Europe on the world stage

No more militarization, but a call for a refocus on soft power

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May 2008

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Introduction

Javier Solana, the European Union's high Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy stated in autumn 2007 that the peaceful unification of our continent has been our great achievement and that now our main challenge is to move from a continental to a global agenda. '*From building peace in Europe to being a peace-builder in the world*' (Solana, 2007, p.8).

Inside the European Union (EU), there are different interpretations of where the European foreign policy is heading. The question that will be addressed in this paper is what role the EU has to play on the world stage. Javier Solana states that we have to become a peace-builder in the world, but the question is what kind of peace-builder we have to be.

As a Union of twenty-seven member states, with over 450 million people, producing a quarter of the world's Gross National Product, the EU is inevitably a global player. This gives us the responsibility for certain global issues like security, human rights and conflict resolutions. In short, in building a better world. The EU is not just a regional actor; we live in a globalized world, so we cannot ignore our responsibility at the global scene. We have to support the principle of the 'responsibility to protect' (R2P) that the United Nations developed in 2005. R2P implies that if a state is unable or unwilling to protect its own population, or is itself the perpetrator of genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes or crimes against humanity, national sovereignty must give way to a responsibility for the international community to protect.

The EU has her responsibility towards the world. At the moment the EU is facing three main challenges when it comes to her foreign policy. The first is the challenge of ambition (Cuperus e.a. 2006. p. 165). This is usually presented in terms of regional versus global power and it has to do with the question whether the European should focus on the containment of instability around its borders or rather, if it should aim at actively shaping the international system. The challenge of ambition is very important, because of the expectations that various regions have. Predominantly the insecurity to be tackled by the EU had to do with

Europe's own past and related efforts at preventing the past from becoming the future. But instead of focusing primarily on the EUs internal sphere, the attention is being more and more refocused on the exterior.

The second big challenge is the challenge of coherence (Cuperus e.a. 2006. p. 166). European foreign policy is the result from the combined actions of different actors that do not coordinate their positions. This is true for member states, but it also applies to European institutions. The case of Darfur is a good example of a lack of coherence. The EU and its Member states are the biggest aid givers to Sudan, the EU High Representative has even appointed a Special Representative to Darfur, but yet all of this either had no impact in preserving the ceasefire because there was not one direction, the EU didn't speak with one voice (Homan, 2008, p. 17). One voice does not necessarily mean having all the EU members present in every situation, but what destroys coherence is that at the moment different actors implement contradictory policies.

The third challenge is the challenge of identity (Cuperus e.a. 2006. p. 167). This is the challenge that will be addressed in this paper. Discussions on the identity of European foreign policy have for a long time revolved around the issue of what kind of foreign policy actor the EU is. This consists essentially the old debate whether the EU should mainly be a civilian power, also called civilizing power of normative power, for it persuasion demarches vis-à-vis third parties, or, rather has to evolve into an actor capable of and willing using its military muscle and, in that sense, has to accept the traditional power politics of international relations (Homan, 2008, 8). The discussion between a civilizing and a military power is also the discussion between soft power and hard power. The EU has a history as a civilian, normative power, focusing mainly on soft power, but is focusing more and more on hard powers. The central question of the paper is:

Does the European Union need to develop its hard powers or does it has to focus on soft powers?

To answer this question firstly the distinction between the terms soft power and hard power will be made more clear. Afterwards there will given some brief inside in the history of the development of the European foreign policy and the introduction of more and more militarization to the traditionally focus on soft powers. Afterwards there will be given some insight in a case where military power maybe was needed and in a case were soft power showed up to be really successful. This paper ends with a call for a refocus on soft power and a stop on further militarization.

2. Soft power versus hard power

The term soft power was first introduced Joseph Nye in his book *'Bound to lead: the changing nature of American power'* (Nye, 1990)*.* In 2004 he published the book *'Soft power; the means to success in world politics'.* The term soft power is a term used in international relations to describe the ability of a political body to indirectly influence the behaviour or interest through ideological means (Nye, 1990, p. 13). The basic concept of power is the ability to influence others to get them to do what you want. There are three major ways to do that: one is to threaten them with sticks; the second is to pay them with carrots; the third is to attract them or co-opt them, so that they want what you want. Soft power represents the third way of getting the outcomes you want (Nye, 1990, 18).

Soft power is contrasted with hard power, which has historically been the predominant realist measure of national power, through the use of military assets. Soft power uses a different type of currency, not force, not money, to engender cooperation (Nye, 1990, 28). It uses an attraction to shared values, and the justness and duty of contributing to the achievement of those values.

When we speak about the power of attraction we have to be really careful. Critics have ironic posed the term 'Ethical power Europe', to critically discuss Europe shaping the world according its own image. Aggestam for example critically examines the self-image of the EU as an ethical power 'doing good' in the word. According to her the EU does not have a legitimate basis on which the

EU can claim to be a universal force for good. She argues from a communitarian perspective that values are rooted in distinct cultural communities and hence a global consensus on universal values is impossible (Aggestam, 2008).

In International relations we tend to compare ourselves to the United States. While being important global partners, the American and European approaches to foreign affairs are quite different. The Americans are quite patriotic, the nation plays and enormous role, also when it comes to America's role in the world. Thereby the American are mostly emphasizing on hard power, the military instrument. The EU on the other hand has always used more non-military instruments, such as diplomacy and development cooperation.

In this comparison Jeremy Rifkin is even speaking of the new European Dream. According to him the new European Dream is based on different assumptions about what constitutes freedom and security. '*It is inclusively that brings security, belonging, not belongings'* (Rifkin, 2005)*.* Rifkin states that Americans are more willing to employ military force to protect what they perceive to be as vital self-interest. Europeans, on the contrary, are more reluctant to use military force and instead favor diplomacy, economic assistance, and aid to avert conflict and favor peacekeeping operations to maintain order.

Although the EU has always been more involved in soft power, the EU officials indicated more and more that an integrated security policy needs a more military dimension. In the next session we take a look to the development of the European foreign policy.

3. History of the European foreign policy

In the founding years the EU did not set out the objective to develop a foreign policy, but it developed incremental. The latter developed almost involuntarily, as an effort to deal with certain aspects of internal policies and as a reaction to international events. The European Community created in the first decades of integration a vast network of foreign policy instruments that are typical for a soft power, namely the signing of cooperation agreements, quite large support for development aid, reconstruction missions and humanitarian intervention

programs. Being this civilian power the EU has in the world a quite unique security culture.

The European Union lived comfortably with its status of soft power that pursues civilian ends only through civilian means till the end of the cold war. The radical changes in the European security landscape in the early 1990's has provided the Union with the question whether to widen its foreign policy instruments. The EUs security and defense capabilities have grown rapidly by then.

By the Treaties of Maastricht in 1992 the Common Foreign and Security Policy was introduced (CFSP). The CFSP created a whole set of new expectations. The CFSP changed by the Treaties of Amsterdam in 1997 and Nice in 2001. These Treaties all together define the EUs main tasks in the area of security. By the CFSP the EU has developed it's so named 'second pillar'. This is the policy domain in which action is decided by intergovernmental agreement, so the Commission and the Parliament play only a minor role and the member states are mostly sovereign. This means there is no qualified majority voting, the foreign policy of the EU remains an intergovernmental affair. Under the Amsterdam Treaty of 1999, Javier Solana was appointed to the EUs first High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and he still has this function.

In recent years the European leaders opted more and more for the development of a military capacity. This effort is particularly visible in the European Security Strategy *'A Secure Europe in a Better World'* (2003). The document was subject to extensive debate prior to its adoption. The Strategy was approved by the Council in 2003 and this was the first time that Europe has formulated a joint security strategy. As argued by Bailes, the European Security Strategy pointed to 'a new and more collective presentational awareness in Brussels and the relevant capitals' (Bailes, 2005, p.12). The European Security Strategy signals with utmost clarity that the usage of security as a code had changed. This strategy was an important step toward militarization. The so named 'Solana's document' stated that the EU should be ready to act on behalf

of the UN when their rules are broken. The security strategy says that with the new threats the first line of defence will often be abroad, and the EU should develop a strategic culture that fosters early, rapid, and when necessary, robust intervention (Toje, 2005, p.18-19).

In the same year the Council developed the EU Defence Agency. Since 2003 the EU has undertaken already quite a lot series of peacekeeping and crisis management missions over the world. The first one was in March 2003, when the EU launched its first military mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo, known under the name Operation Concordia. By this mission the military logic for the EU has emerged. This can be exemplified best by the coining of the concept of 'battle forces'.

4. Case-analysis

Experiences with the EU foreign policy shows a mixed evidence for answering the research question. On the one hand the focus on soft power failed to have a decisive intervention in the war in Yugoslavia. The general assessment by both academics and practitioners, was that the EU despite declaring on paper the operability of a common foreign policy actor, was not yet ready to be successful. The case of Bosnia and Kosovo have shown painfully that without the military resources of the United States the EU could not keep order en peace in the Balkan (Bailes, 2005). The war in Bosnia from 1992 up to 1995 showed in a painful manner that the EU had absolutely no positive influence on the Balkan conflict. Also during the attempts to solve diplomatically the conflict in Kosovo in 1998, the shortcomings of the EU became well visible. Again the Americans had to play a major role. For some people this made clear that the EU seriously have to establish a common defense policy with a focus on hard powers.

On the other hand, the EU has been praised for its successful role as the guarantor of peace in Aceh, the northern tip of Indonesia. The EU here developed in 2005 the Aceh Monitoring Mission, which solved the difficulties in Indonesia that had split the country for more than 30 years quite successfully (Järvinen, 2006). The Aceh Monitoring Mission used a tool of high-level

diplomacy and in the end reached a peace agreement between the government of Indonesia and the armed separatist Free Aceh Movement. The peace agreement was a document of seven pages with principles for the future political and economic status of Aceh, the rule of law, the political participation, human rights and a monitoring and dispute settlement mechanism (Järvinen, 2006, p.21-24). The officials from the EU reached an agreement which meant that the separatist movement handed in its weapons and the central government demobilized the troops in Aceh. This mission really demonstrate the ability of the EU to be successful in focusing on soft powers.

Also when we look to the present and near future the EU has some tests to pass in foreign policy, not even far from home. The first big 'test' is the Balkan. The situation there is very complicated, with the status of Kosovo, the challenge of consolidating stability in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the position of Montenegro and the economic and political conditions in Serbia. The EU needs to show it can handle such complex situations, without creating new conflicts. The question is whether in situation like these the EU has to focus on hard or soft powers?

5. A call for a refocus on soft power

In paragraph three it has been made clear that the EU is increasingly displaying features of a great power, with an emphasis on hard power, rather than on soft power. This trend towards more militarization have prompted scholars like Ian Manners to coin expressions such as *'martial potency'* and a *'military-industrial complex'* and warn about *'unreflexive militarization* (Manners, 2006). The trend towards militarization is risky, it undermines normative power of Europe, in this paragraph it will be made clear that we have to refocus ourselves on soft powers.

The cases in paragraph four show some mixed evidence on the research question whether we need to develop more hard powers or have to stick to the practice of soft power. On the one side the Balkan of the 1990's showed us the need for more military power, on the other side the Aceh missions showed us the ability of the EU to be a successful soft power. Looking back it seems fair to say

that the EU was very successful when putting into practice its security culture. So the EU has to get stick to the practice of soft power.

We do not have to aspire to be like the United States. Not every global player need to be a military hyper power. The EU has to build on its own strengths, it has to preserve and enhance its distinct approach to foreign affairs. The EU must have a normatively different basis for its relations with the world. Pooling the capacities of the member states together can make the EU more effective in the world, but that doesn't have to mean the creation of an EU super state. Militarizing the EU does not implicitly increase its power in interstate politics. The EU has to work from a much broader concept of security. Copying the American approach would be unwise, because the Americans see foreign affairs as a matter of national interest we have to focus much more on the legitimacy of international action, our responsibility to protect.

International peace operation often follows a so named 'quick fix problem solving approach', this are solutions that are often collapse when the peace operation is completed. By focusing on soft power the EU can act more successfully on conflict prevention. By using soft power the EU is able to address the causes, including the political and economic contexts, the natural hazards, and conflicts and state failure, rather than just the symptoms of conflict in the world (Duke, 2004). The EU has to rely especially on long-term conflict prevention and transformation rather than on the use of short-term military force.

A call for refocus on soft power does not say that Europe shouldn't be present in any military power at all. We cannot simple leave all responsibility for solving current global problems to the Americans. Within a refocus on soft power it is entirely plausible that the EU can engage in most of the Article III-309 tasks under a UN mandate as part of a wider peace-building solution. However, the military force should only be attempted under a UN mandate. The EU, as an actor, must have a normatively different basis and purely has to focus on soft power.

Most scholars are claiming a balance between soft power and hard power as the best solution. However, the recent experiences of Afghanistan and Iraq

suggest that in situations where the EU may be seeking to shape post conflict reconstruction, the mixing of hard and soft powers are dangerous. The introduction of EU military forces in settings where only EU civilian staff once worked risks undermining the EUs peaceful soft power.

A very important argument for a refocus on soft power is that the trend towards militarization is risking making the EU a hegemony. The EU has always been regarded as an unusual and extraordinary entity, a vehicle to overcome the great power mentality, with nationalism being regarded as the root cause of conflicts. Achieving security had always reached by integration, the Union has been understood as a 'security community'. With the self as the dangerous other, threats have been located within and not outside the community. This focusing on oneself can offer the possibility of forming a less antagonistic and exclusionary identity than is common in modern societies. The answer to the question of identity has to rest on experiences and policies of the past, a focus on soft power.

6. Conclusion

We can conclude that in the identity of the EU as a global player we see a trend toward more militarization. This trend is risky, because the EU has been built to escape the great power mentality and therefore we do not have to aspire to be a super hard power. By introducing military elements in our foreign security policy our normative power will be undersnowed in the future. As the EU uses more hard power, it will focus more and more on short-term military responses instead of on its traditional reliance on long term structural conflict prevention. Undermining the Union peaceful normative power in favor of a potentially violent one is very dangerous. The trend towards more militarization is a backdrop of the EU as a civilian power. The precious normative power of the EU will be lost if we are not stopping further militarization. We have to keep soft power as the central norm that guides the external actions of the EU. Like Ian Manners put it, *'the trend towards militarization, like Hannah Arendt's 'lost treasures', risk the loss of the normative power of the EU'* (Manners, 2006, p.195)

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