

THE WAR IN UKRAINE AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EU COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY

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Abstract: *The war in Ukraine has been a warning for European countries, alerting them to the fact that defense issues are again relevant. The current framework of the European Union Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) is not appropriate for the new strategic situation. Despite the notable CSDP successes, the key CSDP problems persist. Those unresolved issues are impeding the further CSDP development. There is a need for a complete overview and overhaul of the CSDP. Based on the mentioned issues, the paper analyzes the possible future development of the CSDP, emphasizing the search for answers to two key questions: what is the objective of the CSDP and how the EU should strengthen the defense of Europe?*

Introduction

Without doubt, the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine has caused long-term global political, economic and security consequences. The war in Ukraine is accelerating changes started by the COVID-19 pandemic, the US-China geopolitical conflict and climate changes.

The current conflict represents a crucial challenge for the liberal world order established after World War II and strengthened in the post-Cold War period. This is the culmination of the processes started after 2000: the weakening of the US global

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influence as a result of the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, the rise of China and Beijing's willingness to challenge the US global dominance, the revival of Russia and growing intra-Western divisions. The Russian invasion of Ukraine is accelerating the division of the world into three competing groups of states led by the US, China and countries of the Global South, which refuse to take sides in the ongoing geopolitical conflict.

On the economic front the war in Ukraine is reinforcing the ongoing process of weakening globalization and strengthening regionalization. The direct economic influences of the war and the US-China geopolitical conflict are growing challenges to energy security, disruptions of global food chains, slowed economic growth and return of high inflation. Further economic consequences are the introduction of sanctions and trade restrictions. Those restrictions are disrupting global trade and supply chains. The response of many international companies is twofold: nearshoring of their production, and attempts to build regional supply chains.

Another consequence is the renewed Cold War perception that the access to modern technology is again an instrument for achieving a strategic advantage over your opponents. In response to the Ukrainian war, the US and their allies are introducing country-level restrictions on high technology exports.

The security consequences of the Ukrainian war are the growing probability of high-tech conventional warfare between great powers and the possibility of renewed acceptance of territorial conquest as a means of resolving interstate disputes. After the end of the Cold War, the prevailing opinion was that wars between great powers are now a thing of the past. Interstate wars will be limited to a few regional conflicts, and the prevailing type of armed conflict will be intrastate wars and insurgencies.

This optimistic view was not shared by everyone. Late Colin Gray wrote almost two decades ago about the strong possibility that the rise of China and the revival of Russian power in two or three decades will again start great power competition. This could increase the possibility of wars between great powers (Gray, 2005). Those warnings were disregarded. The Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008 and the first invasion of Ukraine in 2014 were also neglected. Finally, the second Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 showed two things. Firstly, that interstate conventional war is not a relic of the past. Secondly, great power competition can cause the re-emergence of conventional warfare not only in the European neighborhood, but also on the European continent.

Another serious consequence is putting the norms of state sovereignty into question. After the Second World War the development of the international law has been focused on outlawing territorial conquest as a legitimate way for settling interstate disputes. If Russia is successful in breaking Ukraine, regional powers in other parts of the world could use this precedent as a justification for the use of military force with the intent of resolving territorial disputes.

How is changing strategic environment affecting the European Union?

The EU is compelled to rethink its role in the world. In the current circumstances, Brussels is forced to abandon the key goal of the EU as a foreign policy actor in the last two decades. In its first security strategy, the EU stated that the European model of governance and regional integration should be offered as a template for other regions in the emerging multipolar world order (European Security Strategy, 2003). Also, the EU should be a more autonomous foreign policy actor. This has not meant that transatlantic relations are in jeopardy. This was an opportunity for a more balanced relationship with Washington, a goal which European allies tried to achieve from the beginning of the 1970s. The following security strategy quietly put this goal in the background. Now the emphasis is on achieving the security of the EU from external and internal threats. Simultaneously, the EU should be able to influence events not only on its continent, but also in the European neighborhood (Global Strategy, 2016).

The EU is forced to decide where it stands in the current geopolitical confrontation. Brussels is now in a situation where it has to choose alignment with one of the opposing parties instead of balancing security relations with the US and economic relations with China and Russia.

Regarding security, the future of European security and the Union's role in European security architecture are at stake. The Ukrainian crisis shows that the EU has to develop a capability for a sustained military response to the current and future security threats, including the threat of high-tech conventional war with Russia.

The confrontation with Russia is also forcing the EU to rethink its approach in the area of military capabilities development. Despite some achievements, this is still the work in progress. The key challenge is how to harmonize the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) goals with member states' preferences in resolving military capabilities shortfalls. In the past, the EU member states avoided more or less the issue of coordinating their national security and defense policies, preferring the accomplishment of their separate security interests and goals.

The current war is forcing the member states to rethink their security and defense policies. For them, the crucial question is: does this mean that the future development of the EU military capabilities should strengthen the main European security institution (NATO), or should the Union try to reinforce its military capabilities?

The war in Ukraine represents an opportunity for the EU to strengthen the CSDP and to address its defense capability shortfalls. Despite that, the fact is that the current framework of the CSDP is not appropriate for the new strategic situation. Instead of trying to preserve solutions appropriate for the strategic environment in the 1990s, the CSDP should be adapted to the new reality.

Two key dilemmas of the CSDP are still present:

– What is the objective of the CSDP - territorial defense or crisis management and soft security concerns like peacekeeping, border management, protection of shipping lanes, and/or cyber security?

– Should the EU engage strategically in global affairs based on a firm commitment to the NATO-EU cooperation, or should it try to create strategic autonomy and equilibrium towards great powers, including the US?

Those are the issues which have to be urgently resolved.

Successes and problems

Surprisingly, despite the mentioned problems, the EU member states have shown the unexpected unity and resolution to take fast action after the Russian invasion. The Union used a wide spectrum of instruments, from sanctions and diplomacy, and economic assistance to direct military support to Ukraine.

The EU unanimously passed the eleventh package of sanctions against Russia.² Also, it invited Ukraine and Moldova to start membership talks in a very short period after receiving their applications. In normal circumstances, this process requires a great period.

Regarding the CSDP, by adopting the decision to provide direct military assistance to Ukraine (including the delivery of lethal weapons systems), for the first time in its history the EU is helping a non-EU state attacked by the great power armed with nuclear weapons.

In 2022 the member states delivered military weapons and equipment worth 13 billion USD using a new mechanism called the European Peace Facility to channel military assistance to Ukraine. The EU alone provided 4.6 billion euros in military assistance financing Ukraine (4.1 billion euros for weapons systems and 380 million euros for non-lethal equipment).

In October 2022 the EU launched the Military Assistance Mission EUMAM Ukraine aimed at training 15,000 Ukrainian soldiers in the European Union.

In March 2023, the EU agreed to provide Ukraine with one million rounds of artillery ammunition within a year, from the existing ammunition stocks or through joint procurement (worth around 2 billion euros).³

However, if we view further, these successes have not resolved any of the CSDP key problems - the issue of financing the development of the EU military capabilities, the question of different national interests and security perceptions, the issue of insufficient defense industry base in the EU and the process of the European defense fragmentation.

Despite the activation of the European Peace Facility (EPF) framework, a key limitation of this mechanism is still present. The EPF is an off-budget instrument financed by the member states' contributions, with a limited amount of financial assets (5 billion euros for the period 2021-2027). The use of the EU structural funds is still off-

² For an overview of adopted sanctions, see: EU response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-response-ukraine-invasion/> (4 August 2023).

³ For an overview of military and non-military help sent to Ukraine by the EU, see: EU support for Ukraine: from sanctions to military and humanitarian aid, <https://euneighbourseast.eu/news/explainers/eu-support-for-ukraine-from-sanctions-to-military-and-humanitarian-aid-how-is-the-eu-helping/> (5 August 2023).

limits. This situation is the result of the key problem regarding the CSDP development – foreign relations and national security issues are the responsibility of the member states, not the EU institutions. This means that the European Commission cannot finance procurement of weapons systems and military equipment.

The second issue is different national interests and perceptions of security threats and challenges between the EU member states. As a result, the member states are more focused on fulfilling their national interests, not the proclaimed EU goals in the area of defense.

These differences are impeding the effectiveness of the EU response to the war in Ukraine. Nine member states have used an opt-out option and refused to participate in the joint purchase of artillery ammunition for Ukraine. Even the implementation of this decision is problematic. During negotiations, France asked for assurances that the joint arms procurement deal will benefit only the EU-based companies. This proposal was criticized by other member states for potentially slowing down support to Ukraine due to the fact that ammunition manufacturing capabilities in the EU are not sufficient.⁴

Another example of the member states dissimilar interests are different views about policy towards Russia. Ukrainian war has again revealed divisions over response to Russian aggression, and also on the issue of future relations with Moscow and Russia's place in European security. The European core states (Germany, France and Italy) are against the total defeat of Russia. The Central and Eastern European states (especially Poland and Baltic countries) would like a comprehensive Ukrainian victory. Their views are in line with the positions of the UK, the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland and Sweden.

The ongoing shift of influence inside the EU - from Western Europe towards the northern and eastern periphery of the Union - highlights the existing divisions. After the Cold War, foreign and defense policies of Nordic, Baltic and Central European states have been strongly transatlantic oriented, with the US and UK as the most important security partners. The new members of the Union are using opportunities created by the war in Ukraine to promote policies, which were previously opposed by Germany and France. During the war, frontline countries on the European north and east have been at the forefront of the European support to Ukraine. For those states, the key security partner in Europe is Washington, not Brussels (see Koziej, 2018).

The third challenge for the CSDP is the insufficient defense industry base in the EU. The best example is the Union's decision to provide Ukraine with one million rounds of artillery ammunition. The current war in Ukraine is marked by the gigantic consumption of artillery ammunition. For example, before the beginning of the Ukrainian offensive in June 2023, daily Ukrainian consumption was around 7,000 artillery rounds and Russian between 10,000 and 15,000 rounds. This means that the EU delivery of artillery rounds will be late and insufficient for Ukrainian needs.

⁴ Barnes, Joe, France accused of delaying EU's €2bn plan to replenish Ukraine's artillery shell stocks, The Telegraph 15 March 2023, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2023/03/15/france-accused-delay-eu-2bn-plan-replenish-ukraine-artillery/> (30 June 2023).

The problem of the insufficient defense industry capabilities is visible not only in the EU, but also in the US. This is a consequence of the decision made by most Western states after the end of the Cold War. During the Second World War and afterwards, the US developed industrial capabilities for mass production of weapons systems, military equipment and ammunition. During the Cold War, other Western states also developed those capabilities. However, the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the period 1989-1991 also removed the threat of the conflict with a military adversary, which was technologically more or less equal to the Western armies (at least during the 1960s and 1970s) and had a quantitative edge regarding a number of conventional weapons systems. The disappearance of this threat has also removed the need for excessive military industry capabilities. As a result, most Western states, including the US, have gradually lost capabilities for the mass production of weapons and ammunition.⁵ Now, the Western Alliance has to rebuild those industrial capacities in a very short time.⁶

This is a daunting task for the EU. The key problem is the accepted approach for the development of the EU military capabilities. The CSDP is a part of the efforts focused on the development of more integrated and competitive European defense industry and market. The development of the EU military capabilities which could be used immediately is not a priority. This goal will be accomplished after the establishment of an integrated European defense market.

The described strategy is a result of the first unsuccessful attempt to develop the Union's military capabilities between 1999 and 2008. The first approach was based on the member states' willingness to provide necessary military units and capabilities for the EU led military operations and missions. Despite the ambitious goal adopted at the EU Summit in Helsinki in 1999⁷ the member states were not willing to provide the necessary support. As a compromise solution the concept of the EU battlegroup⁸ was adopted in 2004. Any serious discussion on the future development of the ESDP was stopped in 2008 after the beginning of the global financial crisis.

The adoption of the Lisbon Treaty has not significantly changed the development of the EU military capabilities. The European Council meeting on defense held in December 2013 was crucial for the adoption of the current strategy for the development of the EU military capabilities. At this meeting two proposals for further CSDP development were presented.

⁵ The exception to this rule is South Korea. Due to the constant threat represented by the North Korean military, Seoul has been forced to develop and maintain strong defence industry, capable of mass production of weapons systems and military equipment.

⁶ For an explanation of this problem see Vershinin, 2022.

⁷ At the Helsinki Summit, the EU member states declared that by 2003 they could deploy a rapid reaction force of 60,000 soldiers within 60 days and sustain it for a year.

⁸ Battlegroups are reinforced battalions of up to 1,500 soldiers capable of deployment on short notice. Despite being operational since 2007, battlegroups have not been deployed in any military mission due to the fact that battlegroups remain under the political control of contributing member states and their deployment requires a unanimous decision, which is impossible to achieve even in emergencies such as the 2014 crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The first proposal, endorsed by the chairman of the EUMC⁹ General Patrick de Rousiers (and supported by the member states' military establishments), was focused on the development of military interoperability. This proposal asked for the development of the EU military doctrine, joint military education, coordinated member states' defense planning, joint training, common acquisition of weapons and military equipment, and intensification of military cooperation with NATO. Instead of long-term development of industrial capacity the focus was on better coordination and use of the existing military capabilities of the member states.

The second proposal has been endorsed by the European Commission and President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy. This proposal was focused on the transformation of the member states industrial defense infrastructure into the integrated European defense industry and market. The issue of military interoperability was barely mentioned.¹⁰

The adoption of the second proposal means that the development of the CSDP from 2013 onwards is based on the idea of the European defense integration, with the goal of pooling national capabilities, overcoming military duplication and conducting joint military procurement. In order to achieve defense integration the EU has to create more integrated and competitive European defense industry and market. This will be achieved by transferring the future development of the defense industry from the national (member states) to the supranational (EU institutions) level.

The described shift resulted in numerous ambitious policy initiatives from 2016 onwards, following up on the release of the EU global strategy. Innovations included the European Defense Fund (EDF), which seeks to foster an innovative and competitive defense industrial base, and the establishment of the Directorate General for Defense Industry and Space (DG DEFIS) in the European Commission.

Unfortunately, this approach has not resulted in the significant development of the EU military capabilities. The EU initiatives generally focus on long-term development and procurement of military capacities. They do not, and cannot, meet short-term drive to resolve military gaps and deficiencies.

Another factor is the persistence of the member states to preserve their sovereignty in defense issues. The initiatives launched by the EU institutions are too limited to break the member states' resistance and accept the European defense industry integration. Smaller member states also think that only the industries of the largest member states will benefit by those initiatives.

The final result is a continuation of the European defense fragmentation. Instead of the centralized defense procurement on the EU level in Europe numerous overlapping bilateral, multilateral and regional agreements can be noticed. Also, the European states use multilateral frameworks of the EU and NATO. This means that

⁹ The European Union Military Committee (EUMC) is the highest military body set up within the Council, composed of the Chiefs of Defence (CHODs) of the member states. The EUMC directs all military activities within the EU framework.

¹⁰ EUROPEAN COUNCIL 19/20 DECEMBER 2013 CONCLUSIONS, Brussels, 19 December 2013, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/140214.pdf (30 July 2023)

the PESCO mechanism intended as the main framework for defense procurement in the EU is now only one of numerous initiatives on the European continent.¹¹

Instead of managing defense procurement through the EU, the European states are entering into agreements on weapons purchase with their neighbors and leading European military power (the US). Buying weapons systems and military equipment from the US and other non-EU suppliers means that gaps in military capabilities can be filled more quickly than if weapons are developed and produced in the EU. An example of such approach is the recent decision of many member states to become a part of the European Sky Shield program.¹² Procurements out of the EU also do little to strengthen the ability of the European defense industry to develop and produce new weapons systems in a short period.

All mentioned issues are impeding further CSDP development. The current EU long-term strategy has focused on the development of the integrated European defense industry and the market is neglecting the development of real military capabilities which are needed now.

The EU as an institution is focused, from the ECSC up to the Union today, on economic and political integration. From the beginning of the European integration process the field of security and defense was (and still is) the domain of the member states' governments and NATO. When thinking strategically, the EU is focused on economic considerations and soft power instruments.

The changes in the European security made by the ongoing war in Ukraine are questioning this thinking. This also means that the current CSDP policies have to be examined and adapted to the new security environment.

The defense of Europe or European defense

The outbreak of the Russo-Ukrainian war has had a strong punch on the current European security architecture and the belief that interdependence could prevent or at least mitigate all kinds of conflicts. The war has also shaken the normative foundations of the European security architecture, which is based on sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The European security order was broken well before Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022. The first crisis was in 2008, when Russia invaded Georgia. A further blow was in 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea and intervened in eastern Ukraine.

¹¹ The Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) is a legal and institutional framework launched in 2017. This is a mechanism for willing and capable member states to cooperate on specific defence projects including the organization of military missions and operations. The original idea was the establishment of a group of states willing to develop and use military capabilities for specific missions and operations. The PESCO was supposed to be an exclusive mechanism, but because of German pressure, it includes almost all member states (Barić, 2017).

¹² The European Sky Shield Initiative (ESSI) was launched by Germany (and supported by the US) in October 2022 with a goal to strengthen the European air defence. 17 countries participating in the ESSI will jointly purchase short, medium and long-range air defence systems. The systems acquired will be interoperable with the NATO Integrated Air and Missile Defence System (NATINAMDS).

The Kremlin's threats that it will do whatever it takes to win this war – indiscriminately killing civilians, attacking critical infrastructure, and threatening nuclear retaliation – imply that the European security order, which was established in 1975 by the Helsinki Final Act, risks being utterly demolished.

In such conditions the current focus of the CSDP is insufficient. The development framework of the CSDP is not appropriate for the new strategic situation, which means that there is a need for a complete overview and overhaul of the CSDP. Everything points to one question – what is the strategic goal of the EU efforts: is this the defense of Europe, European defense, or both?

The first possible task – the defense of Europe – is based on the presumption that NATO will remain the key organization for the defense of the continent. In those circumstances, what should be the goal of the current and future EU defense initiatives?

Some ideas based on the division of labor between NATO and EU - that NATO would be responsible for the defense and deterrence in Europe, and the EU for providing external support for the Western/US activities in the Middle East, Africa, or Asia-Pacific – are not realistic. The EU security strategy from 2016 clearly states that the primary focus of the Union activities (including the CSDP) is the security of the European continent against external and internal threats.

The second possibility is that the EU defense efforts should be directed to provide support to the European collective defense within NATO. This would be the creation of the often mentioned, but never fulfilled European pillar of NATO. For example, the EU activities should be a part of the implementation of the NATO Madrid Summit decision about the formation of a pool of 300,000 troops in a high state of readiness in Europe.

The problem with these scenarios is in admitting that the EU would not be the primary organization for the defense of Europe – this will be the responsibility of NATO.

The second possible task is the development of the European defense. Unfortunately, this means a continuation of the current EU efforts towards the development of limited military capabilities for crisis management.

The EU has had the Common Security and Defense Policy for 24 years.¹³ During this period the goal of the CSDP and its predecessor ESDP,¹⁴ despite the changed strategic environment, remained the same. Since 1999 the EU has been clear that the objective of the Union's military efforts is quite limited – the development of the capabilities and mechanisms necessary for conducting peace support operations on the European continent and abroad. In other words, its limited goal was essentially focused on peacekeeping and stabilization operations. It was based on the underlying assumption that territorial defense and deterrence against potential invasion threats was primarily a job for NATO. As a result, the EU defense policy is focused on the development of military capabilities for low- and medium-intensity peace support operations. This kind of operations was conducted by the EU in the Balkans, Africa, the Middle East and Afghanistan.

¹³ For a historical overview, see Handbook on CSDP, 2021.

¹⁴ The European Security and Defense Policy.

However, the geostrategic context has now radically changed. The issues related to territorial defense and deterrence against major powers are once again coming to the fore in debates on security policy. A renewed emphasis on territorial defense and deterrence seems set to displace the traditional focus on peace support operations.

This also means that the CSDP has to change its focus from military capabilities necessary for Petersberg tasks-type operations to the capabilities for high technology conventional land warfare, together with air and maritime operations. Despite the changed strategic environment, all plans for the development of the EU military capabilities are still focused on creating capabilities for Petersberg tasks defined in 1992 and later expanded.¹⁵ Those tasks, created three decades ago, are still a basis for the EU defense planning. Even the latest proposals for the establishment of a 5,000-strong EU Rapid Deployment Capacity mentioned in the EU Strategic Compass state that the new formation is intended for crisis management type of operations, not for conventional warfare.

Finally, there is the third scenario, which combines elements of two previous scenarios. The war in Ukraine shows that, despite their differences, NATO and the EU are both essential for European security. Now, as in the past, discussions about the EU-NATO relationship were focused on different proposals about the division of labor between them. Those proposals are limiting the EU to deal with civilian aspects of conflicts (post-conflict crisis management) and leave military matters to NATO (see Rotfeld, 2001).

Despite the attractiveness of those proposals they are misguided. The division of labor presumes that both organizations are ready to give up some tasks to avoid overlapping of functions and activities. Up to now, neither the EU nor NATO has shown the willingness to make that step. Even if this kind of division of tasks intended to eliminate overlapping is possible, a long-term consequence would be pushing NATO and the EU further apart.

The real challenge is not about the division of labor, but how to achieve the coexistence and complementarity of two different models of defense organization. Separate, but overlapping responsibilities of the EU and NATO should be a basis for cooperation instead of competition between two institutions (Matlé, 2023).

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has reaffirmed NATO as the key defense institution in Europe. NATO's role as the cornerstone of European security has been accepted by the EU (Strategic Compass, 2022). The war has also encouraged the transformation of the European Union into a geopolitical player, which is now (among other things) trying to accelerate the development of military capabilities.

The EU and NATO have proved successful in bringing together their member states in a coordinated multidimensional response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Doing that two organizations have been operating within one another's core

¹⁵ The Petersberg Declaration adopted at the Ministerial Council of the Western European Union in June 1992 lists the following tasks: humanitarian and rescue tasks; conflict prevention and peace-keeping tasks; tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peace-making; joint disarmament operations; military advice and assistance tasks; post-conflict stabilization tasks.

policy areas. This complementarity based on separate, but overlapping responsibilities and mandates of the EU and NATO should be further developed to strengthen deterrence against Russia, and also to respond to other threats.¹⁶ The EU and NATO have to cooperate in strengthening partners, stabilizing neighboring countries and developing military capabilities. A real test for the development of complementarity between both organizations will be the post-conflict reconstruction of Ukraine, which has to combine credible security guarantees with political and economic stabilization of Ukraine.

For the execution of the described scenario, two conditions have to be fulfilled. The first condition is the development of the new EU-NATO framework for cooperation. The current framework (Berlin Plus agreement) is insufficient and obsolete for the new strategic environment (Zima, 2021). The last attempt to create a new framework after the NATO Summit in Warsaw in 2016 has been terminated after the change of administration in Washington. Despite that, both organizations are strengthening their relationship (Schuette, 2022).

The second condition is a clarification of the idea of the European Strategic Autonomy (ESA) inside the EU. Today there are many interpretations of the ESA.

The first is the French vision of the ESA, which is officially mentioned in the 1994 National Defense White Paper, although the achievement of autonomy has been the goal of French foreign and security policy in the last seven decades (see Helnarska, 2013). The ESA is repeated in the 2017 Strategic Review on Defense and National Security. In the French view, the ESA means the development and engagement of the independent European military capabilities without reliance on the US. France has recently expanded the ESA from the military sphere to the economy (technology, trade, finance). Many European countries are worried that such a policy would lead to economic protectionism. In those views, the goal of broadening the ESA is the legitimization of the French economic policy objectives in the EU (Bora, 2023). The French vision of the ESA has been rejected in Central and Eastern Europe, and the rest of the EU and NATO members are not supportive of this kind of strategic autonomy.

The second vision of the ESA was conveyed in the St. Malo agreement between the UK and France in 1998. This agreement states that the EU should have military capabilities for the management of international crises in the European neighborhood when the US does not want to be involved (Gegout, 2002). This version of the ESA is the basis for the development of the EU military capabilities from 1999 up to now.

¹⁶ The currently most visible threat is Moscow's destabilizing actions in Europe (South Eastern Europe and Western Balkans area), the Middle East, North Africa, Sahel and equatorial Africa. As a part of efforts to strengthen its global influence, China is increasing its military presence in parts of Africa and the Middle East. Those activities do not represent a direct military threat to Europe, but Chinese support to non-democratic regimes could have a destabilizing influence in those regions, with negative consequences for Europe. Also, Chinese efforts to divide the EU member states (Barić, 2019) could create negative effects on the European defence efforts.

Finally, the EU is trying to define the concept of open strategic autonomy, which is much broader than defense. The goal is to strengthen the resilience of the Union and to reduce the external dependence of the EU in the key strategic areas such as energy, rare earth or technology (Molthof-Köbben, 2022). Together with strengthening its defense capabilities, those steps should enable the EU to become a more credible and stronger actor globally and to be able to stand up in the alliance with the US. This variant of the ESA is a new attempt to achieve a more equal partnership with the US, which is the goal of European allies since the end of the 1960s.

Despite those different views on the ESA, one thing is clear. The war in Ukraine is forcing Europeans to rely on NATO as the only defense organization that can ensure their security. Considering the ESA means that ideas about promoting strategic autonomy distinct from the US are now redundant. The EU member states should reach a consensus on the ESA content, how to organize themselves for it, and how to distribute the costs necessary for its implementation.

Conclusion

Despite the progress achieved during the war in Ukraine, the key dilemmas important for the future development of the CSDP are still unresolved. Instead of strengthening efforts to address the deep structural problems in the CSDP, the war in Ukraine has only reinforced them. The described situation indicates an urgent need for answers to two key questions - what should be a goal of the revised CSDP and how to improve the development of the EU military capabilities.

As a consequence of the war in Ukraine, NATO will remain the key defense institution in Europe tasked with the organization of deterrence against possible Russian aggressive moves. This means that the EU has to reconsider its role as a security provider in Europe and adapt its defense activities according to the new strategic environment. The EU can play a secondary, but critical role in providing and resourcing deterrence through the reorganization of the European defense industrial base, change of its efforts regarding the development of its military capabilities and the development of some specialized capabilities in the areas like cyber, space, resilience, or military mobility. Doing so will require a much deeper and permanent institutional linkage between the EU and NATO, and a change of the CSDP goals to reflect a new reality.

Regarding the development of the EU military capabilities during the last three decades, this process has been focused on crisis management operations abroad (peacekeeping, stabilization and fight against terrorism). The armed forces of the member states have been seen as an instrument for the use in expeditionary operations. Their primary role of deterrence against external aggression and territorial defense has been neglected.

This focus has to be changed. The EU should acknowledge that the primacy of crisis management operations out of Europe has to be replaced with an emphasis on

the development of military capabilities necessary for deterrence and collective defense in support of NATO activities.

In new circumstances the revision of the EU Strategic Compass is necessary. Instead of an emphasis on the fourth basket capabilities (external crisis management), priority should be given to the first three baskets (capability development, partnerships, resilience). This means that plans for the formation of the rapid reaction force for responses to crises out of the EU¹⁷ should be shelved and an emphasis put on capabilities for conventional warfare.

The described strategic shift will not be possible without resolving the conflict between two aims present at different European defense initiatives. Those initiatives are often divided regarding the need for filling military capability gaps and strengthening the EU defense industrial base. The EU has to find a way to balance now an urgent need for restoring the European conventional military capabilities and the long-term need to invest in the development of the European defense industry and market. To achieve both goals simultaneously, the EU member states have to prioritize European considerations over their national interests.

The war in Ukraine represents an opportunity for the EU to strengthen the CFSP and address its military capability shortfalls. This means the development of the EU pillar within the Euro-Atlantic Alliance framework with the goal of setting up the new European security architecture in which the EU and NATO should seek to complement and mutually reinforce one another.

Gradually, the EU should be able to reduce its military dependence on the United States. Due to the Ukrainian war, the United States has retained its role as an essential provider of European security. The US long-term strategic priorities lie in the Indo-Pacific area, which means that sooner or later European allies should be ready to take responsibility for their security. This will also open the possibility of the EU-US security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region on certain security issues (maritime security and freedom of navigation, sanctions enforcement, regional security integration, non-proliferation, energy policy, cybersecurity).

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¹⁷ Rapid Deployment Capacity (RDC) is a modular military formation of 5,000 soldiers that should be operational in 2025.

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