

CFSP WATCH 2003

NATIONAL REPORT FRANCE

sovereign and unequal states. States are long living historical beings. France is one of them and, being a person, must keep

pioneering group, *avant-garde, directoire*... Soon questions are crowding out: for which goals? With whom? Which type of procedures or institutions? What to do with the outsiders?

To a certain extent this *directoire* already exists through bilateral channels (first France-Germany, but also France-Britain...). Can these bilateral mechanisms be geared up into a more complex (trilateral, quadrilateral) system? For France, as confirmed by the Trilateral Summit in Berlin (Blair-Chirac-Schroeder, February 18, 2004), EU must be fed by informal networking. Communautarian rules are too mechanical, too egalitarian, and too bureaucratic; they cannot integrate the member states *de facto* inequalities (in weight, political and military burden, international role).

II. French Perceptions and Positions with regard to CFSP/ESDP issues

Concerning success and/or failure of CFSP/ESDP, French officials seem to make a distinction between European issues (Balkans) and non-European ones (September 11th, Iraq, nuclear proliferation).

European issues must and can become the privileged field of CFSP/ESDP. Common interests are obvious and massive. Operations, combining political negotiations, police-checking and sometimes military action, can associate European states' different experiences. The scale of these operations is reasonable, stimulating a joint apprenticeship of intervention.

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to-day is less keeping balance-of-power than preventing proliferation (this proliferation being more and more a reality). Besides, some parts of the European landscape are changing. For the first time, Britain, under Tony Blair's premiership, seems accepting to be a full European country (if he succeeds in convincing a reluctant British people). Germany is slowly moving towards a more modern vision of what is defence in a post East-West world.

EU, even reshaped by a constitutional treaty, stays organized around two different fields: the supranational, the intergovernmental.

The EU must speak with one voice. This voice must be based on a strong legitimacy, provided only by those who, in their own states, embody their peoples. It is why the person in charge of foreign affairs has to be chosen by the European Council.

Concerning decision-making, France stays devoted to intergovernmentality: any major decision must be adopted by unanimous agreement or, at least, by consensus (no open opposition against the decision). *But, on this point, French stance is flexible.* France would negotiate on many trade-offs: unanimity for initial decisions; qualified majority for implementation (implementing areas being very broad). Time has passed by: pure intergovernmentality can be diluted or adapted into a mixed intergovernmentality.

France, wanting to make EU an international actor, supports European crisis management capacities, both intellectual and operational. All that can produce a European team spirit must be developed: European planning staffs or/and think tanks; joint operations...

For France, EU is and must be a security community. The European choice (joining EU) is a global choice. For instance, like any other member state, neutral countries (Ireland, Austria, Finland and Sweden), when they join EU, accept a new destiny; bringing about the giving up of neutrality. At the same time, France remains convinced that security and defence can unite only the willing. Like police or currency affairs, security and defence must be led on a pragmatic basis, involving only those wanting to be involved. In those areas, what matters is the will to work together. Informal institutional mechanisms (*ad hoc* meetings, *à la carte* operations) must be created, flexible connections being established with formal mechanisms.

IV. Mapping of Activities in CFSP-related Research: French Experts on CFSP/ESDP

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