

Kupferschmidt, Frank

Research Report

Putting strategic partnership to the test: Cooperation between NATO and the EU in Operation Althea

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and Security Affairs

Frank Kupferschmidt

Putting Strategic Partnership to the Test

Cooperation Between NATO and the EU
in Operation *Althea*

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SWP
Stiftung Wissenschaft und
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International
and Security Affairs

Ludwigkirchplatz 3-4
10719 Berlin
Germany
Phone +49 30 880 07-0
Fax +49 30 880 07-100
www.swp-berlin.org
swp@swp-berlin.org

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**Putting Strategic Partnership to the Test:
Cooperation Between NATO and the EU
in Operation *Althea***

Operation *Althea*, which has been the most comprehensive and demanding military operation led by the European Union (EU) so far, was launched in Bosnia-Herzegovina on 2 December 2004. Although formally an EU operation, it represents the high point of NATO-EU cooperation to date.

On 16 December 2002 Javier Solana, the EU's High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, declared that that day marked the beginning of "the strategic partnership between NATO and the EU", which would "bring the two organisations closer together". His statement was a reference to the first significant result to come from the intensive discussions between the EU and NATO since the NATO foreign ministers' meeting in 1996 in Berlin: the two organisations had agreed on goals, principles and procedures to make their partnership in crisis management take effect.

This study analyses the cooperation between NATO and the EU in Operation *Althea* and asks the following main questions: How are the agreed structures and instruments for cooperation used in *Althea*? What are the root causes of the problems which have arisen there, and how can they be solved? And finally, does this cooperation between NATO and the EU live up to the claim of a "strategic partnership"? The reference period of the study is the preparatory phase of *Althea* and the first year of the operation.

The analysis takes the arrangements of the EU and NATO for joint action in the Balkans, specifically in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as its point of departure. It then examines the motivations for the replacement of the NATO-led Stabilisation Force (SFOR) by the EU Force (EUFOR) and goes on to look at the principles and instruments, with which the NATO-EU partnership is to be put into practice.

Subsequently the study examines political and military cooperation in the Bosnia operation with regard to the decision-making process, task-sharing, the command structures and the manner in which NATO resources are used. The problems which arise are identified and their causes discussed. The final section assesses the state of the partnership on the basis of the

agreed principles and discusses how the problems in the partnership could be solved.

In assessing cooperation between NATO and the EU in the scope of Operation *Althea*, the study comes to the following conclusions:

Relations between NATO and the EU only partly live up to the agreed principles of “strategic partnership”. There are also doubts as to whether all the states involved really want the partnership to be successful.

The greatest deficits are to be found in cooperation between the political committees of NATO and the EU. Since all decisions require consensus in both organisations, and the number of members has increased, it is here that problems are most likely to occur.

Different ideas and divergent interests at political and military-policy level delayed decisions in the preparatory phase of Operation *Althea*. The USA’s lack of trust in European capabilities initially led to SFOR’s replacement being postponed. Later, national reservations hindered clear agreements on task-sharing between NATO and the EU and the exact shape of the command structures.

The following measures could improve cooperation between NATO and the EU:

- ▶ Setting up joint NATO-EU preparatory committees – these could help prevent obstacles and blockades or at least allow the danger of their emergence to be recognised at an early stage, which would help lessen the negative consequences.
- ▶ Considering whether Turkey should be given associate status in the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), independent of EU accession negotiations .
- ▶ Improving the rules for cooperation between NATO and the EU.

At military level the agreements between NATO and the EU have been utilised effectively and professionally. But there is still need for improvement in this area. *Althea* showed up the limitations of the “Berlin Plus” agreements: the complexity of the arrangements and the amount of time required for their implementation in an operation mean that their application will probably be limited to NATO-successor operations. Further-reaching options will only be realistic if decision-making processes can be effectively streamlined.

In the military sphere the following improvements should be considered:

- ▶ The preconditions must be created for making decisions at an earlier stage.
- ▶ Command structures of the EU and NATO must be made mutually compatible, in other words an

EU command structure which fundamentally mirrors that of NATO must be created for operations under the “Berlin Plus” rules.

- ▶ Additional arrangements must be made to set a clear framework for cooperation in various areas.
- ▶ The amount of time required to prepare an operation under “Berlin Plus” must be reduced.

Progress has been made in recent years in crisis-management cooperation between NATO and the EU. The following measures would help further consolidate this development:

- ▶ Intensifying strategic dialogue between the two organisations.
- ▶ NATO and the EU meeting at an early stage when crises are looming to discuss the situation, common goals and possible measures.
- ▶ All members should manifest the will to resolve problems in a cooperative manner.
- ▶ Consistently putting into effect the agreed increase in European capabilities in order to achieve the desired balanced partnership between NATO/USA and the EU.

The Political Preconditions for *Althea*

Four factors shaped the EU's intention to assume command of SFOR's successor operation: Firstly, the reaching of permanent agreements between NATO and the EU, which put the Europeans in the position to undertake an operation of this magnitude for the first time; secondly, Europe's particular interest in a country that has prospects of joining the EU, which was expressed in the joint approach agreed between NATO and the EU for the Balkans, for instance; thirdly, the situation in the country itself, which was starting to show positive signs; and fourthly, developments towards a concurring US-European interest in a European successor operation.

Structures and Instruments for Cooperation in Crisis Management

The NATO-EU partnership, which guarantees the Europeans access to the necessary instruments for large-scale crisis-management operations under their own command, was sealed with two documents. In December 2002 all the NATO states—including those which are not members of the EU—issued a declaration welcoming the European security and defence policy and its purpose of enabling EU-led crisis-management operations.¹ This includes military operations, “where NATO as a whole is not engaged”,² meaning essentially if the USA is not involved. Relations between the two organisations must be based on the principles of partnership and trust: the different nature of NATO and the EU must be acknowledged, but it should be guaranteed that crisis-management activities mutually reinforce each other. Effective mutual consultations, dialogue, cooperation and openness were agreed on as further principles of cooperation, as well as equality and respect for the decision-making autonomy and interests of each organisation and its members.

¹ EU-NATO Declaration on ESDP, 16 December 2002 (NATO Press Release [2002]142), <www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-142e.htm> (viewed on 16 March 2005).

² Ibid.

Independent operational management by the EU is made possible by the permanent arrangements with NATO, the “Berlin Plus Agreement” of 17 March 2003,³ which guarantees the EU access to NATO planning capacities. Furthermore, in particular cases the EU also has access to collective NATO resources and capabilities—including the NATO command structure and communications. These agreements regulate numerous mechanisms, including those for NATO-EU consultations in crisis situations and many other functions; they also define the tasks of NATO's Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR) in his role as operation commander of an EU-led crisis-management operation and lay down consultation mechanisms between NATO and the EU for EU operations involving recourse to NATO resources.

These agreements are of great significance for the EU in the light of its former decision to do without a command structure of its own comparable to NATO's so as to avoid “unnecessary duplication”. In larger operations the EU is consequently dependent on the NATO command structure or the headquarters (HQ) provided by individual nations.

Whether it is NATO or the EU which intervenes in the event of crisis is determined in consultations both within the individual organisations and between them. Since this is essentially a decision about whether an operation takes place with the involvement of the USA (in the scope of NATO) or without it (in the scope of ESDP), the American position carries great weight in this process. From the point of view of security policy it is therefore crucially a matter of focussing the discussion on which set of arrangements will be most effective and achieve the best results.

³ Berlin Plus Agreement, <www.nato.int/shape/news/2003/shape_eu/se030822a.htm> (viewed on 15 January 2005). See also *Background EU-NATO: The Framework for Permanent Relations and Berlin Plus*, May 2004, <<http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cmsUpload/03-11-11%20Berlin%20Plus%20press%20note%20BL.pdf>> (viewed on 23 November 2004); a detailed description is also given in: Pol De Witte/ Fritz Rademacher, “Partnerschaft oder Rivalität? Ein Blick aus der Praxis”, in: Johannes Varwick (ed.), *Die Beziehungen zwischen NATO und EU, Partnerschaft, Konkurrenz, Rivalität*, Opladen 2005, pp. 275ff.

The partnership between NATO and the EU is based on the premise that the two organisations can exert much more influence and achieve more in both global

Overview of the member states of NATO and the EU

<i>Members of NATO and the EU</i>		
<i>Members of NATO but not of the EU</i>		
Bulgaria	Romania	
Canada	Turkey	
Iceland	USA	
Norway		
<i>Members of the EU but not of NATO</i>		
Austria	Finland	
Cyprus	Malta	
Ireland	Sweden	

issues and regional crises if they act jointly rather than separately. If NATO and the EU agree in their objectives, they have a much better chance of successfully mastering the new security challenges. Together they have a far wider range of military and non-military options and instruments at their disposal for crisis management, stabilisation and “nation-building”.

The European Security Strategy (ESS)⁴ emphasises the significance of the NATO-EU partnership. It acknowledges that the Transatlantic relationship is a “core element of the international system” and “irreplaceable”, and sees the Atlantic alliance as an “important expression” of this. If the EU and the USA acted together they would be a “formidable force for good in the world”; the EU therefore aspires to an “effective and balanced partnership” with the USA.⁵ Here we catch a glimpse of the growing significance of the EU-US relationship as a complementation and reinforcement of the fundamental strategic partnership between NATO and the EU. However, the USA attaches importance to security issues being treated primarily in NATO because it has a seat and a vote there. Moreover, it fears that the Atlantic alliance could be undermined if the emphasis in EU-US relations shifted more towards security policy.

The Joint Approach of the EU and NATO for the Western Balkans

NATO-EU cooperation in Bosnia-Herzegovina is part of a concerted approach for the Western Balkans, which was discussed and agreed by both organisations and laid down in a framework document in July 2003.⁶ This agreement resolved differences of opinion regarding the best way to stabilise the region. It is the only agreement of its kind relating to a region where both the EU and the USA have security and economic interests.

The objective of the agreement is to help the five states of the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia-Montenegro) attain sustainable stability on the basis of democratic and effective government structures and a viable market economy. Sufficient efforts of their own and full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal are fundamental prerequisites for these countries’ getting closer to the EU and NATO. Both organisations want to use their instruments—NATO’s comprehensive “Outreach Programme” and the EU’s integrated stabilisation and association process—to foster the desired development. In the fields of conflict prevention and crisis management, for example, there must be close consultations regarding the situation in

4 See: *A Secure Europe in a Better World: The European Security Strategy*, Brussels, 12 December 2003, <www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf> (viewed on 16 March 2006).

5 Ibid.

6 NATO-EU *Concerted Approach for the Western Balkans*, 29 July 2003 (NATO Press Release [2003]089), points 9, 10 and 15; see also *European Security Strategy – Bosnia and Herzegovina/Comprehensive Policy*, adopted by the European Council 17/18 June 2004, <www.eusrbih.org/policy-docs/?cid=1,1,1> (viewed on 16 March 2006).

the Western Balkans, but also a regular exchange of information at all levels, which should also include military options. For implementing the reforms in the defence and security sector it was agreed to adhere to a division of labour: the EU attends to the police reform and government affairs, while NATO pursues the preparation for “Partnership for Peace” (PfP) and the “Membership Action Plan” (MAP).

Some diplomats in Brussels assess the arrangement as an agreement on the lowest common denominator, which the EU cannot be satisfied with. Above all they point out that the document is largely a forward projection of the existing practice and that no new perspectives and initiatives for cooperation in the Balkans have been developed. But all signs suggest that it was not possible to achieve more—otherwise NATO would have refused its approval. For this reason the document is said not to have gained any great significance. Erhard Busek, the Special Coordinator for the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, sees this differently: he considers that the “concerted approach” provides guiding principles for his work.⁷ Also, this jointly discussed and agreed approach cannot have been completely without effect because NATO and the EU have worked together unmistakably well in political practice on the ground. This was particularly so when pressure on several Balkan countries had to be stepped up to urge them to comply with the Dayton accords or cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Besides, it has been common NATO practice for concepts simply to recapitulate the state of the discussion and lay it down for the future.

However, since the EU is striving to become a “global security player,” rivalry and disputes over areas of responsibility can still arise in particular cases despite the agreement. The struggle between the two organisations to achieve the best concepts and solutions can also be highly constructive as long as cooperation is not seen as a zero-sum game, in which success for one side automatically means a loss for the other.

The Situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina

In the opinion of the international community, the general situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina stabilised sufficiently in 2004 for the remaining risks to be con-

trolled with a smaller military presence. Following ongoing assessments of the situation, NATO was able to reduce its presence over the years from an original strength of almost 60,000 soldiers in the Implementation Force (IFOR) to 32,000 at the beginning of the SFOR operation and finally to 7,000. When the command was handed over from SFOR to EUFOR—the troops of Operation *Althea*—in Sarajevo on 2 December 2004, speakers acknowledged NATO’s achievement in creating a secure environment,⁸ and even “an enduring peace.”⁹ The assessment of the EU commander on the ground was rather more restrained: In an interview with journalists on 21 December 2004, Major-General A. David Leakey pointed out “ingredients of instability” which still threatened the country.¹⁰ And an American expert on relations in Bosnia-Herzegovina drew attention to the fact that the ethnic polarisation of the war years and zero-sum thinking remained dominant at political level: any decision which benefited one entity disadvantaged another. A major problem was that the Bosnian Serbs were still attempting to undermine the joint institutions created under the Dayton Peace Agreement.¹¹ This assessment was illustrated on 16 April 2005 by the refusal of 1,200 recruits in Republika Srpska to swear the oath to Bosnia-Herzegovina—an incident that must be seen as a protest against the defence reform imposed by the international community.

NATO assesses that there are no longer any terrorist organisations operating in Bosnia-Herzegovina; the greatest risks are now posed by organised crime and

⁸ Speech by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the SFOR transfer of authority ceremony on 2 December 2004 in Sarajevo, <www.nato.int/docu/speech/2004/s041202a.htm> (viewed on 16 March 2006).

⁹ Speech by the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina, M. Borislav Paravac at the SFOR transfer of authority ceremony on 2 December 2004 in Sarajevo, <www.nato.int/docu/speech/2004/s041202b.htm> (viewed on 16 March 2006).

¹⁰ See: *Atlantic News/Nouvelles Atlantiques (ANA)*, no. 3638 (21 December 2004), p. 1.

¹¹ The Dayton Peace Agreement between the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Croatia was negotiated in the USA and signed in Paris on 14 December 1995. The official title is “General Framework Agreement for Peace”. The signing of the document was witnessed by representatives of the Contact Group (Germany, France, Britain, Russia, the USA) and an EU Special Negotiator, <www.euforbih.org/basic/gfap.htm> (viewed on 16 March 2006). On the attempt to undermine the Dayton institutions, see: Edward P. Joseph, “Back to the Balkans,” *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 1 (January/February 2005), pp. 112f.

⁷ Speech by Erhard Busek at the annual PfP conference on 13 June 2005 in Vienna.

corruption. Despite unmistakable positive changes, observers still assess the reform process in the country as fragile. Of all the states of the Western Balkans, Bosnia-Herzegovina is making the least progress in political and economic terms: Politically it is far behind the other four countries, even Serbia-Montenegro; economically it is on par with Albania and Serbia-Montenegro;¹² fifty percent of the population live at or below the poverty line and seventy percent see accession to the EU above all as an opportunity to move to another EU country.¹³ There is great approval for EU accession throughout the country, even in Republika Srpska, so the EU is widely accepted and enjoys great authority. Lord Paddy Ashdown, the High Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations and the EU Special Representative (HR/EUSR), thus noted: “The push of Dayton is increasingly being replaced by the pull of Brussels.”¹⁴

For this reason the negotiations on the status of Kosovo are not likely to affect Bosnia-Herzegovina in any major way. This can also be seen in the population’s declining support for the “heroes” of the war, who have been indicted for war crimes. The people are becoming increasingly aware that the economic progress of the country depends on the capture of these suspects. Yet there is a danger that the attractiveness of prospective membership will wane if the process of approximation to the EU drags on for too long. Some observers consider that accession will only be realistic in ten to twenty years.¹⁵ The government in Sarajevo is aware of this and for the moment is aiming for membership in NATO, which could be achieved at an earlier date. NATO for its part has an interest in integrating the states of the Western Balkans in such a way as to ensure the lasting stability and security of the region.

12 See: Franz-Lothar Altmann, *EU und Westlicher Balkan.*

Von Dayton nach Brüssel: ein allzu langer Weg?, Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, January 2005 (SWP-Studie 1/05), p. 18.

13 See: Erhard Busek, Special Coordinator for the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, Speech on 17 December 2004 in Chatham House, Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, published manuscript, pp. 3f.

14 Quoted in *Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ)*, 1 December 2004, p. 9.

15 See: Franz-Lothar Altmann, “Les Balkans occidentaux et L’Union,” in: *Politique étrangère*, no. 4 (Winter 2004/2005), pp. 795-805 (804), and Marie-Janine Calic, *Der Stabilisierungs- und Assoziierungsprozess auf dem Prüfstand. Empfehlungen für die Weiterentwicklung europäischer Balkanpolitik*, Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, September 2004 (SWP-Studie 33/04), p. 34.

After the rejection of the EU Constitution Treaty in France and the Netherlands and in view of a generally more critical attitude towards any further enlargement of the EU, the states of the Western Balkans are worried about their chances of accession.¹⁶ Many experts on the region estimate that the stability and peaceful development of the Balkan states could be jeopardised in the long term if the EU refuses them this chance. There is much to suggest that the voices of nationalism would then grow strong again and that internationally these countries would align themselves more closely with the USA once more.¹⁷ In this context there are increasing demands that the EU adhere to the undertakings it has given to date¹⁸ and even accelerate preparations for accession. The International Balkans Commission advocates admission of the entire region by 2014.¹⁹

American and European Interests

When the vote was taken to terminate SFOR and hand over its main tasks to the EU, the protagonists had different motives:

- ▶ The USA insisted on a substantial reduction of its own contribution to SFOR. As early as 1999 George W. Bush—then a candidate for the US presidency—criticised during an election campaign that America’s armed forces were dissipating their energies in too many operations around the world and that the country was subsequently tied into the process of “nation building” which was too long and thus too expensive for it.²⁰ This situation was further ex-

16 An amendment to the French Constitution makes the government’s approval of every future EU enlargement contingent on a referendum.

17 See: Dušan Reljić, *Der Westbalkan ohne Zukunftsplan*, Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, July 2005 (SWP-Aktuell 30/05), p. 1.

18 See: *Financial Times (FT)*, 3 June 2005, p. 4; Pauline Neville-Jones, “A Balkan Rethink Is Required before It Is Too Late,” *FT*, 6 June 2005, p. 13; Richard von Weizsäcker/Giuliano Amato/Carl Bildt/Jean-Luc Dehaene, “Dirigeants européens, les Balkans vous attendent!”, *Le Monde*, 19 June 2005, pp. 12f; Erich Reiter, “Balkan-Länder gehören in die EU,” *SZ*, 9 August 2005, p. 2. Andrew Moravcsik of Princeton University considers that the admission of the Balkan states will only be possible if at the same time Turkey is refused membership. See: idem, “Für ein Europa ohne Illusionen,” *SZ*, 14 July 2005, p. 2.

19 See: “Interview mit Kommissionsmitglied Richard von Weizsäcker,” *SZ*, 13 April 2005, p. 6.

20 See description in Lutz Holländer, “Die Übernahme von

acerbated in the years that followed – by the attacks of 11 September 2001, the operations in Afghanistan and in particular the considerable number of troops committed in Iraq. In the end the USA only provided around thirteen percent of SFOR troops rather than thirty-three percent at the beginning;²¹ its European NATO partners meanwhile provided around eighty percent.

- ▶ Since the jointly agreed and regularly reaffirmed principle of “in together, out together” was to be preserved at least formally, a further substantial reduction of the US contribution was only possible through terminating the SFOR operation. This freed up around 800 American servicemen and women for other operations. At the same time the operational command was handed over to the Europeans. They had already provided the lion’s share of the forces for some time but could not claim the position of commander for themselves as long as the USA was involved militarily.
- ▶ It later turned out in the negotiations on task-sharing between NATO and the EU in Bosnia-Herzegovina that Washington wanted to be relieved in the Balkans but at the same time to retain a political voice there and have a hand in the search for indicted war criminals.²² The USA evidently had reservations about leaving the Balkans entirely to the EU. It seems they were afraid of losing influence in view of the strong and diverse European involvement. Furthermore, even as late as March 2004 influential American specialists warned against transferring responsibility to the Europeans before they could really exercise it properly.²³
- ▶ The EU wanted to take on greater military responsi-

SFOR durch die EU: Voraussetzungen, Strategien und Konsequenzen,” in: Varwick (ed.), *Die Beziehungen zwischen NATO und EU* [see note 3 above], pp. 187f.

21 International Crisis Group (ICG), *EUFOR: Changing Bosnia’s Security Arrangements*, 29 June 2004, p. 3.

22 See: Judy Dempsey, “US and EU in Dispute on Control of Bosnia Force,” *FT*, 9 March 2004, p. 2; see also: Horst Bacia, “Washington will nicht loslassen,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)*, 16 March 2004, p. 10, and Christian Wernicke, “Europas zweite Chance,” *SZ*, 1 December 2004, p. 9; see also “Foreword” in: Franz-Lothar Altmann/Eugene Whitlock (eds.), *European and U.S. Policies in the Balkans. Different Views and Perceptions, Common Interests and Platforms?*, Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, July 2004, pp. 6f.

23 See: F. Stephen Larrabee, “ESDP and NATO: Assuring Complementarity,” *The International Spectator* 39, no. 1 (January–March 2004), pp. 51-70 (65). On Washington’s doubts about European capabilities see also the ICG report *EUFOR* [see note 21 above], p. 2.

bility in the Balkans. Then, as now, the EU saw it primarily as a European task to support Bosnia-Herzegovina’s development into a state capable of EU membership—one with a stable democracy, market economy and cooperative foreign policy. The stabilisation and association process initiated by the EU as well as the enormous amount of financial and other aid leave no doubt as to this commitment: more than a quarter of all EU expenditure for the Western Balkans in 1991–2001 (2.27 thousand million euros) was invested in Bosnia-Herzegovina; half of these resources went towards stabilising the democratic structures.²⁴ The HR/EUSR assessed that the prospects for a “future in the EU” after the European Council meeting in Feira in 2000 acted as a “powerful catalyst for good will.”²⁵

- ▶ Furthermore, the EU hoped to prove that it was in a position to shoulder a large-scale and more complex operation. After Operation *Concordia* in Macedonia,²⁶ which some observers qualified as a “dry run,” *Althea* was to be a qualitative leap forward.
- ▶ *Althea* was also an opportunity to test and apply the integrated political plan with its military and non-military components which had been decided for Bosnia-Herzegovina.²⁷ Since the EU was already involved in the country in many ways—with a monitoring mission (EUMM), a police mission (EUPM) and other support measures—it seemed plausible to combine reconstruction and transition policy “in one hand.”²⁸ This would have synergetic effects and help reduce friction. In April 2005 the European Parliament demanded that the international activities in the region be better coordinated.²⁹
- ▶ Additionally, the operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina came at just the right time to test the efficiency of the EU in military matters and foreign affairs. *Althea*’s proponents saw it as a great opportunity to further develop ESDP.

24 See: Heinz-Jürgen Axt, “Konfliktbearbeitung in Südosteuropa (2000-2004),” in: Bundesakademie für Sicherheitspolitik, *Sicherheitspolitik in neuen Dimensionen*, Supplement 1, Hamburg/Berlin/Bonn 2004, pp. 153f.

25 See: ANA, no. 3638 (21 December 2004).

26 Operation *Concordia* was carried out EU under the “Berlin Plus” rules from 31 March to 15 December 2003. Around four hundred soldiers were involved.

27 See: *European Security Strategy* [see note 6 above].

28 The EU Special Representative, the EU Commission and the European Development Bank are also active in Bosnia-Herzegovina in addition to EUPM and EUMM.

29 See: *Bulletin der EU*, no. 4 (2005), p. 66.

Practical NATO-EU Cooperation in Operation *Althea*

This section will examine the declared “strategic partnership” in practice in Operation *Althea*. It will focus on decision-making and management at political level and analyse the distribution of responsibilities between the two organisations and cooperation at military level.

Decision-Making and Management at Political Level

Almost two years passed from the first political deliberations about conducting an EU operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina to the beginning of *Althea*. The decision-making process was so protracted for two main reasons: firstly because of the large number of parties involved – organisations (UN, NATO and the EU) and nations (NATO and EU members, Bosnia-Herzegovina as well as the other states involved in the Dayton agreement) – and secondly due to the initially divergent assessment of the situation in the operational area and the capabilities of the EU. After agreement had finally been reached in matters of principle, a new problem emerged in the relationship between the political and military bodies of NATO and the EU.

The Protracted Political Decision-Making Process

At the European Council meeting in Copenhagen in 2002 the EU first declared its readiness to take over from SFOR with an operation of its own. The Secretary General and High Representative (SG/HR) for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), Javier Solana, was called on, together with the EU presidency, to open consultations towards this end with the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina and all relevant international players.³⁰ Criticism came from the USA – the time was not ripe, it said, and the security situation was still too fragile. An EU operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina was unthinkable without Ameri-

³⁰ “Schlussfolgerungen des Vorsitzes,” Section III, Europäische Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik, Point. I.9.27, in: *Bulletin der EU*, no. 12 (2002).

can approval in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and NATO. Resistance to such a change came from within Bosnia-Herzegovina itself. The Russian Federation also assessed the move negatively at first – it feared that its own veto right in the UNSC would carry less weight if post-conflict management were rapidly transferred to the EU.³¹

The EU’s time-frame was bold and American scepticism comprehensible. After all, an understanding about the permanent arrangements between NATO and the EU had only been reached in December 2002 after lengthy negotiations, and they still had to stand the test of practice. This test occurred in 2003 with Operation *Concordia* in Macedonia. Not until the middle of that year was agreement reached on joint action in the Balkans. The European Security Strategy was finally adopted in December, giving ESDP the framework it needed.

These developments of ESDP allowed a positive answer for the EU one year after its first offer: the NATO foreign ministers, meeting in Brussels, ordered an assessment of options for the future of SFOR and possible transition to an EU mission at the end of 2004 within the framework of the “Berlin Plus” agreements. The NATO Council in Permanent Session and the Military Authorities were to open consultations with their EU counterparts. The ministers would consult all parties concerned, including the government in Sarajevo.³² In return the EU reaffirmed its readiness to command an ESDP mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina, including a military component on the basis of “Berlin Plus”, and welcomed the offer of consultations, which promptly began in January 2004.

In the following months NATO and the EU made a series of other important decisions, step by step, to ensure that the ESDP operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina could begin in December 2004:

- ▶ NATO decided to reduce the SFOR presence to seven thousand troops, and at its summit in Istanbul at the end of June 2004 it finally decided to terminate

³¹ See: Michael Martens, “Der Stellvertreterfrieden,” *FAZ*, 28 December 2004, p. 10.

³² *Final Communiqué – Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council* (NATO Press Release [2003]152, 4 December 2003), Point 8.

the operation. At the request of the EU it later declared its readiness to put the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR) at the EU's disposal as commander for the operation and to base EU Operation HQ at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Mons (Belgium).

- ▶ The EU member states elaborated the operational principles for *Althea*, including the "General Concept" approved on 26 April 2004, and agreed on a comprehensive EU policy towards Bosnia-Herzegovina as the framework for their involvement. This was followed by the Joint Action of the Council of the EU³³ and the green light for the conception, plan and rules of the operation.
- ▶ Resolutions 1551 and 1575 of the UN Security Council created the basis for the EU operation under international law. Resolution 1551 welcomed both the decision of NATO to terminate SFOR by the end of 2004 and the intention of the EU to launch a Bosnia mission of its own, with a military component, in December 2004. Resolution 1575 authorised the EU and countries acting through or in cooperation with it to establish a multinational stabilisation force (EUFOR) – the legal successor to SFOR – under unified command and control for an initial planned period of twelve months. The mission was to be conducted in collaboration with NATO Headquarters in Sarajevo and to follow the rules agreed between the two organisations. EUFOR accordingly takes on the central role in the stabilisation of peace, fulfilling the military dimensions of the Dayton agreement. As part of the preparations, NATO and the EU had sent letters to the UN Security Council, recognising EUFOR's command. The Bosnian president also expressed his approval of the arrangements agreed between NATO and the EU.³⁴
- ▶ On 15 November 2004, on the basis of UN Resolution 1575, the Council of the EU set 2 December 2004 as the date for the beginning of Operation *Althea*.³⁵ The operation currently has a two-year mandate and must be subjected to Periodic Mission Review every six months. Generally it is assumed that operations will last three years. If the opera-

tion proceeds without complications, reductions in the size of forces could begin at an early date.³⁶ As stability increases, the main focus will shift to police crime-fighting and the military dimension will be reduced accordingly.

- ▶ These formal procedures were accompanied by a series of visits by NATO and EU delegations—led by the NATO Secretary General and the Secretary General/High Representative of the EU respectively—to talk with representatives of the government in Sarajevo and the international community. These supportive measures were intended to send a political signal to Bosnia-Herzegovina and convey the message that the handover would be smooth. This was intended to dispel any doubts about an EU operation. Not least it was a matter of "fine tuning" between the parties involved.³⁷

The collaboration and solidarity of NATO SG and the SG/HR of the EU was of great significance in this preparatory phase. NATO, the EU and the UN cooperated closely and very effectively over a considerable period of time in the lead-up to *Althea*. The planned intensification of bilateral relations between NATO and UN on the one hand and between the EU and UN on the other should lead to a further strengthening and extension of these relations to form a stable triangle. This could be achieved, for example, by means of an agreement between NATO and the UN—corresponding to the agreement concluded between the EU and the UN—and would put crisis-management cooperation on a new footing.

The Turkish-Greek Problem

The decision to conduct the EU operation was taken by the Council of the EU on 12 July 2004 in a Council

33 "Council Joint Action 2004/570/CFSP," *Official Journal of the European Union*, 28 July 2004, pp. L252/10ff.

34 Letters to the UN Security Council S/2004/915, 916, 917.

35 "Council Decision 2004/803/CFSP, 25 November 2004," *Official Journal of the European Union*, 27 November 2004, p. L353/21.

36 "Interview mit Generalleutnant Jean-Paul Perruche, Direktor des EU-Militärstabes", in: ANA, no. 3632 (2 December 2004), p. 1. At the time Perruche considered a reduction possible as early as 2005, but this did not occur. The Council for General Affairs and Foreign Relations decided on 21/22 November 2005 not to alter the strength of the forces for 2006. See: Council of the EU, Press Release 2691. *Council Meeting, General Affairs and External Relations*, Brussels, 21–22 November 2005, 14172/05 (Presse 289), <www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/gena/87093.pdf> (viewed on 16 March 2006).

37 Press point with NATO SG and EU HR at NATO Headquarters on 26 July 2004, <www.nato.int/docu/speech/2004/s040726a.htm> (viewed on 16 March 2006).

Joint Action.³⁸ This document stipulates that the EU Political and Security Committee (PSC) exercises political control and strategic management in *Althea* with the authority of the Council, while the EU Military Committee makes sure that the operation is carried out in accordance with the regulations. Since this is an operation in the scope of the “Berlin Plus” agreements, NATO is entitled to be informed regularly of the progress of the operation. As the operation commander of *Althea* reports only to the EU committees, the PSC is to fulfil this commitment towards the NATO Council, while the EU Military Committee does so towards its NATO counterpart. The frequency of meetings should follow the agreements made between NATO Secretary General George Robertson and the Swedish EU presidency in January 2001: at least three joint meetings of NATO Council and PSC, at least two meetings of both Military Committees every six months, as well as regular meetings of lower-level committees.³⁹

Decisions about these joint meetings and their agendas must be made in consensus, albeit by informal means, and this gives individual states significant leverage to block consultations or even prevent discussion of particular points of the agenda. Turkey has made full use of this ability in the last several months to prevent Turkish representatives from having to sit at the same table as representatives of the Republic of Cyprus, an EU member since 1 May 2004.⁴⁰ Rather than facilitating decision-making and practical cooperation, the recent enlargement of the EU to include ten new members has complicated cooperation between the EU and NATO despite the increased overlap of the membership structure of the two organisations. (Nineteen member states are now members of both EU and NATO, see overview on p. 8.)

Turkey’s behaviour undermines the goals of the strategic partnership and could lead some EU members to lean towards autonomy even more. This is because the Turkish blockade created a phase of several months in late 2004 and early 2005 when the only meetings at political level were those of PSC and NATO Council on Operation *Althea*. No joint meetings of the

Military Committees took place at all between September 2004 and early March 2005. Finally the Military Committees adopted the same approach as the committees at political level and limited their agenda to the current operation, so as to at least guarantee the flow of information. This solution made it possible to exclude Cyprus and Malta from these NATO-EU joint meetings under the decision of the 2002 European Council meeting in Copenhagen as they are not members of the Partnership for Peace and do not have any bilateral security agreements with NATO.⁴¹ This means that they cannot take part in “Berlin Plus” or its implementation. If these countries applied to join PFP so as to redress this problem, the Turkish government would probably block their membership so as to retain this vital bargaining chip in view of its own accession negotiations.⁴²

Turkish obstructionism has not yet had any effect on operational matters since Turkey wanted to be involved militarily from the beginning: it provides troops for EUFOR, has announced a battalion for the NATO reserves, which can also be used in the scope of EUFOR, and hopes to contribute an infantry battalion to the EU’s rapid-deployment troops (Battle Groups).

Considering Turkey’s strategic significance and its intention to become more closely involved in ESDP, ways should be found to better integrate Ankara. One possibility would be “Turkey’s association with the ESDP as soon as possible,”⁴³ which would reduce the likelihood of Turkish blockades in its cooperation with NATO and the EU, though not rule them out altogether. However, such a solution would also require the agreement of Cyprus, which could only be obtained if Ankara accorded its recognition.

NATO and EU committees, which according to the permanent arrangements between the two organisations should actually convene jointly on a regular basis, rarely come together—presumably due to foreseeable or suspected difficulties. After the Initiating Directive, which triggers the EU planning process for an operation, the EU’s Politico-Military Group (PMG) and NATO’s Policy Coordination Group (PCG) were left out of the preparations for the operation. The secretar-

³⁸ See: “Council Joint Action 2004/570/CFSP” [see note 33 above], Point (14).

³⁹ See: De Witte/Rademacher, “Partnerschaft oder Rivalität” [see note 3 above], p. 275. Arrangements for consultations in the event of crisis are part of the “Berlin Plus” package.

⁴⁰ See: Dieter Ebeling, “Türkei blockiert Arbeitskontakte zwischen NATO und EU,” *dpa-Korrespondentenbericht*, 14 April 2005.

⁴¹ See: “Schlussfolgerungen des Europäischen Rates von Kopenhagen”, 12 December 2002, Annex II, Point I.17, in: *Bulletin der EU*, no. 12 (2002).

⁴² See: Judy Dempsey, in: *International Herald Tribune (IHT)*, 18 February 2005, p. 4.

⁴³ Heinz Kramer, *EU-Türkei: Vor schwierigen Beitrittsverhandlungen*, Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, May 2005 (SWP-Studie 11/05), p. 17.

ats of NATO and the EU preferred to coordinate directly at their own level between the personal representative of the SG/HR of the EU for crisis management, Peter Feith, and the Deputy Assistant NATO Secretary General, Robert Serry.⁴⁴ They thus demonstrated a degree of flexibility which helped cut short the otherwise laborious processes of reaching agreement.

The Problem of Task-Sharing Between the EU and NATO

Task-sharing between the two organisations proved to be the most difficult aspect of preparations for *Althea*. A tug-of-war over details went on for months. From the very beginning the USA did not want to leave the command of military operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina to the EU alone, and in particular it wanted to retain powers for combating terrorism and capturing war criminals indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Some Europeans, in turn, tried their hardest to prevent this because they wanted to take on overall responsibility and feared that, if they did not, they would remain a junior partner to NATO or the USA.⁴⁵ The American demand was interpreted in different ways—some saw it above all as the USA's wish to fulfil obligations once undertaken. Others concluded that America wanted to dump as many burdens as possible on the Europeans in the Balkans but at the same time retain a share of political control over the EU's military mission in the region.⁴⁶ The USA denied the latter; both considerations probably played a role. Another factor which contributed to the delay of the decision was that, due to divergent views, the Pentagon and the State Department took a long time to reach agreement on these issues. The "delineation of tasks" between NATO and the EU was thus a lengthy and complex process—at

political level it was postponed time and time again, and final agreement was only reached a few days before the start of *Althea*.⁴⁷

The solution which was finally agreed to was one which the NATO Secretary General had raised as a possible compromise back in March 2004 and which the EU had rejected at the time: that the EU and NATO would be jointly responsible for pursuing war criminals. Since it was not possible to clarify at political level how this would be implemented in practice on the ground, the commanders in Bosnia-Herzegovina worked out a solution—they agreed that a joint decision would be made when responsibilities overlapped. This presupposes permanent coordination between the operation commander of EUFOR and the commander of NATO Headquarters in Sarajevo, and close liaison with the HR/EUSR.

The Tasks of EUFOR⁴⁸

The main tasks of EUFOR are:

- ▶ to guarantee a robust military presence to deter violence;
- ▶ to contribute to a secure and violence-free environment and
- ▶ to observe the conditions of the Dayton agreement.

In Annex 1A of the Dayton agreement the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina as well as its territorial entities, the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska, undertook, among other things, to renounce violence – even in the event of agreements being infringed by the other side – and to cooperate with all institutions and organisations involved in the implementation of the peace agreement or authorised by the UN Security Council in any other form, including the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

EUFOR should also support the other organisations of the EU and the international community active in

⁴⁴ See: Deputy Assistant Secretary General Robert Serry at a press briefing on 24 November 2004 on the end of SFOR and the future role of NATO in Bosnia-Herzegovina, <www.nato.int/docu/speech/2004/s041124b.htm> (viewed on 16 March 2006).

⁴⁵ See: Bacia, "Washington will nicht loslassen" [see note 22]. See also Congressional Research Service (CRS), *Bosnia and International Security Forces, Transition from NATO to the European Union*, Washington, D.C.: The Library of Congress (CRS Report for Congress), 6 December 2004, p. CRS-4.

⁴⁶ See: Dempsey, "US and EU in Dispute" [see note 22] and Altmann/Whitlock (eds.), *European and U.S. Policies in the Balkans* [see note 22].

⁴⁷ A diplomatic description of the difficulties ("the problem of having to agree to the delineation of tasks [...] really made it a bit more complicated [than Operation *Concordia*; the author]") was given by Robert Serry at the press briefing on 24 November 2004 on the end of SFOR and the future role of NATO in Bosnia-Herzegovina (see note 44 above). See also the British Defence Minister John Reid, "La présidence britannique de l'UE: un partenariat pour faire avancer la PESD," *Défense Nationale* 61, no. 7 (July 2005), p. 10.

⁴⁸ See: "Council Joint Action 2004/570/CFSP" [see note 33].

Bosnia-Herzegovina⁴⁹ as well as the Bosnian police in its struggle against organised crime; it should assist the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the defence reform and the International Criminal Tribunal in the search for and arrest of indicted war criminals. General Leakey reaffirmed to the press that he aimed to crack down on the organised crime networks which now jeopardised stability more than ethnic conflicts. This would require close cooperation with the EUPM, the representatives of the EU Commission, the World Bank and the Office of the HR/EUSR.⁵⁰ This example shows how well EUFOR is integrated into the EU's overall plan.

The criminal networks have since become so well established that they severely hamper the work of the Bosnian police. General Leakey therefore takes the view that a significant function of EUFOR is to provide a security environment in which the police can effectively act.⁵¹ Here the operational headquarters of EUFOR (EUFOR HQ) can also rely on support from the International Police Unit (IPU) under its command, which consists of five hundred policemen and women from seven nations;⁵² its core is formed by Italian carabinieri. This regiment-strength unit succeeded the Multinational Specialised Unit, which served in Bosnia-Herzegovina for six years. It operates jointly with local police and EUFOR troops in patrols and intelligence gathering. In critical situations, such as a revolt or violent excesses, it supports the Bosnian police.

The Tasks of NATO Headquarters in Sarajevo⁵³

A reduced contingent of one hundred and fifty NATO staff remains at NATO Headquarters in Sarajevo; the presence of NATO HQ is a signal, over and above its specific tasks, that NATO is still interested in developments in Bosnia-Herzegovina and intends to remain involved in the long term. This was also emphasised by the NATO foreign ministers in the communiqué of

their meeting in December 2004.⁵⁴ At the same time NATO Headquarters fulfils the wish of the USA to remain part of the process. And finally it also lessens Sarajevo's worry that, in an emergency, it would have to rely solely on the EU, which might perhaps be too weak to maintain the peace.

NATO Headquarters sees its main task as running the defence reform commission jointly with representatives of the government in Sarajevo in order to ensure rapid progress of the reforms—a task previously performed by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). This goes to implement the task-sharing between NATO and the EU, which is a cornerstone of their joint approach for the Balkans. A NATO Advisory Team as well as Defence Reform Teams for various specialist areas advise and support the Bosnian armed forces. Presently the armed forces are still organised separately along entity lines, in the borders laid down in Dayton, and the greatest challenge in this context is to create an integrated army. A joint defence ministry was finally established in late 2004 after long preparations. After fierce resistance, the Parliament of Republika Srpska voted on 30 August 2005 to transfer responsibility for the defence and armed forces of the entity to the central state as of January 2006. This cleared the way for the creation of a unified army.⁵⁵ The different ethnic groups agreed in the international Defence Reform Commission to establish integrated Bosnian armed forces by the end of 2007.⁵⁶

The elaboration of the defence reform will gain additional significance when Bosnia-Herzegovina joins the Partnership for Peace and the Membership Action Plan and it is time to prepare the country for NATO membership. This is a long-term task. The HR/EUSR initially assumed that the country could be admitted to the partnership programme as early as March or April 2005. But this did not eventuate because not all preconditions had been met at that time, in particular full cooperation with the war crimes tribunal.

⁴⁹ Institutions of the international community active in Bosnia-Herzegovina include the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

⁵⁰ See: ANA, no. 3638 (21 December 2004).

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey and Hungary.

⁵³ See: *NATO's Future Role in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 2 December 2004, <www.nato.int/docu/update/2004/12-december/e1202b.htm> (viewed on 16 March 2006).

⁵⁴ See: "Final Communiqué, Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council held at NATO Headquarters in Brussels on 9 December 2004," *Atlantic News*, 11 December 2004, p. 7, Point 5.

⁵⁵ See: Press statement of the Office of the High Representative of 1 September 2005; *SZ*, 1 September 2005, p. 8; ANA, no. 3703 (1 September 2005); on the previous agreement between the ethnic groups see also *Associated Press Report* no. 427, 18 July 2005.

⁵⁶ See: ANA, no. 3698 (21 July 2005), p. 1.

Finally, NATO Headquarters are responsible for counter-terrorism and military security. Together with EUFOR it is also in charge of intelligence and the search for war criminals. Operations in these fields need to be coordinated very closely with EUFOR HQ. NATO Headquarters can rely on special forces from seven nations when carrying out operations and can also use the Dayton powers if required.

From a military point of view it would have been sensible not to divide the responsibility between two staffs because the amount of coordination which joint responsibility entails tends to increase reaction time and diminish efficiency. On the other hand particular forms of American support – such as special units for the search for indicted persons – are only available via NATO. Some observers regard the inclusion of NATO Headquarters in this task as the price which has to be paid for the USA conceding the command of the Bosnia operation to the EU as a “test of its military maturity”.⁵⁷ The inclusion of NATO is politically essential as a way of involving the NATO member America, since no agreements and structures are yet in place for direct Euro-American cooperation in security policy.

Cooperation and exchange of information between the EU and NATO are ensured through joint participation in various joint commissions in the operations area, whose tasks include guaranteeing the observance of the Dayton agreement (Joint Military Commission) or furthering the defence reform (Defence Reform Commission). This at the same time fosters a working relationship based on trust. Where EUFOR HQ is in charge, NATO Headquarters is represented in the commission, and vice versa.

Cooperation at Military Level

The UN, NATO and the EU each maintain their own management or command structures in Bosnia-Herzegovina; their activities must therefore constantly be discussed and coordinated at command level. The Peace Implementation Council monitors the peace process on behalf of the international community, via the High Representative, on the basis of the Dayton agreement. NATO and the EU conduct their operations in accord with their UN mandate—they do this independently but coordinate their operations at political level and various military levels right down to the operational area. There the coordination of positions

⁵⁷ See: Wernicke, “Europas zweite Chance” [see note 22].

between political and military proponents takes place via the HR/EUSR.

Reaching consensus between NATO and the EU at political level in Brussels is not easy, but military cooperation benefits from many years of joint operational experience in the Balkans and elsewhere. To a significant extent it is the same military personnel of both organisations which has served in various operations in the scope of different command structures. The non-NATO members of the EU have been linked to NATO for more than a decade via the “Partnership for Peace” programme and have gained deep insights into its mode of operation.

The Military Command Structure

The command structure of *Althea* reflects the particular conditions of an EU operation in the framework of the “Berlin Plus” agreements:

The operation commander and the officers in lower-level command functions are appointed in consultation with NATO, in so far as they are part of the NATO command structure. The Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR) is usually appointed commander at strategic level. As mentioned above, this was done in the case at hand through the Council Joint Action of 12 July 2004 shortly after the decision of the NATO summit in Istanbul to terminate SFOR.⁵⁸ The German Admiral Rainer Feist, Operation Commander until his replacement by the British General John Reith on 30 September 2004,⁵⁹ and the British Major-General Leakey, the first EUFOR commander in Bosnia-Herzegovina, complained that this was too late. Since only informal arrangements had been possible before the appointment, they considered the preparation time to be too short. This affected all levels of NATO-EU cooperation—there had only been informal staff contacts before the NATO summit in Istanbul, official working relations were only established afterwards. In subsequent operations this shortcoming must be avoided at all costs.

The military chain of command for Operation *Althea* is independent of NATO and runs from the operational headquarters of the EU (EU OHQ) at SHAPE in

⁵⁸ See: “Council Joint Action 2004/570/CFSP” [see note 33], Art. 2.

⁵⁹ In the new NATO command structure the position of the DSACEUR has been assigned to Britain, while the position of Chief of Staff SHAPE is as always occupied by a German general/admiral.

Mons/Belgium via the EU Command Element at NATO Headquarters in Naples to the operational headquarters of EUFOR in Sarajevo. These three levels represent a deviation from the two command levels actually prescribed in the EU. France originally wanted to adhere to the EU arrangement in order to increase flexibility and also keep NATO—in this case Naples—as far removed as possible. Britain and Italy, on the other hand, spoke out in favour of three levels. As a compromise it was agreed that the operation commander in Mons directly control the commander in Sarajevo and merely keep the EU Command Element at Naples informed – the same arrangement as for Operation *Concordia*. In practice, however, this arrangement does not stand the test. The EU Command Element at Naples considers itself part of the command structure of the EU and acts accordingly. In addition to coordinating Operation *Althea* with NATO operations, it also ensures mutual support and transparency. A further task of this command element is planning the reserves intended for both EUFOR and KFOR. These will be looked at in detail below (p. 20).

The Head of the EU Command Element at Naples was appointed by the PSC only about three months after the Council Joint Action.⁶⁰ His late appointment is an indication of the difficulty of reaching a consensus due to the different views about his role in the EUFOR command structure.

In this respect the uncertainties in the running of the operation, which existed during Operation *Concordia*, seem to be repeating themselves in *Althea*.⁶¹ Obviously it was necessary to allow a certain degree of imprecision so as to keep opponents and supporters of the three-tiered solution equally satisfied. Yet there are good reasons for the establishment of three command levels. Firstly, it improves compatibility with the NATO structure, and secondly the NATO air forces operating in the Balkans also require a joint-forces command level, which the headquarters in Sarajevo cannot provide, and for which the headquarters in Mons is too far away. Permanent coordination is required between the command levels of the EU operation and the corresponding NATO command structure, just as it is between the bodies in Sarajevo—EUFOR HQ, NATO HQ and the office of HR/EUSR.

⁶⁰ See: “PSC Decision BiH/4/2004, 19 October 2004,” *Official Journal of the European Union*, 2 December 2004, p. L357/38.

⁶¹ See: Hans-Georg Erhart, “Die EU als militärischer Akteur in Mazedonien: Lehren und Herausforderungen für die ESVP,” in: Varwick (ed.), *Die Beziehungen zwischen NATO and EU* [see note 3], pp. 175f.

The operational headquarters of the EU in Mons is well integrated into the information structure of the NATO headquarters there, as is the command element at Naples. This integration is achieved on the one hand by command personnel, who carry out both NATO and EU functions, and on the other hand via the option of falling back on personnel of the NATO staff departments at any time. Internal SHAPE arrangements for the EU OHQ were developed before Operation *Concordia* to guarantee that cooperation proceeded smoothly, and since that operation they have been adapted to take account of experience. After certain administrative and organisational teething troubles, the implementation of this part of the “Berlin Plus” agreements has gone off well.

EUFOR Personnel

Althea began with around seven thousand soldiers—the same strength as was present at the end of the SFOR operation. This was to emphasise the smooth transition and reassure Bosnia-Herzegovina that the EU could be relied on in the same way as NATO before it. Eighty percent of the troops were taken over from SFOR. A total of twenty-two EU member states—eighteen of them NATO members at the same time—provided forces for *Althea*. They were joined by troops from eleven so-called third countries, in other words from European NATO partners, on the basis of a particular agreement from Canada⁶² as well as from EU accession candidates and other countries, which belong to neither NATO nor the EU.⁶³ The eleven so-called third countries which are providing troops include five NATO members. Thus twenty-three of twenty-four possible NATO nations⁶⁴ are involved in

⁶² Canada can participate in every EU operation under the “Berlin Plus” rules, but in other EU operations only on invitation of the Council of the EU. See: “European Council Seville, 21-22 June 2002, Presidency Conclusions, Annex V, Arrangements for consultation and cooperation between the European Union and Canada on Crisis Management,” in: *From Laeken to Copenhagen. European Defence: Core Documents*, Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies, February 2003 (Chaillot Paper No. 57), pp. 92ff.

⁶³ The PSC decided on 3 November 2004 to accept contributions of forces from the following so-called third countries: Albania, Argentina, Bulgaria, Chile, Canada, Morocco, New Zealand, Norway, Romania, Switzerland and Turkey (Political and Security Committee Decision/BiH/5/2004).

⁶⁴ The USA and Denmark are not allowed to participate in EU operations; Denmark does not take part in ESDP on prin-

this hitherto largest EU military operation with their armed forces. Personnel at EUFOR HQ come from a total of twenty-eight nations. By far the most substantial forces were provided at the beginning by Germany and Italy, who together make up around a third of the total number of troops.

The “Berlin Plus” arrangement, which regulates recourse to NATO resources, has a very positive effect on the EU command structure at strategic and operational level and enables considerable savings in personnel. It would not be possible to effectively conduct *Althea* at these command levels, with around twenty officers and sergeants, without the support of NATO Headquarters in Mons and Naples. But not all personnel demands can be covered in this way—in exceptional cases additional specialised personnel must be brought in from outside. The position of manager of command and information systems and information security, for example, had to be publicly advertised.

Planning by NATO Headquarters Europe

The “Berlin Plus” agreements guarantee the EU the support of SHAPE for its operational planning. For an operation that intends to rely on NATO resources and capabilities that means that SHAPE elaborates the operational plan in line with a directive from the EU Military Staff. Possibly the EU had false expectations at the beginning about the extent of planning support by SHAPE; after all, the EU operation is only one of several under preparation at the same time. Perhaps it underestimated the difficulties involved in the task, including the time-frame and personnel requirements. In any case, it turned out that ten to twelve months are needed to plan the takeover of a NATO operation. With the Bosnia operation the work began in early 2004, albeit initially on an informal basis.

What does this mean for the applicability of “Berlin Plus” to other cases, where conditions may be even less favourable? Do these insights mean that the arrangements are only applicable when existing operations are taken over and where there is a long preparation period? Could it be that they implicitly dictate a division of labour? These questions must be examined and answered in detail in the course of the

EU’s analysis and evaluation of *Althea*, and this study will return to them in the final section.

The operational plan for *Althea* presented by SHAPE did not meet the EU’s expectations in all respects. Differences arose partly out of divergent procedures and structures. Two lessons must be learned here: On the one hand some SHAPE staff still have a lot to learn; on the other hand it would seem sensible to apply tried and tested NATO arrangements and procedures wherever possible. The enlargement of NATO has meant an increase in the share of European officers in key positions of the NATO command structure that has been streamlined overall. This increase should have a positive long-term effect on NATO-EU cooperation by making European influence adequately felt and deepening mutual understanding. It would thus be recommendable for the individual nations to allow their military personnel to alternate between service in NATO and EU structures. The permanent liaison elements established in 2005—those of the EU in SHAPE and of NATO in the EU Military Staff (EUMS)—should also contribute to improving mutual understanding and ensuring smooth exchange of information. This will help make practical NATO-EU cooperation more effective.

Now France is represented again at strategic level at each NATO Headquarters with a general or admiral and other officers, not just with a separate mission as was previously the case. This opens up the opportunity of integrating France into the planning processes at an early stage and preparing consensus on individual issues at practical, working level. Paris will hopefully be open to this too.

Recourse to NATO Resources

“Berlin Plus” allows the EU to utilise commonly owned NATO resources and capabilities with NATO’s approval.⁶⁵ Approval is given by way of correspondence between NATO SG and SG/HR EU, and there is a special agreement governing this. In Operation *Althea* the EU uses primarily NATO Headquarters and its “services”. In addition, joint use is made of the infrastructure of Camp Butmir in Sarajevo, communications and information systems, and also vehicles.

⁶⁵ Commonly owned NATO resources include infrastructure, communications equipment and systems as well as the aircraft of the Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS).

principle. On Denmark see “Council Joint Action 2004/570/CFSP” [see note 33], p. L252/11, Point (19). Iceland has no armed forces of its own.

The future location of EUFOR HQ was a subject of contention. One proposal was to set it up at the HR/EUSR, but the prospective host did not approve. The goal of this advance was also to give the EUSR greater responsibility in military questions. Agreement was finally reached to station EUFOR HQ together with NATO HQ Sarajevo at Camp Butmir—the property which had been vacated by SFOR. It still has not been resolved who will bear which costs: The EU occupies sixty percent of the camp but has not taken it over in full, as NATO wishes, because of the subsequent costs (infrastructure, personnel). The EU merely pays rent and at the end of the operation wants to return the part it is using to NATO.

All available information suggests that cooperation in the command and information systems has gone well, all necessary resources are being provided. It would hardly be possible for the EU to carry out the mission without the “Berlin Plus” arrangements—NATO provides the communications infrastructure for the liaison of EU OHQ in SHAPE with both the EU Command Element at Naples and EUFOR HQ in Sarajevo and also for the lines from there to the multinational troops involved in the operation. The EU now has well-functioning, secure communication and information software at its disposal, which was not the case with *Concordia*.

Intelligence

The general view is that the success of the Bosnia mission depends very much on smooth cooperation in intelligence gathering. In the words of its commander, DSACEUR General John Reith, the EU operation is much more intelligence-oriented than its predecessors.⁶⁶ This is emphasised by the establishment of a separate unit for the coordination of operations with an intelligence background. SFOR handed over numerous good contact addresses to EUFOR, and these have been integrated into the EU operation. They include sources in the Bosnian state police and intelligence service.⁶⁷

Individual nations provide NATO and the EU with intelligence, since these have no intelligence services of their own. Therefore, even before an operation commences, the participating states should agree to

swiftly pass on any national information and intelligence findings relevant to the accomplishment of the mission. Care should also be taken that the intelligence gathering components are staffed with sufficient and well-trained personnel.

While there have evidently been no serious problems in clarifying the intelligence situation relevant to the present day, NATO’s significant historical body of data has not been used properly for tracking down suspected war criminals: some of its intelligence findings, for example, have not been put at the disposal of non-NATO states.⁶⁸ In order to make the information available to them nevertheless, a lengthy review and sanitisation of the data had to be carried out to prevent any conclusions being made about the sources and to rule out any security risk to informants. In view of the almost one-year preparation period for the EU operation, this problem could and should have been tackled earlier.

Reserves

Member states have different views on who should decide about the use of reserves in the Balkan operations—some see them as being dedicated to NATO, others take the view that reserves are national forces and their use is therefore not covered by “Berlin Plus”. But it is important to clarify who has power of disposal, especially for when there are competing requests from EUFOR and KFOR.⁶⁹ The strategic, operational and tactical reserves are available for both operations. With the tactical reserves in the operational area—two European battalions—an agreement on mutual support has been reached between EUFOR and KFOR; their possible use is decided by the commanders together with the Joint Forces Command (JFC) in Naples. At the beginning of the operation the biggest problem proved to be the lack of a transit agreement with Serbia-Montenegro. This meant that reinforcements could not be brought to Bosnia-Herzegovina via the land route from Kosovo but instead had to be flown in. Since 18 July 2005 at least one relevant agreement has been concluded between Belgrade and NATO.⁷⁰

The “Over The Horizon Forces” (OTHF)—additional NATO troops for crisis situations—can be brought in at

⁶⁶ *Europe* (Brussels), 2 December 2004, p. 10.

⁶⁷ Transcript of an interview with Major-General Leakey in the programme BBC News 24 Hardtalk, 28 February 2005.

⁶⁸ See: Judy Dempsey, in: *IHT*, 11 November 2004, p. 1.

⁶⁹ See: Serry, Press Briefing, 24 November 2004 [see note 44].

⁷⁰ See: ANA, no. 3698 (21 July 2005), p. 1.

relatively short notice. The decision to deploy operational reserves is made at the JFC Naples, while the use of the strategic reserves requires a coordination of positions between NATO Council and PSC. Conflicts could arise here, in particular over the question of which operational area should be given priority.

The battalions intended as reinforcements in the scope of *Althea* held their first exercises in the operational area in late January 2005. The goal was to familiarise their staff with the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina or to keep their knowledge up to date.⁷¹

⁷¹ See: EUFOR Forum Online, Operational Rehearsal Level 1 (first published in *EUFOR Forum*, no. 2, March 2005), <www.euforbih.org/forum/002/p04a/tefp04a.htm> (viewed on 16 March 2006).

A Provisional Appraisal of EU-NATO Cooperation in *Althea*

As the example of *Althea* shows, cooperation between NATO and the EU in crisis management has not proceeded as smoothly as would be expected given the prior agreements made. The practice of each organisation is determined by factors linked to its origins, specific objectives, and special bureaucratic procedures, all of which impedes cooperation. The next section will present the operation's achievements. Subsequently the causes of the problems which have arisen will be analysed and proposals made as to how they might be overcome.

What has been Achieved

Taking stock after twelve months of Operation *Althea*, we can confirm that NATO and the EU have essentially worked together pragmatically, flexibly and successfully from a military point of view, both in the command structure and the operational area. Efforts to make cooperation succeed are most visible on the ground. In this respect it is most understandable that a similar climate is also desired for the political level.⁷² In Bosnia-Herzegovina there is no doubt that *Althea* is an EU operation. Moreover, the difference in rank between the EUFOR commander (a major-general) and the commander of NATO Headquarters in Sarajevo (a brigadier general, one rank lower) shows clearly where the chief responsibility lies.

The transition from SFOR to EUFOR proceeded relatively smoothly. In this respect "Berlin Plus" has proved its worth even though there seemed to be a little confusion in the initial planning, as General Leakey admitted.

So far EUFOR has fulfilled its mission and provided a safe environment in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which must be considered a central prerequisite for the peaceful development of the state with a view to its future membership in the EU. This allowed the EU to begin negotiations with Bosnia-Herzegovina on a

⁷² *Perspektiven der Sicherheitspolitik im Zusammenspiel von EU und NATO*. Speech by NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the Humboldt University in Berlin on 12 May 2005, <www.nato.int/docu/speech/2005/s050512a.htm> (viewed on 16 March 2006).

Stabilisation and Association Agreement in December 2005 after the requisite armed forces and police reforms had been passed by parliament. NATO Headquarters in Sarajevo played an important role in the preparation of these reforms.

Problems and their Causes

At political level the primary problem is the protracted decision-making process: almost two years passed from the first declaration of intent until EUFOR actually assumed responsibility.

In order for Operation *Althea* to come into being, agreement had to be reached between three international organisations and the affected country. Whereas in the UNSC a majority sufficed (nine out of 15 votes, if none of the permanent members uses its veto), decisions in NATO and the EU had to be made unanimously. The USA played a key role both in NATO and as a permanent member in the UNSC. Its vote—like that of every other NATO member—was crucial in the alliance for reaching a consensual assessment of the situation as well as deciding to terminate SFOR and provide NATO resources for the EU operation. America's NATO partners France and Britain are also on the UN Security Council, but they are members of the EU and to this extent represent its interests as well; the USA was sceptical about the European Union and what it perceived as its limited capabilities. So much so that it did not yet feel it could approve the handover of the mission to the EU in 2002, although its involvement in Iraq was putting it under increasing pressure to reduce its military commitments. That saw another year pass, which was ultimately beneficial for the development of ESDP: The first "Berlin Plus" test (Operation *Concordia*), the agreement with NATO on policy towards the Western Balkans and the adoption of the European Security Strategy all took place in this period. What is more, some states—notably the USA—considered that the EU operation must not be a mere successor operation to SFOR because that could be interpreted as reneging on the declared principle of "In together, out together". Rather, the operation needed a different slant. US Defence Secre-

tary Donald Rumsfeld thus repeatedly emphasised the policing aspect of the EU mission. After all, the termination of SFOR was to be presented as a clear success for NATO. The end of the mission would thus be agreed at top political level with maximum publicity, namely at the NATO summit in Istanbul. But the Bosnian government still had to be got on board first, so NATO and EU representatives went on numerous joint trips to Sarajevo to do the necessary persuading.

The decision-making process and preparations for *Althea* took two years—a very long time. Even if the one-year postponement of the political decision as a consequence of American hesitation is taken into account, the preparation of the operation still took twelve months. It is in the interest of NATO and the EU to improve their reaction time and significantly tighten up such procedures in so far as they are theirs to influence.

Differences emerged regarding task-sharing between NATO and the EU; partly these can be attributed to internal difficulties with coordinating positions in Washington and to American annoyance at individual EU members striving for greater independence from NATO and the USA. The negotiations were further complicated by mutual fears of losing influence—or not being given enough of it—when tasks were being allocated and demarcated. The Americans' lack of trust in the capabilities of the EU also played a role in this issue. Some EU members would have preferred to take on the operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina in full in order to demonstrate the EU's independence, raise its visibility and prove its ability to act in the military field too. But since the EU operation could only come into being with the support of NATO and the approval of the USA, a compromise was called for: the EU could only conduct autonomous operations of this order of magnitude if it consistently expanded its own capabilities to the extent agreed. But efforts in this direction have not shown satisfactory results to date.

The interest in EU autonomy and prominence also played an important role in the decisions about the command structures for *Althea* and the location of the EU Headquarters in the operational area. Political considerations had a major effect on military issues here. France strove to achieve greater distance between NATO and EU structures so as to demonstrate the independence of ESDP, but in this respect it could not assert itself. In the end the most functional and pragmatic solution was found—a three-tiered command structure which is a mirror image of NATO's, and the

stationing of NATO HQ and EU HQ together at Camp Butmir.

At political level the existing arrangements hamper effective cooperation between NATO and the EU. For legal reasons (the autonomy of the organisations) no joint decisions are made, and not even joint minutes are taken at the meetings of NATO Council and PSC or of the two Military Committees. The political reservations of certain nations appear to be the crucial factor here—they fear that NATO could use such minuted joint meetings to exercise undue influence on the EU.

However, operational preparations require faster communication than is possible in correspondence between NATO SG and EU HR/SG. Agreements outlining the terms of reference of the joint NATO-EU committees could serve as a short-term remedy here. But the wish to grant these committees greater decision-making power⁷³ is unlikely to find the necessary consensus in the EU in the foreseeable future because various member states prioritise political considerations over material considerations in this issue. The political will to maintain and emphasize autonomy at all times is the dominant factor here.

At the beginning of the operation the need for unanimity in both NATO and the EU had a retardant effect on cooperation. Turkish obstructionism starkly highlighted the additional problems which enlargement of NATO and the EU harbours for consensual decision-making. Before the last EU enlargement, unanimity in both organisations meant the positive vote of twenty-three states; today thirty-two states have to agree. Reaching consensus has become more protracted and uncertain, which is not to suggest that the new members bear any particular responsibility for the problem. It is a simple fact that the processes of reaching agreement and making decisions are slowed down by a larger number of countries being entitled to vote. Often enough it is the older member states which take firm views deviating from the majority.

Turkey's vote prevented unanimity and hindered cooperation at a general level; for a time it also blocked the briefing of NATO on the progress of the Bosnia operation, which was scheduled in the framework of "Berlin Plus". This behaviour served Turkey's short-term interest of not having to sit at a table together with the new EU member Cyprus, but the

⁷³ See: Speech by German Defence Minister Peter Struck, *50 Jahre Bundeswehr – der deutsche Beitrag zur euro-atlantischen Sicherheit*, at the Impulse 21 conference in Berlin on 13 June 2005, <www.impulse21.net> (viewed on 15 June 2005).

blockade had no effect on the course of the operation itself. Many member states were particularly annoyed that it was again Turkey which brought cooperation to a virtual standstill. The controversies surrounding the permanent arrangements between the two organisations will not so easily be forgotten. The government in Ankara had considered the role of the non-EU NATO member states to have been underestimated and had delayed the conclusion of the agreements until the end of 2002 with its disruptive behaviour. In doing so it probably encouraged some EU members in their striving for autonomy, the ultimate aim of which is independence from NATO.

The late appointment of the EU Operation Commander also proved to be disadvantageous because it delayed the start of the formal planning phase for *Althea*. Although NATO and the EU are involved in this decision, thus necessitating a consensus, this function is usually assigned to DSACEUR, so no specific obstacles are discernible. A decision at an earlier date should therefore be possible.

It must ultimately be in the interest of both organisations to radically reduce the amount of time needed to prepare operations involving recourse to NATO resources. Otherwise this option would only be available for operations immediately following NATO operations or where these were directly taken over. This would implicitly involve task-sharing. Difficult crisis conditions do not permit the luxury of spending one whole year on planning and preparations. The great amount of time required is due to the many detailed arrangements which need to be made between NATO and the EU. It has to be worked out which NATO capabilities are available to whom, when and for how long; how in particular they are to be used; who guarantees their maintenance; and how costs are to be reimbursed. These agreements are already impeded by both organisations having their own established bureaucracies, regulations and procedures, which reflect their origins, history and basic legal principles—all these differences hamper cooperation time and time again.⁷⁴ Wherever the challenges are practical in nature, for example in *Althea* in the operational area, cooperation is much simpler than in the political headquarters in Brussels.

⁷⁴ See: Rainer Feist, "NATO-EU und 'Berlin plus'," *Sicherheit und Stabilität* 2, no. 1 (May 2004), pp. 53-59 (58).

Possible Solutions

The following steps could contribute to overcoming the difficulties in cooperation between NATO and the EU at political level:

- ▶ Joint NATO-EU preparatory committees (the "Contact Group" or committees constituted on a parity basis with five members from each organisation, for example) could help prevent the emergence of blockades or at least allow them to be identified at an early stage and thus lessen the impact of their likely effects. The work of these committees must be transparent for all members of NATO and the EU.
- ▶ Independent of accession negotiations, the potential usefulness of binding Turkey closer to ESDP should be given consideration. This would make it easier to use Turkey's potential for autonomous EU operations and at the same time reduce the danger of Turkish obstructionism.
- ▶ The rules and mechanisms of cooperation require improvement. Joint minutes of the meetings of NATO Council and PSC could speed up the coordination of positions between the two organisations.

The following changes should be considered in the military field:

- ▶ The preconditions must be created for making decisions at an earlier stage. If, for, example, the commander of an EU operation is nominated quickly, operational planning can also begin sooner and be carried out more efficiently. Foresighted arrangements for making intelligence findings and bodies of data accessible to the command structure more quickly are also to be desired.
- ▶ Command structures of the EU and NATO must be made mutually compatible. An EU command structure which fundamentally mirrors that of NATO must be created for operations under the "Berlin Plus" rules.
- ▶ Additional arrangements must be made to set a clear framework for cooperation in various areas, as was suggested after the experience of *Concordia* in 2004 for intelligence cooperation, joint security and data protection, logistics and financial questions. There is still room for improvement here today.
- ▶ The amount of time required to prepare an operation under "Berlin Plus" must be reduced. If this does not succeed, the duration of the planning phase will mean that "Berlin Plus" is only viable in

situations where NATO operations are being replaced by the EU. EU operations using NATO resources would then only be worthy of consideration for a very limited range of applications, which would implicitly favour a division of labour between the two organisations.

The State of the “Strategic Partnership” and its Prospects

In order to assess the state of the partnership, the following principles agreed to by both organisations may serve as a measuring stick: effective result-oriented consultations, dialogue, cooperation and openness in decision-making, equality, respect for the decision-making autonomy and interests of the two organisations and their members. First it should be established to what extent these principles have been applied in the preparation and execution of Operation *Althea*. The focus will then shift to the future of cooperation between NATO and the EU.

The *consultations* which took place at the level of competent committees and general secretariats at the beginning of the *Althea* decision-process can be considered to have been effective. In later developments, cooperation between NATO Council and PSC as well as the two Military Committees was partly blocked by Turkey. But hardly any issues which fundamentally affected the NATO-EU relationship were on the agendas of the joint meetings anyway, due to political differences on individual issues. Ways of improving cooperation or resolving problems were not discussed there, for example. Instead there were negotiations on matters which caused no offence to any of the participants.⁷⁵ In this way the NATO-EU meetings very soon lost substance. But effective consultation and dialogue are essential in view of today’s global challenges. In this respect it is a welcome development that the foreign ministers of NATO and the EU agreed in Vilnius in May 2005 to meet more often for informal talks.

In terms of *cooperation and openness*, no deficits were discernible in Operation *Althea*. This is not least due to the fact that France found no acceptance for its proposal for a greater separation of NATO and the EU in the command structure and operational headquarters. But over and above this particular operation there is the fundamental question of whether the precept of transparency should be extended to autonomous EU operations in the interest of cooperative and trust-based relations. In the lead-up to Operation *Artemis*⁷⁶

in the Democratic Republic of Congo the EU did not invite NATO or the USA to talks, which caused some irritation.⁷⁷ Though if openness is called for, it should be reciprocated.

When it comes to the principles of *equality, respect for the decision-making autonomy and interests of the two organisations and their members*, conflicts are bound to occur. Individual members’ divergent interests can prevent cooperation in particular cases, since both organisations are expected to define their interests in consensus, even on fundamental issues. With decisions on joint projects a *double consensus* is required, i.e. unanimity in both organisations.

The term *autonomy* is often used in these debates as if it were an absolute value in itself. This strategy is intended to prevent the USA from supposedly exerting unwelcome influence on the EU. But since four fifths of the memberships in the EU and NATO will overlap in the near future,⁷⁸ this danger can be assumed to be small. The government in Paris speaks out in favour of the autonomy of the organisations and their decisions and invokes the prestige of the EU more than any other. This emerged again and again in the preparation phase for *Althea*, for example in the discussions on the command structure of EUFOR and the stationing of the operational headquarters of EUFOR in the same building as NATO Headquarters in Sarajevo. France wants to use ESDP to increase Europe’s independence from NATO and the USA—it wants to secure greater influence for the EU and therefore also for itself. As French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin expressed this most clearly, stating that Europe should become independent in all defence and security issues.⁷⁹ For this reason the French government seems not prepared to participate in substantial cooperation between NATO and the EU and agree to EU operations using NATO resources outside the Balkans—despite public declarations in favour of the values of NATO and the EU, the complementarity of the two organisa-

⁷⁵ See: Ebeling, “Türkei blockiert Arbeitskontakte” [see note 40]; Judy Dempsey in: *IHT*, 18 February 2005, p. 1 and p. 4.

⁷⁶ The EU Operation *Artemis* took place from June until the end of August 2003.

⁷⁷ See: Larrabee, “ESDP and NATO” [see note 23], p. 61.

⁷⁸ After the anticipated accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU, twenty-one of the twenty-six NATO members will also be part of the EU.

⁷⁹ See: Jean-Pierre Raffarin, “Equilibre du monde, Europe et défense,” *Défense Nationale*, November 2004, p. 11.

tions and their mutual reinforcement.⁸⁰ In particular France wants to prevent NATO’s American Supreme Allied Commander Europe from exercising de facto control over such operations. As a result there is yet no answer to the question of what degree of EU autonomy is compatible with successful cooperation between NATO and the EU. Safeguarding its own autonomy and visibility should not be the EU’s uppermost goal in cooperation, at any rate, because that could prevent pragmatic and efficient solutions in particular instances.

France’s critical attitude towards NATO has its parallel in the USA’s ambivalent relationship to the EU. President Bush recognised the European Union in principle as a partner during his visit to Brussels in February 2005. Washington also regularly emphasises that it wants a strong EU as a partner, at very least in the interests of Transatlantic burden-sharing. But it draws the line where it assesses that overly large European influence could become detrimental to NATO.⁸¹ That would be the case, for example, if NATO and the EU became open rivals at international level or if the formation of a European bloc in NATO Council (EU Caucus) made unanimous decisions there impossible. The governments in London and Warsaw in particular are in agreement with the USA here. A dwindling but vocal lobby in the USA fears that some EU members may wish, in the long term, to establish the EU as a permanent counterbalance to the USA. Some voices beyond the Atlantic are consequently calling for NATO to be “saved from Europe”.⁸²

The exact meaning and the limits of the term complementarity have not yet been resolved, nor is it clear how complementarity can be reconciled with the autonomy that is desired. The two organisations complement each other in some areas, namely with regard to their membership, the methods and means they employ in order to achieve their goals, and in terms of the available capabilities—with a comparative advantage for the EU where non-military elements are

concerned. But the officially proclaimed mutual complementation would demand that the EU be willing to resign itself to dependence on NATO in certain areas. That contradicts the prevailing understanding of autonomy, however, which does not allow any restriction of the options open to European foreign and security policy. On the basis of this understanding the EU has set itself the goal in its Headline Goal 2010 to acquire the ability for rapid global reaction. Improved European capabilities—something on which NATO also insists—would increasingly enable the EU to carry out autonomous operations, thus reducing its dependence on NATO resources. This would bring Europe closer to a transatlantic balance of forces, so the optimistic theory, and also help relieve the USA, which it expressly desires. Recourse to NATO resources would largely be unnecessary under these conditions. Whether the declared “strategic partnership” thus is only an episode of limited cooperation or can perhaps be placed on a new footing will be determined by how long the members of the two organisations regard their partnership as useful.

If the development of additional European capabilities proceeds more slowly than planned, despite the clear statements of political intent—and this appears to be the case—the EU will still depend on substantial NATO support for its operations for some time. The French minister of defence is aware of this and argues vigorously for increases in the defence budgets.⁸³

The EU’s own planning and command ability permits extra flexibility of action and can also help relieve NATO. Since a further reduction of NATO’s command structure is planned and a significant part of the positions is not filled by the nations they are assigned to, it is doubtful whether NATO will have the long-term ability to attend to its own tasks and additionally implement the agreed Berlin Plus arrangements on the scale required.

In summary it should be noted that, although cooperation between NATO and the EU has developed positively over the last several years, it is far from meeting the demands of a strategic partnership mainly due to divergent interests. Various measures must be taken to help NATO-EU relations develop in the desired direction:

⁸³ See: Defence Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie’s demand for additional capabilities and funding for the defence budgets according to ANA, no. 3630 (25 November 2004), p. 2.

⁸⁰ See: Defence Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie, *Renewing the Transatlantic Security Partnership*, speech before the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington on 16 January 2004; idem, “Wir wollen eine starke EU und eine starke NATO,” *FAZ*, 10 February 2005, p. 2; idem, “Let Us Be Partners,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 8 March 2005, p. 10; idem, in: *IHT*, 19 May 2005, p. 3.

⁸¹ See: *NATO and the European Union*, CRS Report for Congress, 6 April 2004, Summary. See also Larrabee, “ESDP and NATO” [see note 23], p. 57.

⁸² See: Jeffrey L. Cimbalò, “Saving NATO from Europe,” *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 6 (November/December 2004), pp. 111-120.

- ▶ Strategic dialogue between the two organisations must be intensified in order to redress identified shortcomings in consultation, information and openness. At senior political level (ministers, secretaries of state) or civil-servant level (political directors) there should be a more frequent exchange of opinions as well as informal discussions between the members of the two organisations.
- ▶ When crises are looming, NATO and the EU must meet at an early stage to discuss the situation, common goals and possible steps.
- ▶ All members should manifest the will to resolve problems in a cooperative manner. Therefore no attempts should be made to enhance the autonomy and visibility of the EU at the expense of its functionality, as occurred when the shape of the command structure and the location of the operational headquarters were at issue.
- ▶ To achieve the desired balanced partnership between NATO/USA and the EU, the agreed increase in European capabilities must be put into effect fully. This concerns capacities for the deployment of armed forces, operational support and strategic transport, but also the establishment of network-centric command and control capabilities by European NATO partners and the European Union.

Role-sharing, role specialisation and pooling within the two organisations have been under discussion for some time as potential solutions which offer the possibility of providing the necessary capabilities despite pressure on resources. These options must be put into practice in earnest very soon in order to utilise scarce budgetary funds more effectively. But that demands a bold step, which politically is difficult to implement. In view of the changed security situation and its new tasks it is no longer necessary for every NATO partner to have all capabilities at its disposal. NATO mentioned this in its Prague Summit Declaration, and in 2003 the EU demanded a review.⁸⁴ Small states such as Belgium and the Netherlands have already done away with some capabilities of their own and made com-

⁸⁴ See: *Prague Summit Declaration*, Issued by the Heads of State and Government, 21 November 2002, <www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm> (viewed on 16 March 2006), and Council of the EU, *2509th Council Meeting – General Affairs and External Relations*, 9379/03 (Presse 138), Brussels, 19/20 May 2003, <www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/gena/75857.pdf>, Annex: Orientations by the Presidency on the Re-inforcement of Cooperation in the Field of Armaments, Declaration on the Military Capabilities of the EU, Para II.9 (viewed on 16 March 2006).

pensation agreements with other member countries.⁸⁵ Member states with greater ambitions are naturally more reluctant to tread this path. Role-sharing opens the opportunity of substantial savings compared with multinational solutions, but it demands a more extensive integration of decision-making mechanisms.⁸⁶

Real savings and fully coordinated procurement planning can only be achieved, however, in integrated European armed forces under unified command. Since it is unlikely that all EU members will aspire to this goal in the foreseeable future and be prepared to accept the concomitant loss of sovereignty, some of them at least could begin the gradual integration of their forces in the scope of structured cooperation.⁸⁷

The operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina is currently the flagship of NATO-EU cooperation, but to date the two organisations have far from exhausted the potential for cooperation. Grand political designs will have little chance of realisation in the near future, it seems. Therefore the task must now increasingly be to achieve improvements in practical cooperation, which will gradually bring the two organisations closer to the "strategic partnership" that they both aim for.

⁸⁵ For example the Belgian-Dutch naval Joint Forces Command based at Den Helder; the German-Dutch agreement whereby Germany provides air transport services for the Dutch armed forces, for payment; the Netherlands has given up its own capability for airborne maritime surveillance.

⁸⁶ On this complex of themes see Patrick Fitschen, "Rollen-spezialisierung' und 'Pooling' – Zauberformeln für ESVP und NATO?", in: Varwick (ed.), *Die Beziehungen zwischen NATO und EU* [see note 3], pp. 139ff.

⁸⁷ See also Volker Heise, *Militärische Integration in Europa. Erfahrungen und neue Ansätze*, Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, September 2005 (SWP-Studie 26/05).

List of Abbreviations

ANA	Atlantic News/Nouvelles Atlantiques
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CRS	Congressional Research Service
DSACEUR	Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
ESS	European Security Strategy
EU	European Union
EUFOR	European Force (Operation <i>Althea</i> in Bosnia)
EUMM	European Monitoring Mission
EUMS	EU Military Staff
EUPM	European Police Mission
EUSR	European Union Special Representative
FAZ	Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung
FT	Financial Times
HQ	Headquarters
HR	High Representative
HR/EUSR	High Representative/EU Special Representative
HR/SG	High Representative/Secretary General for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (EU)
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
IFOR	Implementation Force
IHT	International Herald Tribune
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPU	International Police Unit
JFC	Joint Forces Command (NATO)
KFOR	Kosovo Force
MAP	Membership Action Plan
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NATO SG	NATO Secretary General
NATO HQ	NATO Headquarters
OHQ	Operational Headquarters
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OTHF	Over The Horizon Forces (NATO)
PCG	Policy Coordination Group (NATO)
PPF	Partnership for Peace
PMG	Politico-Military Group (EU)
PSC	Political and Security Committee
SFOR	Stabilisation Force
SG	Secretary General
SG/HR	Secretary General/High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (EU)
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
SZ	Süddeutsche Zeitung
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council