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**“DEVELOPING A SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY IN THE
EUROPEAN UNION:
A VIEW FROM THE BRITISH PRESIDENCY”**

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Introduction

Thank you very much for asking me to address this conference, tackling one of the most important transatlantic issues we face today.

Following such eminent and expert speakers, I suspect it would have been easier to make the opening address rather than the closing one. I suspect a similar question applies to giving views from a Presidency: whether it isn't better to do so at the beginning than the end. In my case, I apologise in advance if much of what I say covers ground you have already trodden very fully already.

In practice, I am delighted that this conference falls towards the end of our Presidency, because there is a great deal to report. But before I do let me set the issue in a broader context. First, and rather fundamentally, why we need a European Security and Defence Policy; second, its progress to date, and lastly what our Presidency can tell us about the challenges and opportunities in stages ahead.

Why ESDP?

And if ESDP, Why NATO?

Let me start with what, since we are in Paris, I might call the existential question. Why ESDP? And if ESDP, why NATO – although the second question could of course be turned on its head. It has certainly spawned an entirely new transatlantic defence industry in terms of commentary, analyses, and learned predictions of inevitable transatlantic divergence. But let me take them in order, because I believe the answer to the first provides the answer to the second.

I don't think I need to remind this audience of the context in which France and the UK launched at St Malo in 1998 our proposals for enhancing Europe's capacity to respond to international crises. Suffice to say that our experience in the Balkans had shown all too clearly – and too tragically – the limits to the EU's capabilities in this domain. British and French thoughts and ambitions may not have been exactly the same at the time – they may not be exactly the same now – but we both felt it was the right moment to sink our differences and move forward.

It has been said that any effective foreign policy relies essentially on three tools: words; money; and force. Until St Malo, the EU had the first two in

abundance. They are not to be dismissed. Both are important instruments of diplomacy. They have allowed the EU to project its foreign policy and influence in a wide variety of domains, not least in terms of enlargement. But without the third, the EU's foreign policy capacity, and credibility are inevitably limited. As Kofi Annan once memorably said, in Baghdad: diplomacy is good; diplomacy backed up by force and the threat of it is better.

The Balkans in the 1990s set the limits of the EU's lack of ability to make its weight felt in the world. Events since have reinforced the message. The changing nature of the security threats Europe faces has underlined the need to have the capacity not only to persuade, through words and money, but to intervene, whether militarily or non-militarily, to safeguard our security, maintain the peace and prevent conflict.

Just as that security is no longer simply threatened by the classic menace of invasion, but by an ever-widening range of dangers, from terrorism to the consequences of conflicts and instability elsewhere, so we have needed to develop a similarly diverse range of instruments to respond to them. And we have found in the EU that, now we have equipped ourselves to deal with issues militarily as well, we have rather a lot of options at our disposal, giving the EU an exceptional capacity to tackle the complex nature of insecurity in the world today.

Which brings me to the second part of the existential question: if ESDP, why NATO. And the argument that this is somehow a sort of institutional zero-sum game.

Those of us immersed in the subject can all too easily slip into a sort of glass bead game of institutional winners and losers. Our citizens worry rather less about such abstractions. They - in my view rightly - conclude that the more that can be done to assure their security, the better.

Thus, when it comes to enhancing security in a world where the threats to it are expanding, expanding our capacities to deal with them seems to me a pretty reasonable – actually a pretty essential - conclusion. The fact that we have more rather than fewer instruments at our disposal, a greater menu of policy options to respond to a greater range of eventualities, seems to me self-evidently a Good Thing. It may look messy, and lack neat logical lines. But so do today's security challenges themselves.

So ESDP and NATO can and should happily co-exist. NATO remains the bedrock of our collective security and can be used in other key areas as well, particularly where high-intensity fighting is a risk. ESDP has a very wide range of military and civil-military uses in almost every kind of international crisis imaginable. They are mutually compatible – not least because the membership of both overlaps so extensively. And they are complementary, even if the precise frontiers of this complementarity have not so far been defined.

ESDP's Development: From St. Malo to Aceh

Let me turn from the existential question, the why, to the what: what has been achieved. And before I start on what I believe to have been the

achievements of our Presidency, a word or two about the platform from which we were able to launch it.

By the standards of any policy or institution, ESDP has come an extraordinarily long way in an extraordinarily short space of time.

The last time Britain held the Presidency, ESDP didn't even exist. Concepts such as EU battlegroups belonged in the realm of futurology. Until just under three years ago, there had never been an ESDP operation.

Today, ESDP is an integral element in the planning and projection of the EU's diplomacy. Some 26 nations have now made commitments allowing 19 battlegroups to be available on rotation – groupings of 1,500 troops deployable anywhere in the world in 15 days. There are now 14 ESDP operations underway or planned in regions as diverse as Africa, the Middle East, the Balkans and South-East Asia.

Seven years ago, names such as Aceh, Darfur, Rafah would have sent many scurrying for our maps. In the life of an institution, it is not a long time to have gone from St Malo to South-East Asia, by way of the Balkans, Africa and the Middle East.

Reasons for ESDP's Rapid Progress

To chart ESDP's likely future development, and the impact this will have on the transatlantic relationship, it is worth taking a moment to identify the reasons why it has prospered so quickly. I would underline two factors in particular.

First, of course, commitment - an issue to which I will also come back when I turn to future challenges. Without the commitment forged by our experiences in the Balkans, our own Presidency would have had a far less solid base on which to build.

But secondly, no less important, is ESDP's flexibility and what we might call in French - as so often, French has a word for it where we need at least two - its "*pluridisciplinarité*". Or in plain Anglo-Saxon, being able to resolve problems by doing rather a lot of very different things all at the same time.

Thanks to this, ESDP has not only developed much faster than those at St Malo (and I was one of them) imagined. It has also expanded in ways then hardly envisaged. The St Malo declaration may have enshrined a commitment, but it was one that talked primarily of military force. And this against the background of events in Europe's near abroad. It explains why just a few years later we are running a large military operation in Bosnia - no mean achievement in itself. But it doesn't explain why we are also running a monitoring mission in South East Asia, nor a border one in Gaza.

This is where flexibility and *pluridisciplinarité* come in. They are important. Because ESDP's capacity to evolve and provide an array of instruments is essential in a world changing just as rapidly, where, as I have said, the challenges are becoming similarly plural. Even in the few years since St Malo, we have recognised that, as the European Security Strategy sets out, crisis management and conflict-resolution today rarely demands purely military action. Security requires a multifaceted approach.

This gives the EU both an advantage and a responsibility. It has a perhaps unique toolbox of military and civilian crisis management capabilities to support its Common Foreign and Security Policy objectives. And it has the proven capacity to use them in close coordination with other multilateral institutions and organisations working for global security- the UN, NATO, the African Union, ASEAN, to name but a few.

Here again, flexibility has been key. St Malo talked of Europe taking autonomous action where NATO was not engaged. But increasingly, the EU is recognising the need to work in concert with, rather than independently from other organisations without affecting its autonomy.

So commitment, flexibility and a multidisciplinary approach have been central to the extraordinarily rapid growth of ESDP. It is on these foundations that we have sought to build under our Presidency.

The UK Presidency

When we took over the Presidency, we set out our goal as being to make ESDP more active, more capable and more coherent, with the EU co-operating effectively with key international partners.

More Active

Let me start with activity. There has been a lot of it. As I have mentioned, the EU now has over a dozen missions ongoing or about to be launched. Seven of these have been launched or prepared under the UK Presidency. And we have widened both the geographical reach of ESDP and the type of mission it can undertake. The EU is now proving on the ground that it is

uniquely well placed to provide assistance in situations across the conflict cycle, from peacekeeping, to border monitoring and assistance, to security sector reform.

To highlight some examples. Our longest-running mission - the policing mission EUPM in Bosnia – and our biggest one, Althea, the main military force in Bosnia continue to prove their effectiveness. So too do the two ESDP missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo - EUPOL Kinshasa advising the Integrated Police Unit, and EUSEC supporting security sector reform - the first ESDP mission of its kind. Within EUSEC we have recently agreed to launch a new project assisting with payments to Congolese soldiers. In July, we also reinforced EU support for the African Union in Darfur with the aim of strengthening the AMIS mission's policing chain of command and providing observers, planning support, and air transport to its military element.

In September the EU launched its first mission in Asia - the Aceh Monitoring Mission. It's worth pointing out that this mission was set up within 16 days, underlining the speed of ESDP decision making today.

The EU is also increasingly active in the Middle East. On 1 July the EU launched the operational phase of the Integrated Rule of Law Mission for

Iraq, EUJUST LEX. And most recently the EU agreed to launch two missions in the Palestinian Territories. A new police support mission, EUPOL COPPS is scheduled to begin in January. And in November, the EU established a Border Assistance Mission at the Rafah crossing point on the Gaza-Egypt border. Once again, this mission was set up quickly, in less than a month.

It's worth pausing for a moment to consider the importance of this mission. Opening the border was an event of enormous political significance, and the EU was the organisation of choice for the Government of Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Egypt. This, in such a complex and sensitive environment is a major achievement.

I hope this rapid and incomplete world tour gives some indication of the extent to which ESDP has become more active. As a result, the EU is now considered by the broader international community as a key organisation for supporting efforts to improve peace and security around the world.

More Capable

But to ensure that the EU can continue to launch and sustain such a variety of challenging missions we must continue to develop our capabilities. Capability improvement is not just about spending more money, but spending more efficiently and making qualitative improvements in our armed forces and civilian capabilities. Sadly Europe's record here remains

wholly inadequate. The best institutions in the world are useless without some real capability – some genuine military muscle – behind them.

The Headline Goal 2010 sets out the framework. Our Presidency contribution has been the approval of the Requirements Catalogue of military assets needed for the missions the EU wants to undertake. The catalogue emphasises the need for rapidly deployable, highly interoperable armed forces. We have also developed a Headline Goal Questionnaire through which Member States will offer contributions against the requirement. That process will also identify capability shortfalls, including ones that are already well known to us such as strategic airlift, air-to-air refuelling assets, command and control arrangements and unmanned aerial vehicles.

Key to making improvements in these areas will be the work of the European Defence Agency. Others have spoken about this this morning. So I would merely highlight one area where we have been particularly pleased with progress – the Code of Conduct on Defence Procurement for those procurements currently exempt from EU competition law on national security grounds. We hope that this will help address concerns that the European defence industry lacks the competitiveness to deliver European defence capability requirements cost-effectively.

As I mentioned earlier, we have also taken forward work on the Franco/British/German Battlegroups initiative. The ambition for full operational capability by 2007- to have two battlegroups available at very high readiness at any one time - will now be met.

In parallel, we have been taking forward work on civilian capabilities within the framework of the Civilian Headline Goal 2008. We have made good progress in identifying capability shortfalls in all the priority areas: police, rule of law, civilian administration, civil protection, monitoring and support to the EU Special Representatives. The rapid reaction capacity of civilian ESDP has also been improved by the agreement of a concept for Civilian Response Teams and a strategy for the rapid deployment of police.

More Coherent

Being capable of responding quickly and effectively to crises anywhere in the world is increasingly what is needed today. But to achieve this, coherence and complementarity between all the civilian and military tools is no less vital.

That is why we launched with Austria and Finland a tri-Presidency approach to improving EU civil-military co-ordination. Work has already been completed on a Concept for comprehensive planning for EU crisis management. By bringing the EU's instruments together in a single planning

framework for any particular crisis response, we hope this will ensure synergy and an understanding of the links between the various actors.

As well as internal coherence, the EU also needs to co-ordinate closely with other international organisations, notably NATO and the UN. The EU and NATO have co-operated closely on the ground in Bosnia and Darfur, and also on capability development. The EU and NATO also worked closely together in response to both Hurricane Katrina and the South Asia Earthquake.

Future Challenges and Transatlantic Implications

So I believe our Presidency has taken ESDP further not only operationally but in terms of future capability. Looking beyond it, let me draw from that experience a few conclusions and pointers for the future of ESDP, and its impact on the wider transatlantic relationship.

Let me start with ESDP itself. Though we can be pleased with progress there are plenty of areas where more needs to be done. To highlight just a few:

First, improving rapid deployability. This is at the heart of making our capability more effective. Events from Darfur to Pakistan show both the EU and NATO need to be more co-ordinated and more flexible. We particularly need to work on air and sea-lift capabilities.

Secondly, we need more countries to commit to investment in research. The Defence Agency can help support groups of nations to work more effectively. We also need to give it a role in auditing our commitments against objective criteria, to ensure that capabilities offered are useable.

Thirdly in Africa, there are valuable national military programmes run by the UK, France and others, helping to build indigenous capacity. The challenge is to build on them to provide a stronger, wider and more inclusive approach which matches solutions more closely to African requirements.

Fourthly, we see an important role for the Operations Centre in managing the array of missions involving a civil and military response more effectively.

And finally, and to return to my remarks at the beginning, we need to build stronger links and trust between the EU and NATO. The new liaison cells are a start. But we must enable a fuller and more informal dialogue at all levels, influencing international thinking on the range of challenges that face us all.

In this respect, the effective practical co-operation with NATO on the ground in Sudan and through Berlin Plus in Bosnia carries an important message for the future. Increasingly, the challenges we face will be multi-dimensional. Responding to them will of course require the multidisciplinary tools available to the EU, but equally it will often require working alongside others.

This may mean institutions combining their efforts in different areas, whether that is the EU working with the UN, with the AU or ASEAN, or with NATO. This is not about losing Europe's autonomy, which is not under any threat. The EU's decisions will always be autonomous. And it must be able to act on its own. But it is about needing Europe at the top table of global crisis management in whatever institutional form or combination of

them best meets the needs of the crisis concerned. That can only be helped by having a strong ESDP, a strong NATO and a strong partnership between both. And such strong and practical cooperation in turn can only help reinforce the partnership across the Atlantic which remains essential to the ultimate goal we share of promoting global security.