

# **‘Mapping The Mind Gap: A Comparison of US and EU Security Strategies’**

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“We have been building a new consensus on the nature of the new threats, and on the instruments and strategies to combat them (...) Differences over Iraq do not change my judgement that a new transatlantic consensus is coming together”

NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson, October 2003

In their response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, NATO members demonstrated their sympathy with the United States by invoking Article five of the Washington Treaty. Although without much practical consequence, this was a historical act as it declared the attack on the US as an attack on all members of the Alliance. This initial state of solidarity and consensus was not there to last, though. Only one year later, the issue of Iraq led to a bitter dispute over the nature of the threat and the proper response. The debate touched on the very substance of national security policies, involving questions of vulnerability, responsibility, and legitimacy, as well as the relationship between national and collective security interests.

In this context, leaders on both sides of the Atlantic attempted to formulate their views in a formal and more structured way. In the United States, after having presented the basic ideas during a speech in West Point in June 2002, George W. Bush issued his administrations National Security Strategy (NSS) in September 2002. Eight months later, at a meeting in Thessaloniki, Javier Solana presented a draft version for a EU counterpart to the European heads of state. After some revisions, the European Security Strategy (ESS) was officially adopted at the EU’s Rome Council in December 2003. With Americans and Europeans now trying redefine basic parameters for cooperation after Iraq, these two documents are well suited to assess the state of the transatlantic relationship. However, while analysts have commented on the major trajectories laid out in these documents, a serious attempt to compare them in a more structured way is as of yet missing.<sup>1</sup> Taking the above statement by Lord Robertson as a measure, this paper fills this gap by examining the two security strategies with regard to their commonalities and differences.

Of course, there are already significant formal differences between both texts regarding length, depth, and language. The US document is more than twice as long, it is better structured than its EU counterpart and more elaborative on key points. Moreover, the NSS is written in a comparatively plain language and presented with an air of authority and decisiveness. Given the debate about America’s motives in Iraq,

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<sup>1</sup> For comments on the NSS see, for instance, Gaddis 2002, Rhodes 2003; for the EU draft, see Garden and Wallace 2003, Everts and Keohane 2003, Dempsey 2003; Schwarz 2003.

Bush wanted to be understood not only by his own constituency but, even more so, to send a signal to his international audience. As Colin Powell noted at a press conference, Bush “makes sure people know what he believes in”.<sup>2</sup> In comparison, the EU document comes across as the more vague and less complete document. There are two main reasons for this: First, the ESS is the first of its kind. Whereas in the US the issuing of a national security strategy has been routine since the 1980s, this the first official EU document dedicated to formulating a common security strategy. Second, it is formulated as to compromise the views of many, including competing authorities in Brussels and well-known differences among the ‘big three’ member states, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. Given these restrictions, the ESS is as good as it gets.<sup>3</sup>

As with every content analysis, the comparison undertaken here is walking the careful line between interpretation and representation. On the one hand, it intends to exceed a simple summary by restructuring the two texts and presenting their key points according to emphasis. It also keeps in mind the political context – the audience – and pays attention to what is deliberately *not* mentioned. To clarify and back-up some important points, it occasionally draws on accompanying documents.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, while stripping the texts from its diplomatic gown, it attempts not to over-interpret either document in a selective way. In other words, it tries to avoid picking and choosing suitable statements to fit them in either a Europeanist or an Atlanticist frame, which among those involved in the identity-*laden* debate about the transatlantic relationship is more often than not the case.

The analysis begins by outlining how each polity (US and EU) perceives and sees itself situated in the post-Cold War security environment. It is followed by a detailed assessment of the *realm of responsibility* and the *main threats*, before looking at the *tasks and strategies* deemed necessary to address these threats and, finally, at the role of *external partners*. It concludes with a short evaluation. As the EU document can be viewed as a response to the NSS, each section will begin with the American position before presenting the European ‘answer’.

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Daalder (2003: 159). According to Condoleezza Rice, Bush demanded the document written in a way so that “the boys in Lubbock ought to be able to read it” (in Rice 2002, 1).

<sup>3</sup> Previous attempts to draw up lists of common European foreign policy interests include the so-called ‘Asolo list’, incorporated the 1992 Lisbon Council report. Produced to support the birth of CFSP, it listed various criteria and ‘areas of priority’ for joint action. The result was, according to Hill and Smith (2000: 162) a “rather academic, even theoretical paper (...) a paradigm of diplomatic and political overload”. In contrast, compared to standard EU documents, analysts have welcomed the ESS as being “unusually acronym-free” (Black 2003) and “mercifully short” (Everts 2003).

<sup>4</sup> In the American case, this is Bush’s West Point address from June 2002, a speech by Rice to the Manhattan Institute shortly in October 2002, and the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (NSCT), published as a supplement to the NSS in February 2003. The EU position is backed up by two speeches by Javier Solana, delivered to the Dublin Institute for European Affairs, and to the Foreign Policy Association, New York, both in May 2003.

## 1. Post-Cold War Security Environment

### 1.1. US

In its assessment of the current international order, the NSS identifies two defining parameters, a positive and a negative one. Both are seen as an outgrowth of the end of the Cold War, with September 11<sup>th</sup> having served merely as a magnifying glass rather than a threshold to a radically new era. The NSS is hence formulated with the view that, in the words of Condoleezza Rice, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the fall of the World Trade Center were “bookends of a long transition period”.<sup>5</sup>

The first element is, plainly spoken, post-Cold War triumphalism, a celebration of the superiority of political and economic liberalism as ordering principles. Setting the tone for the entire document, Bush notes in the cover letter that the twentieth century struggle of ideas had ended with a “decisive victory for the forces of freedom”, presenting the world a “single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise”.<sup>6</sup> America’s position as the most powerful actor in the International System today is thus seen as a result of its ideational orientation, as “sustained by faith in the principles of liberty and the value of a free society”.<sup>7</sup> This unprecedented and unequalled American power, it is argued, naturally translates into a special responsibility (see below).

According to the NSS, the period after 1990 is characterized, secondly, by a “profound transformation” of the global security environment. The clear-cut confrontation with the Soviet Union has been replaced by a more complex, more uncertain and, hence, *more* dangerous environment. Confronted by “deadly challenges” stemming from rogue states and terrorism, aided by poverty and economic underdevelopment (see below), open societies such as the United States are seen as experiencing a new vulnerability and with it “a new condition of life”.<sup>8</sup> Adjustment to this new security environment is, according to Bush, inevitably connected with the necessity of fighting a ‘new kind of war’. While this war is imposed from the outside and participation therefore inescapable, Bush promises that America will define the terms of adjustment: “the conflict will end in a way, and at an hour, of our choosing”.<sup>9</sup>

### 1.2. EU

In some ways, the ESS shares the American outlook. It agrees, for instance, that the end of the Cold War has “left the United States in a dominant position as a military actor” (although it is silent on whether this is desirable). And it also agrees that the security environment confronting the EU is increasingly marked by complexity and interdependence: Open borders, technological progress and the spread of democracy have brought “freedom and prosperity to many people”, while civil wars, poverty, and regional instability, among others, are posing major security

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<sup>5</sup> Rice 2002, 1.

<sup>6</sup> NSS, p. v

<sup>7</sup> NSS, p. 1

<sup>8</sup> NSS, p. 31

<sup>9</sup> NSS, p. 5

problems.<sup>10</sup> However, this is where the similarities between the assessments end, and where the poles between which they are developed begin to deviate.

First, the success-story mentioned in the ESS is not Cold War victory but European integration. The latter is credited with bringing peace to the continent by having “transformed the relations between our states, and the lives of our citizens” through the spread of the rule of law and democracy. Correspondingly, the contrasting world order is not found in the Cold War period, but in the “violence of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century”.<sup>11</sup> Hence, the ESS fails to grant either the end of the Cold War, or 9/11, for that matter, the decisive meaning as the American document does. Second, as a consequence the EU does not see itself as being engaged in a new war. It does acknowledge that security threats continue to exist (see below) and notes a heightened vulnerability of global “interconnected infrastructures”. But the very first sentence of the document suggests that the sense of security among Europeans has increased, rather than decreased, noting how “Europe has never been...so secure”.<sup>12</sup> Finally, while the EU also defines itself as a ‘global player’, it does so in a very different, almost reluctant tone. Measured in terms of population, per cent of world GNP, and international engagement, the global player status of the EU is acquired through numbers, not ideas. Hence, in contrast to the US, one gets the feeling that the EU’s “responsibility for global security” is taken on by default, rather than by choice.

## 2. Realm Of Responsibility

### 2.1. US

The NSS is putting considerable effort in making clear to the reader what the US feels responsible for and, hence, what it ought to defend. An entire section is dedicated “to clarify what we stand for”, with the answer being given straight away: “The United States must defend liberty and justice because these principles are right and true for all people everywhere.”<sup>13</sup> Although a familiar element of American foreign policy rhetoric, the authoritative manner in which the NSS defines the realm of American responsibility in these normative terms is striking. It begins by drawing up a list of ‘moral principles’ revolving around the idea of freedom and summed up as “non-negotiable demands of human dignity”.<sup>14</sup> This is followed by declaring it the responsibility of the United States to protect these ideals not only where they are in place, but where there is a mere *demand* for them. And by defining these demands as natural for every human being of which “no nation is exempt from”,<sup>15</sup> the American

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<sup>10</sup> ESS, p. 2f, see below.

<sup>11</sup> ESS, p. 1

<sup>12</sup> ESS, p. 1. In his speech to the Foreign Policy Association Solana noted: “For Europeans, the removal of the Soviet threat brought a new sense of security. As our borders became secure, we cashed in *our* peace dividend. By contrast, 9/11 has shattered *your* century-old feeling of security through geography” (Solana 2003b, 2, emphasis added)

<sup>13</sup> NSS, p. 3

<sup>14</sup> These are: The rule of law, limits on the absolute power of the state, free speech, freedom of worship, equal justice, respect for women, religious and ethnic tolerance, and respect for private property (NSS, p. 3). Later in the paper, the concept of free trade is defined as a ‘moral principle’ and *de facto* added to the list (NSS, p. 18).

<sup>15</sup> NSS, p. 3f

realm of responsibility has no geographical limits. Thus, the declared goal of defending liberty/peace<sup>16</sup> takes morality as the ultimate guideline and defines a strategy of global reach and offensive in character. As the NSS puts it:

“using the opportunity we have today, the national security strategy of the United States must start from these core beliefs and look outward for possibilities to expand liberty”<sup>17</sup>

This “imperial logic of Bush’s liberal agenda”<sup>18</sup> is not motivated simply by altruism, but by a desire of protecting and further distributing the fruits of Cold War victory. As the document explains, it is rooted in ideas governing America’s internal order. Congruent with the interpretation of the events of 9/11 being an attack on freedom, the agenda is deduced from a responsibility to defend the foundation of American national greatness, namely the “principles enshrined in the declaration of independence”.<sup>19</sup> Given the well-known notion of American exceptionalism, there is no reason to dismiss as rhetorical smokescreen the declaration that “we are ultimately fighting for our democratic values and way of life”.<sup>20</sup>

## 2.2. EU

In comparison, the European document is not as explicit in outlining a realm of responsibility for the EU to defend. There are, however, some conclusive hints. For instance, the merits of democracy and the need to protect the “openness and tolerance of our societies” are mentioned.<sup>21</sup> But while sharing the aim of democracy promotion in principle, the ESS does not weigh in on the defence of liberalism to the extent the American document does, a point criticized by some European analysts.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, it mentions the competition for natural resources and explicitly acknowledges the growing energy dependence of European states as a “special concern”, an aspect not mentioned in the NSS.<sup>23</sup>

Taking a closer look, instead of seeing the EU as a defender of moral principles, the key objective surfacing in the ESS is the maintenance of (regional) stability.<sup>24</sup> This desirability of stability does not simply translate, as some critics conclude, into the desirability to maintain the status quo. Stemming from the assessment that integration has been the driving force of peace and prosperity in Europe, the ESS sketches the contours of a European belief in ‘stability through cooperation’. It does so by voicing

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<sup>16</sup> It is quite revealing that the two terms of ‘peace’ and ‘liberty’ are used interchangeably. In Bush’s cover letter as well as in Rice’s 2002 discussion of the document, the term ‘liberty’ is substituted by ‘peace’. This portrays the popularity of the ‘democratic-peace’ paradigm among the American political elite, and one of the few trajectories Bush has adopted from Clinton. See Cox et al. 2000.

<sup>17</sup> NSS, p. 3

<sup>18</sup> Rhodes 2003

<sup>19</sup> NSS, p. 3

<sup>20</sup> NSS, p. 7. In his West Point speech, Bush said “wherever we carry it, the American flag will not only stand for our power but for freedom. Our nation’s cause has always been larger than our nation’s defense. We fight, as we always fight, for a just peace – a peace that favors liberty” (Bush 2002a).

<sup>21</sup> ESS, p. 3

<sup>22</sup> Everts 2003; Meyer 2003

<sup>23</sup> ESS, p. 3

<sup>24</sup> See, for instance, the references on pages 1, 4, 8, 10.

here and there the EU's responsibility for strengthening global governance, international law, and multilateral order, not only as a mean but as an *end* in itself.<sup>25</sup> Hence, while the claim of the EU to "promote its values"<sup>26</sup> remains unspecified, between the lines the document emphasises cooperative engagement as a normative goal. In this context, it is telling that the very last sentence notes as an objective to contribute to a "more united world", a qualification not mentioned in the draft version.

However, overall the ESS harbours far more modest aspirations than its American counterpart. Despite its stated aim to share "responsibility for global security",<sup>27</sup> the agenda is clearly focused on the European region, with the exception of the Middle East. It thus does not follow the decisively global (universal) outlook of the NSS but emphasises that "even in an era of globalisation, geography is still important". The primary responsibility of the EU is therefore seen in turning the vision of a united and peaceful continent into reality. And this means, first and foremost, to concentrate efforts on the EU's neighbourhood.<sup>28</sup> Only here does the ESS explicitly identify a responsibility for promoting liberalism insofar that "it is in the European interest that countries on our borders are well governed".<sup>29</sup>

### 3. Threats

#### 3.1. US

According to the NSS, the primary threat to American and its ideals stems from 'terrorists with global reach', supplemented by 'rogue states', and weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). To be sure, some time is being spent on three other topics, namely the possible return of great power rivalries and arms races, regional conflicts, and poverty in developing countries.<sup>30</sup> However, in comparison these topics are not really defined as threats: The great powers Russia, China, and India, are classified as partners in the war on terror, regional conflicts are perceived as being problematic insofar as they affect America's "global priorities", and the poverty problem is mostly framed within the moral imperative to create a 'better world'. As such, their danger is relative and mainly measured in how far they hinder or fuel the 'terrorism-tyrants-WMD' triangle. At the top stands the definition of the terrorist threat:

"The enemy is not a single political regime or person or religion or ideology. The enemy is terrorism – premeditated, politically motivated violence against innocents".<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> ESS, p. 9, see also below.

<sup>26</sup> ESS, p. 6

<sup>27</sup> ESS, p. 1

<sup>28</sup> In his speech to the Foreign Policy Association, Solana's rhetoric comes closer to that of the NSS when declaring "our common mission is to defend and expand the boundaries of a stable, durable and peaceful liberal democracy, to share with others the rights and opportunities that we enjoy". But this is also qualified by emphasizing the importance of geography shortly after, Solana 2003b, 3f.

<sup>29</sup> ESS, p. 7.

<sup>30</sup> See sections VII, IV, and VIII, respectively.

<sup>31</sup> NSS, p. 5. The 'global reach' qualification is not specified anywhere in the document, and the NSCT reveals it as an empty term. There, the Bush administration divides terrorist organizations into three categories according to level of operation (state, regional, global), arguing that most of them are linked through various factors ranging from ideology to sponsorship. As this "interconnected nature" makes it

In accordance with the scholarly literature, this definition recognizes terrorism as a mean, rather than an end in itself. However, at closer look neither the NSS nor its more detailed supplementary document, the 'National Strategy For Combating Terrorism' (NSCT), spend much time on the issue of causes. Indeed, given the importance credited to the terrorist threat, the lacking discussion on (possible) motivations is striking. The NSCT deals only vaguely with underlying conditions such as economic or political frustration. And even then, these are positioned only as factors "that terrorists *seek to exploit*"<sup>32</sup> for other objectives, saying nothing about fundamental goals other than a desire to produce fear. Most apparent is the non-mentioning of the role of radical Islam.<sup>33</sup>

The dangerous element of terrorism lies, according to the Bush administration, in the *organizational* and in particular in the *operational* character of terrorist organisations. Terrorism is considered a "particularly elusive enemy",<sup>34</sup> a loose and subversive structure composed of "subnational groups and clandestine agents".<sup>35</sup> Other than the Soviet threat of the past, terrorism is an invisible opponent whose "shadowy networks of individuals", organized to "penetrate open societies" and supported by modern technology, are difficult to confront. According to the NSS, though, the real threat of terrorism lies in the type of actions it engages in. More precisely, the threat stems from regarding behaviour as legitimate, which is situated outside the accepted norm. The NSCT makes this point very clearly:

"Those who employ terrorism, *regardless of their specific secular or religious objectives*, strive to subvert the rule of law and effect change through violence and fear. These terrorists also share the *misguided belief* that killing, kidnapping, extorting, robbing, and wreaking havoc to terrorize people are *legitimate forms of political action*".<sup>36</sup>

The lack of respect for human life ascribed to terrorism also resonates in the description of terrorists as "soldiers who seek martyrdom in death".<sup>37</sup> Terrorism is thus seen as deviant or criminal behaviour and viewed in the same light as slavery, piracy, or genocide,<sup>38</sup> exposing those using this method as "enemies of civilization".<sup>39</sup> Consequently, Bush argues that terrorism cannot be tolerated, whatever the motivation: "no cause justifies terrorism". It is important to note that for Bush therefore the danger lies not only in terrorists' deviant behaviour *per se* but also in the

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necessary to fight terrorism "across the geographic spectrum", the document *de facto* makes the qualification 'global reach' obsolete.

<sup>32</sup> NSCT, p. 22f, emphasis added.

<sup>33</sup> On other occasions, the Bush administrations' assessment of causes often comes down to a diagnosis of Anti-Americanism. With the religious (Islamic) factor being deliberately downplayed so not to fall in the 'clash of civilization' trap, Rice links terrorists with "a mindset that...difference is a reason to hate and to kill" (Rice 2002, 1). It is worth noting, though, that prior to September 11 causes of terrorism had generally been under-researched among IR scholars (Crenshaw 2000).

<sup>34</sup> NSS, p. 5

<sup>35</sup> NSCT, p. 1

<sup>36</sup> NSCT, p. 1, emphasis added.

<sup>37</sup> NSS, p. 15

<sup>38</sup> NSS, p. 6

<sup>39</sup> NSS, p. 11

failure of third parties to recognize it as such. Since all acts of terror are illegitimate, it signifies behaviour “no respectable government can condone or support and all must oppose”.<sup>40</sup> For Bush, the threat of terrorism thus possesses a strong moral dimension that must be confronted in a ‘war of ideas’.

This is where the document links terrorism with the second major threat, ‘rogue states’. According to the NSS, a small number of ‘rogue states’ emerged in the 1990s. Although mentioning Iraq and North Korea as examples, the much-discussed term ‘axis of evil’ does not appear in either the NSS or the NSCT.<sup>41</sup> Used interchangeably with ‘rogue regimes’ and ‘tyrants’,<sup>42</sup> the document measures ‘rogue states’ mainly on the behaviour of political leaders. Five aspects are mentioned: (i) brutalisation of own people, (ii) lack of regard for international law, (iii) determination to acquire WMD’s for offensive purposes, (iv) sponsoring global terrorism, and (v) rejection of basic human values and, as if to sum it up, hatred of the United States and “everything for which it stands”.<sup>43</sup> Hence, in the same manner as the terrorist threat, this represents a list of deviant or unacceptable behaviour of state-actors.

While it is not clear how many of these points a regime needs to fulfil in order to qualify as ‘rogue’, they can be fused together into two key determinants. First, the deviant behaviour of rogue states means that they cannot be trusted. Similar to terrorists (and other than the old Cold War adversary) the NSS assumes that rogue regimes are likely to act in an irrational manner, noting “leaders of rogue states are more willing to take risks”.<sup>44</sup> This becomes dangerous in the light of, second, the attempts of rogue state leaders to acquire WMD’s. Given the proliferation of relevant knowledge and material after the end of the Cold War, “the availability and potential use of a WMD has become a category [of threat] by itself”.<sup>45</sup> Given the irrational behaviour of rogue regimes, the NSS fears such states acquire WMD’s not for the purpose of deterrence but “as weapons of choice”.<sup>46</sup>

The biggest threat scenario therefore arises out of an “alliance of terror and tyrants”.<sup>47</sup> The notion of ‘state-sponsored terrorism’ is expressed in Bush’s well-known statement that “we make no distinction between terrorists and those who knowingly harbour or provide aid to them”.<sup>48</sup> With terrorist networks and rogue states being connected by deviant behaviour, including the assumed readiness to use WMDs, they are in the words of Rice “different faces of the same evil”.<sup>49</sup> The potential of such an alliance to form is therefore seen as high and, given the experience of September 11<sup>th</sup>, the potential costs as too high. As a consequence, Bush argues that the greatest danger to freedom lies not only “at the crossroads of radicalism and technology”,<sup>50</sup> but also in the denial of this threat and/or the failure to act against it.

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<sup>40</sup> NSS, p. 6

<sup>41</sup> See also Gaddis 2002.

<sup>42</sup> This term, rather than rogue state, is the one used predominantly in Bush 2002a.

<sup>43</sup> NSS, p. 14

<sup>44</sup> NSS, p. 15

<sup>45</sup> NSCT, p. 10

<sup>46</sup> NSS, p. 15

<sup>47</sup> NSS, p. v. See also Bush 2002a.

<sup>48</sup> NSS, p. 5

<sup>49</sup> Rice 2002, 2

<sup>50</sup> NSS, p. v

### 3.2. EU

Noting that large-scale aggression against EU member states is nowadays unlikely, the ESS mentions five key threats. Only four of them are discussed below: (i) WMD proliferation, (ii) terrorism, and (iii) failed states (because they resemble the triangle in the NSS), and (iv) organised crime (because it is missing from the NSS). The fifth, regional conflicts, is not discussed separately because it emerges as a factor in each of the other four threats.

The proliferation of WMD's is defined by the ESS as the "potentially the greatest threat".<sup>51</sup> Supplemented by the proliferation of missile technology, the danger is specified in two scenarios: First, through the possibility of new arms races with destabilizing consequences in various regions, "especially in the Middle East" and, second, through terrorist groups acquiring WMD's with the possible intent of using them. The ESS echoes the Bush administration by regarding the latter one as "the most frightening scenario".<sup>52</sup> As for terrorism, an explicit definition is not given. Similar to the US document, though, the danger is seen in the increased willingness of terrorists to use "unlimited violence and to cause massive casualties", thus affecting lives as well as openness of societies.<sup>53</sup> While this synchronic view is hardly surprising, the ESS approach to the subject differs in three ways. Most obviously, qualifying terrorism as a 'strategic' threat,<sup>54</sup> the European assessment of terrorism lacks the strong normative dimension put forward in the US document. And with regard to causes, the ESS notes:

"The most recent wave of terrorism...is linked to violent religious extremism. It arises out of complex causes. These include the pressures of modernisation, cultural, social and political crisis, and the alienation of young people living in foreign societies. This phenomenon is also part of our own society."<sup>55</sup>

By identifying a range of – admittedly vague – causes, notably including religion, the ESS directs the attention to motivations for committing terrorist acts, rather than focusing on the method only. Second, it acknowledges that these causes also reside within European societies, a step not made by the Bush administration.<sup>56</sup>

Despite the semantic resemblance, the threat of 'failing states' presented in the ESS is very different in character from the American 'rogue states' concept. Indeed, neither the term nor the category put forward in the NSS appears in the European

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<sup>51</sup> ESS, p. 3. Like the US, the EU Rome Council also passed a strategy against WMD proliferation.

<sup>52</sup> ESS, p. 4

<sup>53</sup> ESS, p. 3

<sup>54</sup> While the 'strategic' is not further specified, it is noteworthy that the ESS conflates Al Qaeda activities with terrorism in general. This is a significant departure from the draft version, which had placed the new terrorist phenomenon as 'different from the organisations with which we are familiar' (ESS draft, p. 5). Similarly, the final version asserts 'European countries are targets and have been attacked' (ESS, 3), whereas the draft only noted that attacks in Europe 'have been planned but thankfully thwarted' (ESS draft, p. 5).

<sup>55</sup> ESS, p. 3

<sup>56</sup> As Ed Rhodes points out, the NSS ignores that liberalism is not only threatened by 'terrorists and tyrants', but that "even a polity based on Jefferson's stirring declaration of independence and its incorporating Bill of Rights...is capable of illiberal thought and action" (Rhodes 2003, 146).

discussion of threats. Only at the end of the section dealing with multilateral engagement (see below) does the ESS mention countries who “have placed themselves outside the bounds of international society” through isolation or violation of international norms.<sup>57</sup> While these outsiders do not qualify as threats by the Europeans, failing states do. They are defined as societies whose social and political institutions have been severely weakened or have collapsed. Citing Somalia, Liberia, and Afghanistan as examples, the danger stemming from such states is seen in their destabilizing effect, allowing the foothold of terrorism and organised crime (see below), as well as the European public’s concern about humanitarian tragedies.<sup>58</sup> The factors causing state systems to fail – bad governance and civil conflict are mentioned – are also added to the list.

Finally, the ESS identifies Europe as being a “prime target” of organised crime.<sup>59</sup> As with terrorism, the problem of organised crime is seen as blurring the distinction between internal and external threats. Not only pose they a problem to EU-internal order. Revenues from illicit cross-border trade of drugs, women, weapons, and illegal migrants are fuelling – as well as benefiting from – failing state structures abroad. Afghanistan and “Balkan criminal networks” are mentioned in this context,<sup>60</sup> although it is clear that other neighbouring countries of the EU, both towards the East and in the Mediterranean region, are included in this scenario as well:

“Neighbours who are engaged in violent conflict, weak states where organised crime flourishes, dysfunctional societies or exploding population growth on its borders all pose problems for Europe.”<sup>61</sup>

In sum, while the EU document notes that the new threats are dynamic and often distant, it does not define them as imminent. Instead it strikes a careful balance between threat analysis and the earlier diagnosis that Europe is currently more secure, noting that “taking these different elements together...we *could* be confronted with a very radical threat indeed”.<sup>62</sup>

## **4. Tasks/Strategies**

### **4.1. US**

Building on the analysis of responsibilities and threats, the NSS outlines an ambitious agenda to protect America and its liberal values by differentiating three approaches: ‘defending’, ‘preserving’, and ‘extending’ freedom/peace. Underlying this agenda is the conviction that democracy and free enterprise are the central building blocks for sustainable national success and peaceful interstate relations. Hence, the Bush administration seeks to “extend the peace by encouraging free and open societies” through the promotion of political and economic liberalism. As such,

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<sup>57</sup> ESS, p. 10

<sup>58</sup> ESS, pp. 4, 7

<sup>59</sup> ESS, p. 4

<sup>60</sup> ESS, p. 5

<sup>61</sup> ESS, p. 7

<sup>62</sup> ESS, p. 5, emphasis added.

it not only wants to protect the fruits of Cold War victory but to spread them even further by “opening societies” and injecting the (American) formula for national greatness. Seen in this light, the fight against terror is understood not only as an obligation, but also as an *opportunity*.

Two long sections are devoted to laying out the guidelines for US foreign economic and development policy. The first focuses on the goal of global economic growth and sets up the link between free trade and development. Noting that economic growth “reinforces the habits of liberty”, the NSS calls for the global promotion of free market mechanisms in order to generate such growth.<sup>63</sup> In this context, it also identifies the concept of free trade as a ‘moral principle’ because it allows for “real freedom, the freedom for a person – or a nation – to make a living”.<sup>64</sup> The second section adds the political component. It essentially argues that, in order to reduce poverty and “unleash the productive potential of individuals” in developing countries, structural reforms towards openness and democracy are necessary. Therefore, objectives of development assistance “must change”.<sup>65</sup> Calling it a moral obligation to measure the success of development assistance, the NSS states that American aid will thus be conditional, demanding the “right national policies” in receiving countries.<sup>66</sup>

On the topic of regional conflicts, the NSS at one point notes that there are “legitimate grievances” in many regions that “must be addressed within a political process”.<sup>67</sup> Further down, the document mentions conflicts in the Middle East, South Asia (India/Pakistan, Indonesia), Latin America (Columbia), and Africa. US policy geared towards ‘defusing’ tensions in these regions is formulated around two goals: (i) fostering democratic institutions, open markets, and respect for ‘human dignity’, and (ii) cooperating in the war on terror (see below). On the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the view is expressed that “there can be no peace for either side without freedom for both sides”. At the same time, the American role in solving the conflict is scaled down. While willing to “continue to encourage all parties to step up to their responsibilities”, the document concedes that America has a limited ability to help those who are “unwilling or unready to help themselves”.<sup>68</sup>

With regard to the war on terror, the NSS takes a very different attitude. Here, the definition of defending the peace is forward leaning and pro-active, noting “the only path to peace and security is the path of action”.<sup>69</sup> Again, it becomes clear that the feared overlap between terrorists, tyrants, and WMD’s has changed the risk threshold of the Bush-Administration: “the greater the threat, the greater the risk of inaction (...) even if uncertainty remains”.<sup>70</sup> Given the nature of the new enemy,

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<sup>63</sup> NSS, p. 17f

<sup>64</sup> NSS, p. 18

<sup>65</sup> NSS, p. 21

<sup>66</sup> NSS, p. 22. More on the side, Bush also mentions the necessity to stabilize the global financial market; for Europe and Japan to reform the structures of their economies; and that “economic growth should be accompanied by global efforts to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations” (NSS: 20).

<sup>67</sup> NSS, p. 5

<sup>68</sup> NSS, p. 9f

<sup>69</sup> NSS, p. v

<sup>70</sup> NSS, p. 15

traditional deterrence is seen as having lost its leverage, opening up the necessity for pre-emptive action.<sup>71</sup>

“as a matter of common sense and self-defence, America will act against such threats before they are fully formed. We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best”.<sup>72</sup>

While the different steps to scale back terrorist operability are given in more detail in the NSCT, the NSS provides the broad framework. It promises continuous action using “all the elements of national and international power”, listing a variety of tools, including military, missile defence, law enforcement, financial control, and intelligence. It also demands that corresponding national institutions must be transformed in order to cope with the task at hand.<sup>73</sup> Intelligence is considered “the first line of defence”, and diplomacy seen as necessary “to interact with others”. Even more so, diplomacy has to engage in “public information efforts” in order to “help people around the world learn and understand America”.<sup>74</sup> Here, the theme of a ‘war of ideas’ once again emerges. This dimension is explicitly linked to the central yet rarely mentioned target of US counter-terrorist action: Islamic societies. The document declares to support “modern government” in the Muslim world “to ensure that...ideologies that promote terrorism do not find fertile ground”.<sup>75</sup> And a key paragraph towards the end of the document notes:

“The war on terrorism is not a clash of civilizations. It does, however reveal the clash inside a civilization, a *battle for the future of the Muslim world*. This is a *struggle of ideas* and this is an area where America must excel”<sup>76</sup>

Nevertheless, for the Bush administration the military component is the most important one. Arguing that the unparalleled strength and forward presence of US military has maintained peace in the past, it concludes that it is time to “reaffirm the essential role of American military strength”. Bush defines it as a primary goal to “build and maintain our defences beyond challenge” and to “limit rivalries to trade and other pursuits of peace”.<sup>77</sup> At the same time, the document attempts to calm possible concerns about America’s intentions of using its military power by painting the picture of the US as a benign hegemon (without using the term). It emphasises American willingness to use force not only in its own defence but also “in defence of others”. Global deployment of US military personnel within and beyond Europe and Asia are thus portrayed as “one of the most profound symbols of the U.S. commitments to allies and friends”.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> NSS, pp. 6, 15

<sup>72</sup> NSS, p. v

<sup>73</sup> NSS, p. 29

<sup>74</sup> NSS, p. 31

<sup>75</sup> NSS, p. 6

<sup>76</sup> NSS, p. 31, emphasis added.

<sup>77</sup> NSS, p. 29

<sup>78</sup> NSS, p. 29. See Posen (2003) for a positive assessment of this policy, Rhodes (2003) for a critique.

## 4.2. EU

The ESS defines three strategic objectives of European security policy: (i) addressing the main threats previously identified, (ii) fostering security in the EU's neighbourhood, and (iii) building an international order based on "effective multilateralism". Although this list only already suggests a different agenda from the American one, there are a number of similarities between the US and the EU document regarding the tasks at hand. Most obviously, the documents holds that EU member states must adapt to the new circumstances and recognize that "the first line of defence will often be abroad".<sup>79</sup> Whereas Solana's draft had come close to the US argument that the strategy of deterrence fails with new terrorist phenomenon,<sup>80</sup> the final version has dropped this view. It still notes, though, that terrorist networks will become "ever more dangerous" when left alone, and that the EU should be "ready to act before a crisis occurs. Conflict prevention and threat prevention cannot start too early".<sup>81</sup> Moreover, the ESS shares the 'democratic-peace' assumption by declaring "the best protection for our security is a world of well-governed democratic states".<sup>82</sup>

The difference lies, as always, in the meaning of key terms. In this case, it is found most profoundly in the European understanding of 'conflict prevention' and the American one of 'pre-emptive action'.<sup>83</sup> In essence, the notion of a preventive strategy as presented in the ESS resembles what UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has called a 'culture of prevention': emphasising civilian means in addressing socio-economic root causes and post-conflict peace building tasks, rather than offensive military operations.<sup>84</sup> Thus, while agreeing with Bush that a mixture of instruments is required to address the 'new threats', the European document puts much less emphasis on the military component. Listing past EU activities in addressing the new threats, the ESS mentions cooperation in the legal and police realm, anti-proliferation and arms-control measures, as well as interventions aimed to "put failed states back on their feet".<sup>85</sup> Indeed, the only time the necessity for military action is mentioned is in connection with failed states. And even then the statement "military instruments may be needed to restore order" needs to be looked at carefully. Not only is it embedded in phrases stressing the importance of civilian crisis management and reconstruction tools. Moreover, the use of the term 'restore' rather than 'change' order signals a subtle but important qualification, essentially framing the military as a post-conflict tool only. This is spelled out in the sentence that follows: "Regional conflicts need political solutions but *military assets* and effective policing *may be needed in the post conflict phase*".<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> ESS, p. 7

<sup>80</sup> ESS draft, p. 5

<sup>81</sup> ESS, p. 7. Speaking to the Institute for European Affairs, Dublin, Solana even noted how "conflict prevention lies at the heart of our work. It is a central aim of our external policies", Solana 2003b: 2

<sup>82</sup> ESS, p. 10

<sup>83</sup> There has also been debate among Europeans about use and meaning of the term 'pre-emptive' and 'preventive'. Whereas the draft version had included the former, it was taken out and replaced with the latter due largely to German and French insistence, who saw 'pre-emptive' as too closely related to the American position. See also Dempsey 2003; Everts 2003.

<sup>84</sup> The focus on 'conflict prevention' has been central to EU strategic thinking at least since the 1997 Amsterdam treaty. See also the Nice 2000 presidential report.

<sup>85</sup> ESS, p. 6

<sup>86</sup> ESS, p. 7. This clarifying sentence has been added in the final version.

In this context, it is notable that despite the EU's economic power and its position as the biggest donor in development aid, this dimension receives very little attention. True, trade and development policies are mentioned as "powerful tools for promoting reforms",<sup>87</sup> and the American call for conditioned and targeted trade measures is taken up. But in comparison to the US document, these references are marginal in the ESS, which seems slightly paradoxical given the downplaying of military means outlined previously. However, Everts and Keohane find this to be the documents' most important political message, because it repudiates "the traditional view that the EU believes only in deploying 'soft power' tools such as economic aid."<sup>88</sup>

The ESS also presents a regional focus. However, in line with the statement that geography still matters, it only deals with the European continent in substance. The task is set to extend the 'zone of security' around the EU, particularly mentioning the integration of acceding states and the consolidation of the peace process in the Balkans.<sup>89</sup> In order to avoid new dividing lines and increase regional stability, the ESS calls for promoting "a ring of well governed countries" around the EU. Geared towards both the East as well as the Mediterranean, it promises a strategy of "extending the benefits of economic and political cooperation".<sup>90</sup> The only real concern mentioned outside the European periphery is the Arab-Israeli conflict, whose resolution is defined a 'strategic priority'; otherwise, the ESS warns, there would be "little chance of dealing successfully with other problems in the Middle East". Similar to the NSS, the EU policy supports the two-state solution, though stresses this to be done in a "united and cooperative effort". In this context, a sentence has been added to the final version asking for a "broader engagement with the Arab World".<sup>91</sup>

The biggest departure from the NSS is the way in which the EU document commits itself to an international order 'based on effective multilateralism'. In essence, the inner-European experience of rule-based cooperation and confidence building being a successful security strategy is translated to the international level. Strengthening International Law is thus seen as the conditional response to the challenges identified above. It is argued that

"our security and prosperity depend on an effective multilateral system. The development of a stronger international society, well functioning international institutions and a rule-based international order should be our objective"<sup>92</sup>

Upholding and developing international treaties and legal frameworks is thought to be particularly suited to address the problems of terrorism and WMD proliferation. Here, as in other issues like the Middle East conflict, the ESS is eager to inform the reader that Europe is no newcomer to the international game. It not only declares a commitment to achieve "universal adherence to multilateral treaty regimes"

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<sup>87</sup> ESS, p. 10

<sup>88</sup> Everts and Keohane 2003: 177.

<sup>89</sup> As Solana noted in his Dublin speech: "The most successful security strategy ever pursued by the EU has been the enlargement process. It is the only process which transforms societies", Solana 2003b: 3

<sup>90</sup> ESS, p. 8

<sup>91</sup> ESS, p. 8

<sup>92</sup> ESS, p. 9f

but also notes that it has pursued policies against proliferation “over many years”.<sup>93</sup> In the same vein, it stresses European support for the UN system. Enhancing the ability of the United Nations to “fulfil its responsibilities” and to “act effectively” is defined as a European priority.<sup>94</sup> The strategy of what could be called ‘security through inclusion’ resonates in the calling for the widening of membership of key institutions (WTO, IMF, WB), as well as in his dealing with what resembles the American target group of ‘rogue states’. The document declares it “desirable” that such countries rejoined the International Community and offers assistance, warning rather vaguely that otherwise “there is a price to be paid”. This ties back to an earlier reminder that the effectiveness of treaties also relies on how violations are being dealt with, demanding that “we must be ready to act when their rules are broken”.<sup>95</sup>

Finally, a substantial part is spent on spelling out implications for EU-internal reforms. The ESS calls for an improvement of the EU’s activity, capability, and coherence, to pursue the tasks outlined above. More specifically, it asks for a strategic culture of pro-active (incl. preventive) engagement with optimising the use of “the full spectrum of instruments at our disposal”.<sup>96</sup> It thus demands from member states to increase, adapt, and better coordinate existing resources and policies in both the military and civilian realm. While most of this section falls out of the comparative focus vis-a-vis the US document, it reveals an important second motivation for these reforms. Behind the declared goal of increasing the EU’s ‘crisis management’ capacity is that of strengthening the EU’s recognition as an international actor:

“A European Union which takes greater responsibility and which is more active [in managing conflicts] will be one which carries greater political weight”<sup>97</sup>

## 5. Partners, Mandate, Control

### 5.1. US

The NSS defines the war on terror (‘Operation Enduring Freedom’) not only the primary security objective for the United States but also the global enterprise of the ‘free world’. Repeating his ‘with-us or against-us’ view, Bush in his cover letter sees participation in this fight as an obligation for free nations, a “duty and calling for freedom-loving people across the globe and across ages”. The reason is twofold: First, as the terrorist attacks are aimed primarily at the ideal of freedom, all countries that regard themselves as free are under attack. Second, with all acts of terrorism being illegitimate, all “nations that enjoy freedom *must* actively fight terror”.<sup>98</sup> This is, in essence, a logical conclusion of the normative dimension of terrorist practices outlined above.

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<sup>93</sup> ESS, p. 6

<sup>94</sup> ESS, pp. 9, 11. By doing so, the document pointedly takes up the critique voiced by Bush in his speech to the UN General Assembly in September 2002.

<sup>95</sup> ESS, p. 9f.

<sup>96</sup> ESS, p. 11

<sup>97</sup> ESS, p. 11

<sup>98</sup> NSS, p. v

However, there is a practical side as well. In its effort of scaling back terrorist operability, the NSS concedes that America needs support from ‘allies and friends’ with regard to intelligence, law enforcement, and disruption of terrorist financing. Regional partners are thus encouraged to “take up a coordinated effort that isolates the terrorists”.<sup>99</sup> It promises that the US would rely on regional organizations and state powers “wherever possible”, and provide the necessary capacities for them “to meet their obligation to fight terrorism”.<sup>100</sup> This rallying of allies has particular consequences for the relationship with other great powers Russia, India, and China, where the Bush administration sees an opportunity to overcome “old patterns of rivalry”. While having critical remarks on all three countries,<sup>101</sup> they are portrayed as being in the midst of an internal transition towards the better. Encouraging further political and economic reforms, there is much talk in the NSS about opportunities for ‘constructive’ cooperation and ‘strategic’ relationships. It even mentions “common values” and sees new hope for “a truly global consensus about basic principles” among major powers.<sup>102</sup> Essentially, the view is put forward that 9/11 has “fundamentally” changed the context in which great power relations are taking place because they are now facing a common enemy:

“Today, the international community has the best chance...to build a world where great powers compete in peace instead of continually prepare for war. Today, the world’s great powers find ourselves on the same side – united by common dangers of terrorist violence and chaos”<sup>103</sup>

Not surprisingly, established democracies are seen as ‘natural’ allies. In Asia, the document lists Japan, South Korea, Australia, Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore, and New Zealand as “valuable” partners. Looking across the Atlantic, the NSS goes so far as saying “there is little of lasting consequence that the United States can accomplish in the world without the sustained cooperation of its allies and friends in [Canada and] Europe”.<sup>104</sup> The value of Europe as a partner is seen in its housing both NATO and the EU, which are hailed as “the strongest and most able international institutions in the world”.<sup>105</sup> Their respective roles and the relationship between them are defined as follows: NATO is clearly occupying the realm of security and defence. It is seen as “the fulcrum of transatlantic and inner-European security” with the duty to act “whenever our interests are threatened”. The legitimacy for NATO military action is, in the view of the NSS, provided by “NATO’s own mandate”.<sup>106</sup> In order to meet the new operational demands, Bush lists a variety of measures for NATO to be taken, ranging from further expansion to internal transformation. In contrast, the EU is described as a “partner in world trade” and, hence, reduced to an economic player. Following the strategy of the Clinton administration, efforts by European states of building up a greater foreign policy and defence identity “with the EU” are welcomed

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<sup>99</sup> NSS, p. 6

<sup>100</sup> NSS, p. 7

<sup>101</sup> Most notably China, which is described as “following an outdated path”, NSS, p. 27

<sup>102</sup> NSS, p. 26

<sup>103</sup> NSS, p. iv

<sup>104</sup> NSS, p. 25

<sup>105</sup> NSS, p. 25

<sup>106</sup> Thus making explicit what had been suggested in the Alliance’s 1999 Strategic Concept.

as long as this takes place within a NATO framework: “[We] commit ourselves to close consultations to ensure that these developments work with NATO”.<sup>107</sup>

Above all, the NSS puts America in the position of the natural and self-sufficient leader, equipped with the historical responsibility “to lead in this great mission”. There is no talk of multilateralism and little mentioning of the United Nations system as a general framework for action.<sup>108</sup> Willingness for cooperation is based on “American internationalism” that reflects “the union of our values and our national interest”.<sup>109</sup> Convinced that “the reasons for our action will be clear, the force measured, and the cause just”,<sup>110</sup> the document openly rejects all international constraints. For instance, an entire paragraph is spent on denouncing the legitimacy of the International Criminal Court, whose jurisdiction is seen as not extending to Americans and “which we do not accept”.<sup>111</sup> Arguing that ultimately the foundation of American strength is found ‘at home’, it is made clear that the US will not rule out unilateral action “when our interests and unique responsibility require”. Hence, in a way the NSS defines a new logic of deterrence by declaring

“while the United States will strive to enlist the support of the International Community, we will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defence by acting pre-emptively.”<sup>112</sup>

## 5.2. EU

The EU’s approach regarding partners is more committed to multilateralism than the American one. While the assessment “there are few, if any problems we can deal with on our own” sounds similar to the NSS quote above, the European document does not leave room for an alternative: “international cooperation is a necessity”.<sup>113</sup> Hence, in contrast to the American view, the ESS does not see a possibility to act effectively other than with partners. This refers to the member states among themselves, as well to the EU as an international actor:

“we need to pursue our objectives both through multilateral cooperation in international organisations and through partnerships with other key actors”<sup>114</sup>

Cooperation with other European organisations such as the OSCE and the Council of Europe are mentioned as being significant for the EU’s security. Similarly, Russia is declared a “major factor”. Calling further for ‘strategic partnerships’ with Japan, China, Canada, and India, the ESS more or less falls in line with the American

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<sup>107</sup> NSS, p. 26

<sup>108</sup> The UN is mentioned mainly in connection with specific initiatives the US has supported.

<sup>109</sup> This reflects Ivo Daalder’s observation that Bush’s self-confidence about American power and purpose had reached the point at which “America’s preferences are unquestionably right, and the sole purpose of talking to others is to persuade them of that fact” (Daalder 2003: 159).

<sup>110</sup> NSS, p. 16

<sup>111</sup> NSS, p. 31

<sup>112</sup> NSS, p. 6

<sup>113</sup> ESS, p. 13

<sup>114</sup> ESS, p. 13

list (although the European version is limited to name-dropping).<sup>115</sup> Then again, the EU document deviates from the US position with its support for a rule-based international order and the declared interest to further develop and support institutions such as the ICC and the UN.<sup>116</sup>

It is here where the ESS enters a strategic dilemma: The two most important partners mentioned are the United Nations system and the United States. The UN Charter is declared the “fundamental framework for international relations” which the EU is seeking to strengthen, stating European commitment to reinforce cooperation with the UN. Similarly, the value of the transatlantic relationship is defined as “one of the core elements of the international system”, and as such deemed “irreplaceable”. The EU states as its aim “an effective and balanced partnership with the USA”.<sup>117</sup> In this context, it is notable, though, how little space the document devotes to NATO, which according to the Bush administration is the primary security institution in Europe. And where it is mentioned, the Alliance is framed as a central element of the transatlantic relationship, or as “enhancing the operational capability of the EU”. In either case, there is no expression of hierarchy or NATO dominance.<sup>118</sup> The problem not mentioned but inevitably arising with naming both the relationship with the UN and the US as ‘fundamental’ is, of course, that they are difficult to reconcile as cooperative partners. The central issue arising in this context is, as Everts and Keohane (2003) pointed out, the mandate for the use of force. And whereas Solana’s draft version left this question unanswered, the ESS shifts authority towards the UN by stating:

“The United Nations Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security”<sup>119</sup>

## 6. Conclusion

This comparison of American and European security strategies has produced little evidence for Lord Robertson’s assessment of a ‘new transatlantic consensus’. Quite the contrary seems to be the case. Despite some (no doubt important) overlaps, the documents express quite distinctive views in all areas under investigation here: realms of responsibility, threat perception, tasks and strategies, and external partners. The major fault lines are well known: the US as the self-appointed global defender of the liberal ideal, with a strong tendency towards unilateralism and forward leaning militarism; the EU primarily concerned with the process of European integration, favouring multilateralism and non-military tools. As much as this sounds like repeating familiar stereotypes, there is little in these documents that proves these characterizations as wrong. While there is no direct discussion of how the end of the

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<sup>115</sup> ESS, p. 14

<sup>116</sup> ESS, p. 10

<sup>117</sup> ESS, pp. 9, 13

<sup>118</sup> In his Dublin speech, Solana notes: “Our working relations with NATO are on a firm, clear and agreed basis which respects the autonomy of each organisation” (Solana 2003c: 4)

<sup>119</sup> ESS, p. 9. This can in particular be attributed to German pressure. One month prior to adopting the final version, the German Assistant Foreign Minister, Kerstin Mueller, stated in a conference on European security: “Only the United Nations are able to procure international legitimacy – and thus global political and legal credibility (...) It will stay that way” (Mueller 2003: 5).

Cold War or the events of September 11, 2001, have been interpreted in Europe and the US, they certainly have not shifted perspectives and policy preferences in the same direction. To be sure, an acknowledgement and sense of common commitment to tackle global security problems does speak from these texts. However, the different nuances behind the threat triangle identified on both sides (terrorism, WMDs, 'bad' states) and the strategy to address them (preventive action) become clear once the common semantic shell is removed. Underlying them all, the most striking difference is the normative assertiveness with which the US presents its case, and the lack thereof in the ESS.

The analysis also showed that each side is deliberately omitting important aspects which America or European security policy is often identified with. The NSS is either silent or downplaying the role of Islam, failed states, American energy needs, the term 'axis of evil', civilian conflict prevention, and the United Nations. Similarly, the EU document is less enthusiastic about its global responsibility, the spread of liberalism, the war on terror, military intervention, its image as a civilian power, and the role of NATO. This shows that both documents are very much outward oriented, conscious about their international audience, and in themselves a political tool carrying a specific message.<sup>120</sup> Moreover, the analysis revealed two important features that are often overlooked: The role of ideas as a mean, and recognition as a goal. The NSS defines the fight against terrorism not in military terms but repeatedly stresses the war of ideas, the American one consisting of terrorism being illegitimate and liberalism being superior. In turn, a significant part of the ESS' call for increasing European capabilities and readiness for 'robust intervention' is aimed towards increasing the EU's stand as a credible global actor. This does not necessarily represent a point of conflict,<sup>121</sup> but it adds to both strategies a unique character.

Given that the comparison undertaken here is a snapshot perspective, it might well be that there is nevertheless convergence between European and American positions when looked at from a historical perspective. This, at least, is what seems to be the understanding in Washington, where the Solana draft was welcomed as approaching the American position and, hence, as "a sign of a maturing relationship", a view shared by some analysts.<sup>122</sup> However, the fact that the EU managed to come up with a security strategy loosely modelled on the NSS should not be confused with what really matters, the content. Also, it is not very helpful to downplay the tensions by simply pointing to the history of past disagreements among NATO partners. Not only the Robert Kagans but also historians like Geir Lundestad (2003) argue that the differences currently on display are of a deeper, more structural nature, not confined to particular individuals or administrations.

This assessment is confirmed when, in conclusion, taking a brief look at what these documents say about history or, rather, about themselves in historical relations. The NSS views history as a *judge*. From an US perspective, history is a linear, progressive enterprise leading towards 'national greatness' those civilizations that

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<sup>120</sup> For instance, one cannot escape the feeling that the reason Bush included 'cooperation', 'working with others' and protecting 'our friends' in almost all section-titles of the NSS is to counter (or hide) the notion of American unilateralism.

<sup>121</sup> Although the European plan of increasing military capabilities runs at least theoretically against the American policy of military superiority.

<sup>122</sup> Everts and Keohane (2003)

organize their society around the idea of liberalism. Reminiscent of Fukuyama's 'end of history' thesis, America's Cold War triumph is hence taken as a confirmation of pursuing the right policies. This not only regards its democratic tradition but also reaches in the economic realm. Bush asserts that the "lessons of history are clear: market economies...are the best way to promote prosperity and reduce poverty".<sup>123</sup> Those who have not followed the recipe of liberalism, such as Russia or China, are punished automatically: "History has not been kind to those nations which ignored or flouted the rights and aspirations of their people".<sup>124</sup> Similarly, with regard to the new threat triangle, the document warns "history will judge harshly those who saw this danger coming but failed to act".<sup>125</sup> Although self-critical in the respect that America's own history is seen as a long struggle to live up to its ideals, America could not have failed because it has been set on the right path from the very beginning: "Even in our worst moments, the principles enshrined in the Declaration of Independence were there to guide us".<sup>126</sup> Therefore, Bush says, "our responsibility to history is already clear: to...rid the world of evil".<sup>127</sup>

Europeans draw on history not as a judge but more as a *teacher*. And the lessons are not necessarily universal: Europe's past is mainly understood as a warning not for others but for Europeans themselves. The most insightful paragraph on this issue is not found in the ESS but in Solana's speech to the Foreign Policy Association in New York and worth quoting in some length:

"The history of the United States is a history of construction; that of the European Union a history of reconstruction. Construction of your 'city on the hill' was an enterprise of optimism and vision. The architects of the United States look to the future. The vision of the European Union has been constructed on the ashes of its past. And history still weighs heavily"<sup>128</sup>

The past is perceived not only as a burden, but also as a source for critical self-reflection and, as such, a guide. Most obviously, the EU's preference for multilateralism is repeatedly presented as a result of 'lessons learned'. Having covered the world with empires and ideas in the past, Solana notes, Europeans have become "wary of ideology". The success of the EU to bring about prosperity, peace, and stability "unprecedented in European history"<sup>129</sup> has demonstrated the benefits of international cooperation. And inasmuch as European integration is seen as defining the 'right' path, the view of history as a teacher carries a progressive notion as well. Compared to the American view, though, it is more humble. The European lesson

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<sup>123</sup> NSS, p. 17

<sup>124</sup> NSS, p. 3

<sup>125</sup> NSS, p. iv

<sup>126</sup> NSS, p. 3

<sup>127</sup> NSS, p. 5. The NSCT also compares the current threats with those America and its liberal ideal faced in the past. The section entitled 'the nature of the terrorist threat' begins with a quote from Bush identifying terrorists as "heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century", who are served by a "radical vision" and thus following "the path of fascism, and Nazism, and totalitarianism" (NSCT, p. 5)

<sup>128</sup> Solana 2003b, 2

<sup>129</sup> It is notably that the ESS gives most of the credit for pacifying European continent to the EU. While the United States is attributed a "critical role", this role is defined in terms of its support for European integration and its security commitment through NATO, ESS, p. 1.

drawn from history (as of yet) lacks the claim for universality and therefore is not suited for defining a global mission. But is it free from ideals? Although termed “a thoroughly pragmatic venture”, the vision of creating a united and peaceful continent through negotiation and compromise may be closer to a European ideology than EU officials want to admit.

In sum, the professional optimism of the (former) NATO Secretary General aside, there seems little reason to celebrate a new transatlantic partnership in security affairs. While it is true to some extent that “what happens on the ground is always different from what is contained in a security doctrine”, as one EU ambassador pointed out, no one would deny their importance as mental maps for policymakers. Within them there is always room for manoeuvre – in particular for individual EU member states – but the mind gap separating these two documents appears very real.

8.600 words

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