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Explaining EU Common Security and Defence Policy since St Malo: bureaucratic politics and the lack of Grand Strategy[1]

Abstract

European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) renamed Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) by the Lisbon Treaty has been marked by ambitious rhetoric but modest achievement. It has contributed an emergent European strategic culture underpinned by a comprehensive approach to security. While focused on conflict prevention and civilian crisis management, ESDP/CSDP has failed to deliver the capability and actorness consistently demanded by Grand Strategists.

This paper argues that a Grand Strategy approach cannot work in a field that has been captured by bureaucratic politics: a lowest common denominator and issue-by-issue approach to policy formation and implementation. While the defence component signalled at St Malo has been marginalised, the initiative demonstrates a pragmatic pursuit of what is possible given member state constraints in an era of financial austerity and sensitivity around sovereignty. CSDP reflects bureaucratic politics, consistent not only with with Brusselsization (Allen, 1998; Mérand, 2008) but also with state transformation (Bickerton, 2013) may represent a long term incrementalist and gradual development not only of strategic actorness but also integration.

1 Introduction

The European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy, introduced by the Lisbon Treaty as the successor to the European Security and Defence Policy, has been marked by calls for a more strategic approach to EU security and defence, frequently articulated as a need for Grand Strategy. This paper suggests CSDP epitomises a bureaucratic politics approach which makes Grand Strategy an unlikely means through which CSDP can attain the civilian and military substance necessary to make the endeavour genuinely strategic.

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[1] A version of this paper was delivered to the CEGBI Annual Research Conference, University of York, in June 2014, and again to the 44th UACES Annual Conference at University College Cork, September 2014. The paper remains a draft. Please do not quote without permission of the author.

European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) have been marked by high ambition: '(A) capacity for autonomous defence' (St Malo Declaration, 1998); the EU should 'develop a strategic culture that fosters early, rapid and where necessary robust intervention' (Solana, 2003:13); the Helsinki Headline Goal of 60,000 EU troops deployable within 60 days and able to remain in the field for up to two years (European Council, 1999); the Lisbon Treaty refers to 'the progressive framing of a common Union defence policy' (Lisbon Treaty, 2007:Art.42.2); the phrase 'Defence matters' opens the report from the European Council meeting in December 2013 on EU security (European Council, 2013). In spite of this rhetoric the post-Lisbon CSDP remains mostly about security, not defence, a set of security-related instruments concerned with conflict prevention and crisis management in mainly civilian contexts (Lisbon Treaty, 2007:Art.42.1). The defence capability of the Union remains marginal as NATO and member states represent defence interests. After St Malo and a flurry of military operations in 2003 and 2004 (CONCORDIA FYR Macedonia, RD Congo ARTEMIS, and EUFOR ALTHEA Bosnia Herzegovina) most missions have been civilian crisis management operations, and the policy has been mostly reactive rather than proactive.

Nevertheless CSDP has contributed an emergent European strategic culture encompassing a comprehensive approach to security (Biava, *et al* 2011). There has also been considerable institutional development in a short time. Pooling and sharing prompted by the European Defence Agency (EDA) has made important strides in Air-to-Air refuelling, procurement, medical support, helicopter training, and counter-IED initiatives, as well as support for multinational industrial projects such as the NH90 helicopter and the A400M transporter plane (Biscop, 2013a). This augurs well for enhanced cooperation which was stepped up after the Ghent Ministerial meeting in 2009. Lisbon increased CIV-MIL linking through the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Civilian Crisis Management Planning Directorate (CMPD) marked a further consolidation of the comprehensive approach as a hallmark of CSDP implementation (Martin, 2013).

The EEAS encompasses the former Council General Secretariat and the former DG Development as well as the 139 EU Delegations under the auspices of the Commission, and is headed by the institution-bridging and leadership role of the High Representative/Vice President of the Commission (HR-VP). Lisbon also introduced the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) to facilitate cooperation between states prepared to undertake joint actions as well as pooling and sharing initiatives. So far so good; the institutional advance is impressive and a patient approach would suggest that the EEAS and the HR-VP, backed by

the EDA, should achieve significant cooperation that will bring substance to CSDP and enable capability enhancement as well as CIV-MIL cooperation. The HR-VP Baroness Ashton describes the EEAS as a 'work in progress' while highlighting the often difficult progress made during the first 30 months of the organisation's existence (EEAS, 2013a).

The CIV-MIL cooperation and comprehensive vision within the CMPD is intended to improve coherence in crisis intervention, which Witney (2008:2) considered to be consistently lacking. While Drent and Zandee (2010:36) suggest CMPD could be another interim step in an evolving process, Stevens (2012) affirms that the EEAS and CMPD have greatly enhanced strategic coherence, citing the ATALANTA mission as a good example of the comprehensive approach to security enhancement. CMPD also engages with the Commission on the economic and political implications of crisis management, including the Commission role in post-crisis stabilization, economic matters, democracy and rule of law, human rights and institutional development. The CMPD therefore encapsulates the 'toolbox' approach of CSDP, and is a step towards comprehensive CIV-MIL and Commission/EEAS coordination.

Nevertheless weaknesses in the institutional design stem from the poorly articulated brief of different components in the CSDP jigsaw, not least the EEAS, with conflicting interests between the CMPD and the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability unit. There need to be clearer and streamlined responsibilities for security policy issues and for the planning of CSDP missions. Dinan (2011) describes institutional turf wars in the setting up of the EEAS which have hardly been laid to rest.

In addition a burdensome array of responsibilities are assigned to the HR-VP (High Representative of the Union's Foreign and Security Council, Vice President of the Commission, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Council, Head of the EDA, and Head of the EEAS) tasked also with effective liaison between the President of the Council and all matters relating to foreign and security policy. The HR-VP is also Head of the Common Security and Defence Policy which is implemented through the EEAS.

The Lisbon Treaty is vague on both the EEAS and the HR-VP roles. PESCO is described in the Treaty, but there is no explanation of how it works in practice. The EDA recommends and cajoles but cannot be a driver of pooling and sharing unless member states themselves are prepared to engage. There has often been reluctance on the part of the UK in particular to fully engage with the EDA, and weak spending by many member states continues to limit capacity, while CSDP missions are compromised by the need for states themselves to fund personnel costs with only core expenditure met by the Commission under the so-called

Athena mechanism, an arrangement criticised as inadequate (Venusberg Group, 2007; Witney, 2008; Biscop, 2008; Menon, 2009).

Moreover and crucially, Lisbon maintains a significant caveat on cooperation that has been carried through from the TEU in 1992, namely that:

> (Art.7) shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States and shall respect the obligations of certain Member States, which see their common defence realized within NATO (Amsterdam Treaty, 1997:J.7.1; Lisbon Treaty, 2007:Art.42.2.2).

This essentially protects the intergovernmentalism of foreign and security policy and allows member states to remain outside of common actions and to distance themselves from pooling and sharing, resulting in free-riding as EU members and signatories to CSDP but minimal contributors. Moreover the stipulation in Art.31 that decisions regarding the foreign and security chapter of the TEU shall be taken unanimously by the Council 'except where this Chapter provides otherwise' is a tautology that permits member states total leeway in distancing themselves from any common policy and ensures that without unanimity the Union will simply have no policy. Effectively CFSP is common except when it is not.

Lisbon ensures that CSDP is focused on conflict prevention rather than crisis resolution, the initiative being concerned with 'peace-keeping, conflict prevention and strengthening international security' (Lisbon Treaty, 2007:Art.42.1). This provides limited capacity for strategic actorness. It remains reactive rather that proactive. Lisbon then is a modest ambition compared with the claims in earlier landmarks since St Malo, including Helsinki, the ESS and the Council Report on ESS Implementation (European Council, 2008). Lisbon might even be a step backwards in terms of actorness, defined as: 'capacity to behave actively and deliberately in relation to other actors in the international system' (Sjöstedt, 1977:16). A strategic actor '(is) capable of long term planning and implementing activities in order to achieve the goals it has set (Asseburg and Kempin, 2009:11).

This is not to deny that the EU is an actor in international security, as CSDP has had an impact through 30 plus interventions since 2003. Nevertheless the extent to which it has been strategic is questionable and arguably matches the description of the EU as a 'small power', mostly civilian and minimalist (Toje, 2011). Moreover the EU has kept faith with the

ESS in developing a strategic culture, albeit civilian-oriented, consistent with the soft power and democracy-promoting values of the EU over many decades. That a purely soft power strategic culture is insufficient is well-recognised so the Union remains committed to enhancing its military capability, but military assets are owned by the member states and deployment depends upon agreement and authorisation by state principals. The result is a comprehensive strategic culture compatible with the broad scope of the Petersberg Tasks of humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking, for which Battlegroups, launched in 2007, should be a vital instrument, but they have never been deployed. Kirchner refers to milieu goals as comprising both 'conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction' (Kirchner, 2006:949). But it is clear that despite the reference to peacemaking, CSDP has emerged as an overwhelmingly civilian crisis management instrument, and the defence dimension remains with NATO and member states.

As threat has become more diverse, diffuse, and intangible, now encompassing a wide range of concerns from climate change to international terrorism, cyber security and migration, the EU strategic culture has needed to keep pace with the changing nature of the security environment. CSDP fits with this narrative and reflects realignment in strategic culture consistent with Gray (1999), Rynning (2003), Longhurst (2004), Everts *et al* (2004), and Biava *et al* (2011). An EU strategic culture applies the toolbox approach developed since St Malo, and manifest in the broad scope of EEAS embracing CSDP and civilian crisis management, but also conflict prevention through the promotion of democracy, human rights, political development and economic and trade initiatives under former DG Development and Cooperation (DEVCO). However, the criticism that the EU approach is insufficiently strategic remains, especially among scholars who insist that the Union needs to develop a Grand Strategy.

2 Grand Strategy: providing substance to CSDP?

Grand Strategy is defined as 'the calculated relationship between means and large ends' (Gaddis, 2009), a relationship between:

> an actor's fundamental objective and the basic categories of instruments it chooses to apply to achieve that (Biscop, 2013a:38).

Grand Strategy requires clear articulation of aims and objectives, clear means to achieve specified ends, and political commitment to develop capability in both civilian and military dimensions. Advocates of Grand Strategy also stress the need to accompany increased resources (capability) with the political will necessary to ensure that CSDP meets the objectives set by the ESS, to prevent crises from developing and to be milieu shaping in ways that ensure international security.

Proponents of Grand Strategy argue that the Union is failing to move quickly enough towards an adequate strategic culture, meaning one underpinned by both military and civilian capability, and served by adequate political will (Biscop, 2009, Howorth, 2010a; Biscop and Coelmont, 2011). The result is that the EU lacks 'actorness' in this area.

Biscop (2009; 2013a), Biscop *et al* (2009), and others (Howorth, 2009, 2010a; Biscop and Coelmont, 2010; Drent and Zandee, 2010; Simòn, 2011; Venusberg Group, 2007) have called for a Grand Strategy, which for Gray incorporates a military strategy (Gray, 2007:3). Biscop argues that in a global and multipolar environment the Union should discover the means to exercise strategic influence in order to meet the threats identified in the ESS and in the Report on its Implementation (European Council, 2008). Strategic influence means power, the power to affect the international environment in ways consistent with the values that the Union purports to uphold. To achieve this, the Union and member states must develop and apply:

> A grand strategy that translates the values on which the EU's own social model is based into a proactive and constructive foreign policy, aimed at concrete objectives: on that basis, with the right political leadership, the EU can be a global power (Biscop, 2009:5).

Grand Strategy is hard to achieve, and contains considerable risks. The reasons for this are fourfold and concern democratic legitimacy; state obduracy and commitment to intergovernmental principles; economic austerity in times of financial crisis; and the nature and character of CSDP itself – the latter being the major claim in this paper, centred on the nature of CSDP as governed by bureaucratic politics.

3 Impediments to Grand Strategy

3.1 Democratic legitimacy

CSDP is hardly unique in suffering from a democratic deficit (Maiore, 1998; Majone, 1998; Crombez, 2003; Hix, 2008), a feature of the European integration process since its inception, elite led, top-down and increasingly remote from citizens despite the increasing power of the European Parliament. CSDP concerns high politics, which are rarely subject to democratic oversight, with policies tending to be formulated by elites with often tacit popular consent. CSDP suffers from being part of a foreign policy domain that attracts little debate and even less attention: 'conflict averted in Macedonia' is hardly a media headline in most member state media. The Union and CSDP cannot benefit from below-the-radar successes in conflict prevention, a feature of CSDP, especially in the western Balkans since 2003. Grand Strategy demands a far more engaged relationship with publics who are not much interested in conflict prevention, election monitoring and border control, or even crisis management in faraway places, former colonies or nascent democracies. The public might pay more attention to the defence component of CSDP, which is barely developed. Defence remains primarily a member state and NATO interest, while as regards CSDP it relates to the capability development efforts of the EDA, which may prompt and inform, but cannot be a policy protagonist. Nevertheless, defence is not a priority for electorates, not least because they tend not to detect imminent territorial threat and member state politicians do not highlight common interests that would be served by defence integration. There are no votes in increasing defence spending. Oppermann and Hose (2007) argue that ESDP cannot develop without public support and that member states are likely to be be increasingly constrained by electoral disinterest in ESDP aspirations. In several member states including those of a more Atlanticist hue or a pacifist orientation there is antipathy towards security and defence integration.

3.2 Member State resistance

The second difficulty for Grand Strategy is state obduracy and commitment to intergovernmentalism. Member states, especially the larger ones on whom CSDP mostly depends, remain committed to outdated, even Cold War, interpretations of sovereignty, privileging defence mindsets formed through NATO membership and transatlantic loyalties. Of course there have been some shifts in thinking, notably Poland which has become more Europeanist (Chappell, 2012) as has Sweden, formerly in the non-aligned camp, now an

active contributor to CSDP (Witney, 2008; Matlary, 2009; Government Offices of Sweden, 2014). But in the UK there has always been a residual antipathy towards CSDP for fear that it could undermine the 'special relationship' (Woolner, 2011) or compete with NATO interests (Mills, 2013). Issues such as field command, a permanent CSDP Operations Headquarters and multilateral sharing of intelligence and surveillance research have been a brake on potential European partnerships. Defence procurement has for a long time suffered from national interests overriding the need for pooling of resources. While member states are able to recognise common values, common interests seem less obvious and lack coherent expression. There is a lack of common commitment to capability enhancement as defence (and security) spending remains well below the NATO-recommended 2 per cent of GDP in all but a small minority of member states, Britain and France included (SIPRI, 2012). The sovereignty argument is always paramount where military integration is concerned, with nuclear capability being an obvious example. Trident for the UK becomes a totemic symbol of defence autonomy, despite the notion of independent deterrent being flawed and anachronistic (Jenkins, 2014). Habits such as reluctance to commit to troop deployment or government control over defence industrial interests are extremely difficult to shift, as the EADS-BAE merger debacle demonstrated (*Financial Times*, 2012a; *Guardian*, 2012a; *World Review*, 2012). Britain and France, the former in particular, have appeared more comfortable with traditional bilateral agreements than with developing pan-European capability enhancement (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2013; Mills, 2013). Moreover there has been no sign of any such commitment, arguably leaving the UK with no choice other than to seek an arrangement with the only other member state with power projection capability. In crisis interventions, member states remain mostly content with single state deployments such as the UK in Sierra Leone (in 2000) or France in Mali (2013) than to envisage a multilateral EU military force despatched to a developing crisis, or increasingly to rely on coalitions of the willing sanctioned by the UN and involving NATO as occurred in Libya in 2011 (Hehir, 2013).

3.3 Economic austerity

It is likely that financial crisis has made foreign affairs and security an even less salient issue among electorates so CSDP is unlikely to be a popular enterprise for publics preoccupied with economic concerns, especially unemployment, during a protracted downturn. Economic austerity ought to be a spur to Grand Strategy since pooling and sharing could bring economic gains. Austerity could be an incentive to respond positively to EDA recommendations for more intelligent spending, bringing financial savings and capability

enhancements even without significant spending increases. However as the EDA has found, it is not straightforward getting commitment from all member states to adequately engage in pooling and sharing, and the British government appear more interested in bilateral initiatives of this kind (Mills, 2013; HM Government, 2010; Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2013).

There is pooling and sharing but efficiency and capability enhancement, both civilian and military, requires much more. Adequate equipment enhancement also requires more spending, not the cuts that have occurred in almost all member states since 2010. However there is no doubt that increasing defence spending, or the loss of defence industry employment, is politically extremely difficult during an extended period of austerity which is already damaging the electoral popularity of governments throughout Europe.

3.4 Bureaucratic politics

The final barrier to Grand Strategy is the nature of CSDP itself. What kind of policy is it and how is it implemented? I argue that it is a manifestation of bureaucratic politics and that this militates against Grand Strategy being taken up by member states even following what can be considered a call-to-arms from the European Council in December 2013 (European Council, 2013; Biscop and Coelmont, 2013). In other words, despite the December summit in Brussels echoing the rhetoric of St Malo, Helsinki and the ESS, there is little to suggest a sea change towards a commitment to CSDP achieving the levels of civilian and military capability to give the policy a real and substantial boost. Even the positives noises concerning the importance of EU defence is unlikely to herald a sudden upturn in EU strategic actorness.

The reason for this is that while CSDP has been accompanied by high levels of institutional innovation in Brussels arguably constituting a consolidation of Brusselsization, explained as:

> an increase of the level of interaction among national experts around EU issues and often taking place in the European capital (Mérand, 2008:82).

Elsewhere Mérand refers to 'heterarchical governance' (Mérand *et al*, 2011), a clear characteristic of the bureaucratic politics that this paper considers the dominant explanatory feature of CSDP since 2003. Brusselsization occurs when:

The formulation and implementation of policy (is) increasingly europeanized and brusselized by functionaries and services housed permanently in Brussels (Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet, 2002:261).

But Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet adds that authority over policies and implementation remains with member states, consistent with Mérand *et al* who refer to the reconstitution of the state at the Brussels level:

state power is neither projected nor diluted, but rather it is being reconstituted by state actors beyond the nation state (Mérand *et al*, 2011:122-3).

A link between Brusselsization and bureaucracy is reflected in extensive research interviews with Secretariat officials engaged in CSDP implementation, as well as a range of experts in different European capitals between 2010 and 2013. A further component of Brusselsization, socialization dynamics, is also present but this has no driving impact on policy making, remaining weak in respect of state power. Member states are centrally represented in the management of CSDP by Ambassadors in the Political and Security Committee (PSC). Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet cites the Amsterdam Treaty innovation of the High Representative and the subsequent prominence of key committees in Brussels, especially the PSC and related bodies approved at Nice (Treaty of Nice, 2000), as examples of brusselizing, interpreting this as:

a clear denationalizing of the CFSP and the development of a new method of CFSP governance (Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet, 2002:270).

She argues that both Amsterdam and Nice advanced this process and bring a new 'Europeanized rationality to CFSP' (*ibid*) but crucially without transfer of sovereignty to the European level. There is no power shift, but this policy area does not simply demonstrate a continuation of traditional intergovernmentalism. What is happening is different, does not indicate a centralization of power away from member states even though there may be a 'steady enhancement of Brussels-based decision making bodies' (Allen, 1998:42). Allen (2012) says decision making may *in part* occur at the European level, and influence may be exercised from Brussels, while Howorth (2005) suggests that policy could be driven from Brussels, a much more substantial claim. Meyer even applies the term Europeanization to the Political and Security Committee (PSC):

one of the most important ideational transmission belts of a gradual Europeanisation of national foreign, security and defence policies (Meyer, 2006:137).

This surely overstates PSC influence by implying a disjuncture between it and the member states which does not fit the reality. While the PSC seeks to achieve consensus it is nevertheless governed by the principle of unanimity. The central point is that the Brussels-based CSDP-related entities and any decision making they undertake are dominated by member states. The PSC is not an independent policy initiator. Meyer's claim might be more accurate if the word Brusselsization replaced Europeanization, consistent with Mérand's view that Brusselsization maintains full member state engagement in policy making. Indeed Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet stresses that sovereignty transfer is not part of Brusselizing.

So Brusselsization is a feature of CSDP, a view supported by a number of experts (*Interviews* 4,5,6,11) but all were at pains to stress that no power shift is involved. Moreover the phenomenon complements the notion of the nation state undergoing a transformation to member state (Bickerton, 2013). This also chimes with the idea of the bureaucratic state, and bureaucratic politics emerges as a plausible explanation for CSDP development and implementation, a view expressed by several respondents (*Interviews* 1,2,5,7,18,26) and implied by various officials working with the EUFOR Althea operation in Bosnia Herzegovina (*Interviews* 15,16,17,19,20,21). Bureaucracy, using a Weberian conception, is an essential feature of advanced societies:

> The modern capitalist state is completely dependent upon bureaucratic organisation for its existence (Giddens, 1971:159).

Giddens summarises the Weberian bureaucratic organisation as comprised of specialist officials appointed on the basis of technical competence evidenced by diplomas and qualifications, and experience; they perform clearly defined functions within authoritarian and clearly demarcated hierarchies. Weber considers bureaucratic organisation as:

> the most rational known means of carrying out imperative control (and) superior to any other form in precision, in stability, in the stringency of its discipline and in its reliability (Weber, 1970:267).

Weber's positive perspective contrasts with contemporary criticism of bureaucracy as complex, restrictive, unresponsive, and frequently dismissed as 'red tape', a view countered

by the experience in states undergoing democratic transformation or post-conflict development, such as Kosovo, where bureaucratic governance is interpreted as indicative of progress and more desirable than having elected politicians with tainted pasts using nationalism to stir up support in an adversarial political environment all too reminiscent of previous chaos (*Interview* 26).

I suggest that the complex dynamics around CSDP, and the tendency in the PSC and in other CSDP institutions to seek consensus (Howorth, 2010b, 2013), signifies bureaucratic politics. This echoes the application of bureaucratic politics to the Cuban Missile Crisis:

> (Government organizations) are called into being by political processes; their goals, like their masters, are often diffuse; (they) are especially burdened by unique constraints; they cannot keep their profits; they have limited control over organization of production; they have limited control over their goals; they have external (as well as internal) goals governing their administrative procedures; and their outputs take a form that often defy easy evaluation of success or failure (Allison and Zelikow, 1999:149).

Organizations' limited resources constrain their ability to fulfil goals set by their masters and inertia sets in as the transaction costs of change increase. An inevitable characteristic of complex bureaucracies, of which armed forces are an example, is the obligation to compromise on what principals define as organizational goals. This seems apt for CSDP and may explain sub-optimal levels of achievement and even strategic incoherence, where agreement and consensus become ends in themselves. Bickerton (2011, 2013) describes the consensus seeking characteristics of European Political Cooperation (EPC) in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) between 1973 and 1975, and compares this approach with the PSC. In both organisations compromise and consensus overrides potential conflicts of interest and process supersedes principle. These are characteristics of bureaucratization. Organizations do not lack central purpose or goals, but they become prey to 'bureaucratic drift' (Allison and Zelikow, 1999:152). They adopt rules, norms and routines:

> where satisficing is the rule stopping with the first alternative that is good enough (…) the menu of choice is severely limited and success is more likely to be defined simply as compliance with relevant rules (Allison and Zelikow, 1999:152).

This matches the observation that CSDP reflects lowest common denominator agreement (Smith, 2008:10, Rynning, 2011:30). Several respondents describe CSDP as implemented on an issue-by-issue basis, or particularly through lowest common denominator agreement (*Interviews* 1,8,9,12,14,17,22,27,28). According to Wilson (1989:205) executives (or political masters) wish to obtain allies at a reasonable price while operators (those implementing policy) seek to cope with a situation by getting adequate commitment, guidance and resources from above. This is a good summation of the lowest common denominator impediment to strategic coherence or Grand Strategy. Allison (1971:176-8) refers to chiefs oriented around power and Indians around feasibility, while Wilson (1989:13) stresses that bureaucrats are constrained by their political masters. With CSDP the 'political masters' are the Political and Security Committee (PSC), which in turn is controlled by the member states.

Freedman identifies an association between bureaucracy and strategy, arguing that the rise to prominence of strategy as a conceptual instrument in problem solving is a relatively recent phenomenon and one that coincides with the:

> bureaucratization of organisations, professionalization of functions, and growth of the social sciences (Freedman, 2013:xiii).

This observation matches the view that bureaucracy is a central feature of contemporary capitalist society. Grand Strategy proposes the pursuit of strategic goals with adequate resourcing and sufficient actorness to enable the achievement of those goals. There is a clear tension between Grand Strategy and bureaucratic politics, given the fundamentally bureaucratic nature of the EU policy making and policy implementation processes. Grand Strategy is an attempt to shake the EU from a state-maintained inertia that militates against common foreign policy, common defence and recognition of common interests (Biscop, 2013a). Some common security policy has emerged through CSDP, but it is a small scale, 'small power' constrained contribution to the international security environment. Under these conditions it may yet achieve 'substance' (Shepherd, 2003), but what one expert refers to as 'bureaucratic inertia' (*Interview* 2) suggests that CSDP is most likely to develop as a gradual incremental increase in significance, implemented on a continuing issue-by-issue basis, rather than through a flowering of Grand Strategy supplied on the basis of a major uplift in political will from member states.

CSDP has been captured by bureaucratic politics: in virtually all respects the initiative exhibits a lowest common denominator and issue-by-issue approach to both policy formation

and implementation. The defence component signalled at St Malo, and present in the comprehensive approach of Grand Strategy, remains marginalised despite efforts to develop pooling and sharing (Biscop, 2013a; 2013b). A UK-based expert and two military officials in the Council Secretariat decisively dismissed the defence component of CSDP as effectively absent (*Interviews* 3,8,9) while others await its emergence in a 'slow process' (*Interviews* 1,4,11,12,14,22,23). CSDP demonstrates a pragmatic pursuit of what is possible given member state constraints which have become even more marked in an era of financial austerity and continuing sensitivities around sovereignty. A further aspect of austerity is the wider concern with escaping from the trauma of sovereign debt and the euro crisis that has enveloped the eurozone since 2010. This has arguably pushed CSDP further to the margins although the Council meeting in December 2013 highlighted the importance of progressing defence and security cooperation. It was striking that the Council Conclusions included a commitment to examine progress in this area in June 2015 (European Council, 2013). Nevertheless this is unlikely to be the progenitor of Grand Strategy. Instead the crab-like gradual and incrementalist progress towards pooling and sharing is a more likely response.

An innovation in Lisbon that might have led to a proactive response is Permanent Structured Cooperation (Lisbon Treaty, 2007: Art.46) but there appears to have been little progress in this, and indeed a slowing down in readiness to deploy missions, in part a consequence of a lack of political will, but also as a result of continuing lack of capability. It is understandable that the EEAS (EEAS, 2013a), the Office of the High Representative (Ashton, 2013a, 2013b) and the European Defence Agency (European Defence Agency, 2013, 2014) continue to present a positive spin on their work and there have been some successes in recent years, notably Baroness Ashton's effective diplomacy in the Western Balkans, in particular in respect of Serbia-Kosovo relations (EEAS, 2013b), prospects for further Western Balkans EU enlargement and in relations with Iran brokered by Ashton and centred on efforts by Germany, France and the UK (Telegraph, 2013). There has also been a reasonable level of EU unity in dealing with Russia during the on-going Ukraine crisis, and the EU NAVFOR Somalia (Atalanta) anti-piracy mission is widely regarded as a good example of a multilateral and militarily significant EU operation involving xxxx participating states. But since 2011 CSDP has undertaken few new initiatives other than small assistance missions (EUCAP Sahel Niger, EUCAP Nestor, EUNAVSEC South Sudan) and a military training mission (EUTM Mali). Member states declined the request from Paris for troops to support the French invasion of Mali in 2013, an intervention which Paris would have preferred to have led under an EU-flag, as occurred with EUFOR DR Congo in 2006. There is a sense that CSDP has 'civilianised' (Howorth and Menon, 2009) reflecting a very different set of

ambitions to those expressed in the St Malo Declaration (St Malo Declaration), the EU European Security Strategy (Solana, 2003) and even in the Lisbon Treaty (Treaty of Lisbon, 2007).

Interviews conducted in Sarajevo in 2011 with officials serving with EUFOR Althea unanimously backed the proposition that Althea, the longest lasting and the largest EU military operation under ESDP/CSDP, reflected a minimalist and small scale approach to civilian crisis management, being critical of the principals' lack of a strategic approach (*Interviews* 15-21). The view from Sarajevo was that Althea is a status quo mission, limited by its terms of reference to uphold the Dayton Peace Accords and unable to properly develop a political process that could be developed through a carrot and stick approach. Instead the mission is criticised for its tendency to reward those who had formerly sponsored and contributed to violence and who maintained entrenched nationalist perspectives. Even EULEX Kosovo, the largest civilian mission, is similarly criticised for lacking an adequate strategic approach to political and democratic reform (*Interview* 26). Brussels and the Political and Security Committee in particular are criticised for an arm's length approach that means there is a low level of understanding, or even a lack of interest in the extent of the challenges facing both Bosnia and Kosovo (*Interviews*, 15-21,26). Post-Lisbon reforms, including the enhanced role for the EU Delegations could bring some improvements but the Delegations operate under a Commission mindset that is fundamentally bureaucratic and constrained by resource limitations.

Both the Bosnia and Kosovo missions therefore typify the bureaucratic and minimalist approach. Althea reflects the low level of commitment from member states to drive political and economic development. These missions therefore become prey to what Allison and Zelikow (1999:152) term 'bureaucratic drift'. Nevertheless bureaucratic politics may represent a long term incrementalist and gradual development not only of strategic actorness but also integration. Moreover it may be a more feasible means to progress CSDP than is a Grand Strategy approach.

4 Conclusion

The European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy has been marked by considerable institutional innovation that suggests a high degree of Brusselsization and arguably the reconstitution of the state at the Brussels level (Mérand, *et al,* 2011). The policy

is dependent on consensus between member states acting through their representatives in the PSC and related Brussels-based bodies inside the EEAS. CSDP remains focused on conflict prevention and civilian crisis management rather than on a proactive response to peacemaking. Indeed defence and military engagement is of limited significance in a policy area that has effectively civilianised since its inception in 2003 when three military operations were launched under an EU flag. Currently only the anti-piracy mission EU NAVFOR Atalanta is a military operation. CSDP is underpinned by a primarily normative and civilian strategic culture.

This paper suggests that the bureaucratic politics explanation of CSDP, being consensus-oriented and based on lowest common denominator agreement on an issue-by-issue basis and consistent with Brusselsization, is more credible path for the continued development of CSDP than any 'great leap forward' towards Grand Strategy, no matter how desirable that might be given the pressing need for capability enhancement and even integration in defence terms. Member states and in particular their electorates are not willing to undertake such a decisive step towards greater integration.

Appendix: Interviews 2010-13

Interviews were completed as follows:

1 Security and defence policy expert, ISIS, Paris 16/06/2010

2 Expert on EU Common Foreign and Security Policy, Brussels 17/06/2010

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26 Senior Official in the European Parliament, 10/05/2013

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