Foreign Policy Potentials as part of a common European policy, the MS were nevertheless able to add significant value to security provision in Afghanistan. During the later phase of the Afghan intervention, the MS added important *savoir-faire* to the US-led COIN campaign via a *role convergence by default*. Though this was not the expression of a “European policy”, the parallel contributions of the MS added significant value complementing, co-shaping or reacting to an external lead. This amounted to a partial fulfillment of two of the Collective Foreign Policy Potentials: Instead of collectively proacting and shaping, the MS contributed, reacted and co-shaped on an opt-in/opt-out basis.

The European states therefore acted like “potluck strategists”, offering what they could find in stock and largely leaving the cooking of the “meal” (the campaign) to the US Americans, even though the latter often seemed unsure themselves about the “recipe” (or strategy). In sum, there had to be no convergence of European strategic cultures, and there had to be no specific European political project for the MS to develop approaches that resulted in a collective European *de facto* role in security, a role by default. The below section briefly sums up the findings on each of the four Collective Foreign Policy Potentials and recaps the theoretical underpinning.

To start with what we called the “actorness” and the “proactiveness” potentials, we saw that the MS framed their relations with the US, the purpose of NATO and the intervention very differently during the early years of the campaign. Without a clear US lead, they did not coordinate sufficiently to agree to specific

European strategies and failed to put a state building project of their own on the agenda. Instead, they engaged in numerous micro-projects in state building during the early years, triggering the Americanization of all sectors of SSR and therefore relinquishing agenda setting in the area of state building to the US. When the US started putting in more resources and political capital into the campaign, the MS waited for this lead to become manifest. They allowed NATO's role to evolve conceptually and *re-acted* to the growing Americanization of the war by adding value in niches.

When it came to shaping, it was more appropriate to speak of “co-shaping” in carefully chosen niches: Under renewed US leadership, different European *savoir-faire* were bound together and streamlined better than before, and had therefore more impact on the ground. Under the Obama administration's lead, the MS' approaches and strategic cultures obviously still diverged; however, now their opt-ins were embedded politically, better coordinated and supported by more capable military US infrastructure: Using this foreign lead in reaction to the insurgency, the MS' attempts at shaping became individually more efficient and collectively more streamlined. Importantly, this co-shaping happened on the operational, not the strategic level.

Regarding “autonomy”, the MS were militarily dependent on US military infrastructure and made no attempt to act autonomously in the regions where they oversaw a significant PRT infrastructure. During the early years of “peacekeeping”, their military outposts needed US military air support in cases of emergency, and their later COIN operations were often only possible because the US provided them with an influx of capacity. However, they enjoyed considerable decisional autonomy to opt out from a more significant engagement. The national caveats showed that the MS were able to resist US demands, and EUPOL was an example where the MS collectively underperformed compared to what they promised they would deliver. Again, this was not based on a European policy to underperform; it happened by default, as an accumulation of individual national policies.

Going beyond the empirical argument, this dissertation also advanced a theoretical-conceptual argument: Far from being an impediment to a European role in security and defense, the absence of a European policy project acted as an important

enabler of behavioral convergence once a US lead could be relied upon. Behavioral convergence in security and defense occurred despite strategic cultural divergence. It consisted of, and was driven by, joined-up *action* on an opt-in/opt-out basis as long as collective European *policy* was not necessary.

This is in contradiction with great parts of the literature, which has long argued that a European strategic culture (and a European security and defense policy more widely) must come either as the result of convergence between national strategic cultures, the integration of “European logics” into domestic policy making or a move toward institutional integration (bottom-up), the effect of “coercion” or socialization and learning processes induced at the level of the European Council (top-down), or the gradual diffusion of norms that impact all MS (cross-loading or horizontal) (see Chapters 1, 2 and 3).

Hence, the way this dissertation contributes to theoretical academic debates is that it not only identifies the major problems with this literature, but also proposes an analytical alternative: Firstly, many authors interested in European security and defense only look to the political dimension of policy convergence (i.e., the creation of common policies), without which the concept of “Europeanization” arguably makes little sense. However, seeking to analyze the creation of common policies, they fail to take into account the behavioral convergence that is *a-political*: The behavioral convergence described here was a very technical phenomenon devoid of a common *European* project. To paraphrase Bastien Irondelle, this is not “Europeanization without the EU” (Irondelle 2011), but “behavioral convergence without European politics”.

Therefore, the main theoretical-conceptual contribution this dissertation makes is this: It shows the apolitical nature of defense and security cooperation is not necessarily an impediment, but can be an important driver of behavioral convergence in European security and defense. If what is called here role convergence by default is not a function of cultural convergence but happens despite continued cultural divergence, this means we must not look for Europeanization in security and defense as a cultural or political convergence process. Rather, we should look to “constellations” and favorable “alignments of stars”, i.e. alignment of behaviors (or

policies) in reaction to events. Kosovo and Afghanistan were such events, and looking around in early 2016, one can easily spot a handful of possible successor candidates lining up on the horizon.

These findings beg important questions: Given that this is a single-case study, can the findings and arguments of this dissertation be generalized and how can they be embedded in the wider context of the MS' post-1989 rhetoric of playing a security role in their wider neighborhood? What does the MS' great difficulty to act, proact and shape in autonomy mean for the EU as a whole?

When it comes to generalization, it is important to bear in mind that this dissertation used a “critical case” design: It argues that its findings are very *likely* to be “valid for all (or many) cases”, but it does not claim universal validity (Flyvbjerg 2006: 230). Hence, if the MS failed to shape and proact in Afghanistan, this does not “prove” that they *never* will be able to so. However, it is possible to make the statement that European collective proactivism and shaping in security happens (or fails) under precise circumstances, many of which this dissertation described and analyzed. Furthermore, though there are many other cases where the MS have tried to act, proact and shape with some degree of autonomy, the many problems the empirical literature singles out in this respect largely confirm the picture that emerges from this dissertation. Lastly, the dynamics of convergence “next to the EU” are congruent with the findings of other recent studies in European security and defense (see Hoeffler and Faure 2015b; Fescharek 2015a, and section 7.3).

7.2. Embedding the findings in a wider context

7.2.a. Moving beyond Afghanistan

The following section starts with a general overview of what seem to be the three central problems affecting the MS' collective actorness (the first Collective Foreign Policy potential), namely the glaring gap between the MS' growing global

security interests and their means to provide security guarantees for the status quo, the MS' low collective reactivity and their difficulty to produce "big picture" strategies. Next, the section briefly looks to other examples of EU/MS security policies on the international arena. It does not provide in-depth analysis of topics that would all require years of study; it simply illustrates that the dynamics and tendencies analyzed in this dissertation can be found in other cases. On the whole, there currently seems to be no example of a policy where the MS have collectively realized the four Collective Foreign Policy Potentials in the domain of security.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's military occupation of the Crimean Peninsula in March 2014, for instance, highlights a first major problem concerning the MS' collective foray into global foreign policy. The EU's and NATO's Eastern enlargements have brought the EU into Russia's backyard, and this always implied the possibility of some form of conflict, not only over Ukraine, but also over the EU's democracy promotion agenda, for instance (Hassner 2015). However, while European interconnectedness has grown and the EU has expanded eastward after its enlargement, its ability to provide autonomous security guarantees for the new EU members has not (Caddis 1998): If Eastern enlargement led to a concrete conflict with Russia over "spheres of influence", potentially extending into the new MS, there never were enough capabilities to guarantee the security order or draw a line (if such was the political decision, which is also questionable) and without asking for American security guarantees (Laïdi 2008). This is especially so in the context of the US' slow "pivot" away from Europe, which entails a substantial dismantlement of the military infrastructure in Europe (Meijer 2015; Tunsjø 2013).

A second major limitation in the MS' collective foreign policy adventure relates to the question of reactivity: Any strategy worth its name must be flexible enough to react to changing facts on the ground, but this is precisely where the MS encounter great difficulty: Engrossed as the EU is in a "maze of daily, nitty-gritty compromises and small steps, which an extremely complex decision-making process exacts from its members", EU foreign policy continues to be "mostly fixated upon its own workings and upon short or mid-term fixings" (Le Gloanec 2016). The Arab Spring is just one example that reveals the difficulties to react collectively to complex and moving situations. Though EEAS and Commission initiatives were greatly improved after a cacophonous start in 2011, the MS have continued to pursue

different priorities and policies next to EU-level initiatives, not only with respect to intervention in Libya, but also on issues ranging from irregular migration to the fighting of terrorism (Balfour 2012a and 2012b; Youngs 2014). To be sure, the US also struggles to make sense of the Arab Spring, but the uneasy co-existence of diverging national priorities and EU-level initiatives greatly disadvantages the EU when it comes to its ability to react collectively and with cohesion (Koenig 2012).

A third problem the MS and the EU encounter as a foreign policy actor in the “great game” of geopolitics is their difficulty to agree on a “big picture” strategy. Substantial European strategies on Russia or China have always been lacking, for instance, mostly because different MS maintain different relations with both countries and find it difficult to link their policies across policy items, for instance energy, trade and security (for Russia see Haukkala 2010; Debardeleben 2012; Nitoiu 2014; for China see Baker 2002; Crookes 2013; Kaya 2014). One consequence of this is “theateritis”, a term widely attributed to US General George C. Marshall, who complained about the pronounced tendency of his military commanders to see only as far as their own campaigns, losing sight of the bigger picture of World War II (Brands 2014: 208, footnote 23). The multitude of parallel security projects emanating from national initiatives or coalitions (a legal advisory mission in Georgia, a few training missions scattered around Africa, police mentoring in Afghanistan, a border security mission in Palestine and so on) most clearly expresses this. There is ample evidence that what has motivated the launch of a great deal of CSDP’s civilian or military missions were diverse national reasons: CSDP’s advisory and assistance mission in support of Security Sector Reform in Guinea-Bissau (EU SSR Guinea-Bissau) from early 2008 to late 2010 is widely considered to be a Portuguese priority; as we have seen, the Germans, Dutch and British perceived a key interest in creating EUPOL in Afghanistan and the French played a lead role in establishing EUFOR Chad (2008) (Muniz 2013). A look at the map of CSDP missions therefore reflects national priorities and prestige projects, but not an overarching strategic logic (CSDP Map 2014).

Turning from these general observations about the MS’ difficulties to be a “foreign policy actor” to the three remaining Collective Foreign Policy Potentials (collective proactiveness, shaping and autonomy), the central arguments of this study, i.e. the MS’ collective lack of will and ability to fulfill the above potentials, do fit into

a much wider context of CSDP missions and collective MS policies in the international arena, as the following paragraphs briefly illustrate.

Regarding autonomy, one can say that out of all ESDP/CSDP military missions, only two were mounted under the “Berlin Plus” arrangements (Operations Concordia in Macedonia and Althea in Bosnia; see Chapter 3). The EU also launched its first autonomous mission ever outside of the “Berlin Plus” arrangements in Congo in 2003 (Operation Artemis). However, France provided almost 1,800 of the 2,200 troops and most CSDP military missions equally drew very heavily on the assets of a framework nation, making it difficult to speak of *collective* autonomy (Howorth 2014; Sperling, Webber and Smith 2012). CSDP missions have generally operated with narrow mandates and the great majority of observers heavily criticize their output as, for instance, “small, lacking in ambition and strategically irrelevant” (Gowan and Korski 2009: 11; see also Ginsberg and Penksa 2012; Engberg 2014; Pohl 2014; Howorth 2014; Larivé 2014; Biscop and Whitman 2013; Peen Rodt 2014).

Outside CSDP, and moving beyond a narrow security focus, the EU has greatly contributed to transform former communist and other countries, to make them what Anne-Marie Le Gloannec calls “Euro-compatible”, but its incentives of accession perspectives are of limited use once states have become EU members: Recent setbacks in the democratic development of Hungary, for instance, suggest the MS’ collective coercive and shaping powers are in fact rather limited (Pridham 2002; Grabbe 2006; Le Gloannec 2006, 2015; Mungiu-Pippidi 2007; Le Gloannec and Rupnik 2008). When it comes to the ENP, the EU’s proactive flagship project to build a “ring of friends” in order to avoid creating new dividing lines in Europe, its conditionality has been largely toothless in the absence of membership perspectives, and conflicting MS interests have often led to different policies with different ENP partner countries, undermining ENP’s overall thrust (Johansson-Nogués 2007; Casier 2010; Witney and Dworking 2012; Balfour 2012a; Lehne 2014; Le Gloannec 2016).

In the case of post-intervention crisis management in the Balkans, the MS continue to play an important stabilizing role, but European engagement in state building obviously came after the US had led a military intervention the MS were unable to agree to or carry out on their own (Batt 2004; Fagan 2010; Keil and Zeynep 2015). In the Iranian nuclear program, the EU3 Group (France, the UK and Germany) did seize an opportunity to engage Iran in negotiations on its nuclear program at a

time when the US was not interested in talks, but there is broad consensus in the literature that the US has set the overall agenda, and the use of small formats also indicates a significant step down from the ambition to realize collective European actorness in foreign policy (Everts 2004; Denza 2005; Goldthau 2008; Kienzle 2015). In short, there is no example yet that disproves the empirical argument of this dissertation, namely that the MS have been unwilling and unable to fully realize the four Collective Foreign Policy Potentials.

The next section draws attention to at least two important implications for the MS'/EU's collective role as a security provider on the international stage: One implication concerns Europe's role next to the US and the other concerns the MS' collective ability to add value in international security more broadly. The following section starts with the implications for the MS' role in transatlantic relations.

7.2.b. Implications for the MS'/EU's collective role as a security provider on the international stage

7.2.b.i. The MS and the EU in transatlantic relations

As we saw, many of neorealism's conceptualizations are inadequate to capture the dynamics analyzed in this thesis: The MS did not "balance" against US policies in Afghanistan (which could not be squared with the high amount of European casualties in Afghanistan); they have not systematically "bandwagoned" with the US alliance leader (which ignores European caveats and other forms of resisting US demands) and they have not "hedged" against the US either (which presupposes a sense of European agency that the fragmented and contradictory nature of national European military contributions simply does not warrant). It is better to speak of a "threshold of inertia", under which European governments allowed their militaries to fight, sometimes vigorously, but which European leaders never allowed crossing (Fescharek 2015a: 140).

In the context of the MS'/EU's wider geopolitical role, the implication is that – far from proposing alternative security projects independently or even "balancing"

US power – the MS rely on it and selectively complement US global security leadership. Paradoxically, the MS' collective attempts to promote a rules-based order and reduce the role of power politics in international relations “is offset by their determination to remain committed to the US bond or, which is the same, dependent on US power” (Alcaro and Ditrych 2014: 13). Since, with few exceptions, European leaders' appetite for autonomy of action in a largely US-dominated security agenda is mostly limited to choosing between “opt-outs” and “opt-ins” under Washington's “policy umbrella”, they currently largely content themselves with post-decisional influence inside US-led strategic frameworks. The French, who have long been the staunchest supporter of a maximum amount of “European autonomy” (and who served as “framework” nation for EU military missions in Macedonia, during the first EU operation in Congo and later in Chad, pushed for a naval mission off the shore of Somalia and initiated the second ESDP/CSDP mission in Congo), have now long reintegrated NATO's strategic command and the French government itself concedes that its European allies have never aligned themselves on the French position of independence from Washington (Védrine 2012). A recent study reviewing the diplomatic history of four major CSDP missions (EUFOR Althea, EULEX Kosovo, EUPOL Afghanistan and EUFOR Chad) concludes that they have overall advanced and complemented – rather than hindered or “balanced” against – US policies, relieving US resources in the Western Balkans, selectively supporting state building in Iraq and Afghanistan, conducting monitoring missions in places such as Georgia where an overt US presence was deemed unacceptable to the Russian government, or defending public goods such as fighting piracy and terrorism in parts of Africa (Pohl 2013: 365).

Other recent cases also show that because only the US can underwrite a serious military campaign, the MS look to Washington before considering military action and then selectively complement it in post-decisional ways: When US President Obama spoke of a “red line” with respect to President Bashar al Assad's use of poison gas, European militaries readied themselves to participate in missile attacks – but after Obama's climb-down they withheld their missiles (Techau 17.11.2015). However, when the US does finally decide to use force, many MS opt in: In the bombing campaign against the Islamic State, small MS such as Belgium and Denmark contributed fighter-bombers until July and September 2015 respectively and France

was reported to have carried out two strikes over Syria and 270 attacks over Iraq before the Paris attacks on 13 November 2015 (Rogers 12.11.2015).

7.2.b.ii. The MS as a collective niche player by default

The second implication of the MS' great difficulty to agree to common security strategies, take initiatives and collectively determine security agendas, is that their collective security contributions are likely to be efficient in situations where leadership is either already provided and the high politics largely settled (as the US in Afghanistan), when the most important decisions are in the hands of other players (such as, for instance, local elites in post-conflict countries) or when the development of events is out of their control and thus does not require a specific collective political project: The EU's role in the Arab Spring is a case in point here, where the MS' very different analyses kept the EU from being proactive and undermined its ability to help steer the process in an outcome-oriented way. The EU was therefore forced to follow an incremental approach and displayed no will to "pre-empt reform" in countries undergoing change: European support was "pusillanimous rather than determinant" and it operated like "a plant that took root only in very specific national conditions" (Youngs 2014: 6). The EU was only able to build on the efforts of successful reforming elites, not to prompt these reforms itself.

In a different context, Olga Spaiser's recent work on the EU's role in the Central Asian Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan shows how the EU established itself over the years as a technical "expert" that shuns the geopolitical implications of its actions and essentially attempts to operate within the existing security framework determined by the power play of the regional powers China, Russia and the US. Its three key programs in the region, a Border Management program, a Rule of Law Initiative and a Water Initiative show that the EU "endorses a pragmatic, soft security approach with a strong focus on local ownership which is the source of its acceptance in the region, while simultaneously being the source of its limited impact" (Spaiser 2015: 463). Spaiser states that the EU plays a significant role in areas that are

“neglected by the other actors and which could potentially unfold serious security threats in the long-term. Moreover, the European Union stands out as one of the most committed international actors to the peaceful settlement of the tense water conflict and as one of the few pro-democracy actors in the region” (ibid.: 463-464).

The EU acts not so much as a political player, but as a “consultant” on key issues (ibid.). With all of the above in mind, this Conclusion suggests it is more appropriate to conceive of the MS as a web of niche players trying to collectively support ongoing processes and complementing pre-existing frameworks, rather than portraying them as a security “actor” that prompts events or shapes the security environment following a clear strategic logic.

With its very limited ability to act and shape strategically, the EU actually fits into a wider trend, which a handful of authors pointed out long before the US and the MS became engulfed in decade-long state building exercises in Iraq and Afghanistan: The declining utility of military force to impose social order amid operations of “war among the population” (R. Smith 2006; Desportes 2011). In other words, in today’s increasingly complex and inter-connected security landscape, the main challenge does not seem to consist in imposing order or in organizing “hegemony”, but containing, and carefully managing, disorder (see Brzezinski 2013). In the words of an EEAS official: “*L’air du temps se fiche un peu des grandes stratégies*” (“Current times could not care less about ‘grand strategies’”).²²⁸

Hence, Pierre Hassner’s remark about France is also valid for the wider EU: “With respect to military engagements, at this juncture in history, I believe that our strategy cannot be anything but defensive, provided that the security of our periphery and tactical offensive initiatives are not ruled out” (Hassner 2015: 227). A “European strategy”, which according to this dissertation could currently only amount to a “role by default”, would most likely be situated between the two poles of leadership and *faits accomplis*: As stated, the MS can either complement existing leaderships and frameworks (including, of course, leadership coming from one or several MS), or manage the inevitable and respond to events in a post hoc way (such as in Ukraine), organizing ad hoc coalitions inside this paradigm of constraints to figure out the specifics of their contribution.

²²⁸ Phone interview with EEAS official, 20.01.2016.

The difficulty to design “grand strategies” in a security environment that is “more connected, more contested and more complex” therefore leads to an increasingly pragmatic landscape of security cooperation transcending artificial NATO-EU dividing lines.²²⁹ As the American philosopher William James once observed, pragmatism is a word that “at the outset, at least, [...] stands for no particular results. It has no dogmas, and no doctrines save its method ... [It is] the attitude of looking away from first things, principles, ‘categories’, supposed necessities; and of looking towards last things, fruits, consequences, facts’ (James 1981: 29).

7.3. Avenues for further research

7.3.a. Europeanization *extra muros*: The show outside the circus tent?

The above has a number of important implications for potential future research. Bastien Irondelle wrote in 2003: “It is clear that Europeanization is one of the major trends in the transformation of French military policy during the 1991–96 period” (Irondelle 2003: 218). More than ten years on, with the great recession behind us, the EU literature has grown much more pessimistic, many authors speaking of the EU’s “decline” (Youngs 2010; Tsoukalis and Emmanouilidis 2011; Genschel and Jachtenfuchs 2014). However, some recent research on collective European foreign policy suggests that the phenomenon of European behavioral convergence without or “outside” the EU matters in other areas. If it does, we should pay attention to it, and a recent special issue of *Politique européenne* devoted to Bastien Irondelle’s intellectual heritage offers some hints for further research.

One contributor, Olivier Chopin, studies cooperation between European intelligence and secret services (arguably a topic that “goes to the core of national sovereignty”) and speaks of “horizontal” Europeanization in the absence of strong top

²²⁹ This is the formula the revised EU strategy, to be published in the summer of 2016, will use (see Kaim and Bendiek 2015).

down regulation in European security and defense (Keohane 2008: 129; Chopin 2015: 28). For Chopin, there is evidence that “the development of interstate collaborations [in the domain of intelligence sharing] outside the institutional field of the Union” represents a form of “reaction and adaptation” to the institutional stalemate, in other words, “interstate collaborations survive” “due to the insufficiency of institutions” (Chopin 2015: 46; author’s translation). Put differently, the MS find ways to coordinate and cooperate through the integration of constraints that, by principle, can’t be removed (ibid.): There needs to be no commonly agreed-to European policy for parallel or even partially aligned actions to emerge even in sensitive fields of security cooperation.

Though Olivier Schmitt, in the same special issue, dismisses the relevance of the “Europeanization without the EU” hypothesis in today’s context (preferring instead to speak of “*Otanisation avec l’Otan*” or “NATO-ization with NATO”), he reaches a quite similar conclusion as this doctoral thesis: Taking Germany’s, France and the UK’s combat engagement in Afghanistan as an example, Schmitt argues that faced with the insurgency, the three states went looking for doctrinal and material solutions inside NATO’s organizational structure, which is an example of what Schmitt calls “selective emulation” (Schmitt 2015: 150, 152). Faced with similar problems all three states reacted in similar ways: “The factor that contributed to Nato-ization is not socialization and cognitive change (...) but operational necessity leading [them] to adopt as quickly as possible solutions that were previously tested elsewhere” (ibid.: 154; author’s translation).

This points into the same direction as this thesis (the development of parallel *actions* as opposed to common *policies*), and it comes down to what Hoeffler and Faure call “*l’UE sans l’eupéanisation mais avec des convergences nationales*” (“the EU without Europeanization but with national convergences” (Hoeffler and Faure 2015:19). Hence, it would seem that there are important “shows” (inter-state military cooperation, for instance) happening outside the “circus tent” (formal EU institutions in security and defense), and if this is true, they need to be studied: In the military field, for instance, important insights can be gained if the research agenda is widened from Europeanization to NATO-ization and the dynamics between the two. What is important in this respect is that research steps out of “top-down” or “bottom-

up” approaches (which unavailingly seek an inexistent political project) and embraces behavioral role convergence with specific case studies.

7.3.b. Crossing conceptual lenses

A second implication concerns the crossing of realist and constructivist approaches to study European security and defense. Particularly constructivist works have greatly enhanced our understanding of the interplay between “power” and “norms”, and they have helped us understand how hybrid international actors such as the EU use normative rhetoric to relate with their near and far abroad. However, there are clear limitations as to what a focus on norms, or what is sometimes called “horizontal Europeanization” or cross-loading (the formation of new norms and/or the evolution of normative systems and how they affect policy, see Wong and Hill 2011 and see Chapter 1), can deliver in the field of European security and defense. If our finding is correct that European defense and security policy currently amounts to the alignment of *actions* without a common *policy*, then it is necessary to move the analytical focus to behavior, outputs and actions, which is the level where norms are translated into observable outcomes.

This could greatly contribute to grounding current research in geopolitical reality: For instance, if the “R2P” (Responsibility to Protect) norm has undoubtedly gained wide recognition among the MS, the fact that its implementation remains limited on the EU level does not only have to do with factors such as limited “goodness of fit between R2P and existing EU norms”, as some authors have recently argued, but with political reasons: The MS do not currently wish to get involved in missions that exceeds their military capacities and their appetite for prolonged military engagements on the ground and without explicit US backup is low (De Franco, Meyer and Smith 2015).

7.3.c. “Behavioral convergence without Europeanized security politics”, formats and coalitions

This also means that studies in European security and defense would be well advised to embrace the analytical framework of small groupings, coalitions, formats or “*l’Europe de la géométrie variable*” (Europe of variable geometry). However, analyses of “EU strategy” are still very much rooted in the paradigms of “collective actorness”. For instance, a recent SWP policy paper argues that the EU must, firstly, conduct a collective analysis of how the policy conditions in security have changed, secondly, conduct a regional prioritization of its external relations objectives, and thirdly, redefine parts of the transatlantic security relationship (Kaim and Bendieck 2015: 2). This is based on the premise that such a complex undertaking is actually feasible for a 28-MS “foreign policy actor”. Publications with titles such as “Towards a Strategic EU Vision for Security and Defence”, exhortations that “Europe needs a global strategy” or calls that the EU “become a strategic actor” and “get strategic about ideals and values” abound (Galantino and Freire 2015; Euractiv 03.07.2015; Biscop and Coelmont 2012; Youngs 2010a; see also Howorth 2011b). In his 2014 book Jolyon Howorth wrote: “In order to deliver on the serious potential it commands in the twenty-first century, the EU needs strategic vision” (Howorth 2014: 222). Similarly, a “Reflection Group” on the future of the EU noted in 2010 that

“when devising [the EU’s] external position, the process of policy formulation must not only be driven by events. There is an urgent need for a common European strategic concept. This concept should pull the EU’s diplomatic, military, trade, and development policies together with the external dimensions of its common economic policies” (Project Europe 2010: 45).

In contrast to such approaches, the point this dissertation defends is that all thinking about a European “global” or “grand” strategy must start with the recognition of the fact that such a thing is not currently feasible, and that a “role by default”, i.e. the alignment of actions without specific policy, is the best the MS can currently aim for.

A few authors recognize this and they indicate that the way forward must be to make this lack of strategic actorness the foundation for our thinking about “European strategy”. For instance, David Marquand has argued in 2011 that in order to solve the EU crisis, the MS first need to find solutions for the fundamental ambiguities “about

the relationship between ethnicity and European identity; about how Europe would be governed; about how its territorial boundaries would eventually be defined; and, above all, about politics” (quoted in Maull 2011: 204). Hanns Maull, who reviewed Marquand’s work in a Review Essay for *Survival* is not the only one who recognizes that these challenges are quite unlikely to be solved any time soon: If “that view is correct”, he wrote, “the present crisis is at its core political. The European Union will simply be unable to ‘get strategic’ until those fundamental ambiguities are addressed through politics, at the national and European levels” (ibid.: 2001).

With respect to NATO for instance, some recent publications have indeed started pointing at the fact that the organization is increasingly being used as a “toolbox”. For David Yost, “the allies have in fact used their common assets in ad hoc fashion for a variety of purposes”, ranging from security provision for the Olympic Games in Athens in 2004, to humanitarian relief in Pakistan or the US State of Louisiana after natural disasters (Yost 2010: 494; see also Hassner 2015: 224). If, as this author has written elsewhere, it is time to “redefine what has historically been called ‘the Atlantic alliance’ as the ‘whatever works alliance’”, then studies in European security and defense need to take the absence of a political project as a starting point of analysis, instead of analyzing all the reasons why the MS don’t “get their act together” (Fescharek 2015b: 55; Toje 2010: 179).

A focus on groups and formats should also make it possible to study the dynamics of opting in and opting out among the MS themselves, not necessarily only with relation to the US’ global leadership: For instance, when the German government provides “assistance and support”, cargo planes and medical personnel relieving the French army with 650 German soldiers in Mali, but stops short of “direct military intervention” by German armed forces in Syria, or when the Danish government offers the French “assistance” over Mali but no troops or warplanes, it is necessary to find out more about the concrete modes of such problem-specific cooperation, as well as its political consequences on European security and defense more widely (Deutsche Welle 17.11.2015; Spiegel Online 14.01.2013). This obviously also involves the smaller states and the way they relate to the bigger states’ “bonsai armies”, potentially opting in with narrow skill sets but mostly leaving the high politics to coalition leaders. Can smaller coalitions of European states provide security for the rest and how would this affect European security “governance”? In

sum, this highlights the need to study the tension between the apolitical nature of European defense and security cooperation and the inherently political nature of leadership.

Furthermore, if the above analysis is correct that common strategy is difficult, while a European “role by default” is thinkable, it will also be fruitful to study the MS’ collective repertoire of actions or roles. It is therefore an interesting research question how the MS’ collective inertia, an example of which was described in Chapter 6 but which extends beyond Afghanistan, affects wider questions of US-led security governance: What can the MS’ collective impact be on US policy in the *absence* of a specific European policy, and vice versa, what is the role the US plays in European “compromise diplomacy” such as the Minsk I and II agreements? Such an approach would go beyond the widely accepted notion that the MS’ contributions to US-led coalitions *ipso facto* contribute to the creation and sustainment of a multilateral order that is seen as stable, or that being able to mobilize a great number of allies helps augment the perception of legitimacy of US military interventions and foreign policy (Ikenberry 2001; Nye 2003).

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²³⁰ Web links are provided only when a particular reference can be difficult to find without.

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9. Annexes

9.1. A map of Afghanistan



Source: <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/afghanis-reg.pdf>.