Introduction

In the wider Europe of permeable borders and rapid political transformation that emerged from the end of the Cold War the EU has been forced to respond to an unprecedented broad range of security challenges that extend far beyond traditional military threats. Three primary dimensions of these security challenges can be distinguished: first, external political instability in the near-abroad, including ‘new’ or intra-state war and ethnic conflict; second, internal security risks stemming from cross-border crime, in particular organised crime and terrorism; and third, societal security risks stemming from major population movements in the form of refugees and illegal immigration. These three dimensions of security are clearly interrelated. Political instability in the near neighbourhood can, for instance, as the examples in former-Yugoslavia and Albania have shown, increase the incidence of organised crime and illegal immigration in the EU.

The nature of these broader security challenges evidently cannot be addressed by a single set of instruments. Dealing with political instability in the near abroad might require external economic measures but can also necessitate peacekeeping and even peace-making action involving military means. Traditional instruments of internal security, such as police forces and even judicial structures, may have to be used ‘externally’ to restore stability and security in the Union’s near abroad. It has thus been acknowledged in the post-Cold War era by EU leaders that their Union must become an ‘exporter of security’ or risk ‘importing instability’. This acknowledgement of primarily non-military instruments has clearly been operationalised in EU policymaking in the Western Balkans, the key ‘learning ground’ for the cross-pillarisation of the Union’s external action.

This article will chart this learning process beginning with the end of the Cold War when the Union’s capacity for external action was seemingly limited and when the few instruments that were available were compartmentalised. At this time, the Union’s approach to crises in its near abroad was reactive. It was a question of responding to events as crisis became conflict. The emphasis was on crisis management, conflict resolution and then reconstruction. In addition, there was little, if any, coordination between the relevant EU departments and institutions, not to mention the member states. The article will go on to examine the transformation of this reactive approach into one that attempts to be proactive, pre-emptive and holistic. Since the marginalisation of the EU during the break-up of Yugoslavia, its leaders have adopted a whole range of new instruments for external action, including a military capacity. There have been concerted efforts to ensure coordination and consistency across all areas of Union external activity, not least concerning the dovetailing of civilian and military units. And, crucially, the focus has shifted to crisis/conflict prevention wherever possible via economic and political investment with often EU accession the stated target. Hence, using terminology coined by Javier Solana, the Union is endeavouring to become what would be an unparalleled ‘one-stop shop’ for security (no other organisation can call upon such an array of instruments) that aims to export peace, stability and security, although there are still some gaps on the shelves (capabilities) and some not-insignificant problems with delivery (political will). It is in response to the successive crises in the Western Balkans that this transformation is taking place, it remains to be seen, of course, whether this almost unique example of a functioning common EU foreign policy can be transposed to other areas.
Exporting Security – the Early Years

In the Union’s founding treaty, there had been no direct reference to a common foreign policy. There is almost the sense that the Union gained external policies by default; certainly it was not a proactive process. Coordinated engagement with the outside world was a secondary motivation for the six founder members. Only having defined itself internally, did it become necessary for the Union to define itself externally, and even this process was prompted in no small part by the demands placed on the Union from outside. We can point to various aspects of Union activity that gave it presence as an international actor: trade with third countries, development policy, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the Single Market, humanitarian relief and the single currency, not to mention enlargement. Moreover, the Union’s economic weight has enabled it, to a greater or lesser extent, to impose economic and political conditionality on the third countries it deals with. Irrespective of any military dimension, it became, and remains, a significantly influential international actor, whether in the forum of the World Trade Organisation, in the reconstruction of former-Yugoslavia, in the promotion of liberal market reform and democratic practice in central and eastern Europe, or in tackling global under-development. The growing economic clout did not, however, produce a corresponding capacity for the Union to behave as a single purposive political actor in the world system. True, there had been general agreement among many of the Union political elite that collectively their countries should assume an enhanced role in the new post-Cold War European security order by augmenting their military capacity and taking up more of the burden born by the United States. These thoughts became generically known as the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI). Beyond this vague consensus however, it was unclear how these ideas should be put into practice. For example, a succession of Franco-German proposals in the early 1990s for a European political union with its own dedicated security and defence dimension received some recognition in the subsequent Maastricht (TEU) Treaty but only in what would transpire to be vague and non-committal terms. Indeed, what momentum there was for ESDI rested upon a WEU (Western European Union) that was becoming firmly rooted under the Atlanticist umbrella, namely NATO.

However, if a broader or ‘softer’ concept of security had been embraced, the Union could have been deemed to already be a highly effective international actor, providing security outside its borders across the wider European area, and the logic of it bestowing itself with a military capacity could have been questioned more thoroughly. After all, most of the threats facing the EU member states in the post-Cold War environment did not lend themselves to a military response. The Union’s key contribution to European security was the socio-economic provision and extension of stability through democratisation and the liberalisation of the market. The end of the Cold War, it could have been argued, had removed any necessity for the EU member states to forge any combined military construct. Indeed, Simon Duke, for one, commented that the new post-Cold War era appeared to emphasise a changed definition of power. He pointed to new criteria that rested on non-military factors. For him, the Union had an important role to play in promoting awareness of these non-military aspects of security. And it could do so by promoting effective coordination across its three pillars (essentially, economic, CFSP [Common Foreign and Security Policy] and JHA [Justice and Home Affairs]). Besides, those EU countries wishing to launch some kind of joint military operation or other could simply do so by convening a meeting together elsewhere in Brussels, either at the WEU or NATO. There existed a potentially clear division of labour across Europe’s security architecture. Alternatively, those governments that wanted to could forge some kind of ad hoc extra-institutional military mission as they did in Albania in 1997.

The Western Balkans – the Learning Ground

It was the transformation of the international system with the end of the Cold War that would ultimately prove the key determinant for the ‘one-stop shop’. The Cold War distribution of
power had served to block the route towards an autonomous (west) European security and
defence policy. But even with the constraints of bipolarity in Europe removed, it would take
the fall-out from the successive crises that constitute the break-up of Yugoslavia to provide
the crucial impetus. It were these crises that would prove to be the principal learning ground
for certain EU member states with regard to revised threat perceptions and to Europe’s new
security environment, especially concerning the future role that they might expect the United
States to play in that environment. It was the subsequent conclusions drawn by the
governments in France and Britain in particular which led to a convergence of policy and
enabled the dramatic negotiations at the end of 1998 culminating in the St Malo initiative that
set in motion the real militarisation of the Union. In addition, it should be acknowledged that
prior to St Malo the EU simply did not have the necessary institutional apparatus to be an
effective military actor and a hence, what some would call, a ‘full provider’ of security. But
although the resultant ESDP (European Security and Defence Policy) would not have been
realisable without the integration culture that had emerged among the member states during
the Union’s first four decades, this would not have been sufficient to prompt the militarisation
of the Union in the late 1990s. The creation of a military dimension to the Union’s provision
of security is largely attributable to certain exogenous shocks. The story of the ESDP process
has thus been a reactive one that developed in the context of a certain set of circumstances.
Furthermore, had events turned out differently, or had different conclusions from the EU’s
role in the Western Balkans been drawn, the EU could well still be espousing a fully civilian
route for its continued evolution as an international actor and as a source of security.

Having played a largely secondary role in the Gulf War at the start of the 1990s, the break-
up of Yugoslavia presented an opportunity for the Union and its members to grab the
limelight and prove themselves collectively as a major player in the management of Europe’s
security. For Christopher Hill, there were many both inside the Union and outside who, in the
new post-Cold War era, deemed the Union as a civilian power to be ideally suited ‘to take the
lead in an environment where military force now suddenly seemed irrelevant’.² The Union
was becoming a major economic player in central and eastern Europe and, more specifically,
over 50 per cent of Yugoslav trade was with the EU. Unsurprising then that EU leaders
believed they had the necessary instruments at their disposal to resolve the Balkans crisis.
And as Brian White observed, this view was seemingly confirmed by the Union’s initial
success in utilising these instruments to secure a ceasefire. From the first, EU officials warned
their counterparts in Belgrade that Union financial credits and other forms of assistance were
threatened by the ongoing absence of stable peace on the ground. In addition, they threatened
that the Union would refuse to negotiate a privileged Association Agreement with
Yugoslavia. However, White tells us, the confidence that this brought soon evolved into
overblown predictions about the Union’s ability to resolve the crisis as a whole.³

The Union’s shortcomings were ultimately to be exposed by its inability to broker
anything approaching a permanent peace on the ground and to prevent a major escalation of
the violence. A general lack of decisive decision-making and an inability to find a consensus
largely account for the EU’s failed test with regard to the break-up of former Yugoslavia. But
it is far from clear, besides the prestige of the Union, just what the collective stakes were for
the then twelve member states. The security of the Union was not really in question, nor were
there major economic or political interests at stake. Perhaps as a result, the Union’s reaction
was often characterised by the unilateral actions of its members: Germany with regard to
Slovenian and Croatian independence; Greece and the Macedonia question; and Britain and
France’s initially ambiguous attitude towards the parties in the conflict. This collapse of any
united sense of purpose among the Twelve was never more tellingly illustrated than by the
growing prominence, from April 1994, of the Contact Group. This was an extra-institutional
body comprising Britain, France, Germany, Russia and the United States that made itself the
key policymaking organ for the West and thereby finally marked the full marginalisation of
the EU’s role. The Union had evidently ceased to act as a single entity in the crisis. Overall, it
was apparent that the need for a consensus in the forging of EU policy during the crisis had
led to what White termed ‘bad decisions’, as with the aforementioned recognition of Slovenia.
and Croatia, and had additionally prompted the larger member states in particular to seek alternative diplomatic outlets, be this unilateral initiatives or the Contact Group. Roy Ginsberg considered the Union’s diplomatic and humanitarian intervention in Croatia and Bosnia as a ‘baptism by fire in a zone of war’. It was a coming of age, he argued, for the Union as a ‘mature player in international politics’. Never before had the Union attempted to engage in many of the activities it engaged in during this crisis. But concurrently, after the US-brokered Dayton peace accord in particular, but also before, there emanated a general sense of EU impotence in the face of such a hard security challenge. The limits of a civilian actor’s capacity to enforce a peace between warring parties were evident for all to see, as was its extreme vulnerability on the ground. It was starkly apparent that the Union lacked the necessary strategic planning and analysis capability to implement any policy decisions that may have been reached. In addition, the revolving Council presidency was severely restricted in its ability to offer firm, constant leadership in a crisis situation. Ginsberg pointed to a widening and deepening disconnect between diplomacy and force ‘until NATO eliminated the deadly gap in 1994-5’.

One completely viable interpretation of the EU’s performance during the collapse of Yugoslavia could thus have been that the Union should stick to its civilian activities and make every effort to stay clear from anything remotely military. It was after all starkly apparent that it quite simply was not bestowed with the necessary mechanisms to deal with crisis management of this type. Here was the capabilities-expectations gap referred to by Hill in which the fanfare surrounding the launch of CFSP had led to elevated, unrealistic, expectations of the Union compared to the capabilities at its disposal. Those relevant EU members could not even agree to adopt French proposals for a deployment of the WEU! From this viewpoint, the Union was first and foremost a civilian actor and should remain so. By this is meant an actor without any military dimension but that is still able to influence other international actors through diplomatic, economic, and legal means. The scholar François Duchêne had famously been among those back in the early 1970s (admittedly at a time of emerging Cold War détente) who had proclaimed that conventional interpretations of power based on military might were being subsumed by civilian power as the principal conduit to influence in contemporary global relations. Two and a half decades later, it was Bretherton and Vogler who wrote that it was in the EU’s provision of ‘soft’ or ‘broad’ security, such as humanitarian aid, that the ‘translation of presence into actorness … is likely to be more efficacious than the “hard” security of military defence’. In this vein, the President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, at the start of his tenure, talked of the Union’s mission to become a ‘global civil power at the service of sustainable global development’, not least as a means to ensure it’s own security.

One could point in the early 1990s to the potential clear division of labour among the continent’s key institutional actors. The WEU and/or NATO were perfectly able to take up the military burden of the European area, and additionally there was the OSCE (the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) for the monitoring of crises, potential and real. In this interpretation, the Union then should stick to what it was good at, namely the civilian aspects of its external relations: economic cooperation, conflict prevention and post-crisis reconstruction to name but three. After all, it might have been argued, was there not an opportunity here for the EU to lead the way in global thinking by moving beyond the Cold War, realist, interpretation of power and ‘actorness’ in solely military terms? Here was the chance to carve a new model for collective state behaviour. In this way, the European integration ‘project’ would not have remained unfinished with the absence of a military dimension. Instead, the Union would have devoted itself to becoming a global player of high standing and major influence based upon purely civil attributes and instruments. This indeed appeared to be what was happening when, at their June 1996 Berlin Council, NATO members agreed to allow the WEU to use the Alliance’s Combined Joint Task Forces (CJTF) mechanism in military scenarios that may not involve the US. The WEU and ESDI, it seemed, were being further bound into the NATO framework.

The argument that ran counter to the ‘EU as a civilian actor’ concept dated back at least to the early 1980s (a time of renewed superpower confrontation) and was initially associated
equally famously with Hedley Bull.\textsuperscript{12} This backlash to the Duchêne line accused the Union of ineffectiveness in world affairs and held that it could only ever become a successful international actor if it bestowed itself with a credible military component. The civilian power associated with the Union at this time was only possible because of the military power of states. Real power, so the argument went, necessitated the acquisition of military capabilities.\textsuperscript{13} From this perspective, experience of successive subsequent crises in Kosovo, Macedonia, the Middle East and Afghanistan could be interpreted as attesting to the ongoing relevance of military instruments of power. The absence of a military option left the Union leaders beholden to and dependent upon a positive and dependable response from the main actor that could offer this military capacity – the United States. Essentially, this view held that had the Union been able to call upon its own military force, it might have been able to coerce the belligerents to cease their conflict and to negotiate a permanent political settlement. A military capacity would have given the Union credibility and, ultimately, a lasting impact on peace and stability. The mismatch between the EU’s economic resources and its diplomatic clout was clearly unacceptable. But talk of bestowing the Union with military attributes was clearly highly emotive and raised fundamental problems of principle. The aforementioned inability of the EU member states to back French calls for a deployment of the WEU had raised serious doubts about the credibility of this organisation as the military arm of the EU as envisaged by the Maastricht Treaty. Furthermore, we can also point to the stark lack of operability of the WEU. Even had the French found widespread support for a European military deployment, the WEU simply did not possess the operational capability. Perhaps for both these political and logistical reasons, the WEU was not even incorporated in the post-Dayton multinational implementation force for Bosnia-Herzegovina (IFOR).

Nevertheless, as we know, it would be the second of the two contrasting conclusions that was to be elevated to the apogee of the Union’s policymaking agenda. The member states did not draw the ‘stay civilian’ conclusion from the disappointments and failings of the Yugoslav crisis. Instead, they determined, at Amsterdam in 1997, that the Union should have its foreign policy-making capacity augmented by the appointment of a High Representative for CFSP (the post now occupied by Javier Solana) and the creation of a Policy Planning Unit. In addition, as noted earlier, they committed themselves to making the WEU’s Petersburg Tasks part of the Union’s acquis. Hence, they reacted to events, particularly in south-east Europe, rather than conforming to some inherent integrationist logic. But although we can point to Amsterdam as the moment when the Union became a military actor, there was little actual momentum towards putting the necessary instruments in place. With regard to defence integration, this Treaty of Amsterdam only appeared to add to the ambiguity about the Union’s future role in this field. For White, Amsterdam ‘[w]hether intended or not … appeared to reinforce the institutional primacy of NATO in the defence field and to “map out” an appropriate security rather than defence role for the EU’.\textsuperscript{14} Furthermore, any decision about the merger of the WEU into the EU was postponed. But at least it was now on the agenda, even if no agreement could be reached. Without dealing with practicalities, the Treaty declared that to carry out these Petersburg Task operations the Union would ‘avail itself of the WEU’. In the meantime, the real movement in this field was in the progressive Europeanisation of NATO. With this process underway, and with the EU improving its foreign policy coordination, where was the need and the room for a new military organisation? The spasmodic, almost reluctant and possibly stalling process of defence integration inside the EU framework was to then receive an almost unprecedented jolt in the second half of 1998 with the British change of policy and the ensuing St Malo Declaration.

\textbf{From Compartmentalisation to Cross-Pillarisation, From Reaction to Pre-emption}

Among other lessons being learnt in the Western Balkans in terms of crisis management was not least that a heavily armed military response was not always the most appropriate response. To this end, External Relations Commissioner Patten was charged by the December 1999 Helsinki European Council to augment and make more effective the EU’s non-military tools
for crisis management, primarily: humanitarian aid & rescue services, mine clearance &
disarmament, supply of police personnel, provision of administrative & legal support for
democratisation, monitoring of elections & human rights and conflict mediation in crisis
regions. But equally, there was a discernible recognition that simply reacting to crises was no
longer sufficient and that emphasis should now be placed on pre-empting crises. Added to this
was a certain normative dimension that asked whether there is actually a distinctive European
approach to conflict. Certainly, a significant part of the European body politic is deeply
sceptical of using coercion to settle disputes. With the possible exception of the leaderships in
Britain & France, the ‘civilian’ mentality is pronounced; more emphasis is placed on seeking
to prevent conflicts through political engagement and constructive dialogue and confrontation
and military action are seen as measures of last resort. This perspective on conflict has
become a growing priority for EU external policy; conflict prevention could even now be said
to be the binding concept of CFSP, as providing the common thread, in terms of values,
objectives, and instruments, which holds the system together and gives it purpose.

In many respects, the Union is ideally placed to operate effectively in the field of conflict
prevention: it has the world’s biggest market and largest aid budget, and it has an unparalleled
web of historic, cultural and diplomatic ties. Hence then, it has an impressive array of
economic & political levers at its disposal in order to help dissipate the root causes of
scenarios that can lead to violent conflict. It is recognised that the need is to target the
underlying causes of crises, rather than just the short-term causes. Hence, the Union has been
quietly active in promoting economic development, democracy, good governance, judicial
reform, human rights and so on. Swedish governments in particular have shown a resolve to
put conflict prevention on an equal footing with crisis management within the Union. This
was enshrined at the June 2001 Gothenburg European Council which declared ‘conflict
prevention is one of the main objectives of the Union’s external relations and should be
integrated in all its relevant aspects, including ESDP, development cooperation and trade’.
Hitherto, the Union had only been partially successful in promoting sustainable development
and peace around the world, its economic policies had on occasion actually served to
exacerbate the situation, to raise tensions and to increase the risks of violence (for example,
uneven distribution of development assistance across social groups, or its protectionist trade
policies).

One example of the more structured approach by the Union is the Cotonou Agreement
with the ACP countries that integrates trade, aid and a comprehensive political dialogue. As
of November 2000, good governance, the rule of law and institution building have all been
objectives of the Union’s development policy and this combines with the central aim of
poverty reduction. Elsewhere, the impact of trade on conflict is increasingly taken into
consideration in the EU’s Economic Partnership Agreements, whether this be barring the
export of arms and military equipment or working to tackle the war economy in Central
Africa. The Gothenburg Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts (PVC),
meanwhile, encompassed four dimensions:

- i. Rule of law - In May 2002 the EU member states committed themselves, on paper at
  least, to providing 282 agents (such as judges, prosecutors & correctional officers)
  who would be available to assist the establishment of the rule of law in crisis
  situations, of whom 60 could be deployable within 30 days.
- ii. Policing – With the Police Action Plan, one could point to EU policing as being the
  area of conflict prevention and crisis management where the most progress has been
  made. This has a purely civilian chain of command in which the Committee on
  Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CIV-COM) will advise the Political and
  Security committee as well as COREPER.
- iii. Civil administration – This is the least developed of the four dimensions and it
  refers to post-crisis transitional arrangements for the running of the country concerned;
  national training centres are developing training modules and pilot courses.
- **Civil protection** – The EU Presidency can request civil protection assistance from the member states regarding an emergency taking place outside the borders of the EU in the context of a crisis management operation.

Here then were signs that conflict prevention was starting to be mainstreamed in all of the Union’s external policies, although there is still a long way to go.

In Macedonia, the Commission launched, in October 2001, a Confidence Building Programme to facilitate implementation of the previous August’s Ohrid Framework Agreement. The aim was to reduce inter-ethnic tensions, to avoid escalation of tensions, and to counter tendencies for spill-over into neighbouring countries; it was also to facilitate the return of refugees and internally displaced people and there was a focus on rebuilding civil society. The EU could likewise point to a significant, although not exclusive, role in pacifying relations at this time between Serbia and Montenegro. Then, in February 2002, the EU agreed to take over responsibility from the UN for international policing in Bosnia. In the guise of the EU Police Mission (EUPM), 500 officers within the framework of the ESDP were to train and strengthen the existing police force. EUPM took over in the field in January 2003 with an annual budget of 38 million euros over 3 years. It involved personnel from all 15 EU members plus some 18 other countries (this was, for example, the first time that Canadian, Russian and Ukrainian officers served under the EU banner).

In addition to the Gothenburg programme, the member states are also supposed to be drawing up their own national plans for conflict prevention, and there is a commitment to augmenting the Union’s capacity for conflict analysis and early warning. The latter is facilitated by EU monitoring missions (as in the Western Balkans), EU facilitators (as in Togo), election observation missions, human rights monitors and special representatives and envoys. Furthermore, the Commission has worked to make its development cooperation programmes increasingly conflict sensitive by the use of conflict indicators in its Country Strategy Papers (CSPs). The Union also now has in place the Rapid Reaction Mechanism, a funding mechanism that provides for rapid disbursement of funds for measures to impact a conflict situation. By July 2002, it had been used to support initiatives in preventive diplomacy and post-conflict institution building in Macedonia, Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Thessaloniki European Council of June 2003 would then adopt the second annual report on the PVC programme that in particular highlighted lessons learnt from the western Balkans.

**The One-Stop Security Shop – Unresolved Issues**

*Capability Shortfalls*

*Political Shortfalls*

*Implications for Other Actors*

An admittedly simplified interpretation of the EU’s post-Cold War responses to security challenges in the wider Europe could point to the Union attempting a major re-ordering of Europe’s security architecture whereby it becomes a ‘one-stop shop’ for security and hence renounces the institutional division of labour that had emerged in the early 1990s. This interpretation has even greater resonance when one adds the enlargement dimension that sees the Union expand across most of the European space. If the Union is able to ‘do it all’ (conflict prevention, crisis management, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction), then what are the implications for the OSCE and NATO?

**Conclusion**
Largely deriving from the transformation of the international system the EU and its member states have gradually adopted a much broader interpretation of the security challenges facing them, or, put another way, the external threat perception as seen from Brussels has undergone a fairly radical revision. Crucial to this transformation was the experience gained in reacting to the successive post-Cold crises in the Western Balkans. The learning process began with the, albeit partial, militarisation of the Union and was complemented by the introduction of early-warning and policing capabilities. More recently, the process has embraced a pronounced emphasis on conflict prevention and an attempt to introduce far greater harmonisation across all policy areas, including development.

Endnotes

6 Ibid, p.58.
8 Twitchett, Kevin, quoted in Ginsberg, Roy H. *op cit*, p.39.
13 White attributes this line of argument in particular to Hedley Bull in the early 1980s and John Peterson E. Bomberg at the start of the 1990s, *op cit*, p.152.