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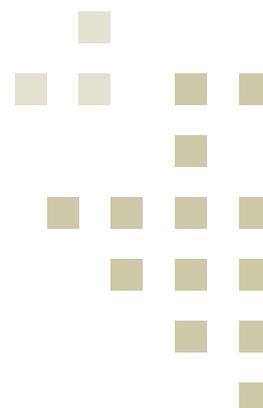
From Common Defence to Comprehensive Security Towards the Europeanisation of French Foreign and Security policy?

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[Summary] This article looks at the relationship between European integration and national foreign and security policy - specifically, how and to what extent the development of a specifically European (EU) foreign and security policy leads to adaptation and change in national foreign and security policy. The theoretical point of departure is an interest in national changes in response to EU norms. It will be argued that national approaches tend to adapt to norms defined by a community to which they are closely linked; that this adaptation takes place over time, through a socialisation process; and that it may also, in the end, lead to changes in national identity. This argument challenges the common assumption of IR theory that national identities and/or interests are fixed and independent of structural factors like international norms and values. The empirical focus is on changes in French foreign and security policy since the early 1990s. How and to what extent has the dominant French national discourse on foreign and security policy changed since the early 1990s? And if so, how are these changes related to the European integration process in general, and to the development of a European foreign and security dimension in particular?

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Towards the Europeanisation of French Foreign and Security policy?

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Introduction

This article looks at the relationship between European integration and national foreign and security policy – specifically, how and to what extent the development of a specifically European (EU) foreign and security policy leads to adaptation and change in national foreign and security policy. The theoretical point of departure is an interest in national changes in response to EU norms. It will be argued that national approaches tend to adapt to norms defined by a community to which they are closely linked; that this adaptation takes place over time, through a socialisation process; and that it may also, in the end, lead to changes in national identity. This argument challenges the common assumption of IR theory that national identities and/or interests are fixed and independent of structural factors like international norms and values. The empirical focus is on changes in French foreign and security policy since the early 1990s. How and to what extent has the dominant French national discourse on foreign and security policy changed since the early 1990s? And if so, how are these changes related to the European integration process in general, and to the development of a European foreign and security dimension in particular?

It is widely held that France has had an important impact on various aspects of the European integration process, including the development of a European security and defence policy. France, it is said, has favoured the development towards a ‘Europe puissance’ – a strong and independent European security and defence policy capable of military power

projection¹ (Howorth 1998: 144). However, we may question whether the French conception of ‘Europe puissance’ is in fact what is being implemented in the area of the EU security policy. For instance, the European Security Strategy adopted in December 2003 seems to have more elements of a comprehensive security approach – an approach emphasising a holistic approach to security, exemplified by conflict prevention and civil military crisis management – rather than elements of military power projection. If so, this could be interpreted as an indication of a somewhat reduced French influence over the integration process in this area, or perhaps that France’s ambitions for European foreign and security policy have changed. Elsewhere, I have shown how the EU has developed a foreign and security policy discourse independent of its member-states, and that this EU discourse has influenced the security approaches of some of its smaller member-states (Rieker, forthcoming). This article investigates whether a similar influence can be observed in a large member-state like France.

I begin by showing how the EU can be understood as a comprehensive security actor and how processes of Europeanisation can be studied in relation to this policy area. The second part of the article focuses on the changes in French foreign and security policy discourse from the early 1990s and until 2004, and discusses whether these changes may be understood in relation to certain major changes in the EU in this particular period.

Europeanisation of national security approaches

The EU may be described as a security community. However, while Deutsch understood integration as the creation of security communities among states in a region without formal statehood, Adler and Barnett’s concept of *tightly coupled* pluralistic security communities better captures the EU’s special kind of ‘actorness’, which is characterised by a high level of political integration without being a federation (Adler and Barnett 1996). With the EU becoming an increasingly important provider of security, as well as being more integrated (or more tightly coupled) than other multilateral frameworks, there is good reason to expect that its security approach will also have an impact on how security is defined at the national level – both in EU member-states and in states closely linked to this community. While such a

¹ Power Projection is a term used in military and International Relations circles referring to the ability of a state to implement policy by means of force. Usually, power projection refers to the ability to do so far away from the territory of the state.

pluralistic security community does not necessarily erode the legitimacy of the state or replace the state, the more integrated or tightly coupled it is, the more the role or identity of the state will be transformed. Several scholars have studied the influence on EU on national institutions and policies, but less attention has been paid to the Europeanisation of national foreign and security policy approaches (some exceptions: Tonra, 2001; Aggestam, 2004). Building on my previous work on the Europeanisation of the Nordic countries security approaches (Rieker, forthcoming), this article represents a further attempt to fill this gap.

The EU as a comprehensive security actor

To be able to study the Europeanisation of French foreign and security policy, we must first clarify the character of the independent variable of the analysis – the EU's foreign and security policy. In fact, assuming both that the EU is an actor and that it has a distinct security approach is controversial. For a long time the main opposition stood between those who perceived European integration solely as an arena for intergovernmental bargaining, and those who saw it as a continuous process towards a supranational state.² The analysis in this article is based on the assumption that the European integration process has gradually consolidated parts of Europe as a political actor, but without having become a supranational state – a tightly coupled security community. This means that the focus here will be limited to describing the actual functioning of the EU as a security actor, rather than the underlying mechanisms that can explain the development of EU's foreign and security policy. Accepting that the integration process is an open-ended and even a reversible process, I will analyse how the Union's current discourse and actions affect national foreign and security policy.

There are two very different stories that can be told about EU security policy. Some would argue that the EU has no security policy of importance. In their view, the deep division among important EU countries in relation to the Iraq war provided final confirmation of the absence of any EU security policy – or at least that it was simply declaratory. Further, it is argued, when really important issues arise on the agenda, the larger states in the EU will stick to their national interests. According to this argument, therefore, also the future prospects for an EU security policy are weak. Others, however, would argue that the period after the Iraq

² For an introduction to this debate see Rosamond (2000).

war has been one of considerable intensity in relation to security policy, even though the EU cannot yet be characterised as a unitary actor (Cooper. The development in EU security and defence policy (ESDP) since 2003 clearly shows that the ESDP has moved beyond declaration and become operational.³ The increased institutionalisation of a common security policy at the EU level also indicates that, despite its intergovernmental character, this policy area involves more than merely the sum of the EU's member-states.

Whether or not it is possible to argue that the EU has developed a distinct security approach also depends on how security is defined. While there is general agreement that there is a relationship between integration and security, those who defend a traditional definition of security may tend to ignore the EU as a significant security actor. Especially the EU's lack of effective military capabilities makes it difficult for them to characterise the Union as a security actor (Bull 1983; Walt 1991; Hill 1993; Kagan 2003). For those who understand security in a broader sense, however, the situation will look quite different. For them the Union's potential to coordinate diverse tools of security policy – economic, political and military – makes it one of the most important security actors of the post-Cold War world (Wæver 1995; Manners 2002; Sjursen 2004; Rieker forthcoming).

Of the various external factors that have influenced the development of an EU security policy, most important is probably the end of the Cold War and the emergence of a changed European security context. While existing multilateral security policy frameworks like NATO and the OSCE have adapted to this new environment, the most interesting development has occurred within the EU – the only multilateral framework with no security-policy legacy from the Cold War period. While its lack of a security policy legacy is a consequence of reluctance on the part of the member-states to relinquish national sovereignty in the traditional security area, it also seems that this reluctance actually has facilitated the development of an 'innovative' security approach. Thus, it may be argued, the development of an EU security policy has not been hampered by a difficult transformation process in the area of security and defence more generally. Instead this has actually facilitated the development of a different and

³ For instance, in 2003 the EU took over UN's police mission in Bosnia; it took over NATO's peacekeeping mission in Macedonia; and it undertook its first peace enforcement operation outside of Europe, in Congo. In addition the member-states agreed on several issues that will further strengthen the EU's security policy, the most important being the adoption of an EU Security Strategy (ESS) that defines threats, objectives and policy implications for the EU. (European Council 2003) In December 2004, the EU also took over NATO's Stabilisation Force in Bosnia.a

more comprehensive security approach in which military means are but one part of a whole range of security policy means.

Ever since the mid-1990s, it is such a comprehensive security approach⁴ that has been emphasised by the EU itself, through its official documents and speeches. This approach is not merely declaratory: the EU has also managed to transform the ideas inherent in this discourse into concrete policy. This has been the case in the shaping of a comprehensive European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) – first with the incorporation of the Petersberg tasks in the Amsterdam Treaty, which shifted the focus from the development of a ‘common defence’ towards ‘international crisis management’, and then with the establishment of a civilian crisis management component in parallel to the military one. Other examples of comprehensive security on the ‘softer’ side include the enlargement process as such and the programme for Conflict Prevention together with the Stability Pact for the Balkans, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, as well as the various efforts made in the areas of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) and the Community (EC) in order to combat terrorism. This shows that the EU, despite the lack of a coherent and clearly defined Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) – as clearly shown by the dispute over the Iraq crisis – does have a distinct security approach, one which is implemented both by the Commission and the Council, and which in addition to CFSP includes parts of both the Economic Community and Justice and Home Affairs.

Before the EU can become an efficient comprehensive security actor, some important improvements must be made. It has been argued, for instance, that a bridge between the different policy areas is still lacking (den Boer & Monar, 2002: 11). However, both the members and the EU as such have expressed their wish to strengthen this potential. The adoption of a European Security Strategy indicates a clear will to have this further reflected in the functioning of the EU (European Council 2003). But the issue of coherence is not confined to the integration of the security policy tools: it is also about the relations between the community pillar and the intergovernmental pillar within the EU, between the EU and its member-states, and the EU and other organisations (Gourlay 2004; Keane 2004). A potential

⁴ While the concept is generally referred to in relation to studies of environmental security (Westing 1989; Dokken 1997), it will here be used to refer to a holistic security approach that includes both internal and external security mechanisms. This is in accordance with Katzenstein (1996: 3), who emphasises the social, economic and political aspects of security rather than focusing narrowly on the explicitly coercive dimensions of state policy.

structural solution was proposed in the Constitutional Treaty. Several of the proposals in the Treaty – such as a ‘double-hatted’ Foreign Minister, supported by a Joint External Service, a solidarity clause, and structured cooperation in the area of security and defence (with the creation of multi-national battle groups) – indicated a clear political will to have this further reflected in the future functioning of the EU (European Convention 2004). However, now that the Treaty has been rejected by referenda held in France and the Netherlands, the political elites will have to find a different solution to this problem.

The recent rejection of the Constitutional Treaty does not mark the end of the EU as a security actor. In fact, the Union’s ambitions in the field of security have been singled out in the ESS and in the newly adopted capability Headline Goal for the period 2004–2010. It is also interesting to note that there is a large popular support for strengthening the EU in this policy area (Eurobarometer 2004). Two important policy analyses undertaken for the EU – the proposed Human Security Doctrine for Europe (Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities 2004) and the proposed European Defence Strategy (Lindley-French and Algeri 2004) – provide specific proposals on how to implement the strategy. All three documents emphasise the need for a comprehensive security approach that can go beyond the traditional distinction between external and internal security, and between civilian and military instruments.

Using Robert Cooper’s terminology, this is what one may call a *post-modern security approach*. In a recent book, Cooper distinguishes between three different phases in European history. He describes the period before the establishment of the system of nation states in 1648 as the pre-modern phase, the period after 1648 as the modern phase and finally the post-Cold War era as the post-modern period, which is characterised by abandoning the power of balance system and by the acceleration of a period of political integration (Cooper 2003). Cooper further argues that the EU must be considered as the most developed post-modern system since the dividing line between foreign and domestic policy is being erased, states are giving up their traditional monopoly on violence, and [internal] borders are increasingly irrelevant (Cooper 2003: 36–37).

According to this logic, one may argue that it is the special character of the EU – the fact that the EU is an institutional hybrid between an international organisation and a federal

state,⁵ and the fact that it lacks a clearly defined security policy legacy from the past – that makes it post-modern. While the first opens up for other forms of governance than the ones we are used to, the second makes it easier to develop an innovative (comprehensive) security approach. Thus, rather than being the result of the influence of a particular (or a certain group of) member-states, the Union's current security approach seems to be a result of the special character of the integration process and the fact that the EU did not have an institutionalised security policy in the past. As Craig Parsons argues, one certain idea of European integration becomes institutionalised rather than another simply because it is easier to institutionalise or because it fits better with elements of the environment (Parsons 2003: 20).

Europeanisation as a process of adaptation and learning

Traditional foreign policy analysis focuses on the state as a unitary actor with given interests, understood mostly in material terms. However, this approach basically ignores the importance of norms, values or other social factors such as culture and national identity. Since the early 1990s, a reaction to this 'rationalist' dominance has gradually evolved, resulting in a large literature more focused on the importance of norms and social factors. This article applies a social constructivist approach and discusses whether community norms influence national identities and approaches: more specifically, how the development of a certain idea of security – a comprehensive European security approach – also influences the national security approaches and identities of member-states. As Parsons has recently argued, ideas may not only 'cause actors to make certain choices, but [...] the institutionalisation of certain ideas gradually reconstructs the interests of powerful actors' (Parsons 2003: 6).

Since other factors – the changes in NATO, domestic politics, geopolitical shifts, etc. – also are relevant for understanding possible changes, the difficult challenge is to isolate the effects of Europeanisation. The following analysis seeks to identify the independent impact of the integration process by process-tracing, carefully examining the temporal order of various changes combined with a special focus on the language used in speeches, official texts and documents that express the national security identity.

⁵ The fact that the EU has developed institutional features beyond the original design and certainly beyond the purpose of managing economic interdependence also indicates that it is more than simply a successful intergovernmental regime. (Christiansen et al. 2001: 13)

The aim is to identify ‘the national security identity’, here understood as the ‘dominant national discourse on security’. This builds the understanding of nation-state identity put forward by Thomas Risse, who holds that nation-state identity distinguishes itself from other components of collective identity by taking longer to construct and by being deeply embedded in both institutions and a certain political culture (Risse 2001: 201–202). This means that it is possible to identify the security identity of a nation-state by studying official documents and speeches produced by the political leadership. Changes in this dominant national security discourse can therefore be understood as indicating a change in the nation-state’s security identity.

Not all changes in this discourse that are a result of Europeanisation are also examples of an identity change. Some changes are merely a result of instrumental adaptation with an unchanged understanding of security. This is why it is important to distinguish between two forms of Europeanisation: adaptation and learning. While the first refers to changes that occur when actors merely adjust their behaviour to external factors, the second refers to changes in their preferences or identities. This difference is similar to Argyris and Schön’s concepts of ‘single’ and ‘double-loop’ (or complex) learning (Argyris and Schön 1978: 2-3). As in the study on Europeanisation by Cowles, Caporaso and Risse, ‘learning’ will be used in this article only to refer to the latter form (Cowles et al. 2001: 12). This makes it easier to distinguish between strategic adjustments (adaptation) and identity change (learning).

While both types of changes may be a result of Europeanisation, the former will tend to be somewhat more stable and enduring. According to Risse and Sikkink, however, these two types of change may be understood as representing different phases in the socialisation process (Risse and Sikkink 1999). According to this logic (the so-called spiral model) a socialisation process may be initiated when an actor starts instrumentally adjusting its discourse and actions to a community norm. This means that the actor tries to find ‘new’ ways of preserving traditional interests. Even though such a change cannot yet be characterised as socialisation, it marks the first step in that direction. In the end, the actor becomes convinced by the community’s discourse and the chances for socialisation or learning increase.⁶ Whether the changes in the French national discourse and approach that will be discussed below

⁶ While Risse and Sikkink developed their model for studying why certain authoritarian states start to comply with international human rights norms, I will argue that the basis in this model also may be used for explaining why states comply with EU norms.

represent an identity change or merely an instrumental adaptation will be further elaborated upon in the conclusion.

Towards a Europeanisation of French foreign and security policy?

Although there exist constructivist analyses of French foreign policy, their conclusions do not differ much from those of more traditional (rationalist) studies. While the constructivist or the rationalist studies are based on various different explanatory or interpretative factors, such as power politics,⁷ institutional centralisation⁸ or national culture or identity,⁹ they all seem to conclude that France has had one major foreign policy goal since the end of the Second World War: to re-establish its position in world politics – often referred to as *la gloire et la grandeur de la France*. This is then seen as the main explanation for the actions of French leaders on the international scene. This means that none of them incorporates the possibility of change or account for the possibility that international norms or structures may influence French national interests, identity and thereby also policy.

Even though France has influenced (and still is influencing) the integration process in many respects, there are reasons to believe that the institutionalisation of a ‘comprehensive’ European foreign and security policy in the EU also influences French foreign and security policy. Thus, it might be ideas and collective norms rather than objective interests that must be taken into consideration if one wants to explain France’s current foreign and security policy (Parsons 2000). I will now move on to present the traditional French ambition of a

⁷ Analyses based on a *realist approach* generally argue that French foreign policy is a result of traditional power politics (Hoffmann 1965; Kramer 1994; Hoffmann 2000; Lansford 2002). France is seen as defending multilateralism and international law either because of its ‘weakness’ (compared with the USA), or because this is deemed the only way for France to have an important role in international politics.

⁸ An *institutionalist approach* would emphasise the highly centralised political system in France, and point out that the realist approach is a result of the French political system. (Blunden 2000) The centralisation of political institutions and the strength of the French president mean that the French foreign policy is defined in almost a permanent symbiosis between the Elysée (the Presidential Palace) and the Quai d’Orsay (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Thus, it is not correct to see the Presidency, the Prime Minister’s Office, the Quai d’Orsay, the Minister of Defence and the Ministry of Finance as separate entities, engaging in regular but informal contacts. In practice, the leaders of these institutions are in uninterrupted contact, continuously informed of the same events, often before these are made public. Thus, the members of this group acquire a distinctive common culture;⁸ and this, according to Margaret Blunden, goes far in explaining the exceptional and much-noted continuity of French foreign policy. (Blunden 2000: 28-29).

⁹ A *constructivist approach* would focus particularly on the importance of cultural factors and discourse. Even though this approach includes non-material factors like identity and culture, the conclusions are quite similar to those of traditional realist approaches. In practice, they interpret the importance of power politics in the French foreign policy discourse as an expression of French identity. (Larsen 1997; Holm 2000; Holm 2002; Gaffney 2004) Larsen, for instance, argues, ‘it can be said that the French discourse on the nature of international relations possessed many features of the realist school of thought. Norms and values, although present in the language, do not seem to be integrated in the main argument’ (Larsen 1997: 126).

French-dominated 'Europe puissance', which I argue was the most important element of the French nation-state security identity until the mid-1990s. Then I will discuss the extent to which this ambition has been challenged by some of the most important decisions in the EU with regard to shaping EU's comprehensive security approach since the mid-1990s – the incorporation of the Petersberg tasks in the Amsterdam Treaty, the adoption of the draft Constitution and the European Security Strategy (ESS).

The French ambition of 'une Europe puissance'

Defence issues have played an important role in French history in general and in the creation of the French nation-state in particular. This is one reason why questions of defence and security have had a prominent place in thinking about security (Larsen, 1997). At both ends of the French political spectrum, a strong national defence is perceived as necessary. In fact, there has never been much support for pacifism in France, and historically there have been no strong peace movements. This can explain why there is no clear distinction between peace (where political means are used) and war (where military means are used) (David 1989). Even the French nuclear 'dissuasion' has been almost synonymous with security and peace in the French discourse (Larsen, 1997: 120).

The main elements of the French defence reform in the 1990s – abandoning conscription, emphasis on power projection, spending and procurement cuts and procrastination on defence industrial restructuring – indicate that France continued to give priority to power projection over crisis management, peacekeeping or conflict prevention. In reality, France was with this reform applying the lessons learned from the Gulf War and attempting (within the limits set by an ever-decreasing budget) to follow the US lead towards the information revolution in weapons systems (Howorth 1998).

In addition, a main French foreign and security policy goal since the end of the Second World War has been to re-establish the country's traditional role as a great power in international politics. However, the French leadership soon recognised that it was not realistic to try to achieve this goal alone. Thus, at a very early stage in the post-war period, the French turned this ambition into a European one. Through European integration it seemed possible to regain some of the lost *grandeur* and *gloire*. France aimed at developing a French-dominated

Europe – one which would be highly integrated (but not a federation)¹⁰ and independent of the USA (Bozo 1996). This explains the French positions in the integration process from the early 1950s until the early 1990s. In fact, it was the rationale behind the first integration initiatives proposed by France in the 1950s (the Schuman plan¹¹ and the Pleven plan¹²) and the 1960s (the Fouchet plan¹³), but also the Maastricht treaty from 1992, which established a Common Foreign and Security Policy, aiming at a common defence. So far the continuity in the French positions is striking.

Even the French intentions of a return to NATO's military structures in 1995 may be understood in this perspective.¹⁴ When France announced its intention to reintegrate the military structure in NATO, this was based on the changes in NATO and the perceived possibility of finally achieving an alliance with two equal partners – the EU and the USA. In fact, France had never sought to undermine the Alliance and throughout the Cold War had benefited enormously from its stabilising effects. What France had constantly proposed was a new balance within it, and in the mid-1990s there seemed to be a realistic prospect of finally achieving that goal (Howorth 2004: 215). While the USA and most NATO members welcomed the Maastricht Treaty and the development of a CFSP in 1994, they were more reluctant in 1996. There was, for instance, little will to make the changes in the command structure that France required – changes that would create a more equal relationship between the USA and Europe. When the French political leadership understood that NATO was not going to undertake such changes, they answered by aborting their plans to reintegrate into NATO's military structures (Rieker 1998; Bacot-Déciaud 2004).¹⁵

In many ways, France's ambition has been to develop the EU as a security actor with an important military capability able to operate independently of the USA. This means that the French ambitions for EU security policy in the early 1990s went far beyond

¹⁰ For a more detailed analysis of the French discourse on Europe see Henrik Larsen (1997).

¹¹ to establish a European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).

¹² to establish a European Defence Community (EDC).

¹³ to establish a European Political Union.

¹⁴ France withdrew from the integrated military structures in NATO in 1966 as a reaction to the US dominance in the alliance, and in 1995 it opened up for a possible reintegration into these structures (Rieker 1998).

¹⁵ The French rapprochement to NATO has also been interpreted as an indication of an important change in French foreign and security policy, away from its ambition of an independent and common European defence (Rynning 1999; Rynning 2000). It is argued that even though France aborted its plans for reintegration, it strengthened its cooperation within the military forces of this alliance, both in the preparations for the creation of the Combined Joint Task Forces and in the practicalities of real deployments, such as NATO 'Extraction Force' in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, that provided the nucleus of the KFOR deployment during and after the Kosovo crisis (Clarke 2000: 727), and more recently the French contribution to the NATO Response Force (NRF).

comprehensive security and international crisis management. In fact in an opening speech at the Palais des Congrès in Paris 10 January 1992, Mitterand even spoke of the possibility of having a common European nuclear doctrine:

Only two of the twelve are nuclear powers. For their national politics, they have a clear doctrine. Is it possible to think of a European doctrine? This question will soon become one of the major questions in the development of a common European defence (Mitterand 1992, my translation).¹⁶

This was rather surprising, given the French tradition of being militarily independent. However, the 1994 French White Book on defence modified the concept of French military independence, and emphasised that the French perception of national vital interest was from now on to be coordinated with that of other European countries:

The questions that will be raised in the perspective of developing a common European defence within the framework of the European Union must not fall out of sight. In fact, one cannot not exclude that, in the long run, when the interests of the European nations are moving closer to one another, the idea that France has of its vital interests will coincide with those of its neighbours (La documentation française 1994 : 24–25, my translation).¹⁷

Together with Chirac's decision to go ahead with nuclear tests despite heavy criticism, his decision to initiate a radical transformation of the French defence forces in 1996 (Ministère de la Défense 1996) may be seen as an attempt to show that his country was both able and willing to take the lead in the process towards the establishment of a credible European security and defence policy. In the official document (*le projet de loi*) it is argued that the French national defence contributes to the creation of a credible European defence:

The [national] defence policy will serve the construction of a credible European Defence, both the creation of armed branch of the European Union and the strengthening of the European pillar within the Alliance [...] France therefore wishes the establishment, under the authority of the European Council, of an ambitious common security and defence policy (Ministère de la Défense 1996 : 1.2.2, my translation).¹⁸

¹⁶ Seuls deux des Douze sont détenteur d'une force atomique. Pour leur politique nationale, ils ont une doctrine claire. Est-il possible de concevoir une doctrine européenne ? Cette question-là deviendra très vite une des questions majeures de la construction d'une défense européenne commune (Mitterand 1992).

¹⁷ Les questions ouvertes par la perspective de la construction d'une défense européenne commune dans le cadre de l'Union européenne ne doivent pas être perdues de vue. Il ne peut être exclu en effet, à long terme, qu'à mesure que se rapprocheront les intérêts des nations européennes, la conception qu'a la France de ses intérêts vitaux n'en vienne à coïncider avec celle de ses voisins (La documentation française 1994 : 24–25).

¹⁸ La politique de défense servira la construction d'une défense européenne crédible, à la fois bras armé de l'Union européenne et moyen de renforcer le pilier européenne de l'Alliance. [...] la France souhaite donc la mise en place, sous l'autorité du Coseil européen, d'une politique commune de sécurité et défense ambitieuse (Ministère de la Défense 1996 : 1.2.2).

This statement was made only a few months before the opening of the Intergovernmental Conference where the EU member-states aimed at a revision of the Maastricht Treaty, including a concretisation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The fact that also Chirac refers to the possibility of giving France's nuclear assets a European role in the future indicates that the French conception of a European defence also at that time went beyond international crisis management and peacekeeping:

I have indicated that the French nuclear force [...] could play a role if the European defence [...] is developing (Chirac 1996, my translation).¹⁹

This means that France's ambitions for developing a common European defence also transcended the Petersberg tasks²⁰ that were included in the Treaty of the Amsterdam European Council in 1997.

The effects of the Amsterdam Treaty

The summit of Amsterdam was in many ways a disappointment for the French political leadership, who had hoped for a decision that could provide the EU with an independent defence role, involving a merger of the WEU and the EU. Instead this summit saw the introduction of the Petersberg tasks, which must be understood as a first step towards developing the EU as a comprehensive security actor. From now on, EU security policy would progress in a different direction, leaving the ambition of creating 'une Europe puissance à la Française' and focusing instead on the security policy means at the disposal of the EU in addition to military means. Certain countries, however, perceived this summit as a success precisely because they had managed to turn the EU's focus away from the ambition of creating a 'common defence'.²¹

¹⁹ J'ai indiqué que la force nucléaire française [...] pouvait être un élément, dans la mesure où la défense européenne [...] se développerait (Chirac 1996).

²⁰ Referring to a WEU Ministerial Council meeting in June 1992, held at Petersberg Hotel near Bonn, where the member-states of this organisation had decided that the WEU should aim at carrying out 'humanitarian and rescue tasks, peace-keeping tasks and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peace-making'.

²¹ The Swedish-Finnish initiative, taken during the 1996 intergovernmental conference (IGC), to include the 'Petersberg tasks'²¹ in the Treaty (Treaty of Amsterdam, 1997: V.J.7), must be understood as an attempt to provide reassurance that the 'European security dimension' would be limited to crisis management, and thus not include the collective defence dimension that had been stipulated as a long-term goal in the Maastricht Treaty.

At a press conference after the Amsterdam summit, Jacques Chirac expressed a certain disappointment with the result. While he welcomed and recognised the progress that was made, he also emphasised that this progress was limited:

We have made a step, not a big step, but still a step that we would not have taken two or three months ago, concerning European defence, by moving the European Union and WEU closer together. [...]. In the same way, we have improved a certain number of procedures, linked for instance to military actions, especially in the humanitarian area and in the area of peacekeeping [...] (Chirac 1997, my translation).²²

At this point, France still saw this progress as a first step towards the realisation of its long-term goal of a common defence, rather than a reorientation towards comprehensive security. However, only a few years later, in December 1999, Chirac was to focus more explicitly on the value of the diversity of the EU toolbox in crisis management. In an interview with the magazine *Armées d'aujourd'hui* he argued:

the construction of a European defence is a major ambition of our country. We want the Europeans to get the capacity to take common decisions and to undertake military operations within the framework of comprehensive crisis management, which includes diplomatic, economic and military means. It is the important strength of the European Union that it may engage in all the aspects of a crisis. This doesn't mean that it will replace the Atlantic Alliance, which remains a legitimate framework for collective defence and its role in crisis management (Chirac 1999, my translation).²³

While French political elites continue to refer to 'Europe puissance' and 'Europe defence', the meaning of these concepts seems to have changed slightly. In addition to the focus on 'crisis management' instead of 'common defence', the concept of 'conflict prevention' seems now to have become the key issue also for France:

We should establish as an ambition the need to develop Europe as the major political actor of tomorrow, and we should proceed so that this project will answer to the large ambition of the people. 'Europe puissance'? Political Europe? Beyond the label, it is all about responding to a need: playing an important role for creating peace in the world. The European Union can and should work for the reduction of international tensions because prevention is the best guarantee for security (Chirac 2000, my translation).²⁴

²² On a fait un pas, pas un pas considérable, mais enfin un pas que l'on n'aurait pas fait il y a encore 2 ou 3 mois, pour ce qui concerne l'Europe de la défense, en rapprochant l'Union européenne de l'UEO. [...]. De la même façon, nous avons amélioré un certain nombre de procédures, notamment liées aux actions militaires de l'Europe, en particulier dans le domaine humanitaire et dans le domaine du maintien de la paix [...] (Chirac 1997).

²³ La construction de l'Europe de la défense est une ambition majeure pour notre pays. Nous voulons que les Européens aient les moyens de décider ensemble et de conduire des opérations militaires dans le cadre de la gestion globale d'une crise, à la fois diplomatique, économique et militaire. C'est la grande force de l'Union européenne que de pouvoir agir sur tous les aspects d'une crise. Il ne s'agit pas de se substituer à l'Alliance atlantique qui demeure le cadre légitime de la défense collective et à sa place dans la gestion des crises (Chirac 1999).

²⁴ Nous devons nous fixer pour ambition de faire de l'Europe un acteur politique de premier plan dans le monde de demain, et nous devons faire en sorte que ce projet réponde à une large ambition populaire. Europe puissance? Europe politique? Au-

The new 'loi de programmation militaire' for the period 2002–2008, presented by the French Minister of Defence, Michèle Alliot-Marie in September 2002, shows a continued will to modernise the French defence force. In an article titled 'La programmation militaire: une ambition pour la France, pour l'Europe', the defence minister shows that France's ambitions are in fact *equivalent* to those of Europe. It is also clear from the text that it is 'crisis management' rather than 'European defence' that is referred to:

We mainly use our effort on a European perspective because we believe this is the best way to proceed. [...] This effort would support the role of France in the world and make our armed forces able to participate in all kinds of peace-building and peacekeeping missions, while preserving our decision-making and acting autonomy. It will make it possible for France to strengthen its political and military importance in Europe. [...] Since 1996, the international framework of our defence policy has been changing. European defence has taken a new dimension since the initiatives taken by France together with its main partners. Their propositions, approved by the fifteen, have made it possible to concretise the institutional basis for the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and fix the military objectives for a European capacity for crisis management (Ministère de la Défense 2002, my translation).²⁵

While France is increasingly referring to crisis management and peacekeeping in the European context it is important to note that the aims of the French national military still contain elements focused more on offensive capacity. This is especially evident where the possibilities of 'pre-emptive action' are referred to, even though the precise meaning of this concept remains unclear:

Outside our borders, within the framework of prevention and projection, we must be capable of detecting the threats as early as possible. Thus, the possibility of pre-emptive action may be an option when a serious threat is recognised (Ministère de la Défense 2002, my translation).²⁶

delà de la formule, il s'agit de répondre à une nécessité : jouer un rôle majeur pour la paix dans le monde. L'Union Européenne peut et doit œuvrer à la réduction des tensions internationales car la prévention demeure la meilleure garantie de sécurité (Chirac 2000).

²⁵ Nous plaçons d'abord notre effort dans une perspective résolument européenne car nous pensons que cette voix est la meilleure [...]. Cet effort doit permettre, en préservant notre autonomie de décision et d'action, de conforter la place de la France dans le monde, en mettant nos forces armées en mesure de participer à tous les types de missions de rétablissement et de maintien de la paix. Il permettra à la France de renforcer son poids politique et militaire en Europe. [...] Depuis 1996, le cadre international de notre politique de défense se transforme. L'Europe de la défense a pris une dimension nouvelle depuis les initiatives prises par la France avec ses principaux partenaires. Leurs propositions, soumises et approuvées par les Quinze, ont permis de concrétiser les fondements institutionnels de la politique européenne de sécurité et de défense (PESD) et de fixer les objectifs militaires d'une capacité européenne de gestion de crises (Ministère de la Défense 2002).

²⁶ A l'extérieur de nos frontières, dans le cadre de la prévention et de la projection – action, nous devons donc être en mesure d'identifier et de prévenir les menaces le plus tôt possible. Dans ce cadre, la possibilité d'une action préemptive pourrait être considérée, dès lors qu'une situation de menace explicite et avérée serait reconnue (Ministère de la Défense 2002).

Still, France perceives itself as the driving force in the development of ESDP, and the official text ends with a confirmation of the importance of developing a European defence:

The implementation of this programme will make it possible for France to play the role of an engine in the construction of a European defence, respecting our alliances and our international engagements (Ministère de la Défense 2002, my translation).²⁷

While this indicates a certain continuity, it still seems likely that there has been a shift in the French discourse after the incorporation of the Petersberg tasks in the Treaty, towards an increased focus on comprehensive crisis management. As we shall see, this tendency appears stronger after the preparation process leading up to the draft Constitution and the development of the European Security Strategy (ESS).

Impact of the Convention process and the ESS

In fact, some of the French proposals in the Convention may be characterised as proposals aimed at strengthening the EU as a comprehensive security actor. This is especially true concerning the question of an EU foreign minister. Such a minister will be responsible for both the Commission's and the Council's tools in this area, thereby facilitating coordination among different policy areas and different institutions. In fact, the French political leaders seem increasingly preoccupied with showing how their country can contribute to the realisation of the comprehensive security aspects in the EU.

First, the adoption of a European Security Strategy (ESS) seems to have led to even greater emphasis on international crisis management comprehensive security in the French discourse. A move beyond European defence can be identified in a recent speech made by the French Minister of Defence, Michèle Alliot-Marie:

The year 2003, no one can deny it, has led to spectacular progress in European defence. In fact, the last Council of Brussels, which met in December 2003, adopted a European security strategy, which provides the proof that the Europeans, both by pragmatism and ambition, are capable of defining a common conception of the challenges in the world, in order to be able to improve their common security. This has led to a recognition of the urgent need of creating a unit for planning and commanding operations. This has been important progress, an essential

²⁷ La mise en oeuvre de ce programme « permettra à la France de jouer un rôle moteur dans la construction de l'Europe de la défense, dans le respect de nos alliances et de nos engagements internationaux » (Ministère de la Défense 2002).

element. This step must now be made more specific to optimise the crisis management capacity of the European Union (Alliot-Marie 2004, my translation).²⁸

A speech by the French Minister Delegate for European Affairs, Claudie Haigneré, makes even more explicit reference to the importance of comprehensive security:

The European Union has gradually developed a common perception of European security. The European security strategy, adopted in December 2003, is an essential step forward on which one must continue to work. This strategy puts emphasis, rightly so, on the new challenges: the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and, of course, on terrorism. The fight against terrorism, in all its forms, is a priority that needs that the Union implement the whole range of its means – diplomatic, military, but also police cooperation (Haigneré 2004, my translation).²⁹

The French have also managed to match this comprehensive discourse with concrete actions. The French-led EU operation in Congo in June 2003 may be seen as an implementation of EU's comprehensive security approach. This operation was undertaken at the request of the UN and in close cooperation with civilian actors in the area. Another example is the decision, based on a French proposal and made by the defence ministers of France, Italy, Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands in September 2004, to form a joint paramilitary force to conduct peacekeeping operations that do not require the advanced skills of soldiers but which are too dangerous for civilians and NGOs. Such a force would aim at helping to bridge the gap between military and civilian peacekeeping operations. The agreement involved creating a 3,000-person strong Gendarmerie Force, based in Vicenza in northeast Italy and designed to help restore public order to regions emerging from conflicts, such as the Balkans and beyond. As the French Minister of Defence, Michèle Alliot-Marie, recently argued:

The creation of a European paramilitary force [...] will make it possible to complete the range of capacities for crisis management that today exist, by having a specific response to the transition phase between military and civilian means (Alliot-Marie 2004, my translation).³⁰

²⁸ L'année 2003, personne ne peut le contester, a permis de faire progresser l'Europe de la défense de manière spectaculaire. Le dernier Conseil de Bruxelles, réuni en décembre 2003, a notamment permis l'adoption de la stratégie européenne de sécurité, apportant ainsi la preuve que les Européens, autant par pragmatisme que par ambition, sont capables de définir une ligne de lecture commune des défis de ce monde, afin de mieux garantir leur sécurité collective. Elle a également fait apparaître la prise en compte du besoin avéré d'une cellule de planification et de conduite des opérations. C'était un grand progrès, un élément essentiel. Cette démarche doit maintenant se concrétiser pour optimiser la capacité de gestion de crise de l'Union européenne (Alliot-Marie 2004).

²⁹ L'Union Européenne a développé progressivement une perception commune de la sécurité européenne. La stratégie européenne de sécurité, adoptée en décembre 2003, est une première étape essentielle à laquelle il faut continuer à travailler. Cette stratégie met l'accent, à juste titre, sur les nouveaux défis : la prolifération des armes de destruction massive et, bien sûr, le terrorisme. La lutte contre le terrorisme, sous toutes ses formes, est une priorité qui suppose que l'Union mette en œuvre l'ensemble des moyens diplomatiques, militaires, mais aussi la coopération policière et judiciaire (Haigneré 2004).

³⁰ La création d'une force de gendarmerie européenne [...] permettra de compléter la gamme des moyens de gestion des crises aujourd'hui disponibles, en permettant notamment d'avoir une réponse spécifique pour la phase de transition entre les volets militaire et civil (Alliot-Marie 2004).

From these examples we can see that France has not only adopted a comprehensive security discourse, but is also eager to take the lead in strengthening the EU as a comprehensive security actor.

Conclusion

French diplomacy and security policy-making are known for their awareness of strategic vision; a clear understanding driven from the very top of what France wants to achieve in a medium- to long-term frame, based on a shared sense of its own identity and purpose, imbued with confidence in the national role France should play (Clarke 2000: 729). It is interesting to note, however, that the content of this strategic vision may have been somewhat modified by influence from the EU. As I have shown here, French ambitions for a European defence seem to have been oriented away from a more military and offensive approach. Increasingly, also the political leaders of France appear to have recognised a comprehensive security approach as the guiding principle for EU security policy.

But do these changes really mean that the French political leadership has abandoned its long-held ambition of a common European defence in the traditional sense? Has the French foreign and security identity changed – perhaps through a learning process – and become increasingly oriented towards a comprehensive security approach? Or is this change in discourse merely the result of an instrumental adaptation to a changed environment, with the French ambition of an independent European defence policy remaining the ultimate long-term goal?

While the changes observed in French foreign and security policy are interesting, they should be viewed with caution. It is unlikely that they signify that France has suddenly become a promoter of ‘soft-power’ Europe (Holm 2003; Holm 2004). Also important to bear in mind is the fact that different countries may read similar discourses through different cognitive and normative lenses (Howorth 2004: 231). All the same, the changes identified in this article do indicate some new trends. That the civilian and military instruments are increasingly seen as a whole, and that the EU as a post-modern security actor focusing on comprehensive security is supported also by France, both indicate a modification of France’s ambition of creating a European defence in the more traditional sense.

While some smaller member-states, like Sweden, have actively supported the development of a comprehensive security policy in the EU, this development rather seems to be the result of the special character of the EU as a security actor. That the EU is a tightly coupled security community, with no institutionalised security policy from the past, seems to have facilitated the adoption of such ideas of security. The shift in the French security approach, which seems to have taken place shortly after some important changes in the EU, may therefore be interpreted as a result of a process of adaptation and learning within the EU. While such a Europeanisation process is likely to start with instrumental adaptation, it may, as the spiral model presented by Risse and Sikkink indicates, lead to learning and interest and identity change in the longer run. Thus, while the changes in the national discourse in the early 1990s and in the aftermath of the Amsterdam Treaty may be characterised as instrumental adaptation, the more recent changes, which also have been followed by concrete comprehensive security proposals from France, may mark the beginning of a more profound change in France's national interests and identity.

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