Momentum and Impediments: Why Europe Won't Emerge as a Full Political Actor on the World Stage Soon*

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Abstract

Is Europe about to rise as a full political actor on the world stage? Conventional wisdom had it that European integration in foreign policy, security and defence was unlikely to amount to much very quickly. More recently, however, a diverse group of scholars has argued that pan-European political actorhood had gained considerable substance. Surveying the recent literature, pertinent related writings and relevant primary materials on the matter, this article identifies and systematizes the many different factors affecting European high-politics actorhood in the early 21st century. A fully grown international actor Europe, it finds, remains a longer-term project rather than an imminent prospect.

Introduction

Is Europe about to rise as a full political actor on the world stage? Are we close to entering an era in which Europe reaches full external political actorhood, operating on the international stage on a steady and dependable basis?

At least from the mid-1960s, one kind of conventional wisdom had it that European integration in foreign policy and security affairs was unlikely to amount to much very quickly or smoothly (Bull, 1982; Díez Medrano, 1999; Gordon, 1997/98; Hoffmann, 1966, 2000; Moravcsik, 1998; Wallace, 1982). More recently, however, a varied group of scholars has argued that pan-European political actorhood had gained considerable substance. Of diverse theoretical and intellectual provenances, they diagnosed a mounting quest for increased European security and defence autonomy; the fabrication of capabilities to project power independently beyond Europe's borders; the emergence of a European strategic culture; or growing institutionalization of security co-operation among EU Member States indirectly engendering the capacity for Europe to act externally as a whole (Howorth and Keeler, 2003; Jones, 2007; Manners, 2002; Meyer, 2005; Posen, 2006; Smith, 2004; Wallace, 2005). Has European integration, 50 years after the Treaties of Rome, reached the realm of traditional high politics in foreign policy, security and defence?

This article thoroughly explores the prospects for Europe's emergence as a full actor in international politics. It proceeds as follows. First, it collects and systematizes the many different factors and forces promoting or undermining pan-European political actorhood in the early 21st century. Second, in so doing, it surveys the recent literature, pertinent related work and relevant primary materials on this subject. It draws widely from writings from various strands of thought and from findings of a variety of sources. The article's considerations operate with a time horizon of some two or three decades ahead.

At the beginning of the 21st century, international and European affairs have generated more momentum towards real European high politics actorhood than at any point since the 1950s, when the European Defence Community (EDC) was buried after it had failed to win the necessary majority in the French National Assembly. Indeed, in the early new century, a diverse set of potent factors vigorously fuels increased European high-politics actorhood. However, there also remain powerful persisting or evolving forces that will constitute considerable impediments to Europe's genuine evolution into a high-politics actor for an indefinite time to come. The quarter-century ahead will see Europe emerge as an actor of sorts in select foreign policy, security

and defence matters of delimited range. However, a fully grown high-politics actor 'Europe' remains a longer-term project rather than something that will emerge in the imminent future. The advent of a more or less unitary and autonomous actor Europe in foreign policy, security and defence matters is not in the offing. A unified Europe resembling anything like the actorhood of the *United* States of America remains distinctly unlikely.

To be sure, in some policy domains, such as trade and customs, EU actorhood is firmly established. Occasional transatlantic trade disputes in agriculture, aircraft, services or steel, among others, between the European Union and the United States illustrate the point (see, for example, Meunier, 2005, 2000; Meunier and Nicolaïdis, 2006; Henning and Meunier, 2005). In competition policy and finance, the European Commission authoritatively acts for Europe in both internal and external policy contexts and with internal and external political implications (Abdelal, 2007, ch. 4; Majoras, 2005). The euro area states have transferred monetary policy to the European Central Bank, an autonomous supranational institution (McNamara and Meunier, 2002; Savage, 2005). In a formidable range of economic and other regulatory policy areas, pan-European actorhood is fully instituted or well advanced and presumably durable.

But a real political actor also requires autonomous actorhood in the areas of traditional high politics: foreign policy, security and defence. That is, it needs steady and dependable capacity to act in the policy domains related to the use of force or coercion, the preparation for the use of force, the threat of the use of force or the preparation for the possible threat of the use of force or coercion. For full actorhood, Europe's policies in these areas would not necessarily have to be 'single' but generally they would have to be 'common'. Europe would have to hold together in stormy political times and on matters of the highest stakes. It is exactly in these policy areas that Europe's capacity to act as a unit has remained the weakest and least developed.

The formation of West European security arrangements after World War II was deeply intertwined with the (again interrelated) incipient cold war, US involvement in continental reconstruction and early steps towards European integration (DePorte, 1987; Katzenstein, 2005; Lundestad, 1998; Lundestad, 2003). The perhaps untimely EDC was designed to parallel the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). It would have established a Europe of the 'original six' effectively integrated in security and defence and instituted a European military. After the EDC's conclusive failure in 1954, Nato and the transatlantic frame decisively took over in the areas of security and defence (with the WEU no more than a token organization), while leaving the final say in matters of high politics at the level of the nation-state.

Within Europe, the 'empty chair crisis' of the mid-1960s and the subsequent de Gaulle-orchestrated 'Luxembourg Compromise' cemented the centrality of the nation-state in matters of 'vital national interest'. In the 1970s, the European Political Co-operation (EPC) set in motion loose, intergovernmental co-operation procedures in foreign and security policy, later somewhat strengthened and expanded by the Single European Act (1986). The 1991 ('Maastricht') Treaty on the European Union self-confidently and somewhat pompously declared 'a common foreign and security policy [. . .] hereby established'; yet the political practices of the decade to follow hardly echoed the Treaty's text or spirit. The ensuing Amsterdam (1997) and Nice (2001) Treaties developed the Maastricht stipulations and defined the establishment of a European security and defence policy (ESDP).[1]

The fate of its actorhood in the domains of foreign policy, security and defence is important. It will be crucial for Europe, one way or another, to find its place in the world. The nature, degree and robustness of Europe's high-politics actorhood, in whatever exact organizational shape, not least will form the basis of Europe's potential cohesive external behaviour. It will critically affect the possible future roles that Europe as a whole may wish or be able to play in world politics. It will be a key factor affecting North Atlantic politics and transatlantic relations as well as international affairs more broadly. The shape of European high-politics actorhood is likely to be an important factor influencing world politics in the 21st century.

In terms of basic institutional practices in foreign policy and security affairs, a more or less cohesive European unit in international affairs would create a world and define a time different from what Europe and the North Atlantic area have experienced over the past two centuries. With respect to Europe's recent and more distant pasts, a unified European external political actor would represent a major leap from the classic nation-state-centric European foreign policy conduct of the 19th and 20th centuries – whether the Europeans were balancing against each other, acting in concert 19th-century style, warring against one another or loosely co-ordinating in matters of foreign policy and security.

With respect to Europe as part of the North Atlantic world and transatlantic relations, European actorhood in high politics would substantially differ from the American-made post-World War II 'One West' design, which simultaneously integrated the United States in an Atlanticist framework and maintained its role as final arbiter in decisive questions of security and defence in the region. There is growing political and scholarly recognition that full or

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[1] For historical and political overviews of European developments in the foreign, security and defence policy domains, see Hill and Smith (2000); Jones (2007); Smith (2004); Van Oudenaren (2005).

even increased European actorhood and the 'One West' design will offer different and, at least in the medium term, not necessarily entirely compatible modes of ordering high politics (compare, for example, Cimbalo, 2004; Deighton, 2002; Drozdiak, 2005; Kupchan, 2002, ch. 4; Ojanen, 2006; Van Oudenaren, 2005, chs 9 and 11). Autonomous European actorhood, for example, is likely to generate tensions with the Nato model of organizing security and defence in the North Atlantic area. If for the Europeans the central frame of reference in high politics further shifted from the Euro-Atlantic community towards full European political actorhood, relations between the two sides of the North Atlantic would not necessarily need to be inimical – indeed, they might imply high degrees of transatlantic co-operation and exchange. But in terms of basic institutional practices and fundamental modes of organizing security and defence, it would be a world different from the multilateral Nato world of the second half of the 20th century's 'old west'. What is the likely course of European actorhood in foreign policy, security and defence in the first few decades of the 21st century?

I. Factors, Forces and Developments in Favour

At the beginning of the 21st century, five main factors exert substantial causal impact towards a more complete European actor in world politics. These causal forces are diverse in nature and have varying roots. Together, they generate considerable momentum towards increasing European actorhood in foreign policy, security and defence.

Europeans Like It

First, many Europeans like it. When asked, in various wordings, whether they are in favour of Europe playing a more prominent or visible role in international politics, strikingly large numbers of Europeans tend to respond affirmatively (Eurobarometer 66, 2006, pp. 22–7; Eurobarometer 65, 2006, pp. 120–7; Eurobarometer 64, 2006, pp. 103–7; Eurobarometer 59, 2003, pp. 1–4; Kennedy and Bouton, 2002). In most EU Member States, up to a remarkable 70 per cent (or more) of citizens regularly support a common European foreign policy, a European security and defence policy or generally 'a greater' European role in international politics. The numbers in favour of the ESDP are even higher than those supporting a common foreign policy.

The reasons why Europeans tend to respond affirmatively might be diverse and not fully compatible or entirely free of contradictions. To some extent, they may document differing kinds and degrees of concrete or diffuse sorts of anti-Americanism (Katzenstein and Keohane, 2007; Markovits, 2007; Pond,

2003). Foreign policy leanings among larger publics, furthermore, might be subject to serious degrees of volatility (Sobel, 2001). Nonetheless, in the early 21st century, many Europeans favour a more pronounced pan-European stance in international affairs.

Beyond public opinion polling, both among European administrative elites and within Europe's wider publics, 'more Europe' in foreign policy, security and defence is generally considered something valuable and desirable (compare Vennesson *et al.*, 2007). Indeed, Europe as a more unitary actor in high politics is generally seen as something 'good', including by many who do not consider it very likely. In fact, the reality construction of this 'good' seems literally to almost go without saying. In reverse, Europe's incapacity to speak with one voice or to act in concert is generally considered 'bad', a problem to be addressed and a deficiency to be eliminated (see Nicolaïdis, 2004a; Smith, 2003; Smith, 2004).

EU Officials Foster It

Second, the administrative elites and functionaries of the various EU organs clearly work towards increasing EU actorhood in high politics and aim at establishing the EU as an independent and autonomous force in that sphere. Recently, the European Union has formulated general strategic objectives and called for a 'more active', 'more capable' and 'more coherent' EU foreign and security policy, declaring 'the European Union [. . .] inevitably a global player' (European Security Strategy, 2003). The European Commission pronounces the EU a 'world player', outlines 'the EU's global role' and apparently naturally includes a common foreign and security policy (Commission, 2004, pp. 3–5, 8–10). Regarding 'Europe in the World', the Commission promotes greater 'coherence, effectiveness and visibility' as well as 'leverage in support of external goals' in foreign policy, security and defence matters (Commission, 2006). The High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy plays an increasingly active and visible role. At the early new century, EU-level policy-makers strongly foster the establishment of a more robust EU actor in traditional high politics.

Quest for Autonomy from American Preponderance, Anti-Americanism and 'Europe-as-not-America'

Third is the quest for autonomy from American preponderance, anti-Americanism and 'Europe-as-not-America' (Garton-Ash, 2004, ch. 2). The intricate confluence and the mix of these three stimuli shape a powerful factor towards a greater pan-European role in international politics. The quest for autonomy from American dominance and American foreign policy decisions,

as well as doses of anti-Americanism, may or may not imply sketches of pre-balancing, 'soft' balancing or preparations for producing the capacity for classic 'hard' balancing sometime in the future.[2] For analytic reasons, it is important to crystallize whether the unipolar concentration of brute material capabilities, transmuted sets of transatlantic relations or internal European (or American) processes drive these stimuli; and whether material or social forces bear the greatest causal weight (Andrews, 2005; Howorth and Keeler, 2003; Hyde-Price, 2006; Jones, 2007; Meyer, 2005; Posen, 2006). In terms of ultimate historical outcomes, however, it might not matter so much which aspects of this mix predominate.

Various types and layers of anti-Americanism may evolve into a new stimulus to bring Europeans together in foreign policy and security affairs. Indeed, recent degrees of admissible anti-Americanism in Europe have been striking and puzzling (notably compare Hoffmann, 2001; Katzenstein and Keohane, 2007; Markovits, 2007; Pond, 2003). Rather than being confined to isolated quarters on the left or right, anti-Americanism in Europe seems lately to have stretched broadly across the political spectrum and, in different shades, apparently involved elites and wider publics alike. Anti-Americanism could affect the formation of increased European security actorhood through different channels. Whether it directly or indirectly enters electoral politics (as it already has in some instances), for example, might influence the degree to which anti-Americanism takes on causal relevance.

As a historical force fuelling European integration or co-ordination, anti-Americanism in particular would stand disgracefully next to the heroic 'no more war' motive that initially so strongly propelled moves towards European integration – not least with active American financial and political support after Europe's physical destruction and moral devastation through war, fascism and holocaust. But a strong force it is.

It is paradoxical, perhaps, that barely a half-decade after Nato (for the first and only time to date) in the wake of 9/11 evoked the provision of Article 5

[2] 'Traditional hard balancing seeks to change the military balance in an actual or (more often) potential conflict by contributing military capabilities to the weaker side through measures such as a military buildup, war-fighting alliance, or transfer of military technology to an ally' (Pape, 2005, p. 36). 'Soft-balancing measures', on the other hand, 'do not directly challenge a unipolar leader's military preponderance, but they can delay, complicate, or increase the costs of using that extraordinary power. Non-military tools, such as international institutions, economic statecraft and strict interpretations of neutrality, can have a real, if indirect, effect on the military prospects of a unipolar leader' (Pape, 2005, p. 17). 'Soft balancing [. . .] occurs when states generally develop ententes or limited security understandings with one another to balance a potentially threatening state or a rising power. Soft balancing is often based on a limited arms buildup, ad hoc co-operative exercises, or collaboration in regional or international institutions [. . .]' (Paul, 2005, p. 3). Pre-balancing may involve preparations to generate the capacity for either hard or soft balancing or both. On discussions and definitions of various types of balancing as well as on whether Europe, consciously or unconsciously, may engage in any of these, see further Art *et al.* (2005); Jones (2007); Lieber and Alexander (2005); Posen (2006); Walt (2005).

of the Treaty that 'an attack against one [. . .] shall be considered an attack against them all'[3] and after *Le Monde* famously declared that 'we are all Americans',[4] Europe has found in the United States a new 'Other'. It increasingly enjoys defining itself as 'not-America' and is home to varying kinds of burgeoning and widespread anti-Americanism. However, depending on their continued persistence and intensity, as social forces, all of these contribute to the fabrication of greater European autonomy and cohesion in foreign policy, security and defence.

Long-Term Tenacity

Fourth, piecemeal progression towards increased European actorhood in foreign and security affairs seems to have remarkable long-term evolutionary tenacity. Even after the conclusive failure of the EDC in the mid-1950s and the reinforcement of national supremacy in high politics with the Luxembourg Compromise in the mid-1960s, the general project of increased pan-European political actorhood did not fully evaporate into historical obsolescence. The EPC of the 1970s set in motion loose yet lasting processes of foreign policy and security co-operation among the European states. It salvaged the overall programme that ultimately allowed the Maastricht Treaty text to establish a 'common foreign and security policy' (CFSP) (even if only on paper) and the Amsterdam Treaty to draw the sketches of an incipient ESDP.

European political actorhood surely has progressed unsteadily (Hill and Smith, 2000; Howorth, 2005; Smith, 2004; Van Oudenaren, 2005, ch. 9; Wallace, 2005; see further Cremona, 2004) and it has remained fragmented and incomplete. And it has endured numerous blows, crises and failures. But whereas its shortcomings have frequently been visible and grave; whereas it has often proved barely viable in practice; and whereas it has never fully taken off, as a process and project, it has also never fully disappeared and in fact seems to have consolidated bit by bit. From a larger historical perspective, piecemeal evolution towards more European political actorhood appears a fragmented yet tenacious slow-moving process (Pierson, 2004).

Recent Practices

Fifth, recent practices indicate an apparent gradual phasing into actorhood in small steps, through one mission and undertaking after another. Over the past decade, the European Union has expanded the range and the level of its foreign involvement, little by little, largely outside the limelight of

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[3] The North Atlantic Treaty, Washington, DC, 4 April 1949, Article 5.
[4] *Le Monde*, 13 September 2001, p. 1.

public attention and without great national parliamentary deliberations. Such phasing-into-actorhood-by-doing, even if of still limited scale, has clearly gained momentum. After completed EU operations in Macedonia, Congo and Georgia and with a number of current operations especially in the Balkans, the signs at the beginning of the 21st century suggest more rather than less 'actor Europe' in international affairs.[5]

II. Factors, Forces, Developments Against

However, there also remain basic long-standing historical and political forces that impede the rapid arrival of real European actorhood in traditional high politics. Supplemented by evolving factors that undermine Europe's quick emergence as a full political actor, these forces are located at the European level, at the national level and related to various transatlantic connections.

Structural Complexity of the EU Foreign Policy Apparatus

First, the structural complexity of the EU-rooted European foreign policy apparatus will constitute an impediment to general and effective European foreign policy actorhood for an indefinite time to come. A multitude of actors, units and institutions share fragments of political authority and may be involved in the formulation of positions or in decision-making processes. The European Commission, the Council of the European Union, the Council Secretariat and the CFSP High Representative are only the most visible of them. Procedures and proceedings are frequently intricate and complex (De Neuilly, 2005; Nuttall, 2005; Smith, 2004; Vanhoonacker, 2005).

Depending on the specific matter, EU foreign policy-making may somehow involve (among others) the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy; the President of the European Commission; the External Relations Commissioner; several Directorate-Generals; the Special Representatives of the EU in various countries or regions; members of the European Parliament; the Council of Ministers; the European Council; the Director-General for External and Politico-Military Affairs at the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union; and various representatives of the Member States and national governments. Given the history of its piecemeal evolution and the legal position from which the Union operates,

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[5] For recent foreign policy and ESDP missions and other foreign involvement, for example, see Gegout (2005); Grevi *et al.* (2005); Hansen (2004). With respect to both ESDP and CFSP, on EU operations and foreign policy involvement generally, see also the EU's own web pages. For example, Council (2007); Commission (2007). Perhaps the broader and more inclusive the conception of security affairs that is adopted, the more European actorhood we will witness. Compare Diez *et al.* (2006); Nicolaïdis (2004b).

with competences conferred by the Member States, such complexity may partially be inevitable. Nonetheless, the Lisbon Treaty's regulations, if ultimately ratified in one form or another, might streamline some of this complexity. However, even if entering into force substantively, these regulations will not fundamentally alter the structural condition.

Insufficient Funding

Second, insufficient funding and financial overburdening will further obstruct Europe's rapid conversion into a major foreign policy and security actor (compare Smith, 2003; Smith, 2004; Umbach, 2003, pp. 9–12; Wallace, 2005). Even limited ambitions for some coherent world political role will require resources and funds to far exceed what the Europeans have heretofore allocated for matters of foreign policy, security and defence. However, Europe-wide polls and national surveys show the Europeans' very strong disinclination to increase defence spending broadly, with no indication of a change in opinion soon (Kennedy and Bouton, 2002; for some numbers and a review of the financing of EU operations, see Missiroli, 2003). (Interestingly and strangely enough, the numbers resemble those favouring common foreign, security and defence policies, or generally a greater European role in the world.) Decisions on spending and resource allocation are certainly matters of political priority and will, and they may be adjusted or reversed. But changing Europe into a real security and defence actor in world politics would require very significant defence budget increases. Such European spending upsurges of the scale required are not likely in the two or three decades ahead.

Absorption of Membership Increase and Need for Inner Consolidation

Third, the European Union has to digest the shift from 15 to 27 members (Albi, 2005; Caporaso, 2000; Moravcsik and Vachudová, 2003; Raik, 2004). It is not the case, as some claimed prior to the 2004 and 2007 accessions, that nothing has changed but the number of representatives around the table. With augmented complexity, new internal challenges and yet greater multiplicity of interests, the EU will have to enter a phase of inner consolidation. Further enlargement might not necessarily rule out increased European foreign policy actorhood; but it will surely not facilitate or accelerate it.[6]

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[6] In principle, enlargements could also function as a factor working for greater pan-European foreign policy actorhood, for example, if new Member States generate impetus towards greater and more coherent common foreign policy action. However, at least the 2004 and 2007 enlargement rounds did not significantly produce such momentum. It seems questionable that potential accessions in the near or medium term might work in this way.

Rise of Anti-Brussels Sentiment

Fourth, notwithstanding polling results favouring more Europe in foreign policy and security, recent years have seen a tremendous rise in anti-Brussels sentiment, along with a certain integration-fatigue. These phenomena come in different types and have different roots. Various sorts of anti-Brussels sentiment are not fully compatible and can be in direct tension with one another. They include views that the EU scheme had become too economically liberal (from the left); too centralizing and too bureaucratic (centre-right); too aggressively undermining of national sovereignty and responsibility (right); and generally too intrusive, expansionist and fraught with serious democratic legitimacy deficits (across the spectrum). There might be no direct link yet between anti-Brussels sentiment and obstruction of external European political actorhood. But if it persists or continues to rise, sooner or later the tension is likely to become virulent. The electoral results of the French and Dutch referendums on the constitutional treaty, as well as the Irish referendum on the Lisbon Treaty, illustrate the waning of the European publics' 'permissive consensus' to let European elites and functionaries move ahead as they please.

Incapacity to Hold Together When It Really Matters

In order to reach serious external political actorhood, critically, Europe has to hold together in times of crises and tensions. Much argues against such cohesion under duress as the standard procedure for the next few decades – including recent experience and a number of general considerations. Fifth, recent history and events indicate (EU-)Europe's difficulty, if not frequent incapacity, to hold together and to speak with one voice in major crises and policy challenges in international affairs. Since the beginning of the 1990s with the escalating crises in former Yugoslavia, through the mid-1990s with the wars and killings in Bosnia, followed by Kosovo, then Afghanistan and Iraq, Europeans have almost consistently failed to find common positions and to cohere. The CFSP was Iraq's first victim. Iraq, after all, just as other crises and wars, tore apart not only Europe and America, but the Europeans themselves. There might be a European co-ordination reflex. But there are other reflexes, too. The strength of the European glue remains limited (Hoffmann, 1996; Ramet, 2005; Gordon, 1997/98; Hill, 2004; Stemplowski and Whitehead, 2002).

Atlanticism v. Cohesion

In addition to recent experiences, there are deeper forces at work, underlying factors that cast doubt on European cohesion in the face of major political

challenges. Sixth, the viability of dependable European external political actorhood also, or especially, requires European foreign policy unity in times of disagreement and tension between at least parts of Europe and the United States. There are reasons to expect that Europe will not hold together in such cases, at least not as a general rule. To begin with, there is the particularly close, 'special' relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom. Traditionally, if confronted with difficult security and defence choices between one or more of the continental Europeans on the one hand and the United States or the open sea on the other, Britain has tended to display general inclinations towards the latter. At the very least, there is reason to doubt that Britain will act on a regular basis in accordance with the requirements of the full European actorhood scenario (among the multitude of writings on the US–UK connection, note Bennett, 2007; Danchev, 1998; Dumbrell, 2001; Harris, 2002; Louis and Bull, 1986; Russett, 1963).

But the point is not specifically tied to Britain. Many of the central and eastern European states, especially in security and defence, have proved staunchly Atlanticist. For historical or other reasons, when all is said and done, they prefer doses of American reassurance regarding decisive aspects of their security over exclusive European reliance. Neither necessarily anti-European nor Euro-sceptic, they enjoy some room for manoeuvre and the transatlantic link (compare Bugajski and Teleki, 2005; Jacoby, 2005; Mrozinski, 2003; Pehe, 2003, p. 33; Valášek, 2005). Finally, most European states other than Britain or the central Europeans have also frequently sided either with other Europeans or with the United States over divisive transatlantic issues (Gilbert, 2006; Levy *et al.*, 2005; Nuti, 2005).

European high-politics cohesion remains fragile and the potential for European collective identity to fuse together in security and defence remains incomplete and cumbersome, perhaps especially in times of transatlantic complications. During transatlantic harmony or quietude, this might not matter much. But it will make a difference in times of discord and tension, when having it both ways – the American and the European – will not prove viable. The future is likely to hold such tests.

Persistence of Various National Foreign Policy Traditions

Seventh, more generally, there persist significantly varying national foreign policy traditions among diverse European states (Andreatta, 2001; Krotz, 2002; Sauder, 1995; Wallace, 1991). Differing national historical experiences and dominant interpretations of their meanings trigger different reflexes and inform different longer-term goals. They affect divergent

sensibilities, perceptions or definitions of problems and formulations of adequate responses to them. The same raw event does not necessarily mean the same to all Europeans or entail the same implications. The meanings of historical experiences and divergent national foreign policy proclivities are unlikely to converge or fuse very quickly. The Europeans' rules of engagement, for example, or their attitudes towards the use of force, are anything but identical and only mirror such differences. Whether such discrepancies among Europeans are really so much smaller than between the United States and 'Europe', in fact, is anything but self-evident. In contrast with suggestions by American neoconservative Robert Kagan and European Union foreign policy High Representative Javier Solana, the Europeans are not all from the same planet either (Kagan, 2002, 2004; Solana, 2003).

National Grip and Final National Say

Eighth, at base the national grip on the final say in foreign policy and security matters remains little contested. In Europe, too, issues at the high end of high politics continue to fall principally under national affairs. Defining state interests and acting upon what they define, especially in security and defence and most notably in deciding about the organized use of violence or the threat of its use, under what circumstances, in what intensity and to what ends, have predominantly remained within the realm of national governments (compare Caporaso, 2000, ch. 4; Gordon, 2005; Hill and Smith, 2000). It remains questionable whether this will alter fundamentally in the two or three decades ahead, or whether robust inter-state procedures will transform the formal final national say into a matter of secondary importance.

The experiences of the past decade or so strongly suggest that in the most important and pressing international questions in high politics, national answers will mostly prevail. The more important the matter, it seems, the more national the will-building, policy-formation and decision-making. Perhaps Germany's unilateral recognition of Slovenia and Croatia in 1991, for example, was as much programme as irregularity. National venues of subsequent will-building and decision-making predominated in Europe in the majority of the most important questions, including participation in various campaigns, coalitions, stabilization forces or nation-building measures (on Croatia, see Crawford, 1996; regarding the former Yugoslavia more generally, see Hoffmann, 1996; Ramet, 2005). A single EU seat in the United Nations Security Council, for example, is not on the list of desiderata of most European governments.

Deficits and Absences

Ninth, there are various deficits, deficiencies and absences – some of which might matter. Two deficits in particular seem to torment rapid moves towards real European political actorhood. If they persist, together they will hinder a more unitary European role in foreign and security affairs. The first is the 'community deficit' – that is, the lack of shared values and bonds as well as the absence of strong senses of belonging together among the citizens of the European Union (compare Etzioni, 2007). Affective bonds of community among the Union's some 500 million citizens have remained feeble and highly fractured. Senses of belonging together on a broad level have dramatically lagged behind elite-driven integration and EU-level institution-building (Etzioni, 2007; however, compare Krotz, 2007).

The second is the 'purpose deficit' – that is, the issue of Europe '*à quoi faire*' (Hoffmann, 2006, p. 199) and in particular 'to do what *in the world*'.[7] The classic 'no more war' integration purpose is predominantly a social purpose internal to Europe; it needs to be supplemented by external purposes if Europe is to play a durable role as a more cohesive actor in world politics.

Scholars and policy-makers have recently reviewed various such possibilities. These include ideas of Europe as a normative actor in world politics with distinct normative purposes and methods (Manners, 2002, 2006). The European Security Strategy (2003), on the other hand, outlines some basic strategic pan-European objectives to include combating terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; building security in Europe's neighbourhood; and promoting multilateralism and international law (pp. 6–11). Thereby, it leaves no doubt that for Europe 'to defend its security and to promote its values' (p. 6) and to achieve a 'balanced partnership with the USA' (p. 13) would involve building up and streamlining its military capabilities. The Lisbon Treaty text in its own way formulates various external objectives to include a focus on climate change, development co-operation and humanitarian aid, economic competitiveness and counteracting terrorist attacks (European Union, 2007).

However, these various outlines of purpose remain broadly drawn. Rudimentary and frequently vague, they are not necessarily coherent or compatible (see Manners, 2006; Maull, 2005). A sense of pan-European purpose, at least for some time to come, is likely to remain feeble, fragmented and contested both among national and European-level political elites and among wider publics. Frequently stated commonplaces like 'stability,

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[7] On matters of purpose, compare also Maull (2005); on 'justifying' European integration broadly, compare Morgan (2007).

security and prosperity for the world' are too general, clumsy and inept to fill the gap.[8]

Conclusions

Will the quarter-century ahead see Europe emerge as a unified political actor that operates in international politics on a dependable basis even in times of crisis and duress? Probably not. There is too much that speaks or works against it. To be sure, today there arguably is greater momentum towards European high-politics actorhood than there has been at any time during the past half-century. Indeed, at the beginning of the 21st century, a set of diverse and potent factors vigorously fuels increased European high-politics actorhood.

But there also remain powerful persisting or evolving forces that will constitute considerable impediments to Europe's genuine conversion into a high-politics actor for an indefinite time to come. Overall, there is insufficient evidence to indicate compellingly the start of an era of a routinely and effectively co-ordinated *common* European foreign, security and defence policy. There is significantly less to suggest the imminence of forged *single* European policy instituting Europe as a full-grown standard actor in these policy domains. And there is hardly anything to imply that the European states are about to relinquish the final national say in the core areas of sovereignty at the high end of traditional high politics. A fully grown high-politics actor 'Europe' remains a longer-term project rather than an imminent future. European actorhood in foreign policy, security and defence will continue to remain incomplete and fragile.

And yet, there might be reasons to believe that, in the medium term, the factors and forces favouring pan-European actorhood might outweigh those undermining it – perhaps especially if the favourable factors persist in their particular combination. While having emerged historically in anything but linear processes and in spite of many setbacks, their slow and incremental

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[8] Not all deficits or absences, however, must undercut or even deccelerate the further strengthening of European high-politics actorhood. Two deficiencies, for some reason, do not seem to affect further moves towards greater foreign policy and security cohesion: the democratic deficit and the unresolved 'finality' issue. Europeans do not seem to associate democratic deficit issues negatively with a greater pan-European role in security and defence in the world. (Of course, it remains to be seen whether democratic deficit issues will hinder further moves towards greater high-politics actorhood in the medium term.) The unresolved 'finality issue' – that is, what an integrated Europe should look like in the end – does not seem to interfere with moves towards greater external political actorhood. The federalist position of a 'United States of Europe' apparently has gradually lost adherents. There is now no dominant view about the ultimate goal of integration. Note that where one desires to arrive in the end ('finality' in EU terminology) is not the same as or necessarily even closely connected with the reasons for the journey overall ('purpose').

growth seems neither concluded nor in deadlock. Furthermore, there seems reason to believe that at least some of the forces undermining more actorhood might wane or be weakened politically. For example, the Lisbon Treaty text illustrates EU attempts to consolidate inner proceedings and streamline the foreign policy machinery. EU and national officials will work towards securing funds for security and defence matters. And various European elites are engaged in formulating pan-European purposes in the world. The emergence of a fully grown high-politics actor Europe on the world stage, then, might be credible in some decades ahead. In the meantime, the factors and forces inhibiting it will keep pan-European foreign and security policy fragile and fractured. Simultaneously, however, its momentum will lead Europe to play a limited and especially regional foreign policy and security role in areas that some Europeans consider to be their 'neighbourhood', such as the larger Mediterranean area and the Balkans.

Two sorts of events or developments in particular might qualify or overturn these conclusions on the future history of European external political actorhood. Both sets of occurrences could work in both directions and might either reinforce the growth of a European high-politics actor Europe, or undermine and retard it. First, different conceivable 'exogenous shocks', for example, major terrorist attacks, security crises or regional outbreaks of violence, energy shocks or natural or environmental disasters could generate political dynamics to accelerate or corroborate the substantiation of pan-European actorhood in ways that cannot yet be forecast. Protracted or intermittent tensions with Russia, for example, might significantly boost the drive towards pan-European high-politics actorhood. Second, for reasons not yet foreseeable, one or more of the factors discussed might grow to dominate or override the others.

Which larger theoretical perspective or intellectual tradition in international relations and political science does this article's findings and conclusions support or challenge? That states tend to expand their political interests and external objectives as they grow stronger is a core tenet of classical realist thought (Kennedy, 1987; Morgenthau, 1978). States, in this view, turn wealth into power and capabilities shape intentions. The EU is not a state. But it seems that its ambitions and actions in security and defence increase as its ability to operate on the international stage grows. Europe's quest for greater security autonomy, the long-term tenacity of the European actorhood project, the piecemeal expansion of European foreign political involvement and perhaps especially the EU elites' aspirations to fabricate an increasingly robust European security and defence actor are in line with classical realism's insight that political entities are likely to translate their resources into political influence.

However, a great variety of other variables conditions European political actorhood. Factors such as the intricate complexity of the EU's foreign policy apparatus and Europe's deficient inner consolidation after significant membership growth speak to the importance of institutional contexts and historical trajectories – the traditional realm of historical institutionalism (March and Olsen, 1989; Skocpol and Pierson, 2002).

Furthermore, European constructions of 'more Europe' in foreign policy and security affairs as something generally desirable, or of 'Europe-as-not-America', the tenacity of different national foreign policy traditions within the EU and the pan-European 'community and purpose deficits' all have to do with historically shaped or politically fabricated and potentially changeable aspects of spheres of belonging and collective identities – the analytical stronghold of social constructivism (Katzenstein, 1996; Wendt, 1999).

And although they push in different causal directions, Europeans' broad support for a more prominent pan-European stance in foreign affairs and hints of anti-Americanism on the one hand and their general dislike of increasing defence spending, various types of anti-Brussels sentiment as well as a certain early 21st-century integration fatigue on the other, are the kinds of social forces that society-rooted liberalism emphasizes (Moravcsik, 1997, 2008).

Each of these distinct macro-perspectives on history and politics brings to light some important factors affecting pan-European political actorhood today. Simultaneously, each displays severe limitations in capturing key forces shaping Europe's fate as a political actor. These considerations, thus, seem to suggest that analysing Europe's high-politics actorhood might best be served by a position of analytical eclecticism that draws from a variety of intellectual traditions (Katzenstein and Sil, 2004, 2008). This judgement might hold at least until one or more factors prove superior to the others in decisively shaping Europe as an actor in foreign policy, security and defence.

However, for the two or three decades ahead, a more or less cohesive high-politics actor Europe on the world stage is much more unlikely than it is probable. Perhaps a stable political actor Europe will be plausible some three or four decades off. Perhaps that will be the Europe of a quatro- or pentapolar world of the mid-21st century, to comprise the United States and Europe, China and India and perhaps Brazil or Japan or Russia. Perhaps such a world is a conceivable long-term future and perhaps it is this future that we can now see in its very early outlines. And perhaps it is this future that European citizens and policy-makers ultimately promote – irrespective of their specific individual motivations.

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