

# The Perils of NOT Conceiving EU Foreign Policy as a Civilizing Project

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**T**he European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and its Common European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) merit analysis and critical discussion. I therefore welcome Giovanna Bono's critical contribution. However, I also think CFSP and ESDP deserve a better deal. With three rhetorical questions at the beginning of her essay, Giovanna Bono implies that the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the European Union in fact does not promote peace, does not contribute to »civilizing« international relations (or, if it does, that this is in fact to promote a suspect »radical normative agenda«), and that it is part of an effort by European »elites« to promote a dubious European collective »identity« in which parliaments and citizens are denied their proper say. I argue that her efforts to »unmask« CFSP/ESDP (ESDP is in fact not just a »sub-set« of CFSP) is substantially off the mark and, ultimately, politically detrimental, for Europe as well as for the future global order.

## What is the Problem with CFSP/ESDP?

What are the problems for and with CFSP? For Giovanna Bono, CFSP/ESDP is losing its way by »deepening, widening and hardening« – that is, CFSP/ESDP is, she claims, increasingly carried out through a framework set by a lead nation in military operations, or through a diplomatic *directoire* of Germany, France and the UK in diplomacy; it is casting its range of activities geographically ever wider, and its military and security activities tend to overshadow its other dimensions. This development, she argues, has resulted from new challenges in the post-Cold War world, from pressure from the United States and from a conscious »securitization« of CFSP by European elites who were unable to promote internal reforms and instead hit on external relations to secure European cohesion (I wonder, incidentally, what we should call Economic and Monetary Union, the introduction of a common currency and the agreement – by govern-

ments – on a Constitutional Treaty if those are not to be considered internal reforms!).

We both agree that the development of CFSP/ESDP since 1990 has been driven by far-reaching internal and international changes, within and around the EU. We also agree that some of the challenges have been »securitized« by European elites, and that the EU has been developing and also increasingly using the institutions and military/civilian capabilities of ESDP: there have so far been four military operations (in Macedonia, Kosovo, Congo and Aceh), as well as about ten civilian police missions (which, significantly, do not figure in Ms Bono's argument). What Giovanna Bono does not mention, however, is that the evolution of CFSP/ESDP during the last decade is widely seen as having been shaped by European policy failures in the wars of dissolution in former Yugoslavia: the EU was unable to prevent the outbreak of hostilities, and for several years also proved unable to quell the violence.<sup>1</sup> Yet according to most reviews of what went wrong in former Yugoslavia, early military intervention could well have saved hundreds of thousands of lives. Timely military intervention probably could also have prevented the genocide in Rwanda.<sup>2</sup> In that context, the use of the concept of »securitization« – political discourses which attempt to upgrade a policy challenge to one of vital or even existential importance – by Ms Bono is misleading. »Securitization« can be ideological and misguided, but it can also be politically quite appropriate (indeed, there may be problems which deserve to be securitized but are not – think of Nazi Germany's occupation of the Rhineland in 1936, which was not taken seriously enough in its security implications by France and Britain at the time).<sup>3</sup>

Ms Bono's argument also disregards the important difference between »securitization« as a political discourse to upgrade the importance and

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1. Jolyon Howorth, »Britain, France and the European Defence Initiative«, in *Survival*, 42 (2) (Summer 2000), pp. 33–55; Bastian Giegerich and William Wallace, »Not Such a Soft Power: The External Deployment of European Forces«, in *Survival*, 46 (2) (Summer 2004), pp. 163–181.
  2. This is now a widely held view, shared by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and former President Bill Clinton. Both have apologized to the Rwandan people.
  3. In that context, it is strange to read in Bono's essay the – unsubstantiated – claim that »practices of international humanitarian intervention as experienced in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo did not prevent conflict«. Does she really want to suggest that the number of human lives lost in Bosnia and Kosovo were comparable or even higher, after the intervention?

urgency of an issue, and as one which identifies military means and actions as appropriate responses to policy challenges. The two discourses are quite different, and in the case of European military operations with enforcement characteristics (most of which, in fact, were *not* carried out by ESDP but, for good reasons, through European participation in NATO operations), the justification given has *not* in the first place been that tensions and instability (in the Balkans, in the Congo or in Aceh) were directly threatening European security, but rather that local violence needed to be contained and suffocated to prevent large-scale human rights violations. Thus, where ESDP has intervened, it has done so, as Ms Bono herself states, within the framework of humanitarian intervention, rather than that of traditional security concerns.

These discourses may be challenged and deconstructed, of course, but it will not do to ignore them. In a nutshell, Giovanna Bono holds that military means are not conducive to peace under any circumstances, while I accept that, under certain circumstances, they can be. With this I emphatically do not mean to suggest that military interventions or war are to be undertaken lightly; nor am I blind to the vicissitudes of military force as an instrument of policy. In fact, we might well agree in many specific instances that the use of military force would be dangerous and counterproductive. However, there are also instances – as in former Yugoslavia, or in Rwanda – when military intervention can be justified as the only way to avoid something even worse. In fact, however, ESDP operations have *not* been, and are unlikely to be in the future, about major military intervention or even warfare. Rather, they are about keeping the peace, mostly in a very traditional PKO (Peacekeeping Operation) mode, or about helping to establish a modicum of order in states which have fallen apart. One can argue about how successful and how warranted such operations have been, and one should certainly be vigilant about the EU's military activities. But to construct ESDP as a militaristic project at present simply stretches credulity. The EU is not, and probably cannot ever be, a traditional military power. It lacks both the capabilities and the will. Indeed, its very characteristics as a political entity *sui generis* made up of sovereign nation-states mean that it will have to define its role in international affairs differently.

Yet Giovanna Bono tries to show that the EU is on its way to becoming a military power along the lines of the United States. Her exhibit number one is the European Security Strategy (ESS) which, according to her, »far from being a reaffirmation of traditional norms for the respect of inter-

national law on the use of force ... represents a move towards a new vision of the EU's external role that is dangerously close to US thinking.«<sup>4</sup> However, the ESS differs fundamentally from the US National Security Strategy's (USNSS) assertion of the right of pre-emption by emphasizing early prevention. At the insistence of several Member States, the ESS explicitly rejects any notion of pre-emptive actions (in the draft version circulated in June 2003 this was still hinted at), focusing exclusively on conflict prevention. The ESS also clearly stipulates that the EU will use force only with a mandate from the UN Security Council – another fundamental difference from USNSS.

Bono's exhibit number two is the doctrine of a »Responsibility to Protect« which was recognized, albeit in a heavily qualified and circumscribed way, by the UN 2005 World Summit. She takes offense at the EU's support for this notion of a responsibility on the part of the international community to protect people against their own murderous governments or state collapse, but she does not seem to be aware that this doctrine has been promoted by the UN Secretary General (in his report »In Larger Freedom«<sup>5</sup>) and his advisory board, the High Level Panel,<sup>6</sup> rather than by the US. Thus, she objects to a position promoted by a broad international consensus of experts and by the very United Nations whose exclusion from peace enforcement operations she laments elsewhere in her essay.

In short, ESDP in its military operations is not about traditional military power; it is about international order. And its security strategy differs fundamentally from that of the United States: it is strictly and fundamentally multilateralist, where the latter espouses a very instrumental support for multilateralism at best (at worst, the USNSS simply reserves for America the right to do what she considers just and necessary). Nor is it right – as Giovanna Bono points out, quite correctly, at the beginning of her essay – to reduce CFSP/ESDP, let alone European foreign policy, to its military aspects. Military enforcement operations are only a minute part of CFSP/ESDP; most of what ESDP does in military terms is *keeping*, rather than *making* peace, and most of the »civilizing« efforts of the EU's exter-

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4. Bono, p. 157

5. *In Larger Freedom*, Report of the Secretary-General to the UN General Assembly, 59th Session, New York: United Nations, 21 March 2005, p. 35 and passim (= Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit, Doc. A/59/2005)

6. *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, Report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, New York: United Nations (2004), p. 66.

nal relations (of which CFSP/ESDP are only part) are conducted through other policies, notably enlargement (in fact, my article which Giovanna Bono criticizes primarily deals with those, rather than with the military policies of the EU<sup>7</sup>).

## **The European Union as an International Actor: What Role Concept?**

However, Giovanna Bono not only criticizes the EU for pursuing a militaristic project, she also accuses it of pursuing *too much* of a peace project. This is the »radical normative agenda« of civilizing international relations about which she is visibly unhappy. By my definition, »civilizing« international relations is about promoting non-violent, that is, peaceful conflict resolution, as well as about a number of other objectives which together establish what has been called »positive peace.« This project does indeed build on Western norms, as she suggests, but those are norms which by now have become universally recognized through a long list of international conventions.

What role concept, then, does the EU pursue? First, as I have argued already, the ESS is resolutely and fundamentally multilateralist. That is, the EU strives to transform international relations along the lines of interstate relations within the Union: to replace the exercise of power by the rule of law and institutions. Thus, the ESS states: »The development of ... well-functioning international institutions and a rule-based international order is our objective. We are committed to upholding and developing international law. The fundamental framework of international relations is the United Nations Charter. The United Nations Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and international security.«<sup>8</sup>

This is indeed a far-reaching vision, a »radical normative project,« as Giovanna Bono states. And a key element in that project is the promotion of democracy and good governance. In the words of the ESS: »The best protection for our security is a world of well-governed democratic states.«

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7. Hanns W. Maull, »Europe and the New Balance of Global Order,« in *International Affairs*, 81 (4) (2005), pp. 775–799.

8. European Union, *A Secure Europe in a Better World, European Security Strategy*, Brussels (December 12, 2003), p. 9.

Here we are at the heart of the EU's role concept as a »civilian power,« of the – in Giovanna Bono's words – »radical normative project« of the EU, which to some might suspiciously sound like Europe's new »mission civilisatrice.« By far the most important (and also most successful) effort by the EU in this sense has been the policy on enlargement; the EU has also been trying to promote this complex »civilizing« agenda through its association and neighborhood policies. Enlargement and association have unfolded on the basis of voluntary accession, but they have also implied a far-reaching economic, social, political and even cultural transformation of new Member States and future aspirants along the lines of the *acquis communautaire* (for future members), as well as extensive conditionality for partners in association agreements, such as the Lomé/Cotonou African, Pacific and Caribbean countries. This, Giovanna Bono claims, goes against international law: specifically, against the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in other states' internal affairs, as recognized in Article 2 (7) of the UN Charter. But the UN Charter also stipulates (in the preamble, in Art. 1 (3) and Art. 55 and 56) inalienable human rights, and in response international law has long moved beyond the unqualified right of a state (or, more precisely, a regime) to do unto its own people as it pleases.<sup>9</sup> The principle of non-interference today is upheld mostly by authoritarian or totalitarian regimes in the Third World. Strangely, Giovanna Bono claims these principles and norms of non-interference to be »cosmopolitan« – they are nothing of the kind. In fact, they are the norms of the »modern« world of nationalism, of the Westphalian system, while cosmopolitan principles and norms are those of present-day international law, of human rights and democracy – that is, of a postmodern world.<sup>10</sup>

## CFSP/ESDP and its Democratic Deficit

The third line of attack on CFSP/ESDP in Giovanna Bono's article is their democratic deficit: CFSP/ESDP are presented as an executive project which deliberately shuns parliamentary scrutiny and civic participation. This ar-

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9. International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect*, Ottawa: ICISS (2001).

10. David Held, *Democracy and the Global Order; From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance*, Stanford: Stanford UP (1995).

gument about a democratic deficit in EU foreign policy making not only ignores some serious intrinsic difficulties with subjecting external relations to parliamentary control and civic participation, which explain why even the most powerful parliament of all, the US Congress, has rarely been able to shape American foreign policy, but also the scope for, and the importance of, democratic checks and balances as a means of constraining the exercise and abuse of executive power. While the EU's external relations may indeed involve very limited institutional control within the framework of EU institutions, powerful checks and balances do exist: national governments generally are loath (in fact, I would argue: only too loath) to give up their national sovereignty over foreign and defense policies. They will certainly also not easily risk the lives of their soldiers for unpopular European »adventures.« Their willingness to deploy troops in NATO peace enforcement operations in fact mostly reflected pressure from public opinion rather than executive bravura: in that sense, too, European military activities since the 1990s have been responsive to societal preferences rather than a promotion of an »imperial« foreign policy by conspiring European executives.

## **CFSP/ESDP in Historical and Political Context**

My final problem with the argument of Giovanna Bono is that it is historically shallow and politically naïve. CFSP/ESDP did not come about only in the 1990s: it had a long gestation period which reaches back to the beginnings of European integration. The first efforts to develop an ESDP were undertaken (abortively) in the early 1950s (the European Defence Community), and the project of a Political Union, including a common foreign policy, also dates back to the 1950s. More directly, CFSP grew out of European Political Cooperation, which was established in 1970, and ESDP built on the Western European Union founded, in its original form, as early as 1948. If one wants to see this project as an assertion of a European identity against some »other,« then the »others« historically have been the Superpowers: the Soviet Union, but above all the United States. In this sense, CFSP/ESDP is but a reincarnation of Europe's desire to hold its own and to project its »civilizing« influence in a world dominated by others.

The author also lacks depth in representing my argument. Contrary to what she says, I have not reversed my position on the compatibility of ci-

vilian power with the use of force: in fact, I have tried to analyze the implications of that particular role concept (which my colleagues here in Trier and I have used extensively to analyze the foreign policies of Germany, Japan and the United States) for the use of military force as early as 1991,<sup>11</sup> and I have repeatedly taken this up since, notably in the context of the military interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo.<sup>12</sup> Nor have I relied on the writings of Robert Cooper to develop the concept of civilian power: it was, in fact, first used by François Duchêne in the early 1970s,<sup>13</sup> and I have borrowed, developed and applied this concept from him since the late 1980s.

Finally, I have difficulties with the implicit understanding of politics revealed by the arguments of Giovanna Bono. Thus, she constructs an antagonistic relationship between elites and civil society (with parliaments uneasily somewhere in between: one could imagine the author's reaction if the European Parliament actually had legitimized military action by the ESDP, as it most likely would have done in all cases, had it been asked to do so), and asserts that politics within the European Union have been far from a Kantian paradise (I have no problem with that: I talk about »civilizing politics,« not »civilized politics«), and have indeed been marked by »violent opposition to hierarchical power centers.« She fails to note the tension between rulers and ruled, however, in the case of Third World countries, although their elites and governments – and particularly those who like to invoke the principle of non-interference – often are considerably less democratically legitimized than EU member governments. As a result, international conflicts in her analysis seem strangely devoid of actors. She talks about »militarization« (apparently by the US and Europe)

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11. Hanns W. Maull, »Zivilmacht: Die Konzeption und ihre sicherheitspolitische Relevanz,« in Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (ed.), *Stabilität, Gleichgewicht und die Sicherheitsinteressen des Vereinigten Deutschland, Analysen und Interpretationen*, Ebenhausen (1991), pp. 157–174 (=SWP-S 373); Hanns W. Maull, »Zivilmacht: Die Konzeption und ihre sicherheitspolitische Relevanz,« in W. Heydrich et al. (eds.), *Sicherheitspolitik Deutschlands: Neue Konstellationen, Risiken, Instrumente*, Baden-Baden (1992), pp. 771–786.
  12. Hanns W. Maull, »Germany in the Yugoslav Crisis,« in *Survival*, 37 (4) (1995/96), pp. 99–130; Hanns W. Maull, »German Foreign Policy, Post-Kosovo: Still a ›Civilian Power?‹,« in: *German Politics*, 9 (2) (August 2000), pp. 1–24.
  13. François Duchêne, »Die Rolle Europas im Weltsystem: Von der regionalen zur planetarischen Interdependenz,« in Max Kohnstamm and Wolfgang Hager (eds.), *Zivilmacht Europa – Supermacht oder Partner?* Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp (1973), pp. 11–35.



and the »outbreak of new types of armed conflicts« but avoids any mention of violent aggression and genocide by some regimes (for example, the Iraq of Saddam Hussein in 1990, the Serbia of Slobodan Milosevic in 1991); rather, she suggests that threats are to be conceptualized as »the product of the interaction between international actors with political strategies and dilemmas of national [!] security.« In that conceptualization, al Qaeda does not figure. Nor do the actors in former Yugoslavia, except perhaps Serbia, which presumably was pursuing »dilemmas of national security« with the former Yugoslav army in Slovenia, Bosnia and Kosovo. Nor does this include any of the challenges to Europe's long-term security which I would personally consider worthy of serious »securitization,« such as state failure, internal and regional conflicts in Europe's environment, horizontal and vertical proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, but also organized crime, pandemics or global environmental destruction.

If the EU is to cope with this rather demanding list of political challenges, it will need to secure a vibrant and robust international order. Yet any political order ultimately relies on its ability to enforce its norms; the challenge for politics is to »domesticate« both states' and social actors' temptation to resort to force. This is what »civilizing« politics is about. The European Union is groping towards this through a foreign policy role concept (or, if you prefer, »identity«) as a different, a »civilian« power. Those efforts certainly deserve critical reflection and scrutiny – but also a fair assessment and perhaps even some sympathy, given the alternatives. For if the EU fails to develop a capacity to promote and secure a »civilized« international order, it will have to take whatever arrangements the other, »modern« powers see fit.