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Christoph Bertram, Joachim Schild,
François Heisbourg, and Yves Boyer

Starting Over

For a Franco-German Initiative in
European Defence

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SWP
Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik
Deutsches Institut für Internationale Politik und Sicherheit

Ludwigkirchplatz 3–4
10719 Berlin
Telefon +49 30 880 07-0
Fax +49 30 880 07-100
www.swp-berlin.org
swp@swp-berlin.org

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Deutsch-französischer Neuanfang in der militärischen Zusammenarbeit

Wie kann – rechtzeitig zum 40. Jahrestag des Elysée-Vertrages – die Vitalität des deutsch-französischen Verhältnisses befördert und zugleich der Europäischen Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik (ESVP) ein neuer Schub gegeben werden?

Der multilaterale EU-Rahmen mit der wachsenden Zahl von Mehrheitsentscheidungen im Rat prämiert verläßliche Koalitionen. Keine verspricht mehr Gewicht als die zwischen Deutschland und Frankreich. Beide Länder stehen mit ihren Vorstellungen jeweils für eine größere Gruppe von Mitgliedstaaten. Eine zwischen Paris und Berlin getroffene Übereinkunft hat deshalb gute Aussicht auf Unterstützung durch die Mehrheit. Die zunehmende europäische Verflechtung macht eine enge deutsch-französische Zusammenarbeit nicht weniger wichtig, sie erhöht vielmehr die Effektivität beider Länder in der EU.

Dies gilt auch im Bereich militärischer Zusammenarbeit. Hier verhinderten lange unterschiedliche Einstellungen zur Atlantischen Allianz und inkompatible Streitkräfte-Strukturen eine verstärkte Gemeinsamkeit; der entscheidende Anstoß zur „Europäischen Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik" (ESDP) kam nicht zufällig durch eine britisch-französische Initiative. Inzwischen jedoch ist der europäische Elan in Verteidigungsfragen erlahmt. Ein neuer Anstoß ist notwendig. Er wird heute am überzeugendsten erfolgen, wenn Deutschland und Frankreich in ihrer militärischen Zusammenarbeit vorangehen und damit ein Beispiel auch für andere EU-Partner setzen.

Das neue strategische Umfeld begünstigt diese Zusammenarbeit ebenso wie die wachsende Annäherung der militärischen Strukturen beider Länder. Die neuen Gefährdungen durch Terrorismus und Massenvernichtungswaffen unterstreichen die Notwendigkeit engeren Zusammenwirkens auf bilateraler wie auf europäischer Ebene. Die veränderte strategische Ausrichtung der Vereinigten Staaten macht europäisches Zusammenwirken in der Sicherheitspolitik zugleich nötiger und möglicher. Nötiger, weil die Staaten der EU amerikanische Entscheidungen allenfalls durch gemeinsames Vorgehen werden beeinflussen können. Da in der amerikanischen Global-Strategie der Nato eine weniger zentrale Rolle zugewiesen wird, werden auch die Schwierigkeiten verringert, die der unterschiedliche Allianz-Status Frankreichs und Deutschlands für gemeinsames Vorgehen bedeutete. Schließlich unterstreicht die holperige Entwicklung von ESVP, daß auch hier wie in anderen EU-Bereichen ein stetiges, enges Zusammengehen von Frankreich und Deutschland wesentliche Erfolgsbedingung bleibt. Und möglicher wird dieses Zusammengehen, weil beide Länder sich in der Orientierung ihrer Streitkräfte-Strukturen inzwischen

weitgehend angenähert haben – weg von traditioneller Landesverteidigung, hin zu Krisen-Prävention und -Intervention.

Vor diesem Hintergrund werden folgende konkrete Maßnahmen deutsch-französischer Zusammenarbeit empfohlen:

- In der strategischen Aufklärung setzen beide Länder auf unterschiedliche Programme – Frankreich auf Helios II, Deutschland auf SAR-Lupe. Beide sollen so gestaltet werden, daß sie sich ergänzen und den Kern eines europäischen satellitengestützten Aufklärungsverbundes bilden. Eine gemeinsame Einrichtung zur Auswertung der von beiden Systemen übermittelten Informationen würde diese Komplementarität entscheidend fördern.
- Jeder größere europäische Militäreinsatz erfordert ein gemeinsames, mobiles Hauptquartier mit gesicherten Kommunikationsverbindungen. Frankreich und Deutschland sollten ein solches Hauptquartier gemeinsam errichten und für die EU bereitstellen.
- Die Fähigkeiten beider Länder zu strategischem Truppentransport – in der Luft wie zu Wasser – und gegebenenfalls zur Luftbetankung sollten in einer gemeinsamen Organisation koordiniert werden.
- Wenn europäische Truppen gemeinsam eingesetzt werden sollen, müssen die militärischen Führer miteinander und mit gemeinsamen Einsatzregeln vertraut sein. Deswegen sollten Frankreich und Deutschland gemeinsame Ausbildungsgänge, zumindest aber in ihren nationalen Ausbildungsstätten multilaterale Kurse vorsehen.
- In gemeinsamen Einsatzregionen ist die Logistik weiterhin rein national organisiert, ein kostspieliger Luxus. Frankreich und Deutschland sollten ihre Depots dem anderen Partner jeweils zur Benutzung öffnen und in Einsatzgebieten mit langer gemeinsamer Verweildauer ihre nationale Logistik verschmelzen.
- Spezial-Truppen wird eine wachsende Bedeutung in künftigen militärischen Einsätzen zukommen. Zusammen verfügen Deutschland und Frankreich über mehrere Tausend derartige Soldaten. Sie sollten regelmäßig gemeinsam üben und mit kompatiblen Kommunikations- und Transportmitteln ausgestattet werden.
- Für die entsprechenden Rüstungsprogramme sollten gemeinsame Budgets für klar definierte Projekte von den Parlamenten beider Länder bewilligt und von einem gemeinsamen Ausschuß aus Assemblée Nationale und dem Deutschen Bundestag überwacht werden. Damit könnten die mit dem bisherigen Verfahren bei gemeinsamen Rüstungsprojekten verbundenen Verzögerungen und Verstimmungen erheblich reduziert und der Anreiz zu europäischer Rüstungszusammenarbeit wesentlich erhöht werden.
- Ein ständiges deutsch-französisches Sekretariat, mit kleiner, gemischter Besetzung und alternierend in Paris und Berlin tagend, würde erheblich dazu beitragen, jede der beiden Regierungen über Vorhaben der anderen auf dem laufenden zu halten, Irritationen über mangelnde Informationsbereitschaft zu verringern und die Suche nach gemeinsamen Lösungen zu ermuntern.

Introduction

Christoph Bertram is Director, Joachim Schild Senior Researcher at SWP, François Heisbourg Director and Yves Boyer Deputy Director of FRS

This paper is the collaborative effort of a small group of Germans and Frenchmen concerned about the fact that Franco-German co-operation, once the centerpiece of European integration, seems to have fallen into disrepair. This concern is not the product of nostalgia for the past when France and Germany both attached major importance to close and fruitful ties, nor is this study dictated by the desire to find something, come what may, to revive that state of affairs. Rather it follows from our conviction that in many areas, Franco-German policy co-ordination is in the national interest of both countries as a result of the changed international environment in which they find themselves both individually and as part of the European Union.

Hence the focus of the analysis and recommendations that follows is on the Union's defence policy and the contribution both states can make towards it by working close together. There will be no EU foreign and defence policy unless France and Germany take an active part in shaping it. And their ability to do so depends largely on their willingness to do so together. In many, if not most instances, the examples they set in their bilateral co-operation can serve to promote wider co-operation within the Union and thus serve Europe's international influence. But even if others do no follow the examples, effective co-operation in these fields will increase the influence of both. Their national interest will be advanced in either case.

It is, of course, never easy to breathe new life into a fading relationship. Both France and Germany have lost much of their initial inclination to give priority to working together and are using repeated disappointments to justify this trend. Each has signalled that there might be other, more accommodating partners or professed a preference for shifting coalitions within the decision-making bodies of the European Union. But these attitudes reflect political fashion rather than a careful analysis of national interests; above all, they indicate how the deep differences between France and Germany on the Common Agricultural Policy have affected the overall bilateral relationship.

Yet the fact remains that in the emerging European Union of soon 25 members, a privileged relationship to another major power offers the best chance for gaining majorities. And while for both France and Germany other major members of the Union may at times and in specific cases seem the more obvious partner, there is for neither an alternative to the other across the board. At the very least, shifting coalitions will always be more difficult to form and sustain for either without the basis of a privileged partnership between France and Germany. Recognition of that basic fact should make the inevitable strains of a sustained partnership more bearable.

This also applies to the field of defence policy. At first glance, this may seem surprising. After all, Germany has traditionally been more Atlanticist than Gaullist-minded France, fully integrated into Nato's military organisation and frequently complaining about the strains of balancing its defence ties between France and the US. On most issues of foreign policy, France has rarely been reluctant to display a strong sense of independence while Germany has preferred to stay in line with the United States. Yet, as we will argue in this paper, those differences were relevant in the past but are no longer so today. This is the result both of the process of European integration which gives a premium to joint action, as well as that of the changed strategic environment to which both countries need to adjust. To pretend otherwise, however tempting for foreign policy and defence establishments loath to adjust, is to cling to outdated habits.

This paper will discuss the need to change and the opportunities that close Franco-German co-operation in foreign and defence matters offers to both and to Europe in three parts. The first will analyse the main trends of the strategic environment. The second chapter will look at the record of Franco-German co-operation, and will describe the present state of affairs. The final chapter will discuss the institutional and political requirements for a closer relationship and suggest specific areas in which this could be particularly rewarding.

As the fortieth anniversary of the Elysée Treaty approaches, France and Germany have ample reason to try a new start; they may discover that few areas can be as fruitful for their co-operation as that of defence. At any rate, we hope that our analysis and proposals will be received in both countries with an open mind and our suggestions with a willingness at least to give them a try.

Christoph Bertram *François Heisbourg*

Proposals for a New Beginning

Understanding the new strategic environment

- The intensity of risks and threats calls for new organisational and budget initiatives at both nation-state and European Union levels.
- Current security challenges erode the traditional distinction between the external and internal aspects of security and defence policy. This must in turn lead to a much higher degree of institutional and organisational **congruence between the domestic and external dimension of security and defence policy.**
- Nato is not configured to bear the bulk in coping with these challenges. However, Nato should continue to play an important role as a provider of interoperability to European defence forces. Given the changing role of Nato, **the difference of status of France and Germany vis-à-vis Nato has become less of an obstacle than hitherto in generating European defence policies and strategies.**
- The US-European partnership, enshrined in the Washington treaty, subsists. However, its practical content will increasingly be determined by extraneous factors such as the evolution of US-Chinese relations and US initiatives in South West Asia, notably in Iraq and the Gulf. Possible conflicts of view on such issues, along with **the divergent vision between a multilateralist EU and a largely unilateralist US will increase uncertainty as to the future of US-European strategic linkage.**
- There exists a specific and strong natural complementarity between France and Germany. Recent experience has demonstrated that ESDP, as other EU endeavours, cannot sustain momentum in the absence of a long-lasting Franco-German agreement on the direction of EU integration. Alliances of opportunity or convenience of the sort prevailing between Britain and France on European defence issues between 1998 and 2001 can be useful: but they are no substitute for a broader-based, stable, long-lasting relationship between France and Germany.

Taking action

- **Strategic Reconnaissance:** The EU's envisaged Rapid Reaction Force will require strategic reconnaissance. With Helios and SAR-Lupe, France and Germany are engaging in building surveillance systems they need to render complementary. One major step towards this will be the pooling of the related military intelligence in a joint organisation.
- **A mobile joint theatre command.** In addition to home-based operational commands, any serious EU operation will require a joint force headquarter to be dispatched to the theatre, equipped with secure communications. France and Germany should set up and hold available such a headquarter.

- **Pooling of air and maritime transport capabilities.** A European strategic mobility command has long been proposed[1] but, due to the reticence of some EU members, still not been realised. France and Germany should establish its air transport component bilaterally without delay. They should also examine a similar arrangement for maritime transport. A fully fledged strategic mobility command would also include the pooling of in-flight refuelling assets.
- **Joint courses at national training establishments.** Training facilities are expensive duplications. It is true that the tendency of major European armed forces to prefer nationally produced weapon systems complicates interoperability and joint training also between France and Germany. But this is not sufficiently problematic to stand in the way of establishing joint courses at national training establishments. At a minimum, a multilateral course segment in national training facilities would be of high value for joint planning and joint operations.
- **Pooling logistics in joint theatres.** Logistics organised on a purely national basis are both expensive and, in operation, inefficient. For neighbouring countries which are likely to be engaged together in most military operations this is a doubtful luxury. A start could be made by making basic arsenals available to the other partner and by pooling logistic in the Balkan theatre in which both countries will remain involved for a long time.
- **Co-ordinating Special Forces.** Special forces are likely to play an increasing role in future military operations. France and Germany together dispose of several thousand military personnel in these forces. The very nature of their operations defies the establishment of joint units. But much would be gained by training special forces jointly at regular intervals and equipping them with compatible communications and specialised transport. If successful, such programmes would encourage related efforts for the traditional forces as well. They would also be a boost for joint arms planning production in these fields.
- **A joint budget for joint arms programmes.** Joint project budgets relevant to the above proposals, voted by the two parliaments and supervised by a joint parliamentary committee, would reduce many of the frustrations currently accompanying common procurement efforts. It would strengthen the authority of the joint organisations created for this purpose as well as increase the incentive of European arms producers to work together. Such project budgets could also serve as a model for possible joint EU funding at a later stage.
- **A joint monitoring body.** France and Germany together should set up a low-key, permanent "Monitoring Secretariat," staffed by a small number of civil servants from both countries and alternating its location between Paris and Berlin. Such a modest body could help assure the reliable flow of information between the two governments independent of their composition, avoid the misgivings of surprise and encourage the search for common solutions.

1 See footnote 20 infra.

The New Security Landscape

The security landscape France and Germany are facing is undergoing basic change which is putting a close not only to the legacy of the Cold War, but also to the transition period of the 1990's. The scope and the depth of the transformation are due to the fact that key elements of the landscape are shifting simultaneously:

- the threat situation is characterised by the ability of non-state actors to wreak mass destruction. What was a risk prior to "9/11" is now a clear and present danger which challenges the traditional categories of internal security and military defence;
- the nature and the contents of the relationship between the United States and its European allies is undergoing a deep revision, which puts into question the transatlantic institutions along with the political and strategic rationale which has underpinned them during more than fifty years;
- the European Union itself is undergoing a process of wrenching institutional and political change, with fundamental consequences, the content of which is contingent on the progress, or the abortion, of enlargement on the one hand, constitutional integration or non-integration on the other.

These categories of change naturally interact with each other, and they are also heavily influenced by other factors, external (e.g. Russia, China, the Middle East …) or internal (e.g. EU demographics). It will be argued here that, in combination, the ongoing transformation generates a set of challenges which make top-level French-German decision-shaping more necessary; but they also introduce new difficulties in the attempt to reshape French-German co-operation in a manner which makes it both relevant and effective.

New threats and risks

The "Founding Fathers" of modern Europe – Robert Schuman, Alcide de Gasperi, Jean Monnet, Konrad Adenauer, Paul-Henri Spaak … – were deliberately seeking to extinguish the risk of war between the European states when they were preparing their various initiatives at the end of the 1940's. Progress along this roadmap has been uneven, particularly in terms of security institutions. Although the Founding Fathers inspired in June 1952 the treaty establishing a European Defence Community (EDC), this initiative failed, with the French rejection of its ratification and the British refusal to sign. Half a century later, the essentially inter-governmental European security and defence policy (ESDP) is far removed from the highly integrationist EDC.

However, success was complete in terms of discarding the threat of the use of force as a mode of conduct between member states of the European

institutions.[2] Moreover, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Europe is in a remarkably pacified situation: the Balkans and Cyprus remain in a state of uncertainty, but war of the '90s variety appears to be in the past rather than in the future; and Russia itself has become a partner, albeit an occasionally difficult one, rather than a source of inter-state insecurity, let alone war, in Europe proper.

Such a description hardly fits the evolution of other parts of the security landscape.

If one confines oneself to conflict between states, three major sources of insecurity represent an ever clearer and more present danger:

- the exacerbation of contradictions in the traditional Maghreb-to-Pakistan "ark of crisis;"
- the spread of nuclear weapons, with the risk of the breakdown of the existing non-proliferation regime, with a similar evolution in the biological arena;
- the possible use of nuclear weapons in Asia, along with its consequences for Europe.

Alongside the traditional "Maghreb-to-Pakistan" ark of crisis we have an emerging nuclear ark of crisis extending from Israel to North East Asia: two of the five official nuclear powers (Russia and China), the three *de facto* nuclear powers, the two nuclear "wannabes" (Iraq and North Korea, who both violated the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT] in their quest for nuclear power), a suspected candidate for nuclear power (Iran) are all located in Asia. Countries which have renounced the nuclear option, willingly (Japan) or under outside pressure (South Korea, Taiwan) could feel compelled to revisit the issue. And if the international NPT regime breaks down in Asia, it will break down elsewhere as well. The current renunciation of nuclear weapons by powers capable of acquiring them would then cease to be the norm, with serious consequences for Europe, most of whose countries have foregone the nuclear military option.[3]

In parallel, research and production of biological weapons (BW), although renounced by 144[4] members of the international community under the 1972 BW treaty, is unfettered by any verification regime. As is now known, the treaty was massively and deliberately violated by the USSR from the day it was signed.[5] Iraq has also done so from the late '80s onwards. And others, who have not been found out, cannot be assumed to have been anymore respectful of the BW ban.

2 However, success has been less evident in terms of relations between member states and non-member states of the EC/EU, including between Nato allies (see Greek-Turkish relations); nor has use of military force been entirely excluded by member states when dealing with non-state actors from neighbouring European states (e.g. French naval confrontations with fishing boats from Spain).

3 The nuclear option was most seriously considered by Sweden (which had the full nuclear military fuel cycle in place by the end of the 1960s) and to a lesser extent Switzerland (in the mid-1950s) and West Germany (in 1957–58, in co-operation with France and Italy).

4 Notable exceptions include Egypt, Israel, Kasakhstan, Sudan, and Syria.

5 See "Biohazard" by Ken Alibek (Alibekov) with Stephen Handelman, New York, 1998.

The combination of enhanced WMD proliferation and of the aggravation of tensions in the Greater Middle East represents a particular challenge to Europe. The enlargement of the European Union will increase the salience of these developments for the security of all the EU's members. Since the entry of the Iberian countries and Greece, the EU finds itself in close geographical proximity to the ark of crisis. The entry of Malta and Cyprus will bring the EU even closer to the unstable Middle East.

The enlargement to central and eastern Europe will also bring the EU in closer contact with areas and actors which risk infecting the Union with their social and political problems: Kaliningrad, Moldova, Transnistria, Montenegro are places which will require increasing attention from an enlarged EU which has every reason to counter the emergence of zones of lawlessness serving as safe havens for the logistical, financial, and operational activity of trans-national criminal and terror groups.

Hyper-terrorism

On 11 September 2001, non-state actors have demonstrated the will and the capability to wreak mass destruction. The hyper-terrorist threat introduces a wholly new dimension in the strategic situation. Dealing with these topics will require significant departures from existing defence policies. The strategic cultures of France and Germany are being equally challenged in this respect.

Among the consequences which flow from the emergence of the threat of mass destruction by non-state actors, the divide between the external and internal dimensions of state security has been transformed. Non-state antagonist work from within the targeted society while also operating across borders. This carries with it three basic and closely international implications:

- although the tools of military force projection will continue to be materially distinct from those of internal police action, the basic facets of counter terrorism (prevention, pre-emption, repression, damage limitation) will not only have to be considered in an integrated manner but domestic security and external defence machinery will have to be tightly co-ordinated. In the French case, this is beginning to happen with the establishment, at the Presidential level, of a *Conseil de Sécurité Intérieure* alongside the *Conseil de Défense*;
- cross-border terrorism can only be met through cross-border counter action, including measures in which state sovereignty is transferred to a federal body (e.g. an EU border guard) or otherwise transformed (e.g. the EU arrest warrant);
- cross-border non-state violence cannot be effectively countered without the co-operation of other cross-border non-state actors, such as the banking community or transportation companies.

Taken together, these will imply a transformation of pre "9/11" national and European approaches to security and defence.

Changing partnerships

Nato and the US

Along with the threat situation, the nature and content of the EU members' strategic partnerships is also undergoing a transformation, first and foremost the one with the United States of America, Europe's security guarantor for more than half a century.

On the aftermath of "9/11," US policy was officially encapsulated by Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz's stark formula "it's the mission that makes the coalition." The Bush administration's propensity to avoid legally binding foreign commitments – and standing military alliances are most clearly in that category – had not hitherto extended openly to Nato. The military organisation of the West will now no longer conduct operations unless there is literally no alternative (as was indeed the case in Kosovo). The question therefore arises as to the future role of Nato; and along with it the companion, but not identical, question on the future of US-European strategic solidarity.

First, there is a trend of Nato evolving into an "OSCE with weapons," a multilateral regional organisation projecting stability in Europe. This is not a new development, since its beginnings during the Bosnian war of Yugoslavia succession, from 1992 onwards. But the post-9/11 shift to mission driven coalitions and the demilitarisation of Nato has in a sense accelerated, and facilitated the political metamorphosis of the organisation, which now fulfils three basic stability-projection tasks:

1. peace-keeping and peace support in the Balkans,
2. providing, alongside the EU, the prospect of membership to the ex-communist countries,
3. accompanying in a benign manner the modernisation process in Russia by treating Russia as a partner, not as a real or implicit antagonist.

There is, at the same time, a continuing military role of Nato as a producer of the public good known as "interoperability and standardisation," generating the technical norms and the operating procedures which facilitate the ability of armed forces in a coalition to operate in a manner which is both tightly co-ordinated and militarily effective. Notwithstanding perennial complaints about Nato's difficulties in fulfilling this mission – and these complaints are as old as the organisation itself –, Nato is practically the only place in which this public good is produced on a large scale (involving mass armies), on a multinational basis (nineteen nations) and at all levels of military activity (low end and top end interoperability). This asset is particularly precious to the Europeans, since there is as yet no other organisation in which European forces benefit from interoperability in such a systematic manner. Therefore, continued US military interest in Nato is absolutely essential if mission based, temporary coalitions, are to function speedily and effectively.

In itself, the death of "old Nato" – as an automatic defence pact and as a war-machine – does not entail strategic decoupling between Europe and North America. There are however two ways in which transatlantic

strategic solidarity could be undermined: through the deliberate disregard of the basic interests of one's partners (e.g. heedless protectionism versus free trade, or the systematic undermining of all attempts, at establishing a rule-based international system); or, as a result of the lack of interest in maintaining and using the machinery which allows, if need be, the forces of the allied countries to work together.

The Russia connection

Russia, by virtue of its location, size, population, and energy resources is an essential partner of the European Union. In security terms, Russia's current evolution has important consequences for Europe, directly and indirectly.

Whether or not Russia moves closer to Nato, the EU and its members will face the indirect security consequences of Russia's positioning as a Eurasian power. This involves principally energy policy (including its Middle Eastern ramifications) and relations with China.

Russia's proven oil reserves represent less than 5 percent of the world's total compared to Saudi Arabia's share of 25 percent.[6] The fact remains that given the prospects of heightened instability in the Middle East, the EU could do worse than focus political, legal, and financial efforts on oil prospection, and investment rights in Russia, as well as on more traditional imports of Russian gas.

The Chinese dimension of the West's relationship with Russia is of a political and strategic nature. Although for the moment, this involves the US rather than the EU, with the Western force presence in Central Asia seen by China as a US-led challenge, the EU will have to pay close attention to the spin off effects of its policies with Russia. The risk could now involve a Russia that would attempt to instrumentalise the US or the EU as partners against a demographically and economically challenging China in the Russian Far East.

Why France and Germany?

From this overview of the new security landscape, several general implications can be drawn for the European Union in general as for the French-German relationship specifically.

- The intensity of risks and threats calls for new organisational and budget initiatives at both nation-state and European Union levels.
- Current security challenges erode the traditional distinction between the external and internal aspects of security and defence policy. This must in turn lead to a much higher degree of institutional and organisational congruence between the domestic and external dimension of security and defence policy.

6 Source for all energy figures: BP 2002 Statistical Review.

- Nato is not configured to bear the bulk in coping with these challenges. However, Nato should continue to play an important role as a provider of interoperability to European defence forces. Given the changing role of Nato, the difference of status of France and Germany vis-à-vis Nato has become less of an obstacle than hitherto in generating European defence policies and strategies.
- The US-European security partnership, enshrined in the Washington treaty, subsists. However, its practical content will increasingly be determined by extraneous factors such as the evolution of US-Chinese relations and US initiatives in South West Asia, notably in Iraq and the Gulf. Possible conflicts of view on such issues, along with the divergent vision between a multilateralist EU and a largely unilateralist US, will generate uncertainty as to the future of US-European strategic linkage.
- There exists a specific and strong natural complementarity between France and Germany. Recent experience has demonstrated that ESDP, as other EU endeavours, cannot sustain momentum the absence of a long-lasting Franco-German agreement on the direction of EU integration. Alliances of opportunity or convenience of the sort prevailing between Britain and France on European defence issues between 1998 and 2001 can be useful: but they are not a substitute for a broader-based, stable relationship between France and Germany. These two countries are fully involved in all aspects of EU integration, including the Euro and Schengen, while carrying the greatest bilateral combination of political, economic and historical weight.

The most serious sources of concern of the time – Germany's inability to operate out of area, France's nuclear status and its peculiar within Nato – have either disappeared or become irrelevant. The fact of possessing or not possessing nuclear weapons has as little bearing in Bosnia, Kosovo, or Afghanistan as does the fact that one is or one isn't formally integrated in the peacetime Nato command structure – what counts in this respect is the ability to work together when required.

However, other causes of friction between Germany and France have emerged: the differing pace of force structure reform aggravated by the style of France's defence decision-making in 1995–96, or the decline of German defence investment. The latter needs to be dealt with if the two countries are to play jointly a dynamic role in developing Europe's ability act in the field of defence. Thus, France's acquisition budget (RDT&E plus equipment procurement) was $ 8,595 million in 2001 versus $ 4,675 million in Germany. Even if close to one fifth of the French total goes to its nuclear forces, this still leaves a ratio of 1.5 to 1 in France's favour.[7]

Given the similarity of their force structure and budget choices, along with their attitude towards the use of force, the degree of communality between France and the United Kingdom remains greater overall than that prevailing between France and Germany. However, that similarity is not sufficient to carry forward ESDP, with Britain tending to adopt a mini-

7 Table p. 35 "The Military Balance 2001–2002," IISS, London, 2001.

malist version of the Petersberg tasks and sticking to a narrowly intergovernmental vision of the EU's defence role. The threat situation clearly calls for something more than the current, restrictive, EU defence and security policy. It is, once again, France and Germany which can and must now provide leadership to move the European Union to greater convergence in terms of security and defence policy.

The Franco-German Experience

> "[...] le grand projet français, poursuivi sous des formes diverses depuis 1957, repris avec de Gaulle, repris avec Mitterrand, d'un couple franco-allemand conduit par la France pour construire une défense europénne alliée aux Etats-Unis mais indépendante d'eux, ce projet a échoué" (Georges-Henri Soutou, *L'alliance incertaine. Les rapports politico-stratégiques franco-allemands, 1954–1996*, Paris: Fayard, p. 411).

One way to look at the Franco-German experience of co-operation in the field of security policy and defence is to focus on bilateral achievements – institutional as well as military. One might, then, tell a success story of how former "hereditary enemies," overcame their century-long struggles and achieved a form of co-operation in one of the most sensible policy fields, in security and defence, creating common military units such as the Franco-German Brigade and the Eurocorps and trying to link their bilateral efforts to further a European security and defence policy.

Another way to evaluate this bilateral experience, the one adopted by the historian Georges-Henri Soutou quoted above, is to look at the European outcome of the Franco-German political and strategic relationship and to point to several historic opportunities to promote a European foreign and security policy which have been missed by the two neighbours.

The period following the end of the East-West conflict and German unification could be characterised in two ways. On the one hand as a period during which important steps – bilateral as well as European – have been taken to promote Franco-German co-operation in the field of security and defence, e.g. the creation of the Eurocorps, as well as on the European level with regard to the Common Foreign and Security Policy and, later on, the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). On the other hand as a time of missed opportunities. This is especially true for the period ranging from 1994 to 1997, when France's rapprochement with Nato came to a halt and the French army reform plans ending conscription produced serious tensions between the two governments. And the end of the 1990s was characterised by the fact that the major breakthrough towards ESDP was a result of a British-French, not a Franco-German initiative.

The question is, then, what yardstick to use in order to evaluate the past experience of Franco-German co-operation in security policy and defence. The one chosen here is to evaluate the Franco-German experience in the light of its contribution to the development of a European Security and Defence Policy: its legal basis, the institution-building process inside the EU, and to the development of civilian and military instruments and capabilities at the disposal of the Europe.

Where co-operation used to end

It is by no means obvious that France and Germany should be forerunners in European foreign policy, security, and defence co-operation, capable of

convincing other EU member states to follow their lead. In the past, a whole range of differences set the two states apart: their foreign policy outlooks and ambitions, their security concepts (integration vs. independence and sovereignty), their national understanding of civilian and military power, their relationship with the United States and their unequal dependence on the American security guarantee, their status as nuclear/non-nuclear powers, their membership/non-membership in the UN Security Council, their position towards Nato military integration and, at least before German unification, very different legal and political constraints on their foreign and security policy, especially with regard to out-of-area missions.

Moreover, the causal relationship between Franco-German bilateralism and European achievements is by no means obvious. In the past, it was sometimes the other way around: failures on the road to intensified co-operation in European foreign and security policy were followed by efforts to strengthen the bilateral framework of co-operation (e.g. the Elysée Treaty in 1963 after the failure of General de Gaulle's Fouchet-plans in 1961/62).

During the Cold War it was steps taken to improve bilateral co-operation, especially in the field of security and defence, were not necessarily intended to promote a more independent European security and defence policy. Some motives, and not the least important ones, which in the end lead to increased security and defence co-operation after 1982 were not, strictly speaking, linked to this objective: French fears of a German "*neutralo-pacifisme*" in the aftermath of the double-track decision of 1979, Germany's longstanding interest of facilitating a French rapprochement to Nato and to get a clearer French commitment to the conventional defence of German territory as well as German worries over French contingency planning and the potential use of French short and medium range nuclear missiles (*Pluton* and *Hadès*), all these motives did not in themselves produce a common effort in favour of a Europeanisation of security and defence policy.

At least some of these motives and interests are no longer valid after the end of the East-West divide, and the traditional French goal of a politically and strategically more independent Europe has slowly gained acceptance in Germany. Nevertheless, this brief survey of the past suggests that several conditions have to be met for France and Germany to play a leading role on the road to a European Security and Defence Policy worthy of the name:

- a commonality of foreign policy priorities and objectives;
- a commonality of security interests and threat assessments;
- agreement on the instruments (civilian and military) to promote common security interests and to counter risks and threats;
- agreement on the preferred institutional framework;
- a common commitment (politically as well as in budgetary terms) to build up crisis prevention and management capabilities, both civilian and military;

- finally the willingness of the European partners to follow the Franco-German lead.

As to when these conditions were being met, one can distinguish three phases:

- the period a deep divergence from 1990 to 1993 which nevertheless saw the birth of a new military instrument, the Eurocorps, and bilateral efforts to give the EU a role in security and defence policy;
- the period from 1994 to 1997 characterised by important convergent developments but also by a major missed opportunity and, finally,
- the period from 1998 onward, characterised by a major breakthrough on the road to ESDP, made possible by a fundamental change of the British attitude and by a new method of European co-operation in this field.

Time of divergence: the first half of the 1990s

In the immediate aftermath of the 1989/91 strategic revolution in Europe, France and Germany developed quite different approaches to major challenges of the post-Cold War world Europe. The two states showed divergent sensibilities and priorities in their foreign and security policy with regard to (potential) crisis regions. Whereas Germany preoccupied with stability in Eastern Europe, French attention focused on developments on the Southern coast of the Mediterranean, especially the civil war in Algeria.

The two countries also differed in their approach to the Euro-Atlantic institutional framework. Germany was, together with the US, among the first Nato members to voice support for the Eastward enlargement of the Alliance as well as the early Eastward enlargement of the EU. Both enlargements were expected to contribute to the stabilisation – political, strategic, and economic – of the new, still fragile democracies of Eastern Europe through integration in the political and security institutions of the West. France, on the contrary, sought to restrict Nato to its old role of collective defence, resisting at first any extension to crisis management and out of area missions while also seeking to deny the organisation a more political role as the stabilising framework for post-communist states in Central and Eastern Europe. As to EU integration, Paris tried to convince these states, albeit without success, of the virtues of a European confederation as a substitute for their early accession to the EU.

The most serious Franco-German divergence, however, emerged over the conflict in former Yugoslavia. The two countries' respective interpretation of the war and its causes could not have been further apart. For France it was an ethnic conflict in which all parties were equally at fault, for Germany an ethno-political conflict caused by Serbian aggression. The different strategies and objectives that followed prevented any coherent European approach towards what was, after all, the first major challenge to the security of post-Cold War Europe. When Germany prematurely recognised Slovenia and Croatia this caused serious tensions both within

the EU and at the bilateral level. Franco-German joint declarations on the conflict of former Yugoslavia were often mere pretence, designed to save their privileged relationship rather than to serve Europe's crisis management efforts in former Yugoslavia. At no point during this first serious test case of a European foreign and security policy was the Franco-German "couple" able to influence the course of events.

One way of underlining the continuing value both nations assigned to their bilateral relationship after the end of the Cold War was their decision to set up the Eurocorps, declared operational at the end of 1995. Here, for once, a Franco-German initiative created a European dynamic as Spain, Belgium, and Luxembourg joined in the common endeavour. The establishment of this military instrument was not, at least in the beginning, primarily guided by considerations of military effectiveness. Rather it was, especially for Germany, a symbol for her continuing integration in Europe and her enduring commitment to the Franco-German special relationship. There was among the partners no common view either of the role and function of this new military command or of the foreign and security policy goals it should help to achieve. Was it to serve a collective defence purpose or should it also be committed to crisis management and intervention tasks? And if the Eurocorps were to be used for power projection instrument at the lower end of the so-called Petersberg missions (humanitarian and rescue tasks; peacekeeping tasks; crisis management including peacemaking), where and in what kind of conflicts could it be used? Neither did French and German decision makers see eye-to-eye on the balance between territorial and alliance defence and power projection missions. They also held different views on the geographical scope of out-of-area missions, which the Germans, unlike France, wanted to restrict to Europe and its surrounding: "The Eurocorps is not an Afrika Korps" as former minister of defence, Volker Rühe, once put it.[8] It came as no surprise that the road to the SACEUR-agreement of January 1993 on the possible use the Eurocorps in the Nato-framework turned out to be rather bumpy.

Missed opportunities: 1994–1997

During the mid-1990s, a number of barriers to bilateral as well as European security and defence co-operation were removed or at least lowered:

- the defence white papers published in France and Germany in 1994 showed a remarkable degree of convergence in the assessment of risks and threats;
- the ruling of the Federal Constitutional Court in July 1994 on out-of-area military operations of the *Bundeswehr* opened the door for the participation of Germany in multinational crisis interventions; this marked the end of German exceptionalism, at least with regard to the *legal* constraints for out-of-area missions;

8 "Kein Triumphgeheul," in: *Focus*, No. 29, July 18, 1996, p. 22.

- Nato's late but effective engagement in former Yugoslavia not only answered the question of the potential future role of Nato in post-Cold War Europe; it also helped the Europeans overcome their disunity.

The most important development that brought France and Germany closer to each other was, however, a new French approach to Nato. This had been prepared by the intensification of Franco-German security co-operation of the 1980s and especially by the active French military involvement in the Bosnian conflict and her participation in the Nato operations "Deny Flight" and "Deliberate Force" which led to an end of the Balkan War.

By announcing the return of her defence minister to the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and of her chief of staff to the Military Committee (MC), France drew the lesson from the experience in Bosnia where French troops were placed under the operational command of Nato; in this context, France's defence minister had already participated in the work of the NAC and the chief of staff in that of the MC, albeit on an *ad hoc*-basis. More fundamentally, President Mitterrand's policy during the first half of the 1990s of giving priority to the WEU as the locus for the development of a more autonomous European security policy and defence had clearly failed. Now Paris realised it would simply not work to build European security and defence institutions and structures outside the Nato-framework around an institution that other EU governments, especially the British, did not value.

This new French flexibility towards Nato rewarded persistent German efforts of trying to nudge her partner towards Nato by intensified bilateral security and military relations. It also paved the way towards the formal recognition by Nato of an European security and defence identity, preparing the way for the "Combined Joint Task Forces" (CJTF) concept formally adopted at the Berlin Nato summit of June 1996.

Thus the gap between German and French notions of defence narrowed as France became more " Nato-ised" and Germany more "Europeanised." Yet the intended bargain between the revision of French Nato-policy and the Europeanisation of Nato came unstuck when agreement on the reform of the integrated command structure turned out to be elusive. Washington refused to entrust Nato's AFSOUTH command to a European admiral, a demand formally put forward by President Chirac. The new Socialist government in Paris reacted by blocking all further formal moves to Nato re-integration, to considerable German disappointment – the Kohl government had supported the French position on AFSOUTH at least half-heartedly.

A second French move complicated the situation still further. In early 1996, Chirac decided to professionnalise the armed forces through abandoning conscription and giving priority to operational forces for power projection missions. The French and the German government had reached a similar analysis of the new security risks and threats as laid down in their respective white papers on defence of 1994 – but very different conclusions for the reform of their military. For the Kohl govern-

ment territorial and collective defence remained top priorities, not least because of an *a priori* disposition in favour of conscription. France, on the other side, sought above all to create more capabilities for crisis intervention.

It was, however, not only the substance of the French decision that caused irritation in Bonn; after all, improving crisis intervention capabilities (the *Bundeswehr's* "Krisenreaktionskräfte") and reducing the number of draftees were also part of the German approach. Rather, German frustrations and resentments over the French move resulted from France's apparent incomprehension that such a radical change in her force structure would have repercussions beyond the strictly national context.[9] Not only did it challenge Germany's conscription ideology; it also inevitably would lead to the withdrawal of all French forces from German territory and reduce the significance of such joint military units as the Franco-German brigade where professional soldiers and conscripts served side-by-side. Moreover, it was bound to have a negative impact on bilateral and multilateral arms programs; these would now have to be stretched or delayed to accommodate France's ambitious army reform. While things were not made easier by cuts in the German defence budget, especially in military investment, the nagging question remained: What purpose did the Franco-German security and defence council serve if it was not the place to inform and consult over such a major step as the professionalisation of the French army?

The remedy to German irritations caused by the French army reform was true to type: Chancellor Kohl and President Mitterrand at their Dijon summit of June 1996 set up a working group to develop a joint security and defence concept (which already the Elysée Treaty of 1963 had called for). The "The Common Franco-German Concept for Security and Defence" was formally adopted at the Nuremberg summit in December 1996. It underlined that there should be no formal division of labour. But the *Bundeswehr* with its conscription army and mobilisation capability would serve as the backbone for territorial and collective defence allowing France to focus on operations of crisis intervention.[10]

There was another remarkable point to this concept. It underlined the common objective of a "systematic search for complementarity" which would lead to a "pooling of military means" and "freely consented mutual dependencies" in the military equipment programmes of both countries.[11]

9 See the interview with German defence minister Volker Rühe, related in: Karl Feldmeyer, "Unklarheiten in der deutsch-französischen Sicherheitspolitik," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 2, 1996, pp. 1–2.

10 For a discussion of the document's continuing relevance see p. 37.

11 The original text reads as follows: "La recherche systématique de complémentarités conduit à la mise en commun des moyens militaires." [...] "Les deux pays s'accordent pour créer dans le domaine de la politique d'équipement des dépendances réciproques librement consenties" (extrait du "Concept commun franco-allemand en matière de sécurité et de défense," adopté le 9 décembre dans le cadre du 68e sommet franco-allemand à Nuremberg, in: *Les relations franco-allemandes depuis 1963*. Documents rassemblés et

(Indeed, under the budgetary restrictions of the European stability and growth pact the top priority should be to get more defence for the same money. This is hardly conceivable without a degree of military role specialisation and division of labour, which, of course, creates mutual dependencies. A first tentative step into this direction might be seen in the subsequent Franco-German understanding on satellite-based strategic intelligence, with France concentrating on the development of the Helios II optical and infra-red satellite to be launched in 2004 and Germany on the radar satellite SAR-Lupe with all-weather capabilities.

The Common Concept not only helped to allay the earlier irritations, it also offered a road map for further bilateral co-operation on military and armament issues, possibly leading to a common European effort at a later stage. Regrettably, both countries were to neglect this potential, except perhaps in some institutional aspects. The Nuremberg meeting came up with a series of Franco-German proposals for the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) preceding the EU Amsterdam summit, many of which found their way into the new Amsterdam Treaty: the creation of the post of a High Representative of the EU for foreign and security policy with his own planning and early warning unit; the introduction of a “constructive abstention” in the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) to facilitate agreement in otherwise unanimous decisions, the reform of the ‘troika’ for the Union’s external representation, and the integration of the Petersberg missions into the Union treaty. Their most important proposal, the gradual fusion of WEU into the EU framework, did not, however, gain the necessary support, blocked as it was by a coalition of Britain and Denmark, the more “Atlanticist” members, with the former neutrals, Ireland, Finland, Sweden, and Austria.

Thus the opportunity for a more autonomous European security and defence policy which had presented itself between 1994 and 1997 was not exploited. Both countries stopped half-way. They undertook to improve their military capabilities for crisis management and intervention by professionalising their armies – although to different degrees –, and introduced improvement in the treaty arrangements for CFSP. But through the missed opportunity of France’s reintegration into a reformed Nato and the unco-ordinated nature of their respective army reforms France and Germany deprived themselves of the chance to become forceful promotors of Europe’s security and defence policy.

Roadblocks removed: the Franco-British Initiative 1998

The years from 1998 onward witnessed the most important steps towards ESDP since the days of the failure of the European Defence Community in the 1950s, beginning with the informal EU summit in Pörtschach in October 1998 and continuing decisively with the Franco-British declara-

présentés par Pierre Jadin et Adolf Kimmel, Paris: La documentation Française, 2001, pp. 444 et s.)

tion of Saint-Malo in December 1998. It was made possible by a remarkable and surprising shift in British defence policy. The UK now no longer blocked a EU role in defence but actively promoted it.

Ironically, it were the most "Atlanticist" and the most "European" of the EU member states which gave European security and defence co-operation a new, potentially decisive push. Yet a closer look at the conditions for the success of the Franco-German relationship in Europe should have revealed that the two neighbours were least likely to move matters forward in this field. They had functioned as the "engine" of European integration when they had been able to agree on a common goal from very different starting points. This was how they helped achieve monetary union: while France and Germany held, at the beginning, the most diverging positions inside the EU, each of them represented of a group of like-minded countries and compromises struck between them could thus receive the support of a large majority of EU partners. In the field of European security policy and defence, it was the UK and France – not France and Germany – who held the positions at the opposite ends of the "Atlanticist vs. European"-spectrum, Germany with its policy of trying to please both simultaneously lying somewhere in the middle. Only a new Franco-British "entente cordiale" could produce a major leap forward towards a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).

After a moment of hesitation, Germany quickly joined in. The Schröder government seized the opportunity of its EU-presidency in the first six months of 1999. The Cologne summit in June prepared a firmer institutional basis for EU defence by designing the new Political and Security Committee, the Military Committee and the military staff of the EU, to be formalised at the 2000 Nice summit. Not to get embroiled in the institution-building activities typical for the Franco-German approach, the British government insisted that priority should be given to military capabilities, and the French agreed. As the Saint-Malo declaration 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."* The initiative eventually resulted, in an astonishingly swift process, in the "headline goals" at the EU summit of Helsinki in December 1999 (a European Rapid Reaction Force of 60,000 soldiers, to be ready for deployment within 60 days, to be operational by 2003) and, one year later, in the Capabilities Commitment Conference of November 2000 in Brussels under French presidency.

On the bilateral level, the Franco-German summit in Toulouse decided to transform the Eurocorps into a rapid reaction corps for missions other than those defined by article V of the Nato Treaty. Its headquarters should henceforth be held available for international peacekeeping missions (as in Kosovo, where the Eurocorps took responsibility for the command of the KFOR Nato force in the first half of 2000).

Thus the road forward has been mapped. The realisation of the plans which originated in Saint-Malo, however, has been slow. European readiness to formulate ambitious goals has not been matched by the willingness

to implement them. The most important European armament project, the A400M military transport plane, hailed in early 2000 as proof of the new spirit, is a case in point. Germany, France, Britain, Spain, and Italy committed themselves to this programme, with the largest share of 73 aircraft to be bought by Germany. Yet due to financial constraints, the German *Bundestag* had still not voted the required financial authority by the end of 2002. Economic downturn and the limits imposed by the Euro-Stability Pact have rendered major increases in defence spending unlikely in most EU countries and suggest considerable delays in reaching the targets. At least, however, they are now no longer an issue of fundamental disagreement among Europe's major powers.

The Franco-German relationship in perspective

After a long phase of hesitation, the EU has thus finally begun devising and fleshing-out its common security and defence policy. Yet that process remains loaded with ambiguities still heavily bearing on its chances of realisation. The role and place of Nato *vis-à-vis* the ESDP, the type of military engagement the Europeans are willing to undertake, the geographical limits of such engagement, the financial and military resources they are prepared to commit and, last but not the least, the political and institutional consequences for the Union of success or failure of the project are among the most visible issues that remain unsolved.

The development of ESDP from Saint-Malo onwards has shown how modest, even inoperative, the Franco-German relation in the field of defence has become, in striking contrast to their many achievements in other key domains of the European construction. Before suggesting new initiatives for the two countries in European defence it is appropriate, therefore, to identify the causes.

The entente between Paris and London, epitomised by the Saint-Malo declaration of December 1998, has been decisive in initiating the EU's move towards a common defence. France and Germany have, however, constantly reaffirmed *"their determination to ensure swift progress in the development of the European security and defence policy so that the European Union can play its full role on the international scene."*[12] France's Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin in his first visit to his German colleague Joschka Fischer, has pointed out: *"As regards European defence, we have, since the Saint-Malo Franco-British summit, made considerable progress, but it's essential not to allow our momentum to get bogged down ... From the outset, France and Germany have been at the heart of this European ambition. I am convinced that they must, together, go on injecting momentum and do so to a greater degree than ever before."*[13] Talking about the preparation of the fourtieth anniversary of the Elysée Treaty, Jacques Chirac has expressed his strong commitment to find

12 77th Franco-German Summit, Franco-German Defence and Security Council, Freiburg Declaration, June 12, 2001.

13 Dominique de Villepin, press conference Brussels, May 13, 2002.

a new covenant with Germany since *"the Franco-German couple constitutes Europe's driving engine."*[14]

The formal dimensions of Franco-German relations continue to look impressive by the very range of issues they cover and by the numerous bilateral private, public, and political structures developed to drive that multi-faceted co-operation.

At the highest political level, bilateral summits give the opportunity to the leaders of both countries to reaffirm their commitment to what De Gaulle used to call a "community of destiny:" *"Nothing in history resembles what Germany and France have lived and gone through together ... Only they can accomplish the gestures which will bring Europe further, in its ambitions, in its bounds, as well in our hearts."*[15]

The net of co-operative mechanisms spanning the two nations remains unique. Alongside the state-to-state relationship, it encompasses a wide range of activities involving the civil society in both countries. The twinning of cities, towns, and villages allows hundreds of thousands of citizens each year to experience the day-to-day life of the other and thus to develop common understandings on a huge variety of issues. The Franco-German Youth Office (OFAJ), unique in Europe and a model to which other countries aspire, has successfully increased the familiarity of the younger generations with each other; it has inspired Warsaw and Berlin to create a similar organisation. While English has sidelined French and German respectively in the secondary schools of each country, cultural exchanges remain numerous. France maintains some 34 institutions (*Alliance française*, cultural centres, institutes on fine arts, etc.) in Germany for that purpose. A corresponding structure, although less comprehensive, exists in France with the German Goethe-Institutes.

Economic relations reflect this network of co-operation. Each country is the other's most important trading partner. Business mergers span the Rhine. The economic woes of one immediately affect the other.

The defence exception

Defence, however, has largely been an exception – despite the many links and agreements that exist between France and Germany, apart from more visible manifestations such as the Franco-German brigade and the Euro-corps.

The Franco-German Council on Defence and Security (*Deutsch-Französischer Verteidigungs- und Sicherheitsrat*) meets under the joint chairmanship of the French President and the German Chancellor assisted by their foreign and defence ministers and the *Generalinspekteur der Bundeswehr* and the *Chef d'Etat-Major des Armées*. The Council's deliberations are prepared by a joint Commission on Defence and Security established in 1982, consisting of the Deputy General Secretary of Political and Security affairs of the French

14 Dominique de Villepin, interview, *Le Monde*, July 30, 2002.
15 Jacques Chirac, declaration at the *Bundestag*, June 27, 2000.

foreign ministry and the *Chef d'Etat-Major des Armées* on the French side and their equivalent on the German side (the Political Director of the German Foreign Office and the *Generalinspekteur der Bundeswehr*). This joint commission is supposed to meet formally at least twice a year ahead of the Council on Defence and Security, also held twice a year. The joint commission oversees six working groups:

- "Strategy and armament," co-chaired by a representative of the foreign and defence ministries;
- "Military co-operation," co-chaired by the French *Major Général des Armées* and his German counterpart; there are five sub-groups;[16]
- "Armaments co-operation," co-chaired by a high representative of the French Armaments directorate (DGA/*Direction de la Coopération Industrielle*) and his German counterpart; it is divided into three sub-groups;[17]
- "Space," co-chaired by the French head of space activities at the general staff and his German counterpart;
- "Armament policy" (*Rüstungspolitik*), co-chaired by the French deputy head of strategic affairs at the Foreign Affairs ministry and his German colleague;
- "Legal Aspects," co-chaired by the relevant heads of department in the foreign ministries.

Such an elaborate organisational structure should by rights be expected to play a major role in promoting close co-operation between the partners. That, however, did not happen. None of the major decisions on defence and military policy taken by either country in recent years has been affected by these institutions. Nor did they produce a more constructive climate in defence matters. Over the years, the meetings have become a ritual lacking both substance and inspiration. Armaments co-operation is an example. In contrast to what might have been expected and was originally hoped for, the elaborate formal structure of co-operation did not even facilitate close personal relations between the relevant bureaucracies; in 2001, the head of the French DGA met his German counterpart only twice.

One explanation lies in the very different make-up and mentality of national bureaucracies. The recent reform of the German Ministry of Defence, for instance, so reorganised responsibilities that the French armament offices responsible for specific weapons families, notably the *Architectes de Systèmes de Force* (ASF) within the French *Délégation Générale pour l'Armement* (DGA), have had problems identifying their German counterpart. This illustrates the general problem: each country is conducting its business without much consideration for the impact on their mutually declared goal. This does not exclude some progress: after a slack period in 1998 and 1999, eight new technical arrangements on weapons develop-

16 Joint forces (*TSK-übergreifende Fragen*); Planning (*Planification*); Army (*Landstreitkräfte*); Air Force (*Luftstreitkräfte*); Navy (*Seestreitkräfte*).

17 Research and Technology (*Lenkungsausschuss Forschung und Technologie*); Pooling of investments (*Zusammenlegung von Investitionen*); Sectorial analysis (*Bereichsanalyse*).

ment were signed between the two countries, bringing the total to 33. But whatever progress there has been has been distinctly modest.

From divergence to convergence?

There are, however, some hopeful signs that greater Franco-German convergence on matters of defence might at last come within reach. Both Berlin and Paris have reformed their respective military forces structure, France since 1996, Germany since 2000. Despite obvious differences, with France going all volunteer while Germany retains conscription for the time being, the armed forces will have a similar size and similar missions – which has not been the case in the past. The *Bundeswehr* will have no more (and possibly less than) 282,000 personnel (193,500 professionals, 27,000 short-term professionals, and 59,500 conscripts) when France will have 245,000 personnel (without counting the *Gendarmerie*).

The levels of defence spending in both countries also tend to converge. If one excludes on the French side the money spent on nuclear forces (some 2 billion Euros or 13 billion Francs), space activities and *Gendarmerie*, the difference amounts to around 11 percent in France's favour. If one considers further that Germany spends less on naval forces than France, the potential of German Air and Ground forces are almost similar to France in terms of deployed equipment. The *Bundeswehr* possesses significant capabilities in combat aircraft, heavy helicopters (about 100 CH 53, heavy lift helicopters), and armoured vehicles (about 2,500 heavy tanks) that the French do not have in such quantities.

Defence spending in 2001
(in Billions of French Francs)

	France	*Germany*
Personnel (without Gendarmerie in the case of France)	69,7	81,17
Maintenance of materiel	12,2	14,40
Acquisitions of equipment for Ground forces	11,9	6,07
Acquisitions of equipment for Naval forces	11,2	4,09
Acquisitions of equipment for Air forces	12,1	11,23

If current trends in German military investment are confirmed for the 2003–2008 period, Germans forces will lag behind, particularly as France has decided to raise procurement spending by close to 10 percent, with plans for a further 10 percent increase to be phased in during the years 2003 to 2008. Yet by 2010/2015, the armies and air forces of the two countries will be similar in structure and key capabilities. Even if some differences will persist, particularly when it comes to naval forces, France and Germany will both command a military force capable of rapid intervention in a crisis, in and beyond Europe. This should be a major encouragement now to look at the opportunities involved.

Past experience cautions. The road to a EU security and defence policy worthy of the name remains steep, for both Paris and Berlin. In each capital service egoisms, bureaucratic inertia and lack of political leadership can continue to block it. Yet growing similarities in structure and outlook as well as the recognition that to remain effective national defence will have to pool resources with close allies are helping to increase the chance for progress. The greater the convergence in military capabilities and structures between Germany and France, the better the prospects for Europe's security and defence policy. To move ahead will mean to understand and accept the profound changes a European defence identity implies for national military establishments. Just as the introduction of the Euro radically altered the traditional role of national Central Banks by making them an adjunct to the European Central Bank, so ESDP within the present budgetary constraints will call for functional specialisations, common projects and even a division of tasks among national defence establishments. In the interest of the common defence, what is needed is a revolution in mentality, a willingness to compromise in vested interests and in ingrained habits.

What did not work could now work

One of the major impediments of Franco-German security and defence cooperation of the past can be seen in their very unequal approach in this field. There was simply no coherence and convergence to be found between overall foreign policy goals, risk and threat assessments, military strategy and force structures, military instruments and equipment. When common undertakings were realised – as with the Eurocorps – the achievements were often more symbolic than real. Now the signs of convergence are hard to overlook:

- In a speech given to the French National Assembly in 1999, Chancellor Schröder endorsed transforming the EU into a global political player in a multipolar international order, an idea cherished by the French.
- Since the 1994 ruling of the Federal Constitutional Court, German forces have participated actively in out-of-area missions, often providing the largest contingents, bringing the country's security policy in this crucial point more in line with that of France, its European and Nato allies. While differences remain, they are now relative instead of absolute.
- Both countries are introducing the professionalisation of their armies and improving their crisis management and conflict prevention capabilities, albeit to different degrees, with different speeds and unequal budgetary resources.
- Both countries are deeply committed to a multilateral approach in security and defence policy, the Germans following their traditional policy line of tying themselves firmly into a multilateral framework, the French recognizing that multinational conflict prevention and crisis

intervention simply do not permit an old style policy of national independence.

- After the terrorist attacks of September 11 have reduced American concern for crisis management in and around Europe, France and Germany should have an easier time to convince their more reluctant European partners of the necessity for developing a more autonomous European capacity in the field of security policy and defence.

Self-imposed limits remain. Germany needs to reconsider the recent *Bundeswehr* reforms, in particular the role of conscription and the structure and size of her defence budget, and France should re-examine her place in a post-9/11 Nato. But once both countries accept a much higher degree of mutual interdependence as expressed in a military division of labour and role specialisation, France and Germany be able to give to an autonomous European military capacity the decisive, necessary push.

A New Start

The hiatus in Franco-German co-operation in foreign and defence policy has been bad for each of the two countries and bad for the European Union. It has been bad for both France and Germany because it prevented both from optimising their assets and their influence within the EU. It has been bad for the Union because it prevented Europe from exerting the international influence commensurate to her economic, political, and military weight.

In order to find out how France and Germany together can change this sorry state of affairs, it is necessary to analyse why they have failed to do so in recent years. After all, they were once the avant-garde for European defence efforts, fathering such significant symbols as the Franco-German Brigade or the Eurocorps; the call for a more effective European role in defence and foreign affairs has been heard in both capitals for many years. The lack of closer co-ordination is even more surprising given that in future a growing number of EU decisions with foreign policy implications are likely to be taken by qualified majority, a development Germany openly advocates: then both will need the support of others even more to retain their interest in the common decision, and there can be no better basis for gaining that of a larger number of member states than a discrete prior understanding between Paris and Berlin.

Words and deeds

Indeed, both countries have been formally committed to no less when their leaders agreed, in 1996, to a "Common Concept of Security and Defence." It is a remarkable document, signed by the then Chancellor Kohl and the then and now President Chirac. It states what is now quite obvious: that both countries are exposed to the same risks for their security (and even refers to the dangers of terrorist action); it emphasizes a common concept for the armed forces of both countries (and declares a willingness to discuss the role of nuclear deterrence in the context of a European defence policy); it calls for a greater complementarity of the military efforts both countries are making.[18]

Significantly, those interests and statements have not been followed through in practice, almost as if they were not to be taken seriously. If there is an explanation it is not the divergence of national interests but, in both countries, a lack of ambition for shaping Europe's international environment.

While both countries may adhere to different philosophies of European integration and may hold different views of the strategic relevance of EU

18 See above pp. 24, 25.

enlargement, there is no serious discrepancy in their views of policies beyond the Union's present and future borders.

This is in marked contrast to the state of affairs at the end of the Cold and the beginning of the Balkan War. France wavered over the desirability of German unification and saw in Bonn's fairly unimpressive Balkan initiatives the dark ambitions of an alleged Habsburg strategy. That is all history now. Whether on relations with the US or with Russia, over the Balkans or the Middle East, Africa or Afghanistan, there is, minor nuances and traditions apart, a remarkable consensus on substance and process. What is more, the foreign policy establishment in both countries has woken up to the fact that neither country can hope to cut much of an international figure on its own unless dressed in the EU cloak.

If national interests have aligned to the point of identity, if the Union is being recognised as the essential "force multiplier" for the international influence of each of its members, why then have both countries, irrespective of the political colour of their governments, failed to work together for a European foreign and defence policy worthy of the name?

The sad answer is that they did not really want to. While both have engaged in the rhetoric of demanding a greater say for the Union in international affairs or of professing to seek the ability for "autonomy" in military operations, neither has made the effort, singly or jointly, to translate this into action. They have even seemed quite satisfied, for different reasons, with words alone.

For France, the purpose of such declarations seems to have been not so much to influence international events but to articulate a recognizable French voice, whatever its impact – a contribution more to the identity of France than to the effective pursuit of European world interests. For Germany, calling for a greater European say in world affairs has combined the advantage of the politically correct buzzwords "Europe" and "multilateralism" with the bonus of obscuring her own inaction. For both, the words, not the deeds were useful, so they have preferred to stop at words.

Yet unless each country means what it says and does what it promises, unless they share the political will to give Europe a say and a sword in the world there will be no European foreign and defence policy.

The odd couple

The reasons why there is a clear need for a greater international role for Europe have been put forward in the first chapter of this paper. But why France and Germany? After all, it has long been believed that in military matters the couple of choice for France would be Anglo-French, not Franco-German, given military traditions similar to those of Britain, a similar readiness to dispatch forces to distant theatres, and a shared tendency to regard the armed forces as a significant instrument of foreign policy.

Yet there are special reasons why it should be, once again, France and Germany which need to take the initiative in bringing defence into Europe. For one, France and Germany have a particular ability to jointly

block any major European initiative as well as to launch one should they so decide. This is not primarily because of the weight each of them carries on its own in any EU decision; that is an aspect which applies to other major EU countries as well. But once France and Germany have worked out a common position this will represent views shared by a much larger group of EU members; once these two agree, this is the basis for a wider coalition of countries. Together they enjoy not only a blocking power against other coalitions, they also are likely to be more successful than any other formation within the EU to launch initiatives in which a majority of other members will recognize their own interests.

For another, no other "couple" in the EU has been accepted so readily by most, if not all, of the other members. For the past 50 years of European integration, they have become used to the two heavy-weights bordering the Rhine acting together to push things along. If the Franco-German tandem stalls, this is for the others no reason for relief but for irritation. Indeed, the continued stalling of the French-German engine, not least due to the divergences relating to the future of the Common Agricultural Policy, is perceived by most EU members as a cause for distress. Precisely because the two countries make an odd couple they command respect within the Union, even appreciation once they propose common action together.

There is a third reason why France and Germany are uniquely placed to move the Union forward in foreign and security policy as they have done in other fields before: their special co-operation enjoys not only acceptance abroad but support at home as well. The surest indicator is the awkwardness felt by the political class in both countries whenever that co-operation stagnates as is the case today. In all the ups and downs of the relationship the need to maintain it has been ingrained in the conscience of the political classes of both countries, expressed at its most modest by feelings of regret and uneasiness in periods of stalemate and distrust. A mutual disposition to revive the relationship has been there throughout. No other two countries in the Union are linked by similar emotions.

What role for institutions?

So the first, indeed the most important requirement for any joint Franco-German strategy to increase Europe's relevance to international stability and progress is this: both countries must generate the political will to help the EU – and thus themselves – shape its international environment, and to do this together. From both this demands a sense of responsibility, a readiness to take the initiative, a willingness to procure the means, and the ability to bring other partners along to a common Union position.

Once there is that will, institutions will be helpful to provide the channels for such action. These need to be developed both at the bilateral and the Union level.

Two facts stand out in the Franco-German "special relationship": its relative endurance and the absence of any real institutional underpinning.

True, the record has been mixed. Sometimes, and often accompanied by a special personal relationship between the leaders of both countries, the degree of practical co-operation has been significant, at other times it has been largely absent.

One possible explanation lies in the absence of any bilateral Franco-German institution of sufficient relevance to day-to-day policy-making in both capitals. Special "Joint Councils," including one for defence set up in 1988, never flourished: attendance particularly of the latter was treated by both countries as duty, not necessity. Their existence gave neither continuity to the relationship nor did it prevent misinformation, misgivings, and misunderstandings. Nor did the declared commitments – witness the Common Concept for Security and Defence referred to earlier – carry any particular weight even with those who had entered into them.

If these institutions failed, it does not follow that institutions in general are unnecessary to support the Franco-German relationship are; it merely suggests that the ones that were set up did not fit a real need. The true need for a bilateral institution, if past experience is any guide, is twofold: to help avoid surprises over what the other government is doing, and to offer a permanent point of contact that can survive periodic changes and personal inclinations in the partner's political leadership.

As a minimum, therefore, France and Germany should set up a low-key, permanent "Monitoring Secretariat," staffed by a small team of civil servants from both countries and alternating in location between Paris and Berlin. Such a modest, if permanent body could help assure a reliable flow of information between the two governments independent of their respective political composition. The Secretariat, while relevant to all sections of the administration, could be particularly useful in the military field. There are already a number of diverse contact points between the defence establishments of both countries which would gain from permanent monitoring. It would also prove highly helpful if and when France and Germany want to undertake joint initiatives for European action in the security field.

One argument often employed against even such minor bilateral bodies is that other European partners would resent any formalisation of Franco-Germany intimacy. It is not borne out by experience. Not only was there little concern when the joint councils mentioned earlier were set up. More relevant: Most if not all EU governments prefer a France that does not set herself apart and a Germany that knows what it wants. As has been pointed out earlier, other EU-members have even become accustomed to a Franco-German proposal preceding major EU-conferences; whenever the two countries have refrained from formulating such initiatives, they have generally been more disappointed than delighted.

The other argument against a more formal policy co-ordination between France and Germany is that this is no longer required given the expected creation of more efficient EU institutions in the area of foreign policy and defence.

It is no less spurious than the preceding one. However much improvement the current EU Convention and the subsequent Intergovernmental Conference may bring for the Union's institutions, these will not be self-executing but depend on governments willing to make use of them. None of the institutional innovations currently debated to render the Union more capable of playing a serious role in the international arena beyond the economic realm – whether the establishment of a "foreign policy presidency" or merging of the job of the Council's High Representative with that of the Commissioner in charge of external relations – can generate the authority for political leadership and decision unless governments provide it. Major improvements of the EU institutions and procedures are, no doubt, highly desirable, particularly in the foreign policy domain. But when foreign policy and, even more, matters of military security are at issue member states will want to retain control for the foreseeable future; hence it is they who will have to be responsible for action. Unless the Union's major members, above all France and Germany, either separately or – much more effectively – together are willing to initiate, promote, support, and at times even lead, even the finest Union institutions will be condemned to inaction or political grand-standing.

Leading by example

So Franco-German co-operation makes sense for both countries, and it is essential to give Europe the ability to shape her international environment. Provided that the governments of both countries develop the necessary will to move Europe in this direction, how should they go about it?

The obvious answer is, of course, that they should strengthen the EU's institutions and act forcefully through them.[19] In most if not all instances of foreign policy this will the best approach. In the field of defence, however, it is unlikely to yield the desired result.

The reason is simply that the group of countries forming the Union is insufficiently united when it comes to matters of security and defence. True, there has been progress in the important if limited field of peace-keeping. At their summit meetings at Cologne and Helsinki in 1999 all members agreed to set up, for this purpose, a rapid reaction military force and police units, and in the meantime the Union has established all the committees to prepare and supervise a military operation if one were to be decided.

Yet at the military level of capabilities, commands, and concepts not enough progress has been made *à quinze*, and little, unfortunately, can be expected. It is not only that various members have sought special status, from Denmark to Ireland, that the Greek-Turkish deadlock prohibits the agreement by which the EU could draw on Nato resources, operational planning and commands, or that most countries see little margin for

19 Including, by the way, reaching a common position on matters before the UN Security Council. That France and Britain continue to keep this outside ESDP/CFSP is increasingly anachronistic.

increasing their defence budgets. All these are symptoms of a more profound attitude: namely that matters of defence and security are regarded as less important than others which governments need to address. As a result, all sorts of minor quarrels about status and principle prevent consensus within the Union. In the end, these differences may well be overcome but the end is not yet in sight. And the best way to overcome them is by proving that co-operation works – in terms of greater efficiency and greater savings.

France and Germany can offer that proof; it is in their national interests to do so. The way in which European states organise their defence is both inefficient and wasteful. It is not that together the 15 EU-members spend too little on defence: roughly half-a-billion dollars per day as compared to America's 1 billion plus. But because these considerable sums are spent to support 15 separate military structures – almost 15 separate armies, air forces, and navies, 15 separate logistic organisations – they can buy much less operational force. If European armed forces want to move away from this orgy of wastefulness, they will have to devise specialisation of tasks, to use each other's facilities, to pool resources. By demonstrating through example that this can be done, France and Germany will make their own defence effort more affordable and effective, and, at the same time, encourage other EU members to follow suit.

How to go about this has been convincingly outlined in the "Common Franco-German Concept for Security and Defence" of December 1996. It is worth quoting at some length:

"The aim of our co-operation is to maintain and improve the effectiveness of our respective means of defence. We need to compensate possible shortfalls and, at the same time, aim at the best cost-efficiency ratio in the implementation of our defence policy. The focus should be on the jointly defined central capabilities of the armed forces, especially on interoperability, command and control, reconnaissance, long-range transport, and logistics.

The systematic search for complementarities suggests the pooling of military means. This could be conducted in the following directions:

- *the tasks of both our armed forces and that of multinational European forces;*
- *a common approach to crisis-management and crisis-resolution;*
- *increased operational co-operation ..."*

The chief ingredients of what could be done are all here. In 1996, of course, the contours of a European defence policy were scarcely visible; today, Franco-German initiatives for bilateral co-operation should be informed by the specific relevance they could have for the European project by addressing concrete deficits and making clear from the outset that others are welcome to join this co-operation.

Projects of promise

- The EU's envisaged Rapid Reaction Force will require **strategic reconnaissance**. With Helios and SAR-Lupe, France and Germany are engaging in building surveillance systems they need to render complementary. One major step towards this will be the pooling of the related military intelligence in a joint organisation.
- In addition to home-based operational commands, any serious EU operation will require a force headquarter to be dispatched to the theatre, equipped with secure communications. France and Germany should set up such a **mobile joint theatre command.**
- A **European strategic mobility command** has long been proposed[20] but, due to the reticence of some EU members, still not been realised. France and Germany should establish its air and maritime transport component bilaterally without delay. A fully-fledged strategic mobility command would also include the pooling of in-flight refuelling assets.
- Training facilities are expensive duplications. It is true that the tendency of major European armed forces to prefer nationally produced weapon systems complicates interoperability and joint training also between France and Germany. But this is not sufficiently serious to stand in the way of establishing **joint courses at national training establishments**. At a minimum, a multilateral course segment in national training facilities would be of high value for joint planning and joint operations.
- Logistics organised on a purely national basis are both expensive and, in operation, inefficient. For neighbouring countries likely to be engaged together in most military operations this is a doubtful luxury. A start could be made by making basic arsenals available to the other partner and by **pooling logistic** in the Balkan theatre in which both countries will remain involved for a long time.
- **Special operation forces** are likely to play an increasing role in future military operations. France and Germany together dispose of several thousand military personnel in these forces. The very nature of their operations defies the establishment of joint units. But much would be gained by training them jointly at regular intervals and equipping them with compatible communications and specialised transport. If successful, such programmes would encourage related efforts for the traditional forces as well. They would also be a boost for joint arms production in these fields.
- Creating **project budgets for joint arms programmes** such as those proposed above, voted by the two parliaments and supervised by a joint commission, would reduce many of the frustrations currently accom-

20 "Les Etats membres … se félicitent … des décisions [préparant] l'établissement d'un commandement européen du transport aérien" (Conclusions de la Présidence, annexe 1 à l'annexe IV, Rapport sur l'état des travaux établi par la présidence pour le Conseil européen de Helsinki concernant le renforcement de la politique européenne commune en matière de sécurité et de défense, Brussels, December 1999.)

panying common procurement efforts. It would strengthen the authority of the joint organisations created for this purpose, increase the incentive for European arms producers to work together, and engage national parliaments. Such project budgets could also serve as a model for possible joint EU funding at a later stage.

Time for a new start

There will be other examples of joint projects in which France and Germany can engage. What the list presented here demonstrates is the wide range of opportunities. None of them requires, for the military establishment of either country, a drastic departure from current practices, yet all contain elements that could encourage the major changes which will be needed in the longer run if both countries want to maintain affordable and useable armed forces for themselves and for Europe. Moreover, as the reference to the 1996 "Common Concept" underlines, they represent a frame of mind which both countries have long professed.

They should be closer to implementing what they proclaimed then for two reasons: the growing compatibility between the structures of their respective armed forces, and the mutation of Nato. France is now completing the transition to a force structure optimizing large numbers of ready forces for military operations not limited to the European theatre. Germany, a late starter, still lags behind but increasingly realises the importance of completing and adjusting the *Bundeswehr* reform begun two years ago.

Nor is the fact that France has remained outside, Germany inside Nato's integrated military structure the obstacle to closer defence co-operation between the two countries it once was. Nato, as the first chapter of this paper has shown, is undergoing dramatic change. From having been the sole organiser of the common defence of all allies, it is becoming, at least for the United States, its pre-eminent member, one coalition among others, useful as the provider of forces for specific coalitions of which the EU or parts of it can be one. Taking part in the integrated military structure, therefore, is not, if it ever was, to accept subordination but to sit on the management team of a body which is becoming more central to its European members than to the United States. Moreover, President Chirac, now newly elected for a five-year term, has long shown a pragmatic rather than ideological inclination towards Nato.

One of the foremost challenges for the Franco-German defence relationship is a sober assessment of these changes and their implications. There is a good prospect that both countries will arrive at conclusions which are not fundamentally different. It is this which should provide a firm basis for a new start in defence co-operation – in the interest of Europe and in that of both countries as they are approaching the fourtieth anniversary of the Elysée Treaty.

Abbreviations

AFSOUTH	Allied Forces Southern Europe
ASF	Architectes de Systèmes de Force
BW	Biological Weapons
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CJTF	Combined Joint Task Forces
DGA	Délégation Générale pour l'Armement
EC	European Community
EDC	European Defence Community
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
IGC	Intergovernmental Conference
KFOR	Kosovo Force
MC	Military Committee
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
OFAJ	Office Franco-Allemand pour la Jeunesse (Franco-German Youth Office)
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
RDT&E	Research, Development, Testing, and Evaluation
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander Europe
SAR	Synthetic Aperture Radar
TSK	Teilstreitkraft
UN	United Nations
WEU	Western European Union
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction