Common Security and Defence Policy: the permanence of bureaucratic politics in EU security dynamics

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Paper presented at the
Political Studies Association Conference
Sheffield, 31 March 2015

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DRAFT PAPER: PLEASE DO NOT QUOTE WITHOUT FIRST CONTACTING AUTHOR
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Keywords
Lisbon Treaty, CFSP, CSDP, intergovernmentalism, bureaucratic politics, Grand Strategy

1. Introduction: EU ambition in security and defence – the absence of Grand Strategy

The Saint Malo Declaration in 1998 called on the EU to create the ‘capacity for autonomous defence’ (Saint Malo Declaration, 1998); the European Security Strategy (ESS) called for ‘(an EU) strategic culture that fosters early, rapid and where necessary robust intervention (Solana, 2003:13); the Lisbon Treaty refers to ‘the progressive framing of a common Union defence policy’ (Lisbon Treaty, 2007:Art.42.2); the phrase ‘Defence matters’ opens Conclusions from the December 2013 European Council on EU security (European Council, 2013). Despite this rhetoric Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) (see Fig.1 below) remains mostly about security, not defence. CSDP is a set of mainly civilian security-related instruments concerned with ‘peace-keeping, conflict prevention and strengthening international security’ (Lisbon Treaty, 2007:Art.42.1). EU defence capability remains marginal as NATO and member states represent defence interests.

Despite an emergent European strategic culture (Biava, et al, 2011), as demanded by the European Security Strategy (Solana, 2003), CSDP has not been marked by ‘Grand Strategy’, defined as ‘the calculated relationship between means and large ends’ (Gaddis, 2009). A substantial literature demands that the EU and member states should discover their common security interests and develop a strategic approach (Venusberg Group, 2007; Biscop, 2009, 2013a; Biscop, et al, 2009; Howorth, 2009, 2010a; Drent and Zandee, 2010; Simón, 2011; Biscop and Coelmont, 2010a, 2012). A strategic approach, they argue, is needed to confront the complex range of threats identified in the Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy (European Council, 2008), namely WMDs, terrorism and organised crime, cyber security, energy security, and climate change. Challenges emanating from failed states that precipitate migration or breed terrorism have less salience than traditional territorial threat, so finding consensus on how to respond is difficult. Member states remain hamstrung by the atavistic appeal of sovereignty in a policy field normally identified as intergovernmental.
### Fig.1 Core statements and declarations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Key goals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Petersberg Declaration (1992)</td>
<td>Humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks, and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peace-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amsterdam Treaty (1997:Art.17.2)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>St Malo Declaration (1998)</td>
<td>The capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helsinki Headline Goal (European Council, 1999b)</td>
<td>Member states must be able to deploy within 60 days and sustain for at least 1 year military forces of up to 50,000-60,000 persons capable of the full range of Petersberg tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Security Strategy (Solana, 2003)</td>
<td>Need to build a strategic culture that fosters early, rapid and when necessary, robust intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian Headline Goal 2008 (Council of the European Union, 2004).</td>
<td>A range of modalities for the setting up and deployment of multifunctional CCM resources in an integrated format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report on Implementation of the ESS (European Council, 2008)</td>
<td>(Need to be) more capable, more coherent and more active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEU Preamble/Lisbon Treaty (2007:C115/16)</td>
<td>To implement a CFSP including the progressive framing of a common defence policy, which might lead to a common defence (…) thereby reinforcing the European identity and its independence in order to promote peace, security and progress in Europe and in the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR-VP Baroness Ashton in EEAS Review (EEAS, 2013a)</td>
<td>The EEAS can be a catalyst to bring together the foreign policies of Member States and strengthen the position of the EU in the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Council (2013)</td>
<td>An effective CSDP helps to enhance the security of European citizens and contributes to peace and stability in our neighbourhood and in the broader world</td>
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</table>

However this paper argues that intergovernmentalism is an inadequate explanation of CSDP, and explaining CSDP should take account of bureaucratic politics. This is incompatible with Grand Strategy, so CSDP will continue to develop through a process, not of Grand Strategy, but of ‘muddling through’ (Lindblom, 1959:83).

Analysis of CSDP, using evidence from expert interviews with policy makers and policy practitioners, including officials working in the EEAS and with the EUFOR Althea mission (EUFOR Althea, 2015) in Bosnia Herzegovina, and supporting academic literature as well as official EU and government sources, suggests a bureaucratic field.

The paper first explains the insufficiency of intergovernmentalism, arguing furthermore that this is a barrier to Grand Strategy. Then Section 3 explains the nature of bureaucratic politics in EU governance; Section 4 describes the institutional framework of CSDP; Section 5 provides evidence that CSDP operates through bureaucratic politics. Finally Section 6 summarises why the bureaucratic nature of CSDP renders Grand Strategy unfeasible.
2. Intergovernmentalism: Lisbon is a barrier to EU strategy in security and defence

EU foreign and security policy is an intergovernmental domain:

Foreign policy, security and defence are matters over which the individual national
governments retain independent control. They have not pooled their national
sovereignty in these areas, so Parliament and the European Commission play only a
limited role here. However the EU countries have much to gain by working together
on these issues, and the Council is the main forum in which this ‘intergovernmental
cooporation’ takes place (European Communities, 2005:16).

This statement sets out the power hierarchy concerning EU foreign and security policy, with
the Commission and Parliament having little influence. CFSP was established at Maastricht
as intergovernmental (TEU, 1992). CSDP, a subset of CFSP, is ‘largely intergovernmental’
(Buonanno and Nugent, 2013:283). The centrality of states to CSDP means
intergovernmentalism remains a vital, though insufficient, theoretical explanation. It assumes
that integration proceeds from inter-state negotiation (Hoffmann, 1966). This is an initially
promising explanation given that CSDP is within CFSP, an intergovernmental pillar in the
Maastricht architecture, and Saint Malo emerged from a bilateral Franco-British initiative. But
the zero-sum game assumptions of intergovernmentalism are inappropriate to CSDP
(Keohane, 1989; Moravcsik, 1998).

Liberal Intergovernmentalism (LI) explains the Single Market using policy making analysis
(Moravcsik, 1998). The focal process of LI was interstate bargaining. No such process has
occurred with CSDP. Perhaps LI rationalism might deliver more CSDP actorness, and
indeed Grand Strategy demands an interest-based rational assessment of the means/ends
with CSDP there is scant evidence of the benchmarking and convergence that marked
Single Market construction, despite calls for just such a process (Heisbourg, 2000;
Venusberg Group, 2007; Witney, 2008), and sustained pressure from the European Defence

Unlike SEM intergovernmentalism, there has been no pooling of sovereignty or legal
consequences analogous with the _acquis_. Member states struggle to articulate common
security interests, lack consensus on threat, and have different strategic cultures. While
CSDP involves cooperation, the intergovernmental bargaining and supranational institutions
that shaped the SEM do not apply to CSDP.
CFSP/CSDP is intergovernmental, but *not simply intergovernmental*. Other dynamics are present. The Single Market process led to economic and political integration. While opt outs and differentiated integration has occurred (EMU, Schengen), in general Community law applies to all 28 member states, whereas CSDP allows member states varying levels of commitment and even participation on an issue-by-issue basis. Allen (2012) argues that this undermines common security and defence. Member states, especially the larger ones, continue to construct bilateral relationships with other powers, limiting CFSP coherence and effectiveness. Arguably to counter this, the Lisbon Treaty introduced Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) which encourages a few able and willing states to share an initiative (Lisbon Treaty, 2007:Art.42.6), but non-participants weaken the ‘common’ in CSDP.

Intergovernmentalism endures across foreign and security policy reflecting a Europe of states, or a ‘Federation of Nation States’ (Jospin, 2002:27). The EU embraces devices such as veto or opt out that resist integration. But arguably intergovernmental processes based on cost-benefit analysis focus on enhancing domestic interests, rather than *prima facie* support for integration which implies a sacrifice of sovereignty. Classical intergovernmentalism suggests a win-lose view of sovereignty. Cooperation that simultaneously defends sovereignty represents a win-win outcome.

CSDP demands a new comprehensive theoretical explanation unbound by a purely state-centric, intergovernmental interpretation. While the field has an intergovernmental core, a better understanding is required since CSDP suggests something beyond intergovernmentalism. Nevertheless, while CSDP should not be deemed simply intergovernmental, caveats in the Lisbon Treaty ensure that intergovernmentalism remains a *barrier to strategic progress*, and a factor in why Grand Strategy is unfeasible. Lisbon states:

> the common security and defence policy shall include the progressive framing of a common Union defence policy. This will lead to a common defence, when the European Council, acting unanimously, so decides. It shall in that case recommend to the Member States the adoption of such a decision in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements. (This) shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States and shall respect the obligations of certain Member States, which see their common defence realized within NATO (Lisbon Treaty, 2007:Art.42.2)
Hence reference to ‘common defence’ is followed by an immediate affirmation of the principle of unanimity, strengthened by a double reference to member states’ ‘constitutional requirements’ and ‘specific character’ in relation to security and defence. PESCO is meant to assist pooling and sharing among groups of states, and Article 31 allows for ‘constructive abstention’, a sort of ‘one-step-short-of-veto’ position. But essentially the Treaty asserts that CSDP requires unanimity (Mattelaer, 2013:22). The member state prerogative is confirmed, even to the extent that the Treaty sanctions protective procurement in defence equipment through the ‘security exemption’ of Article 346. This flatly contradicts the EDA remit to reduce duplication and inefficiency in research and development, in technology, equipment and armaments. The EDA is frustrated by member states’ treaty-sanctioned disregard of its recommendations.

The contradictory and vague framing of the Treaty is a barrier to strategic clarity in EU security and defence policy. This is all the more significant given the commitment by the EU and by NATO for a complementary strategic partnership between the two organisations (NATO, 2014; EEAS, 2014f). The Treaty supplies all the devices necessary to rule out common policy despite the word ‘common’ heading up both CFSP and CSDP. Lisbon protects state sovereignty and therefore tacitly approves potentially 28 different approaches to CFSP and CSDP.

This vague elaboration means that the policy depends on a bureaucratic approach, and is unsuited to the formulation or application of Grand Strategy (GS). GS fails and will fail for two reasons. The first reason is that intergovernmentalism is enshrined in the Treaty despite being an inappropriate and unworkable basis for CSDP development. CSDP simply does not develop through intergovernmental negotiation. There is no bargaining as occurred in the Single Market process. Member states do not have fixed positions from which to defend ‘national interests’. Therefore intergovernmentalism is not what progresses CSDP. Its only impact is negative, a barrier to policy development and policy implementation.

I now explain the second reason which concerns bureaucratic politics. This has emerged as a key feature of EU governance.

3. The development of bureaucratic politics in EU governance

Various scholars have argued that EU security policy is a manifestation of something more than intergovernmentalism (Allen, 1998; Smith, 2004; Howorth, 2007; Mérand, et al, 2011;
Bickerton, 2011, 2013). The European Economic Community (EEC) eschewed a significant foreign policy role, although ministerial consultation under European Political Cooperation (EPC) in the 1970s led to coordination on some issues. EPC developed from being a ‘talking shop to a more active, collective foreign policy-making mechanism’ (Smith, 2004:117) involving officials for whom consensus was a policy objective contributing to ‘institutionalisation’ (Smith, 2004:11). This gave rise to the emergence of Brussels-located institutions with a foreign and security policy remit, a form of ‘positive integration’ (Smith, 2004:5). Foreign policy coordination derived not from intergovernmental negotiation but from normative cooperation, a feature of bureaucratic politics and the changing nature of the state (Bickerton, 2013). Others too have identified the complex multidimensional nature of CSDP (Mérand, 2008; Mérand, et al, 2011). Mérand, et al refer to the ‘heterarchical’ nature of policy making in this field, a 360˚ engagement among various agencies and actors, including member states ‘reconstituted’ through Brussels-based committees staffed by state appointees, specifically the policy determining Political and Security Committee (PSC) and the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER), both of whom are answerable to the Council. A dense network of CSDP and foreign policy related bodies, mostly within or associated with the new European External Action Service (EEAS). The EEAS is responsible for developing and implementing CSDP and the foreign policy interests of the Commission, including aid, trade, economic and political development, much of this under the auspices of 141 EU Delegations attached to the EEAS and who formerly operated under DG External Affairs.

The modus operandi of the EEAS and its associated instruments, including those tasked with implementing EU missions under CSDP, is through bureaucratic politics. Bureaucracy, using a Weberian conception, is an essential feature of advanced societies:

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

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

the most rational known means of carrying out imperative control (and) superior to any other form in precision, in stability, in the stringency of its discipline and in its reliability (Weber, 1970:267).
Weber’s positive perspective contrasts with contemporary criticism of bureaucracy as complex, restrictive, unresponsive, frequently dismissed as ‘red tape’. The thesis examines how the dynamics around CSDP signify bureaucratic politics, echoing Allison and Zelikow’s analysis of the Cuban Missile Crisis:

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

Organizations’ limited resources constrain their ability to fulfil goals set by their masters and inertia sets in as the transaction costs of change increase. An inevitable characteristic of complex bureaucracies, of which armed forces are an example, is the obligation to compromise on what principals define as organizational goals. This seems apt for CSDP and may explain sub-optimal achievements and even strategic incoherence. Organizations do not lack central purpose or goals, but they become prey to ‘bureaucratic drift’ (Allison and Zelikow, 1999:152). They adopt rules, norms and routines:

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

This matches the observation that CSDP reflects lowest common denominator agreement (Smith, 2008:10, Rynning, 2011:30). Wilson (1989:205) says executives (or political masters) wish to obtain allies at a reasonable price while operators (those implementing policy) seek to cope with a situation by getting adequate commitment, guidance and resources from above. This is a good summation of the lowest common denominator impediment to strategic coherence or Grand Strategy. Allison (1971:176-8) refers to chiefs oriented around power and Indians around feasibility, while Wilson (1989:13) stresses that bureaucrats are constrained by their political masters. They may at best ‘muddle through’ towards limited objectives (Lindblom, 1959:83). With CSDP the ‘political masters’ are the Political and Security Committee (PSC) and the member states.
Freedman identifies an association between bureaucracy and strategy, arguing that the rise to prominence of strategy as a conceptual instrument in problem solving is a recent phenomenon that coincides with:

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

This matches the Weberian claim that bureaucracy has become a dominant characteristic of contemporary capitalist society. Grand Strategy proposes the pursuit of strategic goals with adequate resourcing and actoriness to enable accomplishment of those goals. There is a clear tension between GS and BP. The fundamentally bureaucratic nature of CSDP policy making and implementation militates against Grand Strategy.

Bickerton (2013) writes about EU integration, suggesting a change in the nature of the state from nation state to member state. He also offers a bureaucratic politics explanation for a significant development in European foreign affairs: the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) produced the Helsinki Final Act (HFA) in 1975. He explains this as a bureaucratic achievement involving officials agreeing a common foreign policy (Bickerton, 2011:176; 2013:161-3).

Bickerton argues that the HFA emerged not from high level intergovernmental negotiation between principals, i.e. Heads of State and government; it was the work of technocrats and experts working as proxies for their member states; it was affected by a spirit of common purpose towards achieving consensus. This is unlike the intergovernmental negotiating of the Single Market, CAP or CFP, negotiations built on bargaining from interest-based positions (Moravcsik, 1998). The HFA process reflects the bureaucratic politics through which arguably CSDP now operates. This way of working may enable CSDP better than a Grand Strategy approach could.

I now turn to the institutional structures of CSDP, demonstrating that it has developed and is implemented through bureaucratic politics.
4. Institutional framework of CSDP

Lisbon ratification in 2009 inaugurated CSDP, the position of HR-VP, the EEAS, and Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) (Lisbon Treaty, 2007). But power remains with member states and responsibility for CSDP rests with the PSC (Howorth, 2010b; Mérand, et al, 2011; Bickerton, 2011). Nevertheless an overview of institutional structures demonstrates the importance of avoiding the intergovernmentalist ‘state v Europe’ assumption that often dominates IR and foreign policy discourse. The CSDP *modus operandi* is more complex.

Consistent with the notion of Brusselsisation (Allen, 1998; Müller-Brandeck-Boquet, 2002; Mérand, 2008), interview evidence strongly supports the view that there has been no power shift away from states. Many experts define the member states as ‘drivers’ of CSDP (*Interviews 1,2,4,14*) but this too is an oversimplification as it underestimates how institutional development and bureaucratic politics affect how CSDP works.

Since February 2010 CSDP is orchestrated through the EEAS, headed by the High Representative for the Union’s Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who is also Vice-President of the Commission (HR-VP), a dual role intended to bring better cross-institutional coherence to EU foreign policy (EEAS, n.d.b, n.d.c; Zwolski, 2012a).

A notable post-Lisbon innovation within the EEAS is the Crisis Management Planning Directorate (CMPD) tasked with improving coordination between civilian and military aspects of crisis management (Gebhard, 2009; Drent and Zandee, 2010:39; Stevens, 2012; CMPD, 2014). Since February 2010 the CMPD is central to mission planning and policy implementation, responsible for drafting a crisis management concept (CMC) which covers the political and military aspects of a crisis intervention. The military input comes from the EU Military Committee (EUMC) and EU Military Staff (EUMS) (EEAS, n.d.b) while civilian expertise comes from the Committee on Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CIVCOM) (Council Decision, 2000) and the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capabilities unit (CPCC), the latter operational since 2007-08 and reflecting the military structures already existing between the EUMC and EUMS (ESDP, 2008:24-5; Gebhard, 2009). The CPCC is under PSC control and strategic direction, and HR-VP authority. It ensures effective planning and implementation of civilian CMOs (EEAS, n.d.b). Following advice from the EUMC and/or CIVCOM, the CMC is negotiated in the PSC. Once agreed there, it is forwarded to the Permanent Representatives Committee (COREPER) and the Council for approval (Björkdahl and Strömvik, 2008).
The CIV-MIL cooperation and comprehensive vision within the CMPD is intended to improve coherence in crisis intervention, which Witney (2008:2) considered to be missing. While Drent and Zandee (2010:36), Gourlay (2011) and Dinan (2011) suggest the CMPD could be another interim step in an evolving process, Stevens (2012) considers the EEAS and CMPD to have greatly enhanced strategic coherence, citing the ATALANTA mission as evidence of the comprehensive approach to security (EU NAVFOR, 2015; Council Joint Action, 2008a). Fig.2 represents key CSDP structures.

**Fig.2 CSDP Structures (based on ISIS, 2013)**

The PSC ‘exercises political control and strategic direction’ in respect of CFSP and CSDP (EEAS, n.d.b). It maintains oversight once a mission is launched receiving reports from Mission Commanders and from 141 EU Delegations (Ashton, 2013a). These are part of the EEAS and coordinate the Commission role in human rights, democracy and stabilisation initiatives, aid, trade and other economic matters, providing overall management of EU engagement with third countries. The comprehensive approach is, according to ex-CMPD Head Walter Stevens, central to strategic coherence under the EEAS (Stevens, 2012). However, progress has, according to Major and Mölling, brought ambiguous results due to strategic incoherence. They call for a:
peacebuilding strategy to improve the coordination and implementation of the EU’s instruments across the spectrum of its peacebuilding activities (Major and Mölling, 2013:45-6).

The CMPD, regarded by an insider as the central instrument in CSDP (Interview 9), also engages with the Commission on the economic and political implications of crisis management, including the Commission role in post-crisis stabilization, economic matters, democracy and rule of law, human rights and institutional development. The CMPD therefore encapsulates the ‘toolbox’ approach (EEAS, n.d.b), comprehensive CIV-MIL and Commission/EEAS coordination, and therefore it can resolve the divide between ‘community’ and Council interests identified by Schroeder (2007).

This section has demonstrated the striking extent of institutional development in little more than a decade. CSDP is delivered through a complex network of actors, in particular agencies within the EEAS. The EEAS is in a consolidation period, charged with an extremely wide brief but having only a small staff, just 3,417 (in September 2013) with 1,457 in Brussels and 1,960 in the EUDs, and a limited budget, €489m in 2012, equivalent to Slovenia’s defence budget (Martin, 2013:7; O’Sullivan, 2012).

Still lacking a clearly defined role, the EEAS is criticised for not delivering EU actorness in international security, but achieving this depends on the member states. Unsurprisingly and in spite of its complexity, vague purpose and lack of institutional clarity, the EEAS’s own report on its first 18 months is mostly positive about its achievements (EEAS, 2013a).

While CSDP demonstrates better civilian-military partnership, resources have not followed the institutional lead, a long term issue among European NATO members. Financial crisis and austerity exacerbates the problem (Stevens, 2012), as does member states’ failure to identify, prioritise and articulate strategic interests (Biscop, 2013a). Inadequate resources continue to undermine strategic actorness and the prospects for Grand Strategy.

5. Implementing CSDP: an arena of bureaucratic politics

A former military officer and CSDP expert (Interview 5) argues that while Solana only had the EU Military Staff post-Lisbon the HR-VP has the much larger and more comprehensive EEAS. He argues that the institutional changes are subtle but important, and there was no
loss of impetus. This is contestable given the small scale of CSDP interventions since EULEX KOSOVO and EU NAVFOR Atalanta were launched in 2008. More plausibly he suggests that a proper bureaucratic structure now underpins CSDP. The institutions may lack decision-making power but they provide a functioning and effective bureaucracy to support CSDP interventions in future, albeit through civilian crisis management (CCM) rather than military combat operations.

Indeed, CSDP is ‘a crisis management tool’ (Mattelaer, 2010:3) with a focus on ‘peacekeeping, conflict prevention and strengthening international security’ (Lisbon Treaty, Art.42.1). Lisbon suggests something less the fully comprehensive, strategic approach that embraces defence and combat capability, implied by the ESS and treaty references to ‘common defence’, implications consistently adopted by Grand Strategists who press for a stronger defence component. Lisbon reflects and consolidates confusion. The gap between rhetoric and reality is centred on how CSDP works through bureaucratic politics but has implied Grand Strategy aspirations. GS has an overt defence ambition. The former HR-VP Catherine Ashton, regularly criticised for lacking a strategic approach, appealed to the Council to adopt precisely that in advance of the December 2013 meeting scheduled to discuss defence and security (Ashton, 2013c). Instead of strategy, CSDP represents bureaucratic politics, easily embedded within Brusselsisation:

a vast number of committees and subunits that constitute today a large institutional nexus, made up of hundreds of permanent representatives and seconded personnel (Norheim-Martinsen, 2010:1356).

This highlights how the policy area has advanced beyond intergovernmentalism towards bureaucratisation. Ashton, approaching the end of her term, presented a comprehensive wish list regarding Council priorities (Ashton, 2013c). The document made clear that the initiative had to come from the Council, the power brokers, as CSDP is heavily constrained, and the EEAS has no right of initiative in policy terms, and is dependent on member states for mission resources and its own institutional needs. Ironically this appeal resembles a call for Grand Strategy, but the instruments assembled to deliver CSDP, the HR-VP and the EEAS, under PSC authority, are more suited to a bureaucratic incrementalism than Grand Strategy.

While the EEAS supports CSDP, the Commission may influence crisis management through its financial oversight, a possible hint towards integration and a supranational dimension. But
more probably, the funding complexities involved are a brake on any potential supranationalism, as again member states predominantly have control. It is more likely that the EEAS and HR-VP may achieve some ‘strategic and institutional consolidation’ (Hadfield and Fiott, 2013:180), becoming a ‘European level’ professional and diplomatic service, or even ‘a catalyst for a ‘Europeanisation’ of security and foreign policy’ (O’Sullivan, 2012:7). Alternatively member states may:

use all available opportunities to assert national priorities within the Service (which would attenuate) the integrative foreign policy making mechanics that the EEAS is designed to foster (Hadfield and Fiott, 2013:180).

Meanwhile the double role of the HR as Head of the EEAS and Commission V-P could assist Commission/Council coordination (Zwolski, 2012a), although the Council maintains oversight of CSDP through the PSC and COREPER. The heterarchy of security and defence policy making is underlined by the relationships between various actors and institutions (Norheim-Martinsen, 2010:1353), but therein exists possible rivalry.

Gebhard (2009), Drent and Zandee (2010), and Zwolski (2012a) suggest that Lisbon points the way ahead by dismantling the former Commission/Council pillar structure. Zwolski (2012b) welcomes the EEAS having both development and security responsibilities, and therefore potentially delivering on the comprehensive promise in the ESS. However, the post-Lisbon arrangements may fall short of the civilian-military coordination that CSDP needs, particularly because the EEAS and the geographic delegations (EUDs) maintain an institutional cleavage between CFSP/Commission responsibilities for development and governance issues, and CSDP for crisis management (Gourlay, 2011:18-19). The HR-VP and has contradictory mandates, and the EEAS remains a work-in-progress (Barber, 2010:59).

PESCO may become just another bureaucratic device without strategic impact unless backed by regular capability conferences (Biscop and Coelmont, 2010b, 2013c). It risks free-riding from non-contributors, especially in times of austerity. EU Battlegroups, initiated in 2007 as multinational battalion sized rapid response units, have never been deployed, and are plagued by complex funding arrangements, roster difficulties and other anomalies, not least that participating states may withdraw personnel or resources, although the initiative has brought benefits in terms of interoperability, cooperation and forces modernisation (Lindstrom, 2007, 2011; Dickow, et al, 2011; Chappell, 2012; Biscop and Coelmont, 2013b).
Both initiatives reflect the bureaucratic nature of CSDP rather than deliver uplift in strategic actorness.

Bureaucracies necessarily require compromise but this should not blind their masters to the need for efficiency. Drent and Zandee (2010), Norheim-Martinsen (2011) and Mattelaer (2010) call for better civil-military coordination in CSDP which the former Head of CMPD assures is happening (Stevens, 2012), but member state commitment and resourcing is critical.

Meanwhile the EDA urges rationalization but its recommendations are easily ignored; UK governments have shown ambivalence towards the Agency (Witney, 2008:23; O'Donnell, 2011:426); it lacks power being entirely dependent on states and the PSC (Interviews 1,2,6,7,12,24,25), a view backed by Chappell and Petrov (2010) and Chang (2011). Moreover, as Chang (ibid:78) reports, Lisbon confirms the ‘security exemption’ (p.5 above). A proposal by Biscop (2004:518) for an EDA-managed ‘limited procurement budget’ for EU armaments spending looks like an early bid for GS that would receive short shrift from member states.

A Brussels-based expert described the EDA as faced with ‘bureaucratic inertia’ (Interview 2), a criticism aimed at the recipients of EDA recommendations rather than at the EDA itself. The proposition that CSDP has been taken over by bureaucratic politics is not accepted by all respondents. A European Parliament official says:

CSDP is a structure: it responds to security situations, it has the potential to take diplomatic or military action, so it is more than just a bureaucracy (Interview 26).

But CSDP cannot ‘take action’. It can only be implemented by member states through the PSC and the Council, but the member states lack unity and ambition (Interview 14). The Parliament official says CSDP is developing and the EEAS emerging as a significant service organisation in which the EU Delegations are the ‘main innovation’, bringing local influence and engagement to EU foreign policy in 141 countries where they constitute the Union’s main diplomatic presence. This assessment is questionable, as the EUDs come under the EEAS radar but historically have always been a Commission interest. The EEAS has diverse functions and engages multiple actors across different institutions. Bátora describes how the EEAS:
draws upon and recombines physical, legal and ideational resources from various organizational fields (Bátora, 2013:602).

None of this should imply ineffectiveness: indeed the EEAS is ‘potentially a major and highly significant development’ (Howorth, 2013:16), an assessment echoed in HR-VP Ashton’s report (EEAS, 2013a), and shared to varying degrees by several respondents (Interviews 1,4,5,6,8,12,22,26), almost all with the caveat that success depends on the will of member states. Some report that the driver for CSDP will come from outside the EU, from the US for example (Interviews 1,2,4) or from economic imperatives (Interview 8).

Finally the performance of CSDP missions, the central thrust of policy ‘actorness’, defined as ‘capacity to behave actively and deliberately in relation to other actors in the international system’ (Sjöstedt, 1977:16), also demonstrates a bureaucratic modus operandi. Despite the broad scope of CSDP and its ‘common defence’ aspirations, the policy is mostly civilian-oriented. Among 37 missions up to October 2014 (Isis Europe, 2014) seven have been military, mostly in rather benign, low risk environments, and the remainder civilian or military assistance and training missions. Emerson and Gross (2007:12), Asseburg and Kempin (2009) and Menon (2009), point out that while missions are invariably described as successful, they are low ambition and mostly civilian. Others condemn the lack of strategic content, missions being ‘small, lacking in ambition and strategically irrelevant’ (Gowan and Korski, 2009:11). The key point is that CSDP has evolved as a set of civilian crisis management instruments for conflict prevention, as evidenced by the post-Lisbon missions (Major and Mölling, 2013; EEAS, 2014d). Only one has been military, the small scale EUFOR RCA, intended for just one year.

Respondents for this research refer to the ‘lowest common denominator’ manner in which actions are agreed (Interviews 1,8,9,12,13,14,17,21,22), consistent with reports from Toje (2008), Smith (2008:10), Rynning (2011:30), and Chappell and Petrov (2014:3). Officials from the EUFOR Althea mission report the way in which the mission, delivered on a shoestring budget with minimal resources, is essentially a ‘satisficing’ operation, designed to achieve minimum outcomes at minimal cost, a ‘holding operation’ where the absence of violence is considered reason enough to regard the mission as successful. These officials criticise the absence of a properly strategic approach to confronting entrenched problems in Bosnia Herzegovina (Interviews 15-21).
Furthermore CSDP is formulated on an issu-by-issue basis (Interviews 1,14,22), typical of bureaucratic processes (Wilson, 1989), and lacking strategic ambition, undermining any potential for Grand Strategy (Toje, 2008). Indeed CSDP missions reflect Europe not as a strategic actor in international security but as a ‘small power’ (Toje, 2011). CSDP therefore represents a minimalist approach to international security (Interviews 3,9), successful in pockets, making useful local contributions through missions, but ultimately hamstrung in its ambitions to play a major role. This is the outcome we may anticipate from bureaucratic procedure, a consensus-oriented low ambition gradualist approach towards developing security impact. In the long term CSDP can have impact, but it is far from being strategic or securing substantial actorness.

This section has considered the institutional elements of CSDP in relation to bureaucratic politics, and finally the impact of CSDP missions. The conclusion is that the policy area demonstrates a bureaucratic type, but the HR-VP role and the EEAS could potentially bring a more proactive dimension to the EU security role. CSDP is not merely a bureaucratic arena, since the HR-VP and the EEAS may develop some policy entrepreneurial dimension. This would enhance the profile of CSDP and its impact in international affairs, albeit in low profile ways, and dependent on further reforms indicated in Ashton’s Review (EEAS, 2013a). Moreover, CSDP effectiveness requires better resourcing and more ‘ambition’ from member states, a point emphasised by a former member of the Venusberg think-tank (Interview 14). CSDP appears to reflect the conceptual challenge of bureaucratic politics: the capacity to conduct policy and achieve actorness through a bureaucratic organisation.

6. Conclusion: bureaucratic politics versus Grand Strategy

Grand Strategy is rendered unfeasible by the constraints of intergovernmentalism discussed in Section 2 of this paper. It is also impeded by the bureaucratic practice of the policy field. Nevertheless the bureaucratic process may be enabling in a gradual, incremental fashion, as opposed to CSDP being blocked by individual member state calculations regarding costs and sovereignty. Of course they may still block, but the bureaucratic nature of CSDP allows consensus at the highest level, in the Political and Security Committee (PSC). So bureaucratic politics is what allows CSDP to function at all.

Bureaucratic politics emerges as the antithesis of Grand Strategy. GS depends upon states recognition of shared interests and on willingness to engage in a top-down directive process
of pooling and sharing and capacity building. There is very little evidence of this happening so the projection of GS to the top of the EU agenda would risk severe splits between states with different strategic cultures and different levels of attachment to the concept of sovereignty. Currently there is no evidence that 28 member states are prepared to develop security and defence policy through Qualified Majority Voting. Lisbon reaffirms the unanimity principle in foreign and security matters, so GS cannot proceed without it. On the other hand, bureaucratic politics, the muddling through identified by Lindblom (1959) is happening. Mattelaer (2013:158) reports how EU security operations function through a planning mechanism designed to cope with ‘multiple competing agendas’, thus necessitating:

a multifunctional system that can serve as a policy vehicle for exporting national policy preferences (Mattelaer, *ibid*).

This is bureaucratic politics, and quite inimical to a unanimously agreed Grand Strategy, or even one supported by a majority of member states. National politicians, even once on the European stage, cannot drive major policy changes with domestic support (Oppermann and Hose, 2007). This impedes the vision and proactive policy making demanded by Grand Strategy. Instead a bureaucratic piecemeal approach prevails and politics gives way to process. Characteristics of CSDP practice, namely lowest common denominator and issue-by-issue policy making, become entrenched, and strategic planning and Grand Strategy is rendered improbable.
Appendix: Interviews 2010-13

Interviews were completed as follows:

1 Security and defence policy expert, ISIS, Paris 16/06/2010
2 Expert on EU Common Foreign and Security Policy, Brussels 17/06/2010
3 European foreign and security policy expert, Leeds 25/06/2010
4 Security and defence policy expert, Brussels 01/07/2010
5 Former military officer and ESDP expert, Brussels 08/09/2010
6 Expert on Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management, Brussels, 09/09/2010
7 Senior Official in EDA, Brussels 10/09/2010
8 Official in EU Military Staff in Council Secretariat, Brussels, 22/09/2010
9 Military official in CMPD, Brussels, 24/09/2010
10 Security and defence expert in ECFR, London 30/09/2010
11 EU Foreign policy expert, York, 18/11/2010
12 Senior Official in MoD, London 10/03/2011
13 Military representative inside EEAS, Brussels 23/03/2011
14 Former Member of Venusberg Group, Munich 25/03/2011 (telephone)

15-21 EUFOR ALTHEA Sarajevo cohort
15 Consultant to EUFOR Althea, 16/05/2011
16 Senior Official in OHR, 17/05/2011
17 Chief of Political Dept in OHR, 17/05/2011
18 Senior Official in EUFOR HQ, 18/05/2011
19 Senior Official (2) in EUFOR HQ, 18/05/2011
20 Consultant to project for EU Delegation/European Commission, 19/05/2011
21 Senior Policy Adviser to EUSR/EUFOR, 25/05/2011 (telephone)

23 Defence and security expert, German Council for Foreign Relations (DGAP), Berlin. 27/09/2011
24 SPD Member of Bundestag in Grand Coalition 2002-06, 09/07/2012
25 Defence and security expert, ECFR, Berlin 11/07/2012
26 Senior Official in the European Parliament, 10/05/2013
27 Expert on Kosovo and EULEX KOSOVO, Leeds, 18/07/2013
28 Senior Brussels-based journalist, EU expert (various dates)
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