BALANCING GLOBAL INFLUENCE

The "transatlantic conflict syndrome" and the CFSP

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Rough draft, comments are most welcome!

-- ABSTRACT --

Despite the many and highly publicised failures of the EU to agree in the field of foreign and security policy, the EU members have gradually and successively developed their cooperation in this area over time. By focusing not primarily on the *absence* (or failure) of a common foreign and security policy (CFSP) between the EU members, but rather on the *successively intensified cooperation* since 1970, and asking for possible explanations, this paper shows that realism can offer a component to the analysis of the CFSP that has often been overlooked by realist scholars themselves. By (re)interpreting the centuries-old balance-of-power thesis, seeing it as a mechanism through which states will *strive for international influence* rather than power in its purely material sense, this study shows the continued relevance of certain realist wisdom. One very important part of the history of the CFSP turns out to be a history of trying to collectively balance US influence, primarily in other parts of the world. And, while it is indeed – as any realist would point out – difficult to cooperate in the high politics sphere, it is precisely this "balance-of-influence" logic that explains why the CFSP (as well as its predecessor EPC) nonetheless has developed remarkably over time. As shown in this paper, the CFSP has repeatedly intensified following transatlantic disagreements, primarily over international security management. Therefore, while successive institutional changes have locked in this stepwise development, this "cycle" of intensified foreign and security policy cooperation has been repeatedly set in motion by diplomatic quarrels across the Atlantic.

Balancing Global Influence

> Thoughtful Europeans know that Europe must unite in some form
> if it is to play a major role in the long run. They are aware, too, that
> Europe does not make even approximately the defense efforts of
> which it is capable. But European unity is stymied, and domestic
> politics has almost everywhere dominated security policy. The
> result is a massive frustration which express itself in special testiness
> toward the United States.
>
> *Henry A. Kissinger, 1968*

> Most of us would prefer to be called an "ally" or a "partner" than
> a "tool" in a box.
>
> *Javier Solana, 2003*

Since their first meeting within the European Political Cooperation (EPC) framework in 1970, the EU members have successively intensified their foreign policy cooperation. Gradually, the Union has become an actor in its own right in international politics. In 1980, after a decade of cooperation, the Nine had grown into a habit of addressing some ten fairly nearby "problem countries" a year, attempting to influence the situation towards more peaceful and democratic societies. By the turn of the millennium, after another twenty years of cooperation, the European Union was regularly addressing the situation in over 60 countries every year, all around the world, on a multitude of issues relating to security in a broad sense. Both carrots and sticks – political as well as economic – were increasingly used on a regular basis.[1] Another five years on, the Union had also deployed uniformed and armed personnel in several places in both Europe and Africa.[2]

How can this development be explained? Why – despite obvious problems, as last seen in relation to the Iraq war in 2003 – are we witnessing a successive evolution of the EU's common foreign and security policy, which now also includes the European security and defence policy?

Cooperation for power and influence

One of the most plausible explanations for the successive evolution of the CFSP has been suggested by Michael E. Smith, who argues that this development is closely tied to the

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[1] See graphs in appendix.
[2] By the end of January 2005, the EU had initiated (and in some case already terminated) seven crisis management missions, of which six were military missions or police missions.

successive institutional development over time. In something of a cyclical development, improved institutions have repeatedly generated intensified policy, which in turn has generated new demands for improved institutions.[3] However, when contrasting the institutional development of the EPC/CFSP with a systematic study of the changes in policy content (quantitatively and qualitatively) over time, the time lags between the events suggest that it is only the "second half" of this cycle that is repeatedly visible in the history of EU foreign policy. While institutional changes have indeed *followed* policy changes, and thereby constantly locked in the achievements on new and higher levels, the changes in institutional arrangements seem rarely to have *generated* immediate policy changes.[4] Unless constantly allowing for quite long time-lags between the institutional changes and the possible effects on policy (which is not an entirely improbable idea, but not further pursued here), it seems that there might be other forces at work that set off the periods of increasing foreign policy cooperation in the first place.

Something else needs to be added to the analysis, and one plausible place to start would be to ask whether any recurring events or *changes in the external environment* may have preceded the changes in the EPC/CFSP over time. And, one of the most intuitive places to look for propositions of that type would be among scholars writing within the realist tradition. As one student of international relations has pointed out, even "writers who are concerned principally with international institutions and rules, or analysts in the Marxist tradition, make use of some Realist premises."[5] In the following, it will be argued that a closer look – or, rather, a different look – at some realist propositions reveals that there is indeed one type of recurring event that seems to work as a catalyst, repeatedly setting off a new cycle in the development of the CFSP.

Cooperation as a balancing strategy

Realists are not optimists about the possibilities for states to cooperate. The well-known assumptions underlying most realist analyses lead to the propositions that states are predisposed toward conflict and competition, and that international institutions have only marginal possibilities to mitigate these effects of anarchy.[6] Conflict, not cooperation, is something of a default situation in international politics.

Nonetheless, states are sometimes found to cooperate, and mainstream realist frameworks offer two possible ways to account for this rare event. One possibility is that cooperation is *imposed by one participating and specifically powerful actor*, or, as Robert Keohane puts it, that "the formation of international regimes normally depend on hegemony."[7] This is obviously not a possible explanation for the increasingly active

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[3] Smith, M.E. 2004.
[4] Strömvik, forthcoming 2005.
[5] Keohane 1989, p. 35; cf. Jervis 1999, p. 44f.
[6] Grieco 1990, p. 4.
[7] Keohane 1984, p. 31. See for instance Krasner 1976, p. 322ff., for an account of how the "hegemonic stability thesis" may account for cooperation in the field of international political economy. See for instance Bull 1971, p. 144, for a similar argument related to cooperation in the security policy field, within for instance NATO. Bull argued that since the US "enjoys a position of leadership or primacy, certain conflicts within this alliance are kept within bounds or prevented from reaching the surface of conscious political activity."

cooperation within the CFSP, and this 'hegemonic stability thesis' will therefore not be discussed further in this paper.

The other possibility is that states may choose cooperation as a strategy to *balance one specifically powerful actor*. This way of interpreting the 'balance of power thesis,' however, requires a few clarifications.[8] The concept of balancing is quite simply used here as a synonym to *an attempt to alter the balance between one's own power relative to someone else's power*. In this respect, "balancing" is seen as a strategy that may be chosen by one actor alone or collectively by a number of actors, although it is the latter situation that is of interest in this paper.

The concept of power is however somewhat more problematic. Provided that this 'realist' proposition about cooperation has any explanatory power for the CFSP, what type of power it is that we should expect the EU to balance? Depending on how we define power in this context, we will also arrive at very different expectations about when the EU's foreign policy cooperation should intensify.

Power over resources

One useful distinction between three overarching ways to conceive of power in international politics has been proposed by Jeffrey Hart, who argues that a distinction can be made between power over resources, power over another actor, and power over events and outcomes.[9] To ascribe an actor power in accordance with its *power over resources* or *capabilities* is probably one of the most common usages of the concept of power in traditional IR-literature.[10] For instance, Kenneth Waltz argues that the most powerful states are those that score highest "on all of the following items: size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence."[11] Within this conception of power, capabilities are thus normally interpreted as material (and sometimes also non-material) assets, although views differ on which types of resources are the most important ones.[12] More often than not, however, military power is seen as the most important asset.[13]

To balance such power, then, would primarily involve attempts at increasing one's own material assets, measured against someone else's assets. *Cooperation as a balancing strategy* would, consequently, primarily be about collective attempts at increasing certain material assets. Therefore, if it had been this type of power – and this type only – that states were assumed to balance (which is indeed the idea put forward by for instance Waltz), a collective foreign policy would clearly not be the most obvious response. Within this interpretation of the balance-of-power thesis, it would in fact be easier to see for instance

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[8] For two accounts of the various uses of the balance-of-power concept, see Haas 1953 and Sheehan 1996.
[9] Hart 1976.
[10] Hart 1976, p. 289; Goldmann 1979, p. 15; Jönsson 1979, p. 64. Many also make interesting and highly relevant distinctions between resources and capabilities, but in the context of this chapter such distinctions are not of immediate importance.
[11] Waltz 1979, p. 131.
[12] For just a small sample of different interpretations, see for instance Morgenthau 1949/1967, Ch. 9; Bull 1977/1995, Ch. 9; Gilpin 1981; Rosecrance 1986; Nye 1990; Rosecrance 1999; and Mearsheimer 2001.
[13] For a number of examples, see Rothgeb 1993, p. 7f.

the common commercial policy or even the Lisbon process as a balancing strategy than the CFSP. Therefore, this conception of power is not of particular interest to this study.

Power over another actor

The second way to conceive of power is probably the most familiar one in other areas of political science than international relations, and requires an explicit relationship between two or more actors. In Robert Dahl's well-known formulation, "*A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do.*"[14] In this conception, actor A has *power over* actor B in some particular respect, which also requires *power to* bring about the desired act from B. This conception of power is not entirely absent in IR writings, and is reflected for instance in Samuel Huntington's definition of power in international politics as "the ability of one actor, usually but not always a government, to influence the behavior of others, who may or may not governments."[15]

Most typical, this is also the view of power that is reflected in the balance-of-threat thesis. Adding the assumption that the balancing is undertaken in relation not only towards a specific actor, but towards a threatening one at that, the proponents of this thesis argue that rising or overwhelming material power alone is not enough of a threat to trigger a balancing behaviour. Power capabilities will not trigger a balancing behaviour unless they are also offensive, and unless the unit who possesses them is perceived to be aggressive or expansionist.[16]

The balancing is thereby assumed to be undertaken by increasing one's own resources in relation to one specifically threatening actor. Such balancing is often carried out by military means, but Stephen Walt also detects a second possibility – that such balancing may instead be "conducted by political means."[17] Consequently, *cooperation as a balancing strategy* may, in this interpretation, materialise in the form of a military or political alliance "against the foreign power that poses the greatest threat."[18] In line with this reasoning, we should expect the attempts at balancing to be particularly intense during periods when this foreign power behaves particularly threatening. Thereby, and in contrast to the first conception of power, this way of defining power does provide a testable proposition about the development of the EPC/CFSP. The EPC/CFSP should have taken new steps during periods when the Soviet Union behaved particularly offensive during the Cold War, and (although arguably more difficult to sustain) during periods when Russia has swayed towards a more conflictual language and behaviour towards the West after the Cold War.

When contrasting the changes in Soviet/Russian foreign policy since 1970 with the changes in the EPC/CFSP activities, however, there seems to be no link at all between the two.[19] Therefore, while providing an interesting question, this conception of power does

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[14] Dahl, 1957, pp. 202-203.
[15] Huntington 1993, p. 68.
[16] Walt 1987, p. 22, 26, 149, 169.
[17] Walt 1987, p. 22, 26, 149, 169.
[18] Walt 1987, p. 21.
[19] Strömvik, forthcoming 2005.

not provide a fruitful answer to the question about possible external forces behind the development of the CFSP. The common foreign and security policy seems not to develop primarily as a response to a common threat.

Power over events, and an overlooked 'balance-of-influence' thesis

This leaves us with the third conception of power – the *power over events* and outcomes. Jeffrey Hart advocates this view of power as the most fruitful in the analysis of international relations, because "unless the actors regard control over other actors or resources as valuable in themselves, then the ability to control actors and resources will be considered secondary to the ability to control events."[20] This way of conceiving of power can also be found in IR writings. For instance, James Goldgeier and Michael McFaul define a great power as a country "possessing the will and the capability to alter events throughout the international system."[21] In this respect, 'power' equals what some have rather termed 'influence.' Karl Deutsch's argument that power may be thought of as "a symbol of the ability to change the distribution of results"[22] is for instance quite similar to Paul Light's definition of influence as "the ability to change outcomes from what they would have been."[23] This conception of power also seems to fit well with Fareed Zakaria's preferred assumption that states, rather than necessarily striving to maximise power in a materialist sense, are inclined to seek to maximise influence.[24]

It seems, however, that this view of power has rarely, if ever, been explicitly used by analysts interested in the balance-of-power thesis. The balancing should, with this conception of power, equal attempts at increasing one's own ability to influence international events, in relation to the actor in the system that has the greatest ability to influence events. Consequently, *cooperation as a balancing strategy* should be interpreted as an attempt to collectively increase - in relation to the most influential actor - the ability to influence events and outcomes.[25]

This also leads to a proposition about when we should find variation in the levels of cooperation. The perceived gains from cooperation should be most visible during times when the most influential actor pursues policies that the potentially balancing states disagree with (or cannot agree on among themselves). Thus, in the foreign and security policy area, diverging views between the most influential actor and the cooperating group over international security management should induce intensified cooperation. And, conversely, if the most influential actor(s) pursue international strategies that are in line with the preferences of the presumably balancing states, the perceived need to cooperate should either be at a stand-still or even decrease.

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[20] Hart 1976, p. 297. To a large extent, controlling events and outcomes also involve controlling other actors

[21] Goldgeier & McFaul 1992, p. 467.

[22] Deutsch 1968, p. 41.

[23] Light 1983/84, p. 620.

[24] Zakaria 1992, p. 194.

[25] This possible logic behind cooperation fits nicely with John Ikenberry's (1986, p. 61f) observation that states "are most likely to seek international regime arrangements when they cannot control their environments effectively."

Contrary to the balance-of-threat thesis, as discussed above, this line of reasoning should hold even if the cooperating group does not in any way perceive the major actor(s) to constitute a threat to their own security. Even within a military alliance, such as NATO, which rests on strong common interests, there will also at times, and for a variety of reasons, be different perceptions on what security strategies to pursue.[26] The perceived need to balance should therefore rather be a function of different preferences over how to manage international events that are of some importance to both parties. This balance-of-influence-thesis, as we might call it, should thereby even hold equally well in relation to the conditions within a group of states that are closely tied together in collective security arrangements. The cooperation should, in sum, develop or intensify *in relation to the most influential actor during periods of disagreement over international security management.*

During the period analysed in this study, the most influential actor globally has been the US.[27] Thus, if the balance-of-influence thesis has any explanatory value, we should expect to observe changes in the EU's collective foreign policy following periods when the preferred European and US strategies *towards events in the rest of the world* have differed considerably. These occasions should serve as impulses toward increased cooperation by boosting the political will to exert European influence over international events.

The arguments in existing CFSP studies

The view that the EPC was initiated – at least in part – in order to influence international events is hardly controversial. The suggestion, however, that the EPC and its predecessor CFSP might have continued to develop primarily as a result of a generally perceived wish to balance American influence on international affairs is more rare to find in the academic empirical literature. There are however some analysts who have pointed out a possible link between the two on some specific occasions. For instance, and although referring primarily to military matters and the WEU, Simon Duke has argued that during the EPC years, a series of disputes between the US and its allies "encouraged greater exploration of European security co-operation."[28] John Peterson and Elizabeth Bomberg have argued that "EPC became a form of self-defence to try to ensure that the Community's preferences were not discounted, or even ignored [by the Nixon administration]."[29] Writing more specifically on the effects of the strained transatlantic (and intra-European) relations after the Yom Kippur War and the oil crisis, Christopher Hill argued in 1978 that "the growing consensus on the need for a common European foreign policy of some kind testifies to the surviving desire to play an important role in world affairs, if not as individual middle-rank states, then as a collectivity."[30]

Taking a broader sweep, David Allen and Michael Smith wrote a few years later that in "their reactions to Camp David, to the Iranian revolution, to the Soviet invasion of

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[26] Cf. discussion in Jönsson 1979, p. 73; Wallander 1992, p. 50.
[27] Although arguably with some competition from the Soviet Union at times during the Cold War.
[28] Duke 2000, p. 73.
[29] Peterson & Bomberg 1999, p. 229.
[30] Hill 1978, p. 13.

Afghanistan, to the events in Poland and to the question of economic sanctions, the Europeans did indeed begin to build common postures […] around their mutual differences with the United States."[31] Almost two decades on, after the transatlantic (and intra-European) rows over how to handle Iraq, Frasier Cameron pointed out that the "EU has often moved ahead in the past after such situations."[32] Therefore, there seems to be ample reasons to test these observations in a more systematic manner.

More often, however, CFSP-analysts tend to argue in favour of a reverse relationship, or at least a caveat in the above, by focusing primarily on the heavy European dependence on US security guarantees. By assuming that the EPC could never have been initiated without the basic security provided by the American military presence in Europe and the mutual defence guarantees of the Atlantic alliance, many argue that the attempts at adding a collective European voice in international affairs will only be possible as long as the transatlantic link is alive and healthy.[33] There will, according to this view, constantly be EU members that value the transatlantic relationship over a collective EU stance on foreign affairs.[34] The result during the Cold War, as William Wallace has argued, was that a common EPC line was rarely sustained for any longer period if the US was of another opinion:

> The dependence of West European states on American military commitment, during the cold war, limited the attractions of this balancing strategy to other states, the German government most of all. Over Middle East policy, in 1973-4 and again in 1981, European governments deliberately diverged from the line set by American leadership, provoking sharp transatlantic disagreements and a retreat from the autonomous approaches briefly adopted.[35]

According to this view, many EU members should, in particular, diminish their interest in a collective foreign policy if/when they feared a lessened attention towards European security by the US. That is, if the US reduces its interest in influencing events *in the European continent*, including its willingness to provide a military presence, co-operation between the EC/EU members should become more difficult to sustain. This proposition has for instance been forwarded by Joseph Joffe, who claims that cooperation was made possible and easy under *Pax Americana*. The situation, he argues, would however be entirely different were the US to withdraw from Europe:

> The habits of cooperation would not be unlearned, but its practice would once again be soured by the logic of relative gain. […] Pressures for self-sufficiency would mount, inevitably leading nations to contribute less to the "collective good" of security rather than more. […] Facing a new demand curve for security, individual West European states would not necessarily engage in communal production but might scour the market for substitutes.[36]

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[31] Allen & Smith 1984, p. 189.
[32] Cameron 2003.
[33] See for instance Kupchan 1998, p. 43; cf. Mearsheimer 1990, p. 47f.
[34] See for instance Art 1996; and Gordon 1997/98.
[35] Wallace 2002.
[36] Joffe 1987, p. 188. For similar arguments related to the EC/EU, see for instance Waltz 1979, p. 70f; and Art 1996, p. 36. For an opposite argument, i.e. that the fundamental rationale for European integration was security concerns between the members, but that an increased unilateralist stance from the US nonetheless would lead to increased cooperation between the Europeans, see Heurlin 1992, p. 80.

In other words, and to put it rather bluntly, according to these observers the global influence of the US should rather make it quite difficult to forge a collective foreign policy among the EU member states. Instead of being a driving force behind the development of the CFSP, the US, in this view, is rather a dividing force and thereby one of the reasons behind the CFSP failures. Allen and Smith have for instance identified the "special relationship" between the UK and the US as a "sticking-point" in the development of the CFSP.[37] In a similar vein, two other observers argue that "the attitude taken by the US towards the EU as a whole helps explain why the latter has been unsuccessful in attaining the position of significant international actor."[38] These observations, which in some ways run counter to the examples quoted above, should further highlight the value of systematically test the viability of the balance-of-influence thesis.

Transatlantic disunity as a CFSP catalyst

In other words, can the successive development of the EPC/CFSP possibly be linked to periods of transatlantic disunity? Answering that question requires an account of the history of transatlantic quarrels since 1970, and a comparison with the stepwise development of the CFSP. Therefore, the following is in no way an accurate picture of EU-US relations on security policy issues in general, but rather an account of the transatlantic history with an exclusive focus on the occasions of disunity, for reason of theory testing. Each "period of disunity" is first described generally, and subsequently contrasted to the changes in the EPC/CFSP as presented in the diagrams annexed to this paper.

Neglected and quarrelling over the Middle East 1972-1974

By the beginning of the 1970s, and in the international climate of détente, the relations between the United States and the EC were not characterised by any serious disagreements.[39] One issue that had raised concerns in Western Europe at the turn of the decade was the uncertainty about the continued American military presence in Europe. Burdened by its huge military expenditures abroad, US Congress sought in 1969, and again in 1971, to reduce significantly the US military presence in Europe. Both times the Administrations resisted the legislation. The second time, however, the defeat of the Congress nonetheless resulted in stronger pressure on the European allies to assume a greater role in the burden-sharing of the defence costs.[40]

From 1972 and a few years onward, however, a period of gradually more strained relations emerged. Whereas the SALT I treaty between the US and USSR had formalised détente and signalled improved relations between the superpowers, it had also been agreed without the inclusion of other NATO members, even the two European nuclear powers France and the UK. For the EC members, this seemed to signal that the Nixon

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[37] Allen & Smith 1991, p. 105.
[38] Chari & Cavatorta 2003, p. 26.
[39] Joffe 1987, p. 12.
[40] US Department of State; Nuttall 1992, p. 82.

administration saw relations with the Soviet Union as taking precedence over relations within the alliance.[41] This was a feeling that lingered on during the coming year.

Between the EC members, a belief that political integration was on the move had started to sink in. In October 1972, at the Paris summit of EC Heads of State or Government, the EC members declared their aim to "transforming before the end of the present decade the whole complex of their relations into a European Union."[42] The decision to enlarge the Community had already been made, and the EC members were themselves surprised over their successful collective approach to the Helsinki Conference (which were to turn into the CSCE). In the midst of this optimism, the US decided to call for a new "Atlantic Charter," which were to contain a transatlantic "agenda for the future" on both economics, diplomacy, and defence. The call was delivered by Henry Kissinger in April 1973, in a speech that proclaimed 1973 a "Year of Europe."

The speech, however, was not well received in Western Europe. Kissinger suggested in his speech that the US had *global* interests and responsibilities, whereas the EC only had *regional* ones, something which according to one observer "hurt the pride not only of the traditional Nation States, but also of the nascent European political persona."[43] Kissinger also stated that "[d]iplomacy is the subject of frequent consultations but is essentially being conducted by traditional nation-states."[44]

In an apparent reaction to both the call for the Carter and the American attitude to the EC members' growing aspirations for a collective political voice in international affairs, the EC members set out to elaborate a "Declaration on European Identity."[45] The Declaration, it was stated, would "enable them to achieve a better definition of their relations with other countries and of their responsibilities and the place they occupy in world affairs."[46] It contained an admission, or an explanation, that the:

> present international problems are difficult for any of the Nine to solve alone. International developments and the growing concentration of power and responsibility in the hands of a very small number of great powers mean that Europe must unite and speak increasingly with a single voice if it wants to make itself heard and play its proper role in the world.

It was a signal that the EC too had global interests, and was seemingly a direct reply to Kissinger's speech. The declaration listed the EC's accomplishments and aspirations throughout the international system. It spoke for instance of the EC's interest in preserving the historic links with the Middle East, a policy for development aid in a world-wide scale, a balanced world economic system, contributing to cooperation with the USSR, the relations with China, the relations with other Asian states, their traditional bonds with Latin America, and of the EC members' contribution to international progress by adopting common positions in for instance the UN. Maybe most importantly, it stated that the close ties with the US did "not conflict with the determination of the Nine to establish

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[41] Hiester 1991, p. 32f.
[42] Quoted in Nuttall 1992, p. 83.
[43] Nuttall 1992, p. 86; cf. Gardner 1997, p. 4f.
[44] Nuttall 1992, p. 86.
[45] Nuttall 1992, p. 88f.
[46] The Declaration is published in *Bulletin of the European Communities* 12-1979.

themselves as a distinct and original entity." It also stated that cooperation should be developed with the US "on the *basis of equality* and in a spirit of friendship (emphasis added)."

To a large extent, the worsening relations across the Atlantic stemmed from disagreements over how to handle the Middle East conflict and related issues. The diverging views over strategies towards the Palestinian question had begun to surface already in 1971, but the October war in 1973 made matters worse. The EC members had a fundamentally different view of the events than did the United States. The latter, fearing a Soviet intervention, was perceived by the Europeans as obsessed with the Soviet threat. The Europeans also did not share the wholehearted American support for Israel.[47] As one analyst has commented, the October war "helped to restore faith in the possibilities of a united Europe" and consultations "on all levels, particularly between British and French officials, acquired new impetus."[48] The EC members (including the UK) even denied the Americans use of NATO military bases for airlifting war material to Israel.[49] Instead, the US had to conclude an agreement with Portugal on the use of the Azores Islands as a logistics centre.[50]

Meeting in Brussels in November the same year, the EC foreign ministers issued a "Declaration by the Nine on the Situation in the Middle East,"[51] which countered the American diplomatic efforts in almost every respect. It led the Israelis to express both "dismay" and "surprise," and led Kissinger to privately express "disgust" with the Europeans.[52] The declaration mentioned for the first time "the legitimate rights of the Palestinians," and also called for the peace negotiations to be placed "in the framework of the United Nations." The latter was a response to the US who had, together with the USSR and the parties to the conflict but with the exclusion of the EC members, convened the Geneva conference in order to find a solution to the conflict.

A month later, as Kissinger was intensely pursuing his "shuttle diplomacy" with a view to find a solution within the Geneva conference, the EC Heads of State and Government met in Copenhagen. The summit received an unexpected visit by a delegation of Arab foreign ministers, who had been encouraged by the support in the EPC declaration a month earlier. They proposed the initiation of a Euro-Arab dialogue, and demanded an immediate reply. Taken by surprise, the EC states cautiously signalled a positive response, while anticipating American reactions.[53] The news were not heartily received by Kissinger, who has been described as "driven to near distraction" when learning about the announcement. This event further exacerbated the American irritation over European meddling in affairs where they could not themselves contribute constructively.[54]

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[47] Allen & Smith 1984, p. 188; Joffe 1987, p. xii; Peterson 1996, p. 38f.; Bronstone 1997, p. 74.
[48] Sus 1974, p. 69 and 74.
[49] Calvocoressi 1991, p. 60.
[50] *MERIP Reports* 1973, p. 24; Sus 1974, p. 73f.
[51] *Bulletin of the European Communities*, 10-1973, p. 106.
[52] Nuttall 1992, p. 95; Sus 1974, p. 77 and 80.
[53] Allen & Smith 1984, p. 189; Nuttall 1992, pp. 96ff.
[54] Allen & Smith 1984, p. 189.

The nine EC members thus disagreed with the US not only over how to handle the war, but also over the relations with the oil-producing Arab states, over energy policy, and over nuclear non-proliferation which became an increasingly politicised issue in connection with the discussions on alternative sources of energy in the wake of the oil crisis, all of which in turn raised great suspicion and irritation in Washington.[55] Kissinger later commented that it dawned upon the Americans that a "Europe reasserting its personality was bound to seek to redress the balance of influence with the United States."[56] In the spring of 1974 President Nixon even accused the EC members of "ganging up" on the United States.[57] After a tacit agreement at an informal ministerial meeting in the Schloss Gymnich outside Bonn in April 1974,[58] the Nine wowed to inform and consult the US on EPC matters, with a "pragmatic approach" and upon agreement between themselves. This decision put an end to the openly hostile relations between Nixon and the EC members.[59]

This period, with an "atmosphere of recriminations and suspicions"[60] between the EC members and the US, thus had at least three dimensions; an increased perception in most EC states of not being taken seriously by the US, increasing disagreements over the events in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and disagreements over energy policy vis-à-vis the oil-producing Arab states. However, no substantial quantitative changes took place in the EPC framework during this period (see diagrams in the Appendix). But considering the fact that the EPC framework had only very recently been initiated, it produced a somewhat surprising amount of unity with both the Middle East declarations and the Declaration on European Identity. The former was called the "first major common political European move" by French newspapers,[61] and the latter may even be seen as the first stumbling attempt to formulate a collective view on both global interests and strategies.

There was also, during this period, a slight increase in the number of issued statements in general, and in fact all the statements issued in 1974 did contain references to actions undertaken by the Nine/EC. Thereby the balance-of-influence-thesis is at least not contradicted for this period. It is also noteworthy that the years *following* this period (1976–1978) were characterised by an absence of any serious transatlantic foreign policy differences, and also by a stand-still or even lessened EPC activity.

An abundance of crises 1978-1982

The relations between the EC and US improved somewhat during the Ford administration. Among other things, formal and regular consultations (twice a year) between the US president and the head of state or government of the EC Presidency were initiated in 1976.[62] The transatlantic relations improved further with the election of

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[55] Regelsberger 1990, p. 58; Lieber 1983, p. 169; Kahler 1983, p. 276; Ifestos 1987, p. 422.
[56] Kissinger 1982, p. 579.
[57] Smith, M. 1978, p. 27.
[58] This was the first of what soon became quite regular informal weekend meetings between the EC foreign ministers, since then better known as Gymnich meetings.
[59] Allen & Smith 1984, p. 189; Nuttall 1992, p. 90f.
[60] Smith M. 1978, p. 27.
[61] Sus 1974, p. 76.
[62] Gardner 1997, p. 9.

President Carter the following year. Carter seemed committed to mend the transatlantic relations, and became the first ever US president to officially visit the EC Commission in Brussels in 1978.[63] However, the European worries about being neglected by the SALT II treaty, as mentioned above, soon turned to worries about Carter's increased confrontational stance against the Soviet Union. This resulted in an increased scepticism about US determination to cultivate détente, and generated a somewhat more positive tone in the European support for SALT II.[64]

During 1979 the transatlantic relations took a turn for the worse.[65] The first event in a series of overlapping crises was the quarrels in 1978 over the development and planned deployment of enhanced radiation warheads (ERWs), the so called "neutron bomb", in West Germany.[66] During the same period, the US brokered the Camp David accords in 1978, and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, something that was viewed with concern in Europe and seen as in the worst case preclude rather than promote a comprehensive solution to the situation in the Middle East.[67] Subsequently, the deterioration in the relations between the superpowers in 1979 was followed by a number of disagreements between the United States and its European partners. Two observers even speak about the "emergence of a transatlantic conflict syndrome" during this time.[68]

In November 1979, in the wake of the Shah's flight from the country, the American embassy in Teheran was invaded and the embassy staff taken hostage.[69] The United States immediately reacted by imposing an embargo on Iranian oil, and freezing Iranian assets in the US. The EC members were considerably more reluctant to impose sanctions, fearing that such actions would only weaken the position of the moderates in Iran and possibly reinforce the links between Moscow and Teheran. Despite verbally condemning the hostage taking, it took some four months before the EC finally gave in to US pressure on the issue of sanctions. They did so after the US had made it clear that it would otherwise attempt to consider military action to free the hostages. By the beginning of April 1980, the Nine issued a threat of sanctions to Teheran, and began the preparations. On April 22, the nine foreign ministers again discussed the issue in the margins of a Council meeting in Luxembourg. The White House signalled satisfaction and a delay of any military action until the summer. The Nine were taken as much by surprise as the rest of the world when President Carter just two days later nonetheless ordered a military hostage-rescue operation. The operation failed to release the hostages, and eight Americans were killed. Despite the resulting strain in transatlantic relations, the nine foreign ministers decided in May 1980 to impose the sanctions against Iran.[70]

The hostage taking in Teheran was followed only weeks later by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. The Carter administration reacted sharply, by immediately

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[63] Peterson 1996, p. 40; Kahler 1983, p. 277; Gardner 1997, p. 5.
[64] Hiester 1991, p. 33; Kahler 1983, p. 277.
[65] Joffe 1987, p. 77; Gardner 1997, p. 5.
[66] Lundestad 1991, p. 211; Joffe 1987, p. 73.
[67] Artner 1980, p. 421.
[68] Kahler & Link 1996, p. 86.
[69] Calvocoressi 1991, p. 355f.
[70] Nuttall 1992, pp. 168–171; Calvocoressi 1991, p. 356f.

imposing economic sanctions and voiced a proposal for a boycott of the Moscow Olympics. SALT II was also put on ice, and Carter proposed large increases in the defence budget.[71] America's European allies did however not completely share Washington's reading of the situation, and were somewhat surprised at the harsh American reaction.[72] Concerned first and foremost with détente on the European continent, the Europeans preferred to define the invasion as a North-South issue. Internally somewhat divided, but united in their general doubt of the efficiency of sanctions and worried about the effects on détente, the European response was therefore less dramatic. Whereas the EC members collectively gave verbal support for the American measures, the Europeans were less keen on imposing sanctions of their own. Their immediate reaction was to withdraw the Community food aid programme for Afghanistan, and to distribute emergency aid to the Afghan refugees. The EC members also implemented measures to prevent undercutting the US sanctions on grains exports to the USSR.[73] A few months later, again after strong American pressure, the Europeans also agreed to a "no exceptions" policy on high-technology exports to the Soviet Union.[74]

The disagreements over strategies in relation both to the events in Iran and in Afghanistan, in combination with disagreements over nuclear strategy, created what some have even termed a crisis in the transatlantic relations.[75] The strains between the European allies and the Carter administration increased further during the summer 1980 when the EC issued its "Venice declaration", proposing a different solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict than the one advocated by the US in the Camp David peace process.[76] At the end of Carter's presidency, transatlantic relations in general, and relations between Carter and German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt in particular, were severely strained.[77]

The growing unrest in Poland in 1980-1981, which coincided with the election of Ronald Reagan in the US, did nothing to improve the relations. The European and the American responses to the imposition of martial law in Poland in December 1981 were disconcerted and showed, again, fundamental differences in the reading of the situation. The US took the view that sanctions would serve several purposes, one of which would be to reduce the Soviet resources available for military spending. The EC members, although also internally divided, were doubtful about the effects of sanctions and were rather emphasising the positive results of economic interdependence and continued trade. The Polish example, according to the European view, showed that détente had had positive effects and had restrained the Soviet Union in its response to the events in Poland.[78]

The EC-US debate over sanctions against the Soviet Union was however also closely tied to another transatlantic disagreement that had contributed to the strained relations already during the last years of the Carter administration – Western Europe's participation

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[71] Kahler 1983, p. 278; Bowker & Williams 1988, p. 234f.; Martin 1992, p. 191; Lundestad 1991, p. 140.
[72] Calleo 1987, p. 68f.; cf. Hulett 1982, p. 228.
[73] Burt 1980, p. 110f.; Nuttall 1992, pp. 154–158; Joffe 1987, p. 3; Kahler 1983, p. 278.
[74] Martin 1992, pp. 194–197.
[75] Kahler 1983, p. 279.
[76] Kahler 1983, p. 279; Allen & Smith 1990, p. 231; Gardner 1997, p. 5.
[77] Calleo 1987, p. 70; Mendl 1984, pp. 65-66.
[78] Hulett 1982, p. 228f; Lieber 1983, p. 176; Kahler 1983, pp. 289f.; Hoffmann 1987, p. 26.

in the Siberian natural gas pipeline project. The pipeline, built to transport natural gas from Siberia to Western Europe, was to be finished in the mid-1980s and aimed at providing ten Western European states with natural gas from the Soviet Union. The project was largely financed by EC members (by credits granted to the Soviet Union) and relied heavily on Western technology.[79]

When General Jaruzelski, pressured by the USSR, proclaimed martial law in Poland in December 1981, the immediate American reaction was to announce sanctions against the Polish government, followed by sanctions directed also against the Soviet Union. The United States also pressed the West Europeans to follow suit, but while condemning in strong diplomatic language the imposition of martial law and warning against an open Soviet intervention, the Europeans did not in any substantial way give in to American wishes. The collective measures taken by the EC states were limited to certain quota reductions on imports from the Soviet Union. The EC members refused to put blame on the Polish government, and never contemplated any Community sanctions against Poland.[80]

Part of the American sanctions consisted of a an export ban on components for the gas turbine compressors built by Western European companies and due for further export to the Soviet Union for the construction of the gas pipeline.[81] A French firm, capable of producing the same components (under licence from General Electric) nonetheless continued to provide the pipeline project with the compressors. West Germany granted the Soviet Union over $500 million in new credits, and was contemplating full financing of the pipeline. By the summer of 1982, this led to an extension of the American embargo to include component manufacturers that were subsidiaries or licencees of American firms. The foreign ministers of the EC reacted in unison and disputed the decision. They also encouraged their firms to disobey what they perceived to be dubious extraterritorial legislation. In response, the US imposed new direct sanctions on the European firms that continued to deliver components to the pipeline project.[82] Instead of a trade war with the Soviet Union, there seemed to be one developing between the US and the EC.[83]

What looked like a looming "outright rupture in the transatlantic relations"[84] – Henry Kissinger called it a crisis that was "more genuinely, objectively, serious than ever,"[85] – seemed to worsen further in June 1982 when Israel invaded Lebanon. The EC members, using for the first time the new crisis mechanism introduced into the EPC framework the previous year, were swift in producing a collective stance despite internal divisions. They agreed to distribute emergency aid to the refugees in Lebanon, refused to sign the second EC-Israeli Financial Protocol, and postponed a planned meeting of the Joint EC-Israeli Cooperation Council.[86] They were however not able to keep up the momentum and

[79] Calvocoressi 1991, p. 50f.; Kahler 1983, p. 291ff.
[80] Hulett 1982, p. 229; Nuttall 1992, pp. 200ff.
[81] Kahler 1983, p. 293; Calvocoressi 1992, p. 50f.
[82] Lieber 1983, pp. 176–179; Kahler 1983, pp. 293–299; Allen 2002, p. 40.
[83] Kahler & Link 1996, p. 87.
[84] Peterson 1996, p. 41.
[85] Kissinger 1982, p. 585.
[86] *Bulletin of the European Communities* 3-1982, point 1.3.6.

propose any further constructive solutions. France wanted to extend the EPC position, to recognise the PLO as an "essential interlocutor" and mention the Palestinian's rights to a states structure of their choice, but did not receive enough support from the other members. Together with Egypt, France attempted instead to move things forward in the UN Security Council. A French-Egyptian draft Security Council resolution, aimed at renewing the Middle East peace process and re-emphasising the role of the Palestinians, was however vetoed by the United States.[87]

Both the disagreements over the pipeline project and the Middle East found (at least temporary) solutions in late 1982. The dispute over the pipeline ended in November, when a deal was made that the American sanctions against European firms would end and that the US would not oppose the completion of the pipeline in return for a promise by the West Europeans to refrain from new high technology agreements with the Soviet Union. The disagreements over the Middle East ended more as a result of lack of internal European agreement, in combination with the inclusion of France and Italy in the Lebanese peace-keeping force.[88]

Thus, by the end of 1982 the transatlantic disagreements over external security provision seemed temporarily quite harmonious. The Argentine invasion of the Falkland Islands in April 1982 had not caused any serious quarrels across the Atlantic. The EC members reacted in unison by imposing sanctions against Argentina and the EC Commission issued a statement condemning the aggression "against a British territory linked to the European Community."[89] The US subsequently supported and followed suit with sanctions against Argentina. The US and its NATO allies also seemed generally in agreement during the following year over the ongoing processes within NATO.[90]

During this period, between 1979 and 1982, there was also, for the first time in the history of EPC, a considerable rise in the number of issued statements in general (see Appendix). To a large extent, the increase was accounted for by collective statements on the very issues described above, in particular the conflicts in the Middle East. But especially in 1981, both new states and new issues, not always related to the above transatlantic quarrels, also made their way into EPC statements. By 1982, the share of statements containing references to activities undertaken also increased considerably compared to previous years. Thus, this period of sometimes severely strained relations between the EC members and the US, primarily over security provision outside their own geographical boundaries, did indeed coincide with the first step of significant change in the contents of the EPC on a general level. It is noteworthy that the Falkland Islands crisis, which is hitherto the only military invasion that an EU member has been subject to since the inception of the ECP, was one of the few international events that did not cause any serious disagreements between the US and the EC members.

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[87] Nuttall 1992, pp. 218ff; Kahler 1983, p. 299f.
[88] Kahler 1983, pp. 293–299; Lieber 1983, pp. 176–179; Nuttall 1992, pp. 218–222.
[89] *Bulletin of the European Communities* 4-82, point 1.1.6.
[90] Calleo 1987, p. 73; Nuttall 1992, p. 207f.; Peterson 1996, p. 40.

Star Wars, Libya, and Central America 1983–1986

Between 1983 and 1986, however, the transatlantic relations again turned increasingly strained. Two of the issues causing renewed tensions were the American plans for a Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI), and the American policy towards Libya. The initial announcement, by the Reagan administration in 1983, about the plans for a Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) came without any prior consultations with the European allies.[91] It signalled again a unilateral turn in American foreign policy. To the Europeans, the decision seemed to undermine one of the central NATO doctrines – the avoidance of war by nuclear deterrent – and would instead provide the US with a protective shield against a nuclear attack. It also raised questions about future reliance on US commitments to European security. If the initiative would have been countered by the Soviet Union, the prospective battlefield between the superpowers would most certainly be in Europe, where great offensive military power was projected but where relatively little defensive power would exist compared to the shielded superpowers.[92] The Europeans, however, could not reach an agreement over a common attitude towards the SDI initiative, which was formally launched in 1985, and eventually Germany and the UK ended up participating in the initiative.[93]

The simultaneous developments in northern Africa put further strains on the transatlantic relationship. In 1983, Libya had threatened to march into Egypt, and the same year, first Libyan and then French troops had entered Chad. The US saw the Libyan actions as a new Cold War challenge, and sent AWACS intelligence aircraft to Egypt and offered to support the French militarily in Chad. France, however, saw the American Cold War rhetoric as unhelpful and feared it would only aggravate the conflict. Nonetheless, American ships and aircraft were sent to the coast outside Libya, which only served to raise several European voices over the American tendency to oversimplify and place third world conflicts into the familiar pattern of Cold War thinking.[94]

By the mid-1980s, a large increase in international terrorism was also linked to *inter alia* Libya. In 1985, the airports in Rome and Vienna were hit by terrorist attacks, and evidence pointed to Libyan involvement. The Reagan administration sought to get the Western European governments to agree on sanctions, again threatening to use force in Libya should the EC fail to comply, but the latter refused. The EC even refused to name Libya as responsible for international terrorism, and the only action taken by the EC members were increased security measures (including airport security and visa policies) and the setting up of a new working group on international terrorism in Brussels. In the beginning of 1986, Reagan announced new sanctions against Libya but excluded subsidiaries of American firms, in order to avoid renewed European complaints over extraterritorial legislation.[95]

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[91] Berkhof 1987, p. 205; Kahler & Link 1996, p. 87.
[92] Duke 2000, p. 73; Rummel 1990a, p. 8; Hiester 1991, p. 34; Joffe 1987, p. xiv; Allen & Smith 1990, p. 228; Kahler & Link 1996, p. 88.
[93] Nuttall 1992, p. 196f.
[94] Calleo 1987, p. 80; Calvocoressi 1991, p. 491.
[95] Rose 1999, p. 143; Nuttall 1991, p. 303; Allen & Smith 1990, p. 233f.

In April 1986, a bomb exploded in a night club in West Berlin, killing and injuring American servicemen who frequented the club. The perpetrators were Palestinians, but said to have links with Libyan officials in East Germany.[96] The US reacted with a bombing raid over several Libyan targets, including Colonel Qaddafi's residence. The Reagan administration first termed the strikes "retaliation", but later rephrased the language to instead claim "self-defence" according to article 51 of the UN Charter. Whereas the UK provided indirect military support for the operation, by allowing the US the use of British airports, the Europeans in general were not in agreement with Reagan over the legality or appropriateness of the air strikes.[97] Many EC members even denied the Americans to use their air space for the operation. In connection to the American air strikes, however, the EC members imposed certain diplomatic sanctions on Libya and also banned arms sales to the country.[98] In response to Libyan threats against individual EC member states, they declared that any such acts of violence would bring forth "an appropriate response on the part of the Twelve."[99] These steps by the EC encouraged President Reagan, who again sought to persuade the Europeans to adopt a new set of sanctions, but with no result.[100]

During 1986, European scepticism over US foreign policy increased further, when, for instance, the US decided to renew its stocks of chemical weapons, and signalled a stop for its compliance with the unratified SALT II treaty. In June 1986, the Foreign Minister agreed that they needed to strengthen the political dialogue with the US, and in September they formally confirmed the practice of having the Presidency's Foreign Minister visiting Washington during every term of office. They also agreed that the twelve embassies in Washington should hold regular contacts with the host government. At the same time, they rejected an American proposal for regular contacts with the US on working group level, fearing that this would allow the US to split the group before any common positions could be found.[101] Only weeks later, however, the US again managed to upset the Europeans, as Reagan and Gorbachev met in Reykjavik in October 1986. Again, it seemed that decisions about future security provision in Europe were taken without the involvement of the Western European states.[102] In addition, the discussions held during the Reykjavik summit seemed to signal a serious risk of decoupling of US and West European security strategies and to leave the Europeans considerably more open to security threats by Soviet conventional forces. These risks, in combination with the fact that the Europeans had not been consulted on beforehand, led to what some have termed a "full-blown Atlantic crisis".[103]

Despite being united in their worries, the EC members were prevented to discuss defence issues in the EPC framework. Eventually UK prime minister Thatcher assumed the role (on behalf of some of the European allies) to meet with President Reagan to elicit an

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[96] Calvocoresi 1991, p. 133; Rose 1999, p. 144.
[97] Steinberg & Spiegel 1987, p. 40; Calvocoresi 1991, p. 13f; Joffe 1987, p. xii.
[98] Rose 1999, p. 144, 155.
[99] Hill 1988, p. 176.
[100] Rose 1999, p. 144.
[101] Nuttall 1992, p. 285.
[102] Howard 1987/88, p. 479f.; Nuttall 1992, p. 198; Rummel 1990b, p. 183; Allen & Smith 1990, p. 229.
[103] Allen & Smith 1990, p. 229; cf. Howard 1987/88, p. 479.

explanation and discuss "the way forward on arms control after Reykjavik".[104] The Reykjavik meeting however also had another effect; by raising new worries about the American commitment to European security, it contributed strongly to the (re)emergence of the discussions about a European pillar within Nato, built around a distinct European security and defence identity (ESDI). Steps were soon taken to revive the dormant Western European Union as a forum for such discussions.[105]

During the mid-1980s, however, also developments elsewhere added to the transatlantic tensions. One such area was Central America. The EC's involvement in the peace process started in 1984, when the EC foreign ministers met with the Contadora Group[106] and the Central American republics in San José in Costa Rica to discuss peace initiatives. The foreign ministers from the two EC applicant states, Spain and Portugal, also participated. The United States, on the other hand, was not invited and the EC's peace proposals included among other things the removal of foreign advisers from Central America and the cessation of external provision of arms.[107] The signal was clearly an implicit response to the American support of, *inter alia*, the contras in Nicaragua. By doing this, according to two observers, "the Europeans put themselves into direct confrontation with US policies."[108]

The American reaction was hostile, and Washington undertook open attempts at excluding Nicaragua from participating in the ministerial meeting with the EC. The US Secretary of State, George Schultz, also sent what was perceived as an insulting letter to each of the EC foreign ministers, urging them not to support the Sandinistas. The President of the EC Council, French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson, responded: "What business does Reagan have in any of this? As far as I know, he is neither a member of the EEC nor of the Contadora group nor of the Central American nations."[109] However, contrary to the controversy over sanctions in relation to Poland a couple of years earlier, the United States chose not to pursue the matter further.[110]

In sum, this was a period when, as one historian has put it, America's European allies had "found themselves relegated virtually to satellite status, their value judged according to their 'loyalty,' and their loyalty assessed by their readiness to accede unquestioningly to American demands."[111] Again, however, just as the first years of the 1980s, such feelings coincided with a generally more active foreign policy cooperation between the EC members. In terms of the EPC statements, the period between 1984 and 1986 also marked the second period of increased activities stemming from the foreign policy cooperation. This is the more remarkable when considering that the EC members were severely divided over internal EC policies at the time, and even refrained for several months from passing

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[104] Nuttall 1992, p. 198; Howard 1987/88, p. 480.
[105] Howard 1987/88, p. 482; Duke 2000, p. 72ff.
[106] The Contadora group consisted of Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela. In 1986, it merged with the former Lima Group (Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay) to become the Rio Group. It was later joined by Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Costa Rica, making the Rio Group the major, although still informal, Latin American group for political co-ordination (Piening 1997:124, 129).
[107] Smith, H. 1995, p. 78f.; Piening 1997:125f; Allen & Smith 1990, p. 235.
[108] Allen & Smith 1990, p. 235; cf. Smith, H. 1995, p. 79f.
[109] Quoted in Smith, H. 1995, p. 79.
[110] Allen & Smith 1990, p. 235; Nuttall 1992, p. 230.
[111] Howard 1987/88, p. 490.

any declarations in the name of the Heads of State and Government.[112] In 1985 and 1986, following what has been called a period when "the US began to challenge the Soviet Union […] in a manner unprecedented since the early Cold War,"[113] the number of EPC statements grew larger than ever before.

Contrary to the previous periods described above, the increasing amount of statements during this time is however not primarily explained by a focus on the events during which the EC members and the US openly disagreed. As shown in the Appendix, the statements during this time testify to a growing global focus, with both Latin America, Africa and Asia receiving more collective attention from the EC members than ever before. The number of the statements containing references to specific activities undertaken by the EC also increased compared to 1983. As for the thematic cover of the statements, there was a sharp rise in the number of statements containing references to the importance of democracy and human rights. Thus, this period of diverging transatlantic views on international politics did again coincide with an increased activity within the EPC framework.

The shadow of Reykjavik and a lonely superpower 1987-1992

The rest of the 1980s were not characterised by any new serious and openly voiced security-related quarrels across the Atlantic. Nonetheless, the distrust in US foreign policy in other parts of the world, and the uncertainty in Europe over the American commitment to European security, increased further during the last year of the second Reagan administration. One observer ever claims that "the year 1987 saw relations between the governments of the United States and its European allies reach a nadir for which it would be difficult to find an equal – the Suez crisis of 1956 exepted – during the whole of the postwar period."[114]

One event that seriously damaged the Europeans' views of US foreign policy in 1987 was the unfolding revelations, starting in November 1986, about the Iran-Contra scandal. The Europeans, having for a long time been pressured by the US on both a strict policy of no ransom money to terrorists in hostage situations, and on sanctions against Iran, were shocked to learn about both the arms transfers to Iran and the connected deals to free American hostages in Lebanon. The subsequent revelations that payments from the arms deals had been transferred to support the contras in Nicaragua – another issue over which the US and the Europeans had for years held diverging views, further outraged the European governments. But even more than the content of the Iran-Contra package, as one analyst has put it, the wide-spread alarm in Europe stemmed from "the fact that it existed at all, the kind of people responsible for it, and the light it shed on the nature of Mr. Reagan's presidency."[115] The credibility of American foreign policy in general was seriously damaged.

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[112] Regelsberger 1988, p. 8.
[113] Gaddis 1997, p. 292.
[114] Howard 1987/88, p. 479.
[115] Howard 1987/88, p. 484.

A huge American budget deficit at the time, in combination with the resumed détente and the effects it had on various disarmament initiatives, also made the European allies increasingly worried about the commitment of the US to keep their conventional forces in Europe.[116] In late 1987, American rhetoric over defence cooperation in Western Europe changed. President Reagan quite unexpectedly expressed unusually strong support for West Europe's attempts to come up with a common European voice in the transatlantic security discussions, and also expressed support for the construction of a European pillar within NATO. He also expressed hopes of an Atlantic alliance "among equals", which on the one hand was what the European allies had long asked for, but which could also be interpreted as part of a trend of American wishes to reduce its military presence in Europe.[117] In late 1988, these worries were reinforced further when the Soviet Union announced, by the end of the year, plans for substantial reductions of its forces and the withdrawal of parts of its military presence in Central and Eastern Europe. A Soviet withdrawal raised fears over renewed discussions in Washington over burden-sharing within the alliance and the rationale behind a continued American participation in security provision in Europe.[118]

When George Bush took office in early 1989, the American rhetoric on West European security changed further. Compared to Reagan, Bush was considerably more prepared to talk about the EC and US as "partners." It seems however as if the US over the coming years were increasingly unsure about its policy towards West European security. During the spring and summer 1989, Bush signalled a continued commitment and determination for a continued American presence in Europe.[119] Following the dramatic events in East Europe in late 1989, the Bush administration recognised the EC's leading role in the reform process, and also welcomed the German unification, as long as it would "occur in the context of Germany's continued commitment to NATO and to an increasingly integrated European Community."[120] Not long thereafter, however, and as the EC members were discussing to introduce issues of defence policy into the new Treaty on European Union, the European capitals received a letter, drawn up by the State Department, warning against building up a European defence identity within the EU and containing implicit treats about force withdrawal from the US side.[121] Thus, the period surrounding the end of the Cold War was clearly marked by an increased uncertainty in Europe over the continued role of the US in the European security structure.[122]

Between 1987 and 1992, however, there were no serious open disagreements across the Atlantic over international events. The initial US policy over the accelerating conflicts in Yugoslavia during 1990 and 1991 signalled US reliance and acceptance of a leadership role for the EC states. The Bush administration was hesitant over the United States' new role

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[116] Howard 1987/88, p. 482.
[117] Sloan 1990, p. 291f.
[118] Sloan 1990, p. 288.
[119] Nuttall 2000, pp. 56–59.
[120] Secretary of State James Baker, quoted in Nuttall 2000, p. 63; Lundestad 1998, p. 112.
[121] Rees 1998, p. 22.
[122] Hoffmann 2000, p. 191.

as a sole superpower, and after the Gulf War the Americans were wary of the risk of setting a new precedence of the US as a "world policeman" and reluctant to advocate a military intervention in The Balkans.[123] Early into the Balkan conflicts, the EC also did come up with a few instruments novel to the EPC framework. The first one was the decision in 1991 to send the Troika to negotiate a cease-fire. This was the first time the Troika not only *represented* the Twelve, but also *negotiated* on their behalf. Another was the setting up of an unarmed European Community Monitoring Mission (ECMM), which represented the first time that uniformed personnel were sent out in the name of the EC.[124] Discussions between the EC members, furthermore, also bordered on military issues, despite the treaty's exclusion of such issues. During one of the many Troika visits to Yugoslavia, Dutch Foreign Minister Van Den Broek even seems to have used the threat that the EU might ask the WEU to send "something like a peace force to the country."[125] At one point, the Twelve also asked the WEU to look into the possibilities of such a mission to Eastern Croatia.[126]

The European Union had also generally seemed in agreement with the US over international security provision immediately after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and has sometimes been described as a cheerleader to the US during the Gulf War.[127] This period can thus be characterised as starting with a serious blow to the credibility of US foreign policy, and throughout being a time of unusually high uncertainty over US foreign and security policy intentions, rather than displaying open disagreements over policies in other parts of the world.

Again, this period (which is in some ways difficult to separate entirely from the previous one) coincides with quite substantial changes in the EPC statements. Between 1987 and 1988, the number of issued statements rose with the largest increase up to that point in EPC history, and continued to rise every year up until 1992, when the upward trend was temporarily broken. The amount of new states addressed also increased considerably, and so did the variety of issues covered by the statements. The large number of new states addressed for the first time during this period is only partly explained by the proliferation of new independent former USSR states.[128] Even more than for any of the previous periods, these changes were also not directly connected to specific policy differences between the EC members and the US, as some of the empirical propositions laid out above would have predicted. There was clearly an increasing tendency to address events and issues wherever they appeared.

In 1989, and again in 1991, the number of statements with references to specific actions undertaken also significantly increased. In 1991, for the first time, there was also a considerable gap between the amount of references to various diplomatic activities and economic activities. Whereas the statements mentioning economic measures increased

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[123] Edwards 1997, p. 174f.; Gow 1997, p. 202–206.
[124] Nuttall 2000, pp. 200ff.
[125] Edwards 1997, p. 185.
[126] Jopp 1997, p. 155.
[127] Kemp 1997, p. 101; Keatinge 1997, p. 279; Haass 1997, p 66.
[128] Strömvik, forthcoming 2005.

slightly, the amount of statements referring to diplomatic activities almost tripled between 1990 and 1991. Thus, this period of distrust in US foreign policy in general, combined with genuine uncertainty over future US policies towards European security provision, coincided with the most dramatic increases in the activities in the EPC framework up until this point. It did of course also coincide with the end of the Cold War and thus with one of the most dramatic changes in the international system since the second World War.

Disagreeing over Yugoslavia 1993-1995

Along with the intensification of the conflict in Bosnia, US and EU opinions over strategies also started to diverge. Between 1993 and 1995 the transatlantic relations were marked by a series of disagreements over policies in relation to former Yugoslavia, and sometimes seemed cooler than they had been in decades. One analyst has termed this period a "break-point" in the Europeanist challenge to NATO, and another points out that the Yugoslav conflict "caused some extremely bitter Europe-United States recriminations."[129]

With the new Clinton administration in 1993, the US increasingly tended to define the conflict in Bosnia as one with a clear aggressor (Serbia) against another state (Bosnia), whereas the EU tended to emphasise that the conflicts were more complex than that.[130] Many Europeans also feared that the new American president, having won the election on a strong platform on domestic policies, might reject much of his predecessor's transatlantic focus.[131] The Clinton administration also soon found itself on a collision course with the Western European states over what strategies to pursue in relation to the conflict in Bosnia.

First, disagreements over the so called Vance-Owen plan in February 1993 resulted in what one observer has described as the worst condition in US-European relations since the Suez crisis of the 1950s.[132] President Clinton and state secretary Warren Christopher then, in an attempt to avoid the engagement of ground troops, tried during the spring of 1993 to convince their European partners to go along with a 'lift and strike' policy against former Yugoslavia. It involved a limited lifting of the arms embargo to allow for arms import by the Bosnian authorities, and limited air-strikes to deter Serb aggression during the transitional period. Getting no European support, in part due to European fears for possible retaliation against their own UN troops already on the ground, the plans for lifting the arms embargo were put on hold temporarily and did not reach the forefront of the debate again until August 1994.[133]

At the NATO summit in January 1994, the Clinton administration showed a renewed interest in the Atlantic Alliance and a determination to continue the US presence in Europe. Shortly after, however, the US began to signal a more unilateralist stance in relation to the Bosnian conflict, and President Clinton again threatened to abandon the

[129] Moens 1993, p. 567 and Edwards 1997, p. 180 respctively.
[130] Gow 1997, p. 212.
[131] Allen 2002, p. 42; Lundestad 1998, p. 117.
[132] Gow 1997, p. 245; cf. Lundestad 1998, p. 122.
[133] Allen 2002, p. 42f.; Edwards 1997, p. 181; Gow 1997, p. 212; Rees 1998, p. 23.

arms embargo. This led to renewed tensions in the transatlantic relations, and the situation in the end of 1994 and beginning of 1995 has been described as a new low, "with the NATO alliance in serious danger of irreparable damage over conflicting European and American approaches to the conflict in the Yugoslav successor states."[134] After an increasingly active role played by the US during 1995, and an increasing agreement within the so called Contact Group over how to pursue the international peace efforts in Bosnia, the Dayton peace agreement was signed in November 1995. This event marked a temporary end to the transatlantic disagreements over the Balkans.

During this period, there was again a visible increase in foreign policy activities in general, stemming from what had by now turned into the second pillar of the EU. In 1994 and 1995, the amount of issued statements grew, although only to reach the 1991 level, but in 1996 the number of statements reached a new high. Activities in relation to the conflict in the Balkans accounts for part of the increase, but so did also for instance the EU's efforts towards the Great Lakes Region in Africa.[135] Also other parts of Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America received increased attention, despite any serious policy differences between the EU and the US in those areas at the time.

During this period, the contents of the statements also became considerably more detailed, and the share of statements referring to activities undertaken by the EU increased considerably compared to the immediate post-Cold War period. For instance, the tendency to dispatch of "EU personnel" in the form of for instance election monitors or so called special representatives, increased considerably in the mid-1990's.[136] Thereby, also this period of quite serious transatlantic disagreements over security provision coincided with substantial changes in the CFSP – although not exclusively, or even primarily, related to the very issues over which EU and US strategy preferences varied.

Extraterritorial legislation and unruly states 1996-1999

In the spring and summer of 1996, serious transatlantic differences arose first over the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act (the so called Helms-Burton Act). The disagreements soon increased further with the passing of the similar Iran and Libya Sanctions Act (so called d'Amato Act). These acts, again, raised the contentious issues of US extraterritorial legislation and how to handle states that were either assumed to sponsor terrorism or in other ways caused international concern.

The Helms-Burton Act had been passed by Congress and signed by President Clinton in response to the shooting down of two American civilian aircraft (owned by Cuban exiles) in international air space outside Havana in February 1996. The Act aimed at discouraging foreign investment in Cuba, *inter alia* by allowing for lawsuits against non-US firms investing in previously US-owned properties in Cuba and denying visas to executives of such firms.[137] The issue of extraterritorial legislation again came to the fore, and while the

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[134] Allen 2002, p. 42; cf. Krenzler 1998, p. 14.
[135] Strömvik, forthcoming 2005.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Gardner 1997, p. 92f.; Roy 1999, p. 30f.

EU condemned the criminal act perpetrated by Castro, the Union also loudly voiced criticism over the Helms-Burton Act. The EU, according to one observer, "showed a remarkable consensus of opposition" and "revealed impressive unity."[138]

The disunity between the EU and the US over how to deal with "rouge states" and international terrorism increased further with the signing into law of the d'Amato Act in August 1996. The d'Amato Law contained similar provisions for extraterritorial imposition of US law as did the Helms-Burton Law, and aimed at blocking new investments in Libya and Iran.[139] In the following discussions within the EU, several counter measures were openly discussed. These included trade sanctions against the US, a regulation preventing European firms to comply with the US legislation, stricter visa regulations for executives of US firms, and steps towards a dispute settlement panel in the WTO.[140] These commonly voiced European concerns, however, fell on deaf American ears, and the discussions between the EU and the US stalled. The disagreement became even more acute when, in the autumn of 1997 French, Russian and Malaysian firms announced a $2 billion investment deal in Iran.[141]

The transatlantic tensions did not subside until a (temporary) compromise deal was reached in the spring of 1998. It included a US promise not to enforce parts of the law on European companies in return for firmer EU export control regarding weapons technology to Iran and closer EU-US cooperation with regard to Cuba, and also involved a promise from the EU not to pursue the matter further the WTO.[142] The agreement, however, was an uneasy compromise and rested on congressional cooperation, something that could not be taken for granted in the long run.[143] In 1999, threats again arose from the EU (driven primarily by Spain) to take the US to the WTO over Washington's threats against a Spanish hotel group investing in Cuba.[144]

The disagreement over the d'Amato Act in particular was only one aspect of a wider disagreement over how to handle the relations with Iran. The EU and the US had no problems agreeing over how to define the underlying problematique in relation to Iran. Concerns were shared over Iran's support for terrorism, its stand on Israel, its suspected programme for weapons of mass destruction and its disregard for human rights.[145] The disagreement, again, was rather on how to deal with these problems.[146] In 1993, the Clinton administration announced the abandonment of the previous American policy of reliance on a regional balance of power in the Persian Gulf region and aimed instead at a policy of "dual containment" of Iran and Iraq. The US was to build up a considerable military presence in surrounding friendly states and thereby contain both Iran and Iraq.[147]

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[138] Roy 1999, p. 33.
[139] Rose 1999, p.
[140] Gardner 1997, p. 95.
[141] Rose 1999, p. 153f.
[142] Roy 1999, p. 29f.; Rose 1999, p. 154.
[143] Roy 1999, p. 30.
[144] Marks 2002, p. 139.
[145] Kemp 1999, p. 49.
[146] Hoffmann 2000, p. 194.
[147] Lake 1994.

This dual containment policy was announced only months after the EC had, in December 1992, announced its wishes to purse a "critical dialogue" with Iran, in order to keep channels open and thereby hoping to exert at least some degree of influence on the moderates in Teheran.[148] President Clinton nonetheless tried to persuade the Europeans to impose sanctions against Iran, but was met with a firm no.

The American attitudes towards Iran further hardened in 1995 when, among other things, it became known that Russia and Iran had finalised a nuclear reactor deal.[149] The US imposed new unilateral sanctions against Iran, banning all trade with and investment in the country, something that further increased the tensions between the EU and the US.[150] The EU continued to advocate the venue of a critical dialogue until, in April 1997, a German court found Iranian authorities responsible for the killing of three Kurdish opposition members in a restaurant in Berlin. The European Union immediately called for a halt of any dialogue and withdrew their ambassadors from Teheran.[151] This event raised hopes in the US for a change of opinion in the European capitals with regard to sanctions. However, the election not long after these events of reform-minded Mohammad Khatami for president changed the situation. The EU resumed its relations with Iran, under the new concept of "constructive dialogue." Not until the agreement in 1998 between the EU and the US over the issue of extraterritorial legislation did US and EU disagreements over Iran recede.[152]

By this time however, the Balkans once again came into focus of the transatlantic relations. When the conflict in Kosovo deteriorated during the fall of 1998, discussions resumed over the possibilities of a military intervention. It became clear that Russia and China would veto a Security Council resolution to that effect, and discussions turned to the possibilities of NATO undertaking such an operation in spite of this. Somewhat surprisingly, and despite occasional dissension over the forms of intervention (ground troops or not) in Yugoslavia, the allies from both sides of the Atlantic were at least on the surface united in their support of the NATO-led air campaign in the spring of 1999. The European lessons learned, however, were that their defence organisations only had very limited possibilities for power projection and deployment of forces outside their own borders. The continued heavy reliance on the US for any large scale military operations was highly felt, and raised renewed debates in Europe over the desirability of some form of autonomous European defence capability.[153]

Also this period coincide with new all-time highs in the CFSP output. In 1996 the amount of issued statements was the highest ever up to that date, and a new record was reached in 1998. The CFSP statements also grew considerably more detailed than ever before during this period. The share of statements mentioning activities undertaken by the EU increased quite dramatically in 1999, in particular the statements containing references

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[148] Kemp 1997, p. 117.
[149] Kemp 1999, p. 54.
[150] Kemp 1999, p. 54f.
[151] Reissner 2000, p. 34.
[152] Reissner 2000, p. 34f.
[153] Rodman 1999; Hoffmann 2000, p. 194f; and Gow 2002, pp. 218–226.

to various sorts of political measures. Only part of this increase is accounted for by the Kosovo crisis, whereas for instance an ever growing collective interest in various parts of Africa also took place during this period. As for Iran, Libya and Cuba, these states seem to have continued to attract EU attention, but not to any significantly higher degree than previous years.[154] In sum, it seems as if this period, again and just like the previous periods, shows a relationship between transatlantic disagreements and intensified CFSP activities.

The viability of the balance-of-influence thesis

It has been argued above that the EU's collective foreign policy has continuously intensified, or taken new steps, during periods that were characterised by certain features. Contrary to some propositions, it does not primarily seem to have been changes in the overarching threats that have set off new collective foreign policy activities. Nor do they seem primarily to have been the result of institutional reforms, although the lion's share of the activities would arguably never have been initiated or sustained without the CFSP-institutions in place. It seems rather that the most forceful factor, preceding both the periods of intensified policy and the successive institutional reforms, has been a periodically highlighted realisation among the member states – set off by intermittent transatlantic disagreements over security management in other parts of the world – that more effort have to be placed on forging a collective stance in order to increase the European influence over international affairs.

In other words, judging from the above, transatlantic disagreements have been something of a recurrent catalyst. Following the periods of highly visible and highly politicised diverging views between the US and the European Union members – the latter also sometimes in disagreement with each other – on international security-related issues, there has been an expansion of EU foreign policy activity. The successive new activities have, furthermore, rarely been directly related to the contentious issues in themselves, but rather constituted by new policy initiatives in only partly related or even unrelated areas.

These conclusions were drawn after studying the development of the EPC/CFSP between 1970 and 2000. To the extent that these conclusions also carry some degree of predictive value, they should hold also for new periods of transatlantic turbulence. A first new such turbulent period materialised during the summer and fall of 2002, and intensified up until the outbreak of war in March 2003. This period and the following months, while described by media as the point in time when European foreign policy was "shifting back to its natural home in individual capitals,"[155] did indeed also display a number of remarkable "firsts" in the history of the CFSP.

The year 2003 was for instance the period when the EU got its first ever security strategy, and for the first time ever deployed uniformed and armed EU personnel (in Bosnia, Macedonia, and the Congo).[156] The Union also agreed on a new EU strategy

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[154] Strömvik, forthcoming 2005.
[155] *Financial Times* 2002-11-07.
[156] This latter development had, in addition, been planned since the disagreements with the US in 1998-99 over how to the handle the Kosovo situation.

against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, stepped up its attempts to get the US more actively involved in the peace process in the Middle East, and stepped up its attempts to make the Iranian government suspend its nuclear enrichment activities. During 2003, the Union furthermore started the planning for new institutional reforms: the first ideas for the battle-group concept were presented, proposals surfaced for the reinforcement of the planning and mission support facilities in Brussels, and the plans for a European Defence Agency took form. And, the current CFSP and ESDP provisions in the Treaty on European Union were substantially reformulated by the European Convention and later the Intergovernmental Conference. Or, as the Convention Presidium wrote:

> Having reflected at length on the current situation and the lessons of the Iraq crisis, the Praesidium takes the view that […] it is also necessary to provide in the Constitution for more effective institutional mechanisms to underpin and assist the process.[157]

The result was, inter alia, the proposals for a new post of European Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, a new external action service, and an intensified military cooperation with a view to carry out more complex and demanding crisis management operations than today.

Not all of these are necessarily *directly* a function of the transatlantic disagreements over how to handle Iraq, and some might possibly have taken place also without the transatlantic dispute. But, taken together they signify a period when the political will to act collectively seems again to have been unusually high. Summing up this period, Javier Solana concluded that "[i]n retrospect, 2003 will be seen as a crucial year in the remarkably rapid implementation of the European Union's security and defence policy."[158] Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt was of the same opinion, arguing that "[w]hile Bosnia-Hercegovina, Macedonia and the Congo may be minor steps on the world scale, I consider them major steps for the European Union."[159] And, the late Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Anna Lindh explicitly connected the issue of US influence with for instance the EU's Congo mission, by arguing that the latter was

> an important example of what the EU can accomplish outside Europe's borders. And I find it important that all those who worry about the development of a world which we call unipolar, where only one big country decides the agenda, where only the US makes decisions over right and wrong, that they may realise that the EU should not develop as a counterweight or opposite pole to the US, but that we need more committed efforts, more committed voices, and that sometimes a strong EU will agree with the US, sometimes a strong EU will have an opposite view from the US, but the EU is needed to balance the US.[160]

As this paper has shown, her comment was no doubt typical for one of the most important driving forces behind the development of the EU's collective foreign policy.

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[157] The European Convention, doc. CONV 685/03.
[158] Solana 2003, p. 40.
[159] Verhofstadt 2003, p. 35.
[160] Speech by Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Anna Lindh, in Almedalen, 10 July 2003, reprinted in *Dagens Nyheter* 18 September 2003.

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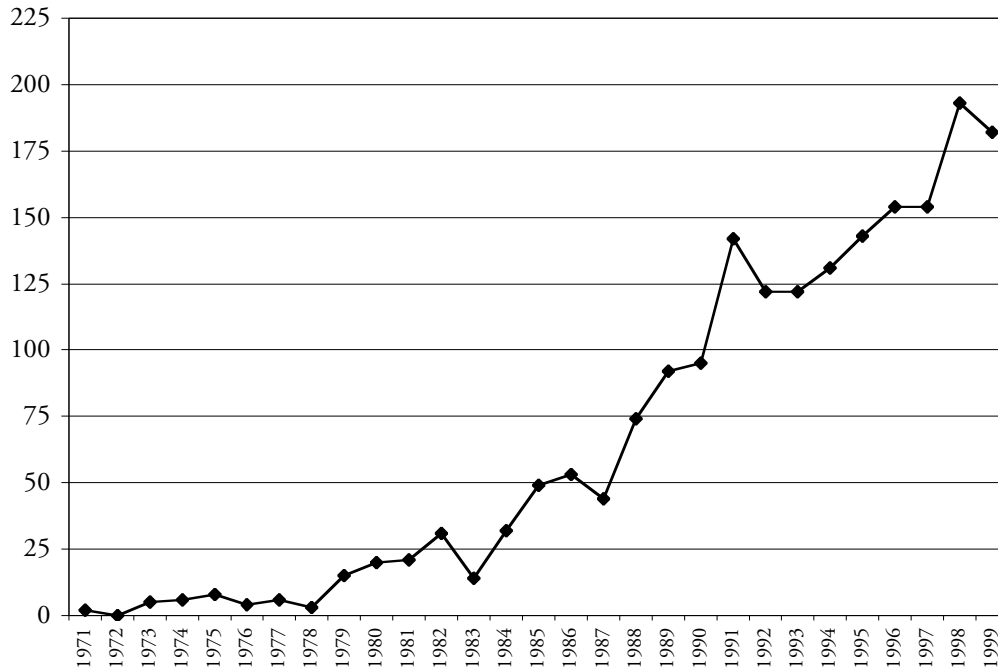*Figure 1. Number of EPC/CFSP statements issued 1970–1999*

Figure 3. Number of EPC/CFSP statements and number of states directly addressed 1970-1999
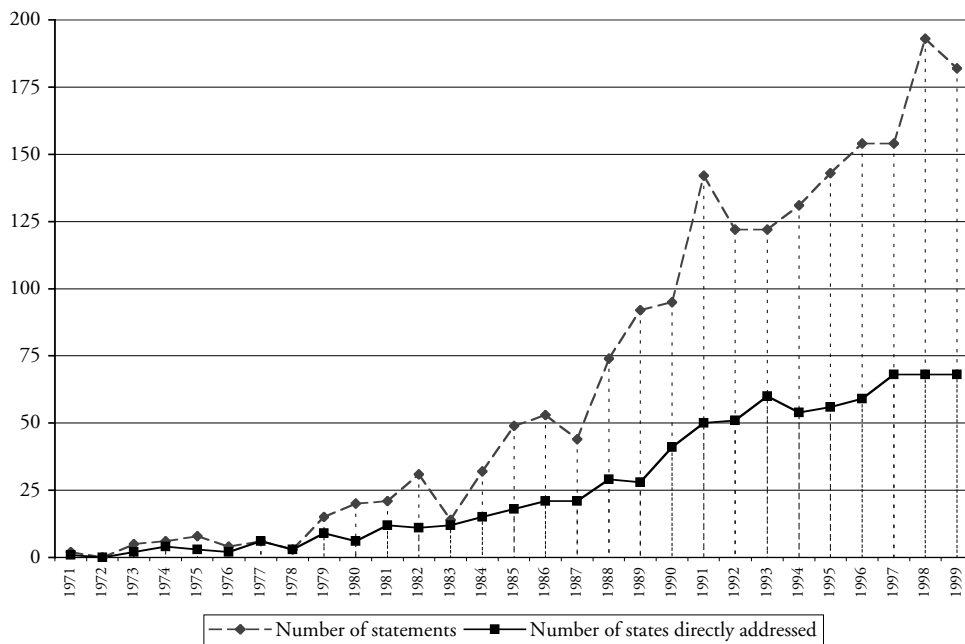
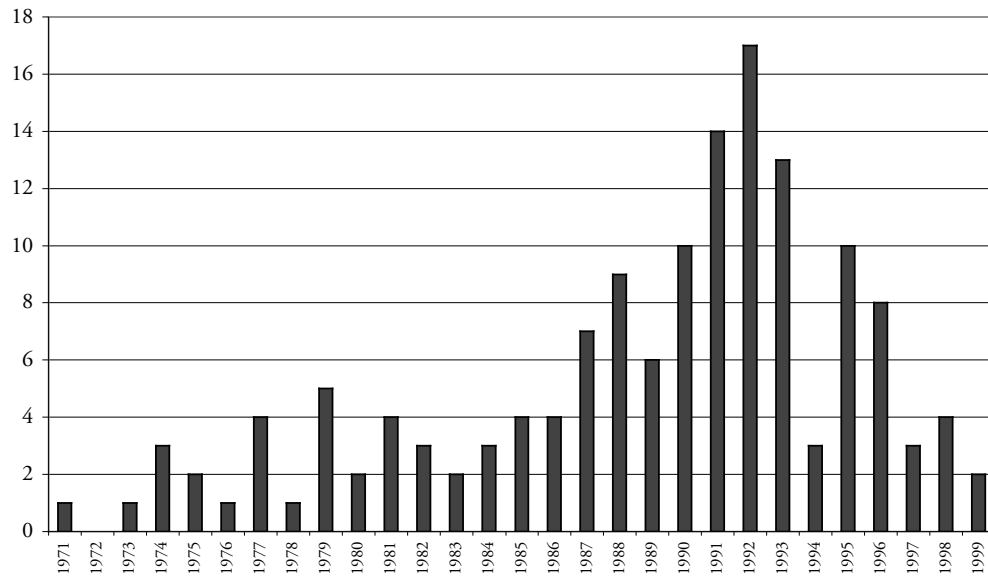*Figure 4. New states addressed in EPC/CFSP statements annually*

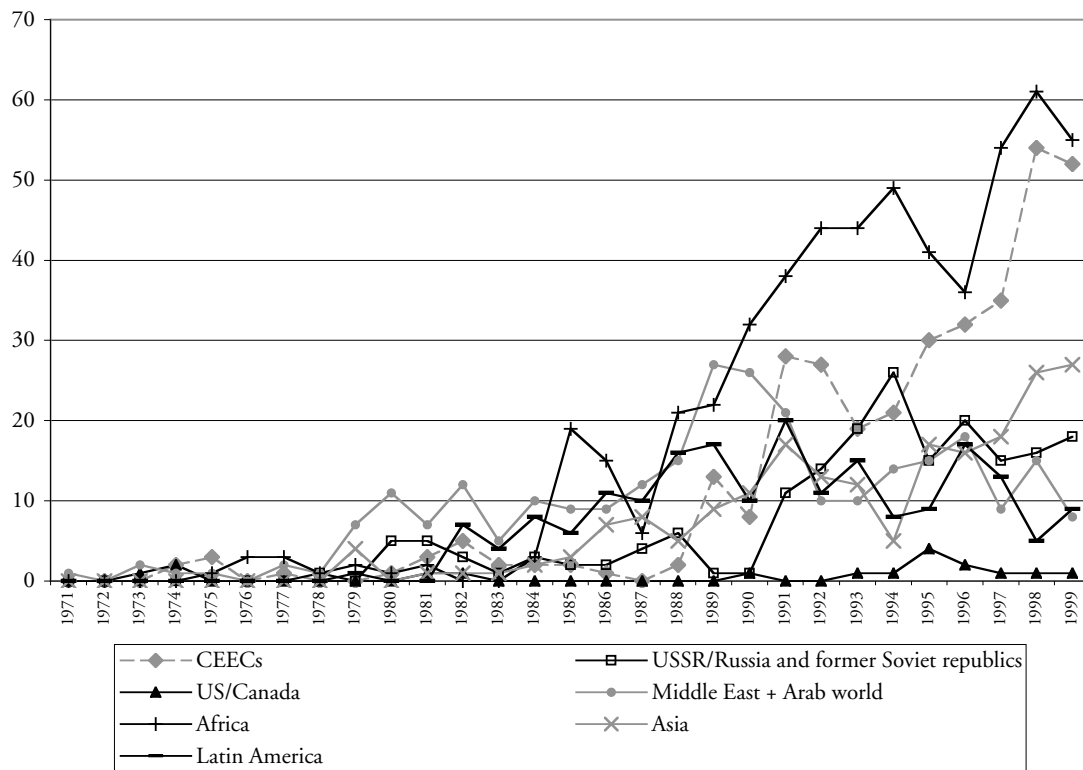*Figure 5. Geographical regions in EPC/CFSP statements*

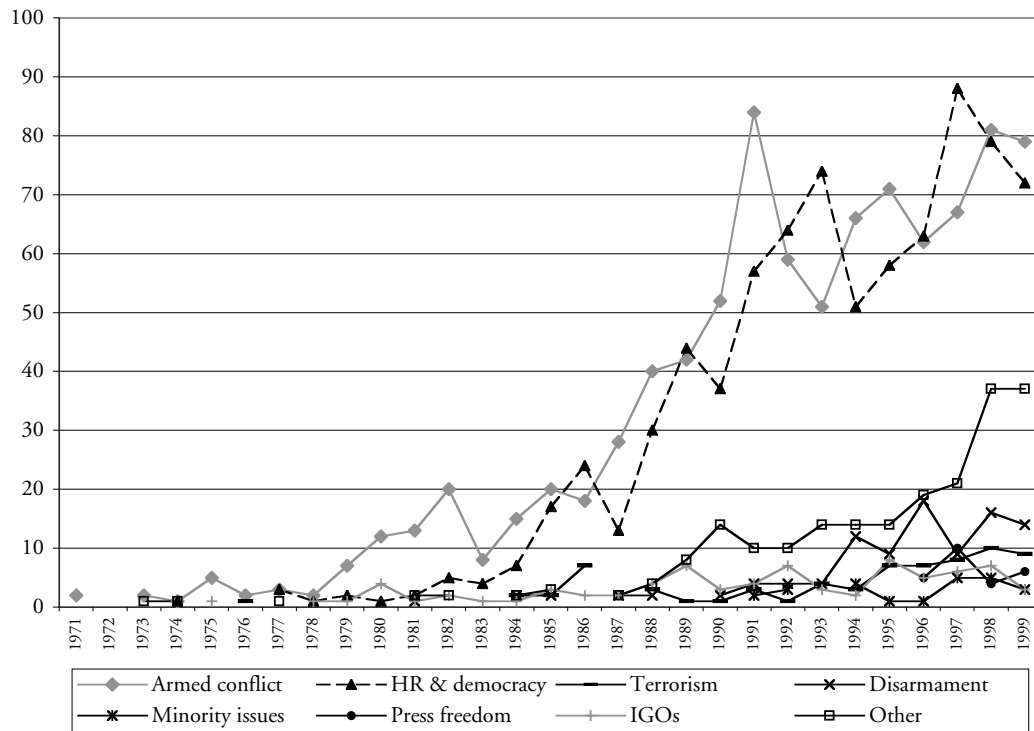*Figure 6. (Selected) themes appearing in EPC/CFSP statements*

Figure 7. References to actions (diplomatic and economic) in EPC/CFSP statements