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The new European Union Global Strategy: How to meet foreign and security policy challenges?

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Knowing that Federica Mogherini is currently preparing an *EU Global Strategy on foreign and security policy* to be presented by June 2016, we decided to bring some ideas to the table, some thoughts and more than answers we would like to share some doubts and questions that we have as an academic, but mostly as a European citizen.



We decided to do some research and not surprisingly we found that a lot has already been said and discussed throughout the last year. There is even a growing field of literature on this subject, with some relevant documents, such as:

- Towards European Global Strategy¹
- The EU 's Comprehensive approach to external conflict and crisis²
- Defence matters³;
- EU as a security provider⁴
- And the well done assessment on the strategic environment, The EU in a changing global environment⁵.

What do we know by now? We only need to go to EU web site and will find that we already know a lot, we know how the decision process is going to unfold, its roadmap towards the new strategy, we know the shape it is going to take and I sense we even know the content.

Starting from this, one can only try to bring some added value into the discussion, but state very clearly that we do not foresee much novelty from the new EU Global Strategy.

We will start by trying to answer to a not so simple question: *How best to formulate and implement the European Global Strategy. Should European decision makers pursue a common or integrated EU global strategy?*

¹ FÄGERSTEN, Björn et all (2013) - [Towards European Global Strategy](#). International Affairs Institute (IAI), The Polish Institute of International Affairs, Elcano Royal Institute and The Swedish Institute of International Affairs.

² HIGH REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY POLICY (2013) - [Joint communication to the European Parliament and the Council. The EU's comprehensive approach to external conflict and crises](#). Brussels.

³ ZANDEE, Dick et all (2015) - [Defence Matters: More urgent than ever](#). Clingendael Report. The Hague.

⁴ ZANDEE, Dick et all (2014) - [The EU as a Security Provider](#). Clingendael Report. The Hague.

⁵ HIGH REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY POLICY (2015) - [The European Union in a changing global environment. A more connected, contested and complex world](#). Strategic assessment of HR/VP in preparation of the 2016 EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy of June 2015. In, https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/sites/globalstrategy/files/about/eu-strategic-review_executive_summary_en.pdf

The EU has a wide array of Institutions, tools, instruments, policies, capacities, specific strategies at its disposal, and differently from some international institutions it has also military operations. It's true we have it all, but we also have lack of coordination and above all, lack of leadership and of political will.

So, to discuss whether the EU should pursue and implement an integrated or a common strategy, it is pure semantics. In the end, what it is needed is plan of action and its sequent implementation.

A strategic narrative is important, but we've talked the talk, now it's time to walk the walk. Who cares if it's integrated or common? Where is the big difference? We need a tool, and a useful one, that can help us to solve problems, give us strategic guidance and a course of actions to act in specific situations that are already identified.

But always keeping in mind that we are confronted with an erosion of the former euro-atlantic order, and now live in a complex, interconnected and unpredictable world. So the "tool" must have the necessary flexibility to adapt to a constant changing environment.

We already have an internal security strategy⁶, and if we want the EU to be a security provider, at least we should integrate the former strategy with new security strategy. As we will argue later.

The EU as an International Organization has an identitarian problem. No one questions this.

In every single international *forum*, we always have to separate representations: the EU member states represented by their capitals, and the EU per se. This happens in G20, in major economic projections, or when we analyze Defense Investments in the world. This causes some complexity not to say perplexity...

For example, are we at war with ISIS? Or is only France and UK and Germany? Do you see our point?

This is only the beginning of this analysis, because often not only we see a lack of coordination but we also realize that there is competition or contention between what one could call the capitals and the EU.

We should also keep in mind that we have at least 28 different national interests, the different EU Institutions perspective, different perceptions of reality, threats, challenges and opportunities. An EU from the North, another from the south, one from the eastern part, an Atlantic one, etc. Each of these different realities will try to leave its own foot print in the document. Our biggest threat is renationalization, so our biggest challenge is unity⁷.

We all remember the episode when Kissinger supposedly asked: if I want to call the European Union which number should I dial? Now Kerry must ask himself, if I want to talk to the European Union in Defense and Security matters should I call the capitals or call Mogherini?

Another important question that we can pose is: How to improve the EU level of external cooperation with international partners?

⁶ EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2010) - [Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council. The EU Internal Security Strategy in Action: Five steps towards a more secure Europe.](#) Brussels.

⁷ BISCOP, Sven et al (2015) - [European Strategy, European Defence, and the CSDP.](#) Clingendael Report. The Hague.

The World is crowded: Almost 200 sovereign states, thousands of International and Regional Organizations, not to mention all the NGOs and think tanks that have an impact on how we think and act when it comes to security and defense.

In order to face our complex and dynamic world, we should engage more and work with other players, improving the coordination mechanisms. The EU cannot be risk to be perceived as a Big Payer instead of a Big Player.

Partnerships should reinforce our role in the International Arena and lead to win-win situations, always preserving our shared values and interests. We know this is difficult to achieve, but again it's where the opportunity lies.

In our common strategic vision, we should set priorities of engagement. We only list those that are paramount, although we have to recognize the difficulty in defining a scale of priorities.

- Enhance the transatlantic link, even forge a renewed one. Importance of Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and NATO.
- Strategic Neighborhood - keeping in mind that the neighborhood policy reached its limits, mainly in Eastern Partnership countries and Southern Flank;
- Russia is crucial to fight new treats and hybrid ones, on armament, disarmament and nuclear issues, space and cyber space;
- Middle East and North Africa, including the Sahel;
- Other rising powers that are strategic competitors, mainly China to co-shape global governance and reform post-World War II order.
- Africa - redefine relationship with Africa Summits;
- With other International Organizations we have to deepen the cooperative security and strive to promote development (again this is an area where the EU has a very clear added-value: the EU is the biggest ODA (Official Development Aid) donor in the world.
- In the United Nations the EU has to recognize that it has lost the lead it had some years ago. In the UN Security Council, the EU has to be able to at least coordinate – although the idea of reforming the Council and replacing the UK and France with a single EU representation can be very exciting for academics, we must realize that the capitals are not that keen on that process, referring to some arithmetic's losses (that's to say less votes). In the wider UN system, the EU has to recapture the lost influence, by making clear its position in all decision making processes – it's complicated but to be recognized as a superpower it requires a high level of commitment.

If EU wants to be an Actorness and have an important strategic role we know that it should enhance the capacity of Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) to meet asymmetrical and hybrid threats, armaments proliferation, spread of violent conflicts, failed states, cyber threats, terrorism and violent radicalization; But how to perform this?

CSDP has been our tool for external crisis management. But with all the new strategic and security challenges we notice, we can raise the question whether crisis management should continue to be the only aim of CSDP or we should enlarge its scope, aim and responsibilities to couple, for instances, with artº 42/7 Lisbon Treaty? Or are we prepared to perform more operations, and operate in all levels off the spectrum? All this bearing in mind that we should avoid the renationalization of European External policy.

Currently we face significant capabilities shortfalls⁸, we need enablers to allow deployment and sustainment, and we absolutely need NATO's cooperation⁹. A diagnosis that shows us that we need to start by solving and enhancing relations with NATO, mainly to be able to respond to hybrid threats and guarantee territorial defense.

But the EU has also responsibilities it needs to be able to respond on its own, mainly those that impact on what we consider vital interest. After defining a strategy, we need to translate the defined level of ambition into capabilities and capability development (military and civilian), to pursue a comprehensive approach in order to face existing and emerging threats.

In the last decades we've watched the disarming process of heavy capabilities. We, (Portugal) bought Leopard Tanks to the Netherlands. Now in Europe we only have 997 modern tanks¹⁰. We still maintain a very relevant naval strategic capacity (oceans control and power projection), but Asia Pacific has increased and surpassed our ocean capacity. All new ships and vessels are manufactured in East Asia/Korea and no longer in Europe¹¹.

With the economic centrality and power in the Pacific, we must ensure more Maritime Security with our own capacities. Although we still have some military power we lack the political will to use it, jointly and simultaneously. We have ethical/moral and even legal constraints¹².

The drastic change in values, in the belief system we've faced in last decades sometimes immobilizes us. We also don't have the will to act and to integrate dangerous operations. Those that causes casualties. The European population has a very low level of tolerance to these kind of engagements.

Why are we unable to deploy our Battle Groups? We need be proactive instead of reactive, to strength the planning capacity of the EUMS, to create the ability for early warning, intelligence gathering, etc., etc.

The EU's CSDP should be recognized as a geopolitical, strategic instrument for the protection of the EU.

We need more Union in EU Defence, more complementary to NATO territorial defence or we risk to add to our Financial and economic crisis a security one¹³.

The academic debate in EU hugely reflects on the role of the states and the establishment of an internal / external security nexus, on the externalization of internal security and the internalization of external security, contributing for a theoretical and conceptual fragmentation, does little to define frameworks for analysis and action for those who have responsibility to decide and act on security.

This narrative, consecrated by the realist legacy, only makes sense for structural strategy of the states and for the share of the strategic work at the operational level

⁸ ZANDEE, Dick et al (2015) - Defence Mathers: More urgent than ever. Clingendael Report. The Hague.

⁹ BRITO, Vila de (2016) - , GARCIA, Francisco Proença (2010) - European Union Partners – NATO; In, Estratégia. Lisboa: Instituto Português da Conjuntura Estratégica, Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas e Academia Internacional da Cultura Portuguesa, Vol. XIX, pp. 303-322;

¹⁰ IISS (2016) - The Military Balance. London.

¹¹ TELO, António (2016) - Um Mundo em transformação. A decadência da Europa. In, BORGES, Vieira; RODRIGUES, Teresa; Ameaças e riscos transnacionais no novo mundo global. Fronteira do Caos, Lisboa, p. 16.

¹² Idém, Ibidém.

¹³ GARCIA, Francisco Proença (2012) - NATO from Lisbon to Chicago. From financial crisis to security crisis? In, Maria Scientia. Lisboa: Instituto de Estudos Políticos, Nº 3, julho pp. 51-58

and the design of police/military models, but has little academic, when at the conceptual level we are talking on a broad security concept.

We need greater involvement of EU agencies of the **Freedom Security Justice** sector (SATCEN, FRONTEX, and EUROPOL) in CSDP missions and Operations, like we are doing now with the refugee's crisis. So we need, at least to integrate internal security strategy with EU security strategy, to have a comprehensive approach at least to deal with crisis in the near abroad. Forces may be structurally separate, but the operations have to be coordinated, centralized at the operational level.

In order to act as a global player, with strategic autonomy to conduct operation in all levels of the conflict spectrum, EU needs an industrial base that produces key military and non-military capabilities and assures security of the supply chain¹⁴. It took us years to recognize this evolution, now we need to consolidate it.

We ought to increase dual use capabilities and promote new cooperative programmers (cyber, satellite communications, space, UAV's) where we have identified critical shortfall capabilities, or in the area of enablers (medical, protection, transport).

And European Defense Agency (EDA) should be more involved. With a budget under 40 M€ it's almost impossible... and in EDA's last meeting a member state refused even to raise by 4 million EDA's budget.

EU defense exports have precious little new products. In recent decades we almost exclusively have exported the accumulated stocks of the Cold War. Although in the area of the defense industrial technological base, we have new rules in market integration, standardization, directives for procurement that are aimed to create a more competitive tender procedure, today EU defense industries is a faint shadow of the past.

We believe that Europe fall forecasts have a long tradition of lack of achievement, so we would like to conclude quoting Robert Cooper:

"It is generally believed that the height of Europe has passed. Their lack of vision, divisions, obsession with legal frameworks, lack of willingness to project military power and the weak economy are compared with a United States even more dominant than Rome But the problem isn't with Europe, it is our outdated understanding of power".

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¹⁴ ZANDEE, Dick et all (2015) - [Defence Mathers: More urgent than ever](#). Clingendael Report. The Hague. P. 38.

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