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The Role of Britain in the Development of the ESDI and the Transatlantic Link

The contribution made by the United Kingdom to the European security architecture can scarcely be exaggerated¹. To begin with, the UK is among the leading countries cooperating to put a flesh on the involved concept of European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) – and it has been pursuing this goal while keeping an eye on a number of problems and constraints, such as the balance of forces, relations with the US and European NATO partners, presence in security and integration institutions (the Western European Union, the European Union, and the Organisation for Cooperation and Security in Europe) and, last but not least, the traditional British distance to European affairs. Secondly, the UK has steadfastly relied on Euro-Atlantic relations. And thirdly, due to its military potential, including nuclear weapons, and historical experiences, the country is a European politico-military power, playing an important role in the North Atlantic Alliance alongside the US.

1. ESDI and Euro-Atlantic Security

The notion of “European security and defence identity” was first mentioned in a declaration issued on 10 December 1991 by member states of both the WEU and the EU, and

¹ F. G o l e m b s k i, *Brytyjskie koncepcje bezpieczeństwa europejskiego*, Departament Bezpieczeństwa Międzynarodowego MON, Warszawa 1996. For more on UK foreign policy see: M. C l a r k e, *British External Policy-Making in the 1990s*, London 1992; H. Z i n s, *Polityka zagraniczna Wielkiej Brytanii*, Lublin 2001.

appended to the Maastricht Treaty. Three organisations – NATO, the WEU and the EU – have been involved in discussions on the subject, which has come to be referred to by its acronym, ESDI. From the very beginning, ESDI represented an attempt to link conceptually the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), set out by the EU, and NATO's role as a Euro-Atlantic foundation for the European collective defence system.

Conceptually, ESDI belongs in Europe – or, to the more precise, the EU – coming as the integrating continent's response to the changing determinants of European security. It calls for an autonomous system of security and defence, capable of operating when the US and NATO as a whole show no interest in a collective action. ESDI reflects the intention to impart to the EU a new dimension, making it possible for the bloc to play a fuller role on the international scene, and in a way it also reveals disbelief in the dependability of US security guarantees. Going on since the mid-1980s, the argument on the shape and positioning of ESDI has revealed a rivalry between NATO (or the US, to be precise) and the EU². As the Americans have often pointed out, Western Europe tends to turn out many “memorandums of understanding and proposals but the issue really comes down to a force structure, and money, and very expensive investments in modernisation”³.

In discussing so broad a subject, one must not leave out the evolution of the ESDI concept itself and also other components of European security, such as CFSP, Combined

² See.: R. Ziemb a, *Europejska Tozsamosc Bezpieczenstwa i Obrony na prognozie XXI wieku* [in:] *Raport o bezpieczenstwie 2000*, Kraków 2001, p. 51–52. For more on ESDI see.:

R. Ziemb a, *Europejska Tozsamosc Bezpieczenstwa i Obrony*, Warszawa 2000.

³ R. Falkenrath, *European Security and NATO*, „National Security and Defence” 2000, No 7, www.uceps.com.ua/eng/all/journal/2000_7/html/32.shtml.

Joint Task Force (CJFT), and Common European Security and Defence Policy (CESDP). And these elements must be placed within the context of the international institutions directly involved in the issues under discussion, namely NATO, the WEU and the UE.

An accurate presentation of the British position is hardly facilitated by the complex, multifaceted and dynamic character of changes in going on the field.

The United Kingdom is among the most resolute advocates of Western Europe's cooperation with the US within the framework of European security institutions (along with the Netherlands, Portugal and Denmark)⁴.

Since its inception, the ESDI idea has been "suspended" between the EU and the North Atlantic Alliance. It was envisaged by its fathers to be pursued within the WEU (as "NATO's European pillar," especially in the defence field), but the US and proponents of the Atlantic option within the WEU sought to confine ESDI to the NATO framework.

The ESDI concept received support at NATO's Rome summit on 7-8 November 1991, where it was described in a declaration as an element shaping the new transatlantic partnership and strengthening the European pillar of the transformed Alliance. That, however, was followed by prolonged discussions and controversy within NATO between, on the one hand, the advocates of a stronger WEU and an autonomous security system within the EU (France, Germany) and on the other, the exponents of the Alliance's internal cohesion and the US's durable presence in Europe (the UK, the US).

⁴ J.C. Garnett, *Bezpieczeństwo narodowe Wielkiej Brytanii po Zimnej Wojnie* [in:] D.B. Bobrow, E. Haliżak, R. Ziembka (ed.), *Bezpieczeństwo narodowe i międzynarodowe u schyłku XX wieku*, Warszawa 1997, p. 283.

In the ensuing period the US expressed misgivings about the implementation of the EU's announcements to build its own, modern armed forces. The US reaction took the form of a proposal to create within NATO multinational forces of rapid reaction, to be deployed within the 1992 Petersberg tasks (including crisis management). Thus was born the concept of Combined Joint Task Force, first put forward by the US in December 1993. The US action in this respect was the first constructive proposal towards breaking the continuing stalemate in discussions aimed to reconcile supporters of the European and the Atlantic orientations, by means of incorporating ESDI into the NATO framework. Nonetheless, the road to the implementation of this idea was anything but smooth.

The EU's inability to contribute in any significant way to bringing peaceful solution to conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, and especially the lesson of Kosovo's mounting crisis, have with time prodded the bloc to take measures towards strengthening its international role in crisis management⁵. An important turning point came with a change of the United Kingdom's previously unfavourable view of ESDI. When the British presidency of the Union was drawing to an end in spring 1998, the Foreign Office came up with a draft memorandum announcing new initiatives in the field. The document contained concrete suggestions on creating a more effective crisis management system with resources less thinly spread. The UK position was that the EU should take over the WEU's political functions and NATO the military functions.

At an informal EU summit in Pörschach in October 1998, Prime Minister Tony Blair said CFSP could not longer be continued in the shape it then had, and he called for developing a European defence capability to enable member states to

⁵ T. Garden, *Europe a Strategic Power?*, April 1999, www.tgarden.demon.co.uk/writings/articles/older/europe.html.

conduct joint military operations, notably peacekeeping operations⁶. He also listed other possible institutional options previously opposed by the UK: either a gradual or an outright incorporation of the WEU into NATO. The British position contained entirely new elements, and it indicated the readiness to discuss flexibly and offensively various scenarios on building the European defence capability. That brought appreciation from some other EU member states, including France, thus helping to push forward with a discussion to flesh out the ESDI concept.

The pursuit of ESDI under the EU umbrella was not to the liking of the US which wanted it within the NATO framework, so as to prevent any threat to the transatlantic link. Various misgivings began to emerge in step with the EU's adding new elements to ESDI, based solely on the Union. Questions emerged about duplicating the NATO structures and weakening the Alliance and the transatlantic ties⁷. An open problem was the future relationship between EU members and non-EU members of NATO. The US stressed that countries such as Turkey, Norway, Iceland, and also NATO's new members from Central Europe, Poland included, should be brought into decision-making on future European defence. It also urged the European allies to boost defence spending.

In these circumstances, the United Kingdom's role and policy towards ESDI and transatlantic ties assumes special importance. Due to historical and strategic considerations, the country has an enormous potential for solving various dilemmas

⁶ T. G a r d e n, *European Defence: Is Britain serious this time?*, November 1998,

www.tgarden.demon.co.uk/writings/articles/older/source01.html

⁷ *Trans-Atlantic Relations – Overcoming New Challenges –*

Speech by the Lord Robertson, Secretary General of NATO, Washington D.C., March 7, 2001,

www.uspolicy.be/Issues/Europeandefense/rob.030701.htm.

involved in European security policy and Euro-Atlantic security, in its broad sense⁸.

It must be noted that ESDI is going to be pretty closely linked to the process of European integration, and will be pursued in connection with that process. On the other hand, its institutionalisation is only in a nascent state and the efficacy of its functioning is rather unimpressive, meaning that the concept may still undergo considerable changes.

Future evolution of ESDI will therefore hang on progress with EU enlargement and integration and also the character of the transatlantic ties. The direction is all but settled: ESDI will develop as an integral part of the Union. Further successes of that economically powerful bloc will require that it is strengthened by the security policy pillar and its own defence structure.

Thus, the turn of the century marked the beginning of a new post-Cold War international order and a cooperative system of European security. It also saw an evolution in the scope of institutionalisation of European security, and the emergence of a “new security architecture” with the participation of NATO, the WEU, the EU, the CSCE/OSCE and the UN. New impulses and challenges were provided by the events of 11 September 2001, the Afghanistan operation, and the circumstances surrounding the planned US intervention in Iraq.

The new strategic and politico-military situation gave rise to an organisational and programmatic evolution of security institutions. The question of ESDI and Euro-Atlantic relations has doubtless come as one of the main aspects and challenges of the new strategic situation in Europe.

The United Kingdom has played a special role in this discussion, reflecting its political and military function within

⁸ For more see: K. J a z w i n s k i, *Ewolucja mocarstwowej roli Wielkiej Brytanii po zimnej wojnie*; [in:] B. M r o z e k, S. B i e l e n (ed.) *Nowe role mocarstw*, Warszawa 1996, pp. 89–108.

these institutions, the historically-shaped special relations with the US, its own security concept (in its national and international dimension), and the course of country's foreign policy. One can venture the opinion that the process of ESDI development and fleshing-out has been linked to the evolution of British policy, which in turn reflected the combination of the following factors:

- 1/ the Labour Party's electoral victory in 1997, weakening the position of, mainly Conservative, Euro-sceptics;
- 2/ the new priorities in British security policy, as contained in the Strategic Defence Review of 1998⁹;
- 3/ the multi-pronged approach to European security, as presented by Prime Minister Tony Blair at the EU's informal summit in Pörschach on 24-24 October 1998;
- 4/ the Declaration of European Defence, adopted at the Franco-British summit in Saint Malo on 2-4 December 1998;
- 5/ decisions of the EU summits in Cologne (3-4 June 1999) and Helsinki (10-11 December 1999) on the liquidation of the WEU and formation of the European armed forces.

In the wake of these decisions the Euro-Atlantic relations have been evolving, as have been the role and tasks for the US armed forces in Europe and the policy of European security. And the United Kingdom has become something like a guarantor and stabiliser of these relations. This was alluded to by British Prime Minister Tony Blair, in his Warsaw speech on 6 October 2000. „The circumstances of today,” he said, “mean it is time to overcome the legacy of Britain's past. Two things have changed. From Europe's perspective, Britain as a key partner in Europe is now a definite plus not a minus. Britain has a powerful economy, an obvious role in defence and foreign policy and there is a genuine respect for Britain's political institutions and stability. Also in a world moving closer

⁹ T. Garden, *Air Power: Is it time to leave it to America?*, November 1999, www.tgarden.demon.co.uk/writings/articles/1999/991129.html.

together, with new powers emerging, our strength with the United States is not just a British asset, it is potentially a European one. Britain can be the bridge between the EU and the US. [...] there is absolutely no doubt in my mind, that our strength with the US is enhanced by our strength with the rest of Europe and vice versa”¹⁰.

The ESDI concept has perceptibly influenced the evolution of the Western – including Atlantic – system, and the entire post-Cold War international order. Consequently, a major politico-military problem has emerged, namely how to develop ESDI while not weakening the North Atlantic Alliance. The question arose about ESDI’s possible consequences for non-NATO members seeking EU membership and for those NATO allies who stay outside the Union. Another problem has to do with the consequences of further decisions on the WEU, given the differences in membership categories and individual countries’ status with that organisation.

2. ESDI as an Outcome of European Security Changes; the British Position to 1998

The origins of ESDI go back to declarations of the Council of Ministers of the WEU. An outline of the concept of building an autonomous security system in Western Europe was provided as early as the Rome Declaration of 27 October 1984. It placed emphasis on a more effective use of the WEU to deepen member states’ cooperation in the security field, which was to help improve Western Europe’s security and stimulate solidarity and collective defence among the entire membership

¹⁰*Europe’s Political Future*, Speech by the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair to the Warsaw Stock Exchange, Warsaw, 6 October 2002, www.dgap.org/english/tip/tiph/Blair061000.html.

of the North Atlantic Alliance¹¹. The position was supported by the UK, in compliance with the security-related priorities of British foreign policy of the time.

The Platform on European Security Interests, adopted at the WEU Council of Ministers' meeting of 27 October 1987, indicated a clear intention to reactivate the WEU, by adding a security dimension to the process of European integration and also fostering solidarity within the North Atlantic Alliance. WEU members left no doubt that the future UE should extend integration into security and defence, which in the future would not only strengthen and unify Europe but also help boost its contribution to the North Atlantic Alliance, thus positively influencing a balancing of transatlantic relations¹².

Additional impulses to spur WEU activity came from advances in EU integration. Events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, new developments in Central and Eastern Europe and the Gulf War in the early 1990s called for a more coordinated Western European policy. In 1987, the Single European Act broadened and reinforced the so-called European Political Cooperation, which began to extend into security issues. On 23 April 1990, at a Brussels session of WEU foreign and defence ministers, the discussion began on a joint Franco-German proposal to establish a political union of EC member states, full with security and defence competences. The North Atlantic Alliance also joined the debate, and its London summit of July 1990 extended support to the idea of a political union which would also embrace the development of European identity with

¹¹ *WEU Ministerial Council, WEU Council of Ministers Rome Declaration*, Rome 27 October 1984; W. V a n E e k e l e n, *Debating European Security 1948–1998*, Brussels 1998, pp. 10–11.

¹² *WEU Ministerial Council, Platform on European Security Interests*, The Hague 27 October 1987; W. V a n E e k e l e n, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

respect to security¹³. In November 1991 ESDI received full support from NATO's Rome Council, as a sign of consolidation of the North Atlantic Alliance's European pillar¹⁴.

At the same time, the Alliance's military doctrine was modified, by launching a rapid response strategy. It was warmly welcomed by the UK, in the expectation that the combined joint task forces would stop those countries which sought security safeguards outside NATO structures. A different position was taken by France.

Thus, for several successive years, heated discussions were held within both the EC/EU and NATO on whether the WEU should continue its existence or be incorporated into the emerging European Union. Back in December 1990, a major debate on common foreign and security policy in the proposed EU was conducted at the Rome Intergovernmental Conference on monetary union and European political cooperation¹⁵. The Maastricht Treaty, finally agreed on 10 December 1991 (and signed on 7 February 1992), introduced the Common Foreign and Security Policy as the EU's second pillar.

In this way the WEU was finally to become part of the integration process within the EU. It was to operate simultaneously as both the defence component of the Union and the European pillar of NATO.

Within NATO, exchanges intensified between proponents of a cohesive alliance and the United States' permanent presence in Europe (the UK, the US), and those

¹³ *London Declaration on a Transformed North Atlantic Alliance, Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council, London 5–6 July 1990* (www.nato.int).

¹⁴ *Rome Declaration on Peace and Cooperation*, NATO Press Communiqué s–1(91)86, 8 November 1991

¹⁵ See. M. Sjøvåg, *The Single European Act* [in:] K.A. Eliassen (red.), *Foreign and Security Policy in the European Union*, London 1998, pp. 28–31.

emphasising the importance of the WEU and seeking to build an autonomous security system (France, Germany).

After the Treaty on European Union, the ESDI concept was further extended. At a meeting in Bonn, on 19 June 1992, the WEU's Council of Ministers adopted the Petersburg Declaration, authorising the organisation to conduct crisis prevention and crisis management operations, including those undertaken by the OSCE or the UN Security Council. This marked a major qualitative step forward, giving a go-ahead for military operations out of WEU member states' area (i.e. transcending the collective self-defence provisions contained in Art. 5 of the Washington Treaty and Art. V of the amended Brussels Treaty)¹⁶. These include: humanitarian and rescue tasks; peace-keeping tasks; tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking.

Later years saw ESDI expansion not only towards peacekeeping, but also as a system to reinforce the defence capabilities of Western Europe itself. The process was launched of building WEU operational capabilities, developing European nuclear deterrence, and expanding armaments cooperation. In the 1990s the EU and the WEU conducted an active dialogue with countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean – the areas where future EU members were to come from and where the hottest flashpoints were located, threatening with an outbreak of international conflicts.

Discussions on ESDI among EU member states were still vivid in the mid-1990s. In the Treaty of Amsterdam, signed on 2 October 1996, CFSP's institutional assumptions and powers were further strengthened. The Petersberg tasks were now to be conducted not only by the WEU, but the EU as well. No decision was taken, however, on incorporating the WEU into the

¹⁶ R. Zioba, *Europejska Tożsamość Bezpieczeństwa i obrony na progu XXI wieku* [in:] *Raport o bezpieczeństwie 2000...*, pp. 56–57.

Union – a result of differences of opinion between proponents of the European option (France, Germany) and of the Atlantic option (the UK, Portugal, Denmark)¹⁷.

During the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference preceding the Treaty of Amsterdam, the United Kingdom called for the WEU-EU partnership to be bolstered, with the WEU left as a separate intergovernmental organisation of sovereign states, authorised to pursue increased Petersburg tasks. The British government opposed ceding to the WEU the national defence prerogatives of member states, while not questioning the need to expand their cooperation in the field¹⁸. This option proved acceptable to several neutral members (Austria, Finland, Sweden).

For the next two years following the Treaty of Amsterdam ESDI was hibernating, both on the conceptual and the implementing level.¹⁹ Yet it became clear that, following the adoption of ESDP and in the wake of political decisions taken by the US, NATO will have to undergo major transformation²⁰. Evidence was supplied by the events in Yugoslavia, the Afghanistan operation and the question of a possible intervention in Iraq.

NATO actually consented to the development within the Alliance of European defence identity back in 1991, with the passage of the Strategic Concept, but the official decision on

¹⁷ G. W y n R e e s, *The Western European Union at the Crossroads: Between Trans-Atlantic Solidarity and European Integration*, Boulder CO: Westview Press 1998, pp. 114–129; K. A. E l i a s s e n (ed.), *Foreign and Security...*, pp. 59–93.

¹⁸ This position was presented in a White Book published by the government in London in 1996 – R. Z i e b a, *Europejska Tozsamosc Bezpieczenstwa i Obrony...*, pp. 80–82.

¹⁹ R. Z i e b a, *Europejska Tozsamosc Bezpieczenstwa i Obrony na progno XXI wieku*, [in:] „Raport o bezpieczenstwie 2000”..., p. 59.

²⁰ Rob de W i j k, *Debate. Is the fundamental nature of the transatlantic security relationship changing?*, „NATO Review”, Spring 2001, p. 16–17.

launching ESDI was made in 1994. The concept of separable but not separate capabilities was then formulated and CJTF, under European command, was authorised to pursue missions other than collective defence. The initiative taken at Saint Malo by French President Jacques Chirac and British Prime Minister Tony Blair eventually led to formulating the objectives for EU armed forces, including the creation by 2003 of a 50,000-60,000-strong rapid reaction force. Thus, at the end of the day, NATO reached a consensus on ESDI and its role in developing the CFSP, including CESDP, within the EU.

It should be emphasised that CESDP has become a major engine for change within the EU, prodding further institutional and material changes. And as for NATO, it is likely to consist of two pillars – Euro-Atlantic and European – which without question may render Alliance operation more difficult in these qualitatively new conditions.

The motives which prodded Western Europe to change its previous perception of the collective security system may be listed as follows:

- absence in the Washington Treaty of sufficient security guarantees to cope with the new geo-strategic situation in Central and Eastern Europe (fall of communism, systemic transformations) and a new quality in international conflicts in the Mediterranean (Middle East conflict, terrorism, Muslim fundamentalism);
- rise in nationalist tendencies in the Balkans and the post-Soviet area;
- the United States' reduced presence in Europe, reflecting rise in hegemonistic tendencies and neo-isolationist policy in the US (unilateralism);
- problems emerging on the way to a deeper European integration.

The institutionalisation of ESDI is thus a process which has so far been developing within the framework of three

international structures (the WEU, the EU, and NATO), established either by West European countries or with their participation. Its most recent formula, CESDP, was announced as an executive vehicle within the CFSP.

3. The United Kingdom and ESDI Development after 1998

For many years, ESDI was being discussed among a narrow group of experts in international relations. As some observers argue, the concept gained in importance and made it to international security analyses following the change in UK policy and position on the subject²¹. The Conservative governments of Margaret Thatcher and John Major, in office between 1979 and 1997, exhibited a cautious approach to possible modifications in the way common defence policy was to be introduced within the EU – fearing a restriction of British independence and sovereignty²². As recently as 13 May 1997, at a session of the WEU Council of Ministers in Paris, Foreign Secretary Robin Cook made no bones about his view that while the WEU and the EU should cooperate, their merger was out of the question²³.

The breakthrough came in 1998²⁴, when the Foreign Office's draft memorandum, prepared towards the end of the

²¹ “The European Union’s inability to play an major role in peaceful conflict settlement in the former Yugoslavia, and especially the lesson learned from the intensifying Kosovo crisis, prodded the bloc to take measures to bolster its international role, especially in crisis management. The turning point came with a change in the United Kingdom’s position, previously unsympathetic to ESDI.” — see: R. Z i e b a, *Europejska Tozsamosc Bezpieczenstwa i Obrony...*, p. 52.

²² See: F. G o l e m b s k i, *Stanowisko brytyjskie wobec problemu europejskiej tozsamosci obronnej*, „Sprawy Miedzynarodowe” 1999, No 2, pp. 49–51.

²³ See „Times” of 14 May 1997.

²⁴ M. M a t h i o p o u l o s, J. G y a r m a t i, *Saint Malo and Beyond: Toward European Defense*, „The Washington Quarterly” Autumn 1999, pp. 65–76; R. Z i e b a, *Europejska Tozsamosc Bezpieczenstwa i Obrony u prog u XXI wieku* [in:]

British Presidency of the Union, announced the launch of a new political initiatives. The document contained a suggestion to make European crisis management capability more effective and ensure that the existing resources are less thinly spread. The WEU's political functions should be taken over by the EU and the military functions by NATO. Such a decision on the WEU, it was argued, would help set in order the institutional dimension and streamline the decision-making process. Regarding the EU, a fourth pillar was proposed, to be devoted to defence and separated, at least temporarily, from CSFP.

At the Pörschach summit in October 1998, Prime Minister Tony Blair presented four scenarios of institutional arrangements, including the full, gradual incorporation of the WEU into the EU – something which London previously opposed. The scenario most favourable to the UK provided for positioning ESDI within NATO. The second one was the dismantling of the WEU. Next came the proposal to replace the WEU with the fourth pillar within the EU. And the fourth option was to set up a European Defence Council to coordinate European countries' defence policies within the EU framework.

This opened up widespread debate, in which the United Kingdom's position exhibited new qualities: it proved offensive, flexible and open to discussion of various variants for building up European defence capabilities²⁵. Quickly appreciated by EU partners, notably France, this had the effect of stepping up the discussion on making ESDI more specific. The acceleration also reflected Europeans' fears that the US could revise its foreign

„Raport o bezpieczeństwie 2000”..., pp. 62–65. T. G a r d e n, *The Time for European Defence in Now*, www.tgarden.demon.co.uk/writings/1999/9911cer.html.

²⁵ *The Future of European Defence*, Speech by the British Defence Secretary, Mr George Robertson, to the WEU Assembly, Paris, 1 December 1998, www.britain-info.org/eu/xp/asp/SarticleType.1/Article_ID.714/qx/articles_show.htm.

policy priorities, with technology gap quickly leading to a separation of US and European security.

Several weeks after Tony Blair's statement at Pörtschach, the Franco-British summit at Saint Malo (3-4 December 1998) ended with a joint Declaration of European Defence²⁶, where the two onetime adversaries presented an agreed compromise view on the previously divisive issue of ESDI. France and the United Kingdom stated that the EU should play a bigger role on the international arena and that for this to happen the Amsterdam Treaty provisions on CSFP should be implemented as soon as possible. The European Council was also urged to take a decision on a gradual development of common defence policy (within CFSP) on the intergovernmental level. In Prime Minister Blair's opinion, the British initiative and the debate on European defence helped improve the credibility of CSFP itself. As he argued, "European defence is not about new institutional fixes. It is about new capabilities, both military and diplomatic"²⁷.

Agreement was reached on the need to build up capabilities to carry out autonomous European crisis management operations drawing on credible armed forces. The parties pronounced themselves in favour of collective defence commitments under Art. 5 of the Washington Treaty and Art. V of the amended Brussels Treaty. While proclaiming a programme to tighten up EU member states' solidarity, the UK and France confirmed the binding force of their commitments under NATO which were described as the foundation of

²⁶ S. P a r z y m i e s, *Europejska Tozsamosc Bezpieczenstwa i Obrony: mit czy rzeczywistosc*, „Sprawy Miedzynarodowe” 1999, No. 2, pp. 37–41.

²⁷ *NATO, Europe, and our future security*, Speech by The British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, NATO 50th Anniversary conference, Royal United Saervices Institute, London, 8 March 1999, www.britain.info/eu/xq/asp/SarticleType1/Article_ID.713/qx/articles_show.htm.

member states' collective defence. In the pursuit of their programme the Europeans should act within the institutional framework of the EU (the General Affairs Council and defence ministers' meetings). New analytical, intelligence and strategic planning units should be created, but within the existing WEU resources and with account taken of the evolution of the organisation's relations with the EU. This was to take place while respecting diverse status of various European countries (Iceland, Norway and Turkey) with regard to the EU and NATO, and avoiding a duplication of the arrangements already adopted within the North Atlantic Alliance. The EU was also to enjoy the right to use the resources assigned in advance to NATO's European pillar, and also the national and multinational resources outside the NATO framework.

The French and British leaders further stated in the Saint Malo declaration that they were determined to act hand in hand towards helping the EU to reach these goals. This turn in UK policy towards ESDI took the European public opinion by surprise. Coming equally unexpectedly was a quick emergence of a Franco-British security and defence axis, alongside the longstanding pro-European Franco-German axis²⁸. While remaining Atlantic-oriented, the UK recognised the European security dimension and its institutional form, to which it previously ascribed only secondary importance. As British Defence Secretary George Robertson emphatically stated, "NATO will remain the cornerstone of European security. [...] Merging some elements of the WEU with the EU, and associating other elements more closely with NATO is another possibility, which might allow us to make best use of the capabilities and competences of both organisations. We might also consider creating a more distinct European dimension

²⁸ S. B i s c o p, *The UK's Change of Course: A New Chance for ESDI*, „European Foreign Affairs Review”, vol. 4, Issue 2, Summer 1999, p. 259.

within NATO, building on from the valuable work that has already been undertaken in establishing a European Security and Defence Identity”²⁹.

And so, as a result of the British position, a new situation developed in the ESDI debate after 1998. The ensuing discussion, quickly joined by other countries, focused on presenting ESDI objectives in greater detail and finding out way of implementing the previously proposed arrangements. The direction of the search was laid down in the Saint Malo Declaration.³⁰ The British managed to keep one important arrangement intact: decision-making on defence remained at the intergovernmental level, and no instruments enabling Community-level decisions were to be introduced. The UK thus retained full sovereignty and disqualified supranational scenarios – always a sensitive issue for the British who have been opposing a federalist model of European integration³¹. One can venture the opinion that the Saint Malo Declaration marked no major change in the UK’s strategy. The consent to build the European armed forces to tackle crisis management in Europe was coupled with the conviction that NATO would remain the hardcore of West European defence – and the Balkan developments only strengthened this creed.

²⁹ *The Future of European Defence*, Speech by the British Defence Secretary, Mr George Robertson, to the WEU Assembly....

³⁰ R. Zi e b a, *Europejska Tozsamosc Bezpieczenstwa i Obrony u progu XXI wieku*, [in:] *Raport o bezpieczenstwie 2000*..., pp. 63–64.

³¹ One can only agree with the observation that „the real problem for the European dominant classes is to create a supranational structure of leadership, capable of deciding and acting quickly in a dangerously unstable world in the essential fields of a state. To give the task to the Commission (by definition supranational) is in contradiction with the inter-state nature of the UE” – F. V e r c a m m e n, *European Union: Pseudo debates, capitalist offensive*, www.3bh.org.uk/IV/main/IV%20Archive/IV/333/IVP%20333%20003.htm.

The Kosovo crisis stiffened the resolve of the French and the British to expand Europe's defence capabilities, which found expression in two-day bilateral political consultations in London, beginning 25 October 1999³². It was then that the British-French proposal was born to develop a 50,000-60,000-strong rapid reaction force and strengthen the European command, intelligence-control and logistic capabilities. In a declaration after the meeting, the two parties called on the Helsinki European Council to provide adequate political and military instruments necessary for the EU to launch and conduct military operations. They also demanded to lay down rules governing participation in EU military operations for NATO members and WEU associated partners not present in the EU. The UK and France pronounced themselves in favour of expanding cooperation and consultations, and promoting transparency, between the EU and NATO. They approved the transformation, started at Cologne, of the Eurocorps into the rapid reaction corps, and they also called for European countries to improve their airforce capabilities. The UK-French summit coincided with an earlier British-Italian summit, held on 19-20 July 1999, where the parties emphasised the need to build up European defence capabilities, e.g., by expanding and restructuring their defence industries and integrating more closely with regard to collective defence tasks³³. Both meetings demonstrated the UK's vigorous activity and importance in the

³² *Joint Declaration by the British and French Governments on European Defence*, Anglo-French Summit, London, 25 November 1999, www.britain-info.org/eu/xq/asp/SarticleType.1/Article_ID/qc/articles_show.htm.

³³ *Joint Declaration launching European defence capabilities initiative*, British-Italian Summit, 19 July 1999, www.britain-info.org/eu/xq/SarticleType.1/Article_ID.711/qx/articles_show.html; T. G a r d e n, *Making the Anglo-Italian European Defence Proposals Work*, www.tgarden.co.uk/writings/articles/1999/9909source.html.

discussion preceding the EU's Helsinki summit (10-11 December 1999). The summit officially inaugurated CESDP as a tool of CFSP, and set a "headline goal" for member states to raise a 50,000-60,000-strong rapid reaction task force by 2003, within 60 days for at least one year. In 2000, Britain declared its maximum commitment in this regard at 12,500 ground troops, 18 warships and 72 combat aircraft³⁴.

At NATO's jubilee summit in Washington (23-25 April 1999), the European countries approached ESDI in a deft and cautious manner, not wishing to provoke a possible conflict with the United States. This reflected the NATO members' team-spirited cooperation at a time of the military intervention against Yugoslavia over the Kosovo conflict. France, too, refrained from taking steps which could upset the Euro-Atlantic relations. Generally, arguments with Washington over ESDI were avoided. The summit only confined to concluding that ESDI would be developed within the NATO framework, requiring close cooperation between NATO, the WEU and the EU. ESDI was to strengthen the efficacy of the activities of the Alliance and, within its framework, of the Euro-Atlantic partnership as well. It was to enable the European allies to conduct separate operations on the strength of NATO member states' unanimous decisions, with the main role assigned to CJTF (whose concept was still being developed)³⁵.

It would be highly difficult to predict the course of further discussions on NATO's "Europeisation," still less the detailed procedures for CJTF deployment. The determinants of

³⁴ *The globalisation of the defence industry: Policy implications for NATO and ESDI the UK's role in European defence*, Speech by Secretary of State for Defence, Geoff Hoon, to RIIA conference, 29 November 2000, www.britain-info.org/government/xq/asp/SartcileType.../minister_articles_show.htm.

³⁵ See: *The Reader's Guide to the NATO Summit in Washington, 23-25 April 1999*, Washington 1999, pp. 22-65.

ESDI's further development were altered by the announcement of the WEU-EU merger, made at the Cologne European Council in June 1999, and by the Union's proclamation of CESDP.

The Saint Malo declaration initiated a process of discussion on institutional matters, correlated with concrete decisions on European defence capabilities. The Cologne European Council adopted a decision to set up new, standing politico-military structures within the EU—the Policy and Security Committee (PSC), the Military Committee (MC) and the Military Staff (MS) – as bodies in charge of political and strategic leadership of EU-led operations. A list of forces assigned to EU-led operations was quickly compiled, marking an important step on the way towards greater independence from US policy – the step whose consequences for transatlantic relations are as yet hard to predict.

A major problem affecting the development and implementation of Europe's autonomous defence capabilities remains the absence of clear-cut leadership, which is a necessary condition for effective planning, both operational and defensive. As matters now stand, the largest stakeholders in the process, i.e. France, Germany and the UK, pursuing different interests of their own, may invoke different reasons and priorities. Theoretically, the unifying functions in this field should be performed by the EU High Representative for Foreign Policy (Javier Solana). But in the practice of EU functioning, it is the individual member states' policies and positions that clearly get the upper hand when it comes to security and defence. This is a thorny, but also highly important, problem related to a further evolution of the European defence concept.

As a result, on the one hand, NATO may provide an important forum for transatlantic political consultations but, on the other, the Alliance's formally integrated military structure may be split between North America and Europe. The discussion has thus been gravitating towards the degree of

NATO military structure's integration (avoiding unnecessary duplication between NATO and the Union with regard to the formation of armed forces) and the shape of the Europeans' defence concept³⁶.

Outside France, no-one actually asked for a permanent EU armed force to be build and deployed. According to the British, the credibility of the European rapid reaction force (ERRF) will hang on how they help strengthen NATO's European pillar. It seems that the UK will very cautiously react to anything transcending the modest initial plans for ESDI³⁷. For this reason, Britain is wary of projects that could undermine the transatlantic ties, and at the same time it insists that NATO resources must be used efficiently and the organisation's Defence Capabilities Initiative (DCI) must not be duplicated³⁸. This suits the United States which – even though having (reluctantly) accepted ESDI (primarily within the NATO framework) – has begun to worry about the concept's new elements being built into EU structures. The misgivings are not only about a possible weakening of transatlantic ties but also about the effectiveness of NATO itself³⁹. Generally, the British view is that the EU does not need a defence policy within the meaning of Art. V of the amended Treaty of Brussels, since their member states' security is guaranteed by the North Atlantic Alliance. When attempting to understand the British approach

³⁶ *Trans-Atlantic Relations – Overcoming New Challenges – Speech by the Lord Robertson...*

³⁷ J. Zielonka, *The main characteristics of the European Security and Defence Policy*, „National Security Policy and Defence” 2001, No. 9,

www.uceps.com.ua/eng/all/journal/2001_9/html/48.shtml.

³⁸ Z. Lachowski, *ESDP: złudzenia i realia*, „Polska Zbrojna” 2002, No. 35, p. 34.

³⁹ R. Zieba, *Europejska Tozsamosc Bezpieczenstwa i Obrony...*, p. 68. Szerzej zob.: R.E. Hunter *The European Security and Defence Policy: NATO's Companion - or Competitor?*, RAND 2002, www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1463.

to the future model of European security, one should remember about several key related issues.

1/ A strong, historical conviction among the British about the need for cooperation with the US, coupled with limited confidence in the efficacy of European arrangements. This may explain e.g. why positions are so much diversified among both Labour and Conservative politicians. Notwithstanding the numerous dramatic turns in the approach to European defence (e.g. on the part of Prime Minister Blair), manifest scepticism as to the future model of European security has remained in place.

2/ The attitude towards European integration has become an important element in defining British political groupings' position and weight. Tony Blair himself argues that the positions on Europe taken by Labour Party and the Conservative Party define their differences much better than their respective social or economic policy programmes⁴⁰.

3/ The UK stance on European defence policy must not be separated from the overall objectives of the country's policy towards Europe (and especially the EU). This is important in a situation where Euro-sceptical tendencies in Britain's socio-political life have stayed on for many years.

4/ Increased awareness of the importance of the country's own armed forces, as against the position taken by other European partners. Palpable evidence was provided by the British contingent's successful contribution to conflict management in the Balkans. The sense of importance of the national armed forces received a boost following their participation in the Afghanistan operation alongside the US, and from the declarations on readiness to support the US-planned operation in Iraq.

⁴⁰ „Times” of 28 July 1999.

4. The UK View of the Relationship between ESDI and Transatlantic Ties

The United States and Europe have confirmed in the early 21st century their dominant importance on many levels of international relations. The events of 11 September 2001 have reinforced the United States' interest in Central Asia; at the same time, however, the country exerted pressure on the European allies to assume greater responsibility for conflict prevention and conflict management. This was to take place irrespective of the role played in that regard by NATO. And the Europeans themselves have been aware of the experiences accumulated during the Yugoslav crisis, which revealed the need for autonomous rapid reaction forces. Discussions broke out within the EU about the size of military budgets and the extent of coordination with NATO of future operations by the Union's rapid reaction forces. The US position has been that the EU should rely on NATO's planning mechanisms and engage in close coordination with the Alliance. The creation by the Union of its own planning unit could only jeopardise transatlantic cooperation⁴¹.

With the emergence of these new dimensions and challenges relating to the security architecture and transatlantic relations, a crucial role has been played by the United Kingdom, which is both a tested ally of the United States (linked by special relations) and an important element of the transatlantic ties⁴². Realising its new role, the UK undertook the tough job of correlating ESDI development in a way that would not threaten

⁴¹ *Trans-Atlantic Relations – Overcoming New Challenges – Speech by the Lord Robertson...*

⁴² M. M a t h i o p o u l o s, *The USA and Europe as Global Players in the Twenty-first Century*, „Aussenpolitik. German Foreign Affairs Review”, No. 2, 1998, p. 36–49; M. B u r d m a n, *Britains Blair Launches New Emire Offensive*, „EIR International”, 9 November 2001, pp. 46–47.

the transatlantic ties, Europe's relations with the US or NATO's political and military cohesion. Back in 1998, Defence Secretary George Robertson said that „the transatlantic relations lie at the heart of European security and defence”⁴³. And Prime Minister Tony Blair, when presenting his vision of European development during his visit to Warsaw on 6 October 2002, said that Europe must be „a superpower, but not a superstate”⁴⁴.

In a joint newspaper article, Robin Cook and Madaleine Albright wrote this: „Tony Blair's European defence initiative, launched with France in 1998, is a response to these needs [to strengthen the Europeans' contribution to alliance missions – author]. It will improve the European Union's crisis management capacity and develop, in co-operation with NATO, a European security and defence policy on the basis of improved European capabilities.[...] Dangers to NATO and the transatlantic link are far more likely to come from European weakness than European strength. We want both a stronger Europe and stronger NATO. That is why we both back this European initiative, which promise to strengthen NATO as well as Europe”⁴⁵.

On 23 February 2001, a joint statement on Prime Minister Tony Blair's visit to the US and his talks with President George W. Bush reiterated the importance of both countries' unique relations for international cooperation and security. The parties supported European NATO members' efforts to solve

⁴³ *The Future of European defence*, Speech by the British Defence Secretary, George Robertson...

⁴⁴ *Europe's Political Future...*

⁴⁵ *Euro force will beef up NATO*, Newspaper article by the British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, and US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, in the Observer, 26 November 2000, www.britain-info.org/eu/xq/asp/SarticleType.1/Article_ID.1063/qx/articles_show.htm.

European security problems in accordance with the decision-making procedures of the North Atlantic Alliance. The United States, the document went on, accepted Europe's position on what was described as ESDP⁴⁶. That policy has aimed to enhance Europe's crisis management capabilities within the security framework defined by transatlantic relations.

Reference to the transatlantic link has always been an important part of the UK's position on security issues, with far-reaching consensus often attained between the ruling party and the opposition. Yet it is interesting to cite also this passage from a statement by Ian Duncan Smith, the shadow defence secretary, made on 10 June 2001 [retranslated]: “[...] Among these new initiatives taken by European governments last year, ESDI represents a highly improper turn for NATO nations in Europe. In the years to come, this will lead to growing divisions between the United States and Europe, ending up in declining defence capabilities, something which is obvious anyway. The most important force here is doubtless the United Kingdom, shouldering the historical role of unifying Europe and North America. This role has been swapped for European defence identity, and unless this is changed the United States will lose an unfailing and trusted ally, while gaining little in exchange. For Great Britain, such a move will undermine her global interests, discarding a tried and tested formula for an uncertain political experiment”.

It was feared that the EU's direct involvement in European defence was harmful to the future of NATO and potentially led to splitting the most effective military defence alliance.

The British opposition's misgivings were connected with the expected changes in US military policy. Although

⁴⁶ See: *UK/USA relations*, „Survey of Current Affairs”, March 2001, No 3, London 2001, p. 53.

politically the most conspicuous controversy in transatlantic relations has been the National Missile Defence (NMD) system⁴⁷, the real challenge to the future of NATO will be posed by the question of inevitable far-reaching changes in the US armed forces' structure and doctrine. These changes reflect budgetary constraints (reduced spending on defence in the US, coupled with pressing needs to modernise its armed forces) and strategic considerations (new threats and challenges after 11 September 2001). The final outcome of these changes is extremely hard to predict. As the British see it, the escalation of international terrorism has forced Europe into deeper reflection on a possible extension of the Petersberg tasks, to include fighting acts of terror⁴⁸.

ESDI is of special importance for the future of transatlantic relations. The subject was taken up by the US administration and Senate back in 1999⁴⁹. A resolution proposed by members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 28 October 1999 called on NATO and the EU to jointly lay down rules to coordinate their security-related activities in the transatlantic area. NATO should be the first and principal means of collective defence, it was stressed, and the key to enhancing ESDI's weight within NATO was to improve the European defence capabilities, and not create new institutions outside the Alliance. In the US opinion the EU, while turning into practice the Cologne decisions on CSFP, should bring into the process all

⁴⁷ For the British position on the issue see: T. G a r d e n, *UK Perspective on NMD*, www.tgarden.demon.co.uk/writings/articles/2000/000918nmd.html.

⁴⁸ *The case for European security and defence policy*, Keynote speech by the Minister for Europe, Peter Hain, Royal United Services Institute, London, 28 November 2001, www.britain-info.org/eu/xq/asp/SarticleType.1/Article_ID.1956/qx/articles_show.htm.

⁴⁹ See: *The Reader's Guide to the NATO Summit in Washington 23–25 April 1999*, NATO Office of Information and Press.

non-WEU NATO allies (the Czech Republic, Iceland, Canada, Norway, Poland, turkey, the US and Hungary)⁵⁰. The resolution pointed to the weaknesses of European commitment to collective defence within the NATO framework. According to data for 1996, the combined military spending in all EU countries was at half the level provided for in the US budget⁵¹. The European countries' capability to send and deploy its forces in areas outside Alliance territory equalled just a tenth of the comparable capability of the US forces⁵². It is estimated that the EU countries are not capable of undertaking any autonomous operational activity because of shortages of strategic airborne transport and an insufficient number of troops ready to join such operations⁵³.

The United States has come to the conclusion that ESDI could strengthen European allies' crisis management capability, but must not weaken NATO's role or antagonise the transatlantic relations. This is possible unless the EU member states seek to duplicate Alliance structure, scale down defence budgets, postpone institutionalisation of EU-NATO relations and discriminate against non-EU NATO allies⁵⁴.

The United Kingdom has been aware of these new challenges and the role it may play in the field. Speaking in November 2002, British Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon said that „the UK can claim no small measure of credit for the overall

⁵⁰ O:RYN/RYN99.B39. 106th Congress, 1st Session. Resolution. Mimeo.

⁵¹ See: C. R i c e, *Common European Security and Defence Policy: what will it be like?*, Round table by conference, „National Security and Defence” 2001, No. 9, www.uceps.com.ua/eng/all/journal/2001_9/html/2.shtml; „Le Monde” of 23 October 1999. A full analysis of military spending is contained in: „The Military Balance”, IISS, London 1999.

⁵² Ch. G r a n t, *European defence post-Kosovo*, „Defense News” of 2 August 1999.

⁵³ F. H e i s b o u r g, *L'Europe de la défense dans l'Alliance atlantique*, „Politique Etrangère”, February 1999, pp. 219–232.

⁵⁴ Le Figaro” of 15 March 1999.

character that European defence has now taken, an approach that ties developing EU defence dimension closely to NATO. I have no doubt that the issue of European defence has moved so far, and so rapidly, because of our active engagement and leadership. We will continue to play a leading role.[...] The clear, and growing imbalance between European and American military capability was one of the primary reasons for launching a new initiative on European defence. The United States has long suggested that Europe need to do more, to take a greater share of the security burden. Kosovo showed that we, and they, were right. When it came to the crunch, Europe was unable to pull its weight in its own back yard'⁵⁵.

The events of 11 September 2001 brought home to the EU its real role and position in the transatlantic partnership. Efforts intensified to boost complementarity between Europe and the US, and so did pressures for European countries to improve their military capabilities both within the Union and NATO. Signs of progress included the establishment of ESDP bodies for military affairs, strengthening of institutional cooperation with NATO, and elimination of deficiencies in operational capabilities. The most sensitive problems, however, went unresolved: logistics, communications, strategic transport and intelligence. On the fundamental level, ESDI's scope still remains undefined, leaving unresolved the question of possible duplication of NATO's and EU's efforts⁵⁶. NATO Secretary General George Robertson frequently appealed for the strengthening of transatlantic defence cooperation and for

⁵⁵ *The globalisation of the defence industry: Policy implications for NATO and ESDI the UK's role in European defence*, Speech by the Secretary of State for defence, Geoff Hoon, to RIIA conference, 29 November 2000, www.britaininfo.org/government/xq/asp/SarticleType.../minister_articles_show.ht.

⁵⁶ Z. L a c h o w s k i, *ESDP* ..., p. 35.

holding close consultations on the matter between the EU and NATO⁵⁷.

Conclusions

ESDI is bound to remain the subject of numerous debates within the EU and the North Atlantic Alliance. It is being realised that ESDI does not mean collective defences in the sense associated with a military alliance, given that the amended 1954 Treaty of Brussels on collective self-defence, signed by 10 EU member states, all the time remains in force. There is no sign that it could be terminated without incorporating the provisions of its Art. V (underlying collective self-defence) into the Treaty on European Union. In the future, the Brussels Treaty may possibly be binding also on the states about to join the EU (especially those currently associated with the WEU).

Even if confined at present to European crisis management operations, ESDI does represent major progress on the situation of not long ago when—despite the existence of the WEU, but in the absence of adequate organisational structures—NATO's European members were not capable of carrying out any military operations outside the Alliance⁵⁸. The new look on these issues was certainly inspired by the Kosovo developments, a lessening of France's anti-Americanism and the United Kingdom's greater readiness to engage in military cooperation within the EU. When doubts were dispelled to demonstrate that ESDI does not seek to draw neutral EU member states into a

⁵⁷ *ESDI and Transatlantic Defence Cooperation – Speech by Lord Robertson, NATO Secretary General at the Conference on the „Globalisation of Defence Industry: Policy Implications for NATO and ESDI”, London 29 January 2001,*
www.usinfo.state.gov/cgibin/washfile/display.pl.

⁵⁸ N. G n e s o t t o, *Défense européenne: 2000 et au-delà*, „Bulletin de l'Institut d'Études de Sécurité de l'UEO”, Janvier 2000, No. 28, p.1.

military alliance, that group of countries extended its support as well. And against the worst fears of the US, it has turned out that ESDI, in the formula phrased at Helsinki, poses no threat to the durability of the North Atlantic Alliance. In the words of NATO Secretary General George Robertson, there should be no apprehension about Europe's drifting away from the US on security, because in the foreseeable future Europe's total autonomy is not feasible⁵⁹.

The United Kingdom has contributed mightily to the evolution of European defence policy, playing an important role of as the cement binding Atlanticism with European integration. For many years, the country was in a position to pursue an autonomous security agenda – having at its disposal an adequate economic potential, nuclear weapons, professional, modern armed forces, special relations with the US, a permanent seat on the Security Council, and also accepting NATO as the main pillar of allied defence. Such policy, however, was possible in a bipolar system. The post-1989 transformations have prompted the UK to revise its defence policy and seek a new model for European security. The change in the country's approach to the issue became especially conspicuous in the mid-1990s, even if it still viewed with considerable reserve any attempts at revolutionary changes in Western Europe's existing security system. Consent to the new concepts and institutional arrangements was possible due the new defence system's strong identification with the Atlantic principles and the special role for the United States. A conservative approach to the subject has shown in sometimes contradictory statements by politicians from the same political party. Little accuracy should also be noted in presenting the UK's official stance on initiatives concerning ESDI's further evolution.

⁵⁹ G. Robertson, *Identité européenne de défense: une idée qui se concrétise*, „Le Soir” of 4–5 March 2000.

The opinion may be ventured that the rise in British interest in European defence in the mid-1990s was closely linked to the growing weight of European matters in the country's foreign policy, at a time of its steadily lessening involvement in global affairs. A certain reorientation in the early 21st century, reflecting the shift in geo-political threats (terrorism and Muslim fundamentalism), resulted in a renewed increase in the UK's political and military engagement on a global scale. It is hard to tell whether in the longer run this will influence any progress in British support for the development of the European defence system, including ESDI⁶⁰.

There can be no doubt that the British-French relations will be decisive for a continued development of CESDP. Since the Saint Malo Declaration both countries have been seen as the two main military forces in the EU exploring opportunities to bolster the European defence pillar⁶¹.

The successive European Council, held in Lisbon, welcomed the launch of CESDP provisional bodies, as provided for at Helsinki. The need was also recalled for working out proposals on third parties' participation in crisis management by military means. On this issue, the UK position was that the six non-EU NATO allies should either attend regularly the meetings of the EU's Military Committee or be taking part as observers in the meetings of the Policy and Security Committee. The British position is evidently close to the "Atlanticist approach," according to which the EU's military dimension with regard to CESDP should also appreciate the function and role of NATO⁶².

⁶⁰ See: T. G a r d e n, *European Security in the 21st Century*, www.tgarden.demon.co.uk/writings/articles/2000/000215milcom.html.

⁶¹ M. O a k e s, *Common European Security and Defence Policy: A Progress Report*, „Research Paper”, 00/84, October 2000, pp. 35–36. See: www.opengov.uk/mod.

⁶² J. H o w o r t h, *European Integration and defence: the ultimate challenge?*, „Chaillot Paper 43”, November 2000, s. 27.

Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said in July 2002 that the strengthening of European defence in the 21st century will rest on three major foundations:

- NATO's enlargement and modernisation;
- Europe's credible security and defence policy with regard to crisis management operations (with or without NATO);
- EU expansion, lessening the risk of traditional conflicts driven by poverty and ethnic rivalries⁶³.

The United Kingdom belongs to the so-called Atlanticist group in the ongoing discussion on development of a defence system within the EU⁶⁴. It accepts the need to develop CESDP as the principal way of strengthening NATO. The country's position does not transcend the Petersberg missions, reflecting to some extent the British concerns over the scope, importance and role of the transatlantic link. Within this line of thinking, NATO and privileged relations with the US are still the principal frame of reference with regard to crisis management⁶⁵.

Jack Straw is of the opinion that the operation in Afghanistan has confirmed NATO's importance as a guardian of peace and security in Europe. The decisions of NATO's Prague

⁶³ *Collective security in an enlarged Europe*, Speech by the Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, Intercontinental Hotel, Budapest, 9 July 2002, www.britain-info.org/eu/xq/asp/SarticleType.1/Article_ID.2452/qx/articles_show.htm.

⁶⁴ T. Garden, *British perspective on the European Union*, www.tgarden.demon.co.uk/writings/articles/2001/010307.ind.html.

⁶⁴ T. Garden, *Time to Choose? Britain, Europe and America*, www.tgarden.demon.co.uk/writings/articles/2002/federal.html, T. Garden, *No barbecues for Bush and Blair*, www.tgarden.demon.co.uk/writings/articles/2002/020409source.html.

⁶⁵ *Leadership in Europe*, Transcript of a speech given by UK Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, German-British Forum, 17 October 2002, www.britain-info.org/eu/xq/asp/SarticleType.1/Article_ID.2730/qx/articles_show.htm.

summit of late 2002 and the new foundation of NATO-Russia relations provide a fundamental change for the better. He further notes that the role and importance of Europe's military forces in keeping peace in the Balkans has been increasing (the EU will take over the UN-led International Police Task Force in Bosnia from January 2003). All this leads him to conclude that „we cannot expect to make a real difference without regular, close and systematic cooperation with the US in NATO, and higher and more focused defence spending. This is essential if we in Europe are serious about wanting to play a leading role in international affairs”⁶⁶.

The question arises how long the United Kingdom and, to some extent, the countries that support it (the Netherlands, Portugal, Denmark) will remain capable of building up and cementing the ties between America and Europe, especially at a time of major reassessments in US foreign policy.

As Secretary Straw emphatically said in October 2002, „it is time for vision and courageous leadership from all European governments. The prize is great. [...] We in United Kingdom will play for our part. [...] I believe Britain can offer leadership in two particular areas: first, European security; second, the creation of a prosperous European economy which delivers jobs and prosperity to all corners of the continent”⁶⁷.

ESDI has become for the British an important point of departure and reference for major foreign policy reassessments – and to an extent which transcends defence into areas such as European unification, the shape of the transatlantic link, and their country's contribution to building up the EU's position and importance in the world. This has been pursued in a pragmatic

⁶⁶ *Leadership in Europe*, Transcript of a speech given by UK Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, German-British Forum, 17 October 2002, www.britain-info.org/eu/xq/asp/SarticleType.1/Article_ID.2730/qx/articles_show.htm.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*.

manner, remembering that political leadership requires a difficult and fascinating balance between objective fact and subjective perceptions⁶⁸.

⁶⁸ *Superpower, Not Superstate, Tony Blair*, Foreword by Martyn Bond, Director, The federal Trust, November 2000, www.fedtrust.co.uk/foreword_blair.htm.