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How NATO + EC + WEU Can Equal Security for Europeans

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LONDON — European defense cooperation has suddenly become serious, and this has the United States worried. Europe must take great care that its rush to political union does not undermine the U.S. commitment to NATO. The United States at the same time must not alienate Europe by appearing to meddle in its internal affairs.

As Europe stands at the crossroads, it needs a highway code to guide coming moves.

European security integration is a natural outgrowth of monetary and political union. But it has been stimulated by Western victories in the Cold War and the Gulf war.

The collapse of the Warsaw Pact creates visions of eventual U.S. troop withdrawal from Europe and a sense of declining Soviet threat. Perhaps in the future, some argue, Europe could meet its defense commitments alone. But the Gulf war demonstrated that with today's institutions, Europe cannot develop effective security policy in the face of clear threats to European interests. Many therefore believe that those institutions need strengthening to give Europe a firm and equal voice.

Jacques Delors, president of the EC Commission, captured this spirit on March 7 when he called for insertion of the Western European Union's mutual defense clause into the European political union treaty. This would place defense at the heart of the Community.

Intense work is under way on European defense in three forums.

The EC's Intergovernmental Conference on Political Union will by the end of this year recommend a draft treaty specifying the extent and nature of EC decision making in security affairs.

On Feb. 22, the Western European Union issued its presidency's conclusions on its fu-

ture role as a bridge between NATO and the EC. The recommendations are now being reviewed and implemented.

And NATO is nearing completion of a three-tiered strategic review to redefine its purpose and replace obsolete doctrine.

Only when all these efforts are finished will the new security architecture become clear.

After previous support for a European pillar within NATO, the United States reacted with alarm to recent suggestions for rapid defense integration. The U.S. ambassador to NATO, William Taft, warned that Americans would be suspicious of those who "mess" too much with familiar security structures. A harsh U.S. diplomatic note to European capitals followed, warning against a European caucus in NATO. The message was clear. America had changed its signals from green to blinking amber.

So how can Europe develop a defense identity without alienating the United States? Seven rules of the road might help.

1. *There should be no merger between the EC and the WEU. Nor should the WEU take direct orders from the EC.* The phoenix-like WEU will lose its critical function of bridging differences between NATO and the EC if it is absorbed by one side. If the organizations remain separate, the EC can more easily expand eastward to integrate Central Europe, and the WEU can expand to include other European members of NATO.

2. *European defense competence should be vested in the WEU, not in the EC.* The intergovernmental conference should assign to the EC's European Council only those security issues that do not clash with NATO's principal

defense mission. Coordination of policy on issues such as multilateral arms control, arms exports and counterterrorism might be dealt with by the European Council, but not matters central to defense. Washington believes that the WEU's style is less likely to foster trans-Atlantic confrontation than is the EC's.

3. *The United States will welcome coordinated WEU positions in NATO councils, but not on a take-it-or-leave-it basis.* The British have suggested that European permanent representatives to NATO be "double-hatted" as WEU representatives to facilitate coordination. America's concern is that it will be faced with an inflexible voting bloc that will make NATO an organization dedicated primarily to resolving U.S.-European differences.

4. *The expanding WEU should limit its military capabilities to the non-NATO area and must avoid duplicating NATO command structures.* NATO is planning a multinational European Rapid Reaction Corps, to be commanded by the British. For non-NATO purposes, that force might operate with French troops under the WEU. That would require development of an expensive WEU headquarters structure, but it could prove politically convenient to have such a non-NATO force. The danger is that the WEU command structure might grow to incorporate other European multinational forces. A large command structure could only be created for European defense and would undermine NATO's integrated command.

5. *Use of WEU military forces should require some degree of consent from the NATO Council.* A WEU rapid reaction force would retain European defense responsibilities under NATO and require NATO airlift capability, logistics, intelligence and communications to

operate outside Western Europe. Furthermore, the United States will want a say if the WEU acts in Eastern Europe in ways that might draw Soviet involvement and trigger the NATO commitment. For both practical and political purposes, NATO commanders would be reassured if the NATO Council remained part of the force deployment decision-making process.

6. *U.S. troops remaining in Europe should integrate to the maximum extent possible with European forces.* NATO officials are rethinking the operational wisdom of the emphasis on multinational force deployments in last year's London declaration. NATO members are likely to have peacetime national corps and wartime task forces. But U.S. forces should not be excluded from all European multinational task forces, lest the United States become militarily isolated.

7. *NATO's strategic review should aim to make the alliance a more attractive home for the European defense identity.* The key could be making France more comfortable with NATO. The prospect for greater convergence of NATO and French military doctrines is an opportunity to be seized in NATO's strategic review. NATO's basic doctrine and rationale should be fundamentally revised to maintain support on both sides of the Atlantic. And measures to strengthen the European role, such as having a European serve as Strategic Allied Commander-Europe, need reconsideration.

With rules of the road such as these, the complicated transformation now under way could yield both a stronger European defense identity and close trans-Atlantic bonds.

The writer, deputy director of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, contributed this comment to the International Herald Tribune.