Lecture given by Jim Cloos: background to the establishment of the CFSP (Luxembourg, 30 November 2006)

Source: L'apport de la PESC à l'action extérieure de l'Union européenne (discours pour l'Université du Luxembourg)/Université du Luxembourg, cycle de conférences, semestre d'hiver 2006-2007 / Jim Cloos, prise de vue : François Fabert.- Luxembourg: CVCE [Prod.], 30.11.2006. CVCE, Sanem. - VIDEO (16:01, Couleur, Son original).

URL:
http://www.cvce.eu/obj/lecture_given_by_jim_cloos_background_to_the_establishment_of_the_cfsp_luxembourg_30_november_2006-en-52da9085-11da-42c2-b1f3-0454788596a6.html

Last updated: 05/07/2016

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[Jim Cloos] I have come here this evening to speak on a specific subject, one that has undergone major development of late. I am, of course, referring to the common foreign and security policy, and I will be commenting on the CFSP's contribution to the Union's external policies. And I think it is essential to make it clear at the outset that the common foreign and security policy is not foreign policy. Foreign policy comprises many other things, including trade, development, economic assistance and even cultural cooperation. The common foreign and security policy is an additional component that has been added to the mechanisms available to us in conducting our relations with the countries and regions around us, in short, with the whole world. That is a very important distinction to make.

My aim this evening is to start by putting the CFSP into its historical context, which is important, in my view, if we are to understand it. Professor Leboutte kindly set the ball rolling for me, so I will be able to skip through the first part relatively quickly. So I should like to put it into its historical context before going on to talk about why and how the CFSP, this new component, came to be developed; then I will look at where we have got to with regard to strategy, resources and institutions, so that I might shed a little light, from my personal viewpoint, on the institutional crisis we are currently experiencing and the future prospects for this common foreign and security policy.

I will begin by setting out the historical background. As Professor Leboutte has said, the direction taken by the Union, basically the tendency towards European integration, has always been politically motivated. Uniting the various peoples, bringing them closer together and going beyond borders are just some of its objectives. However, the methodology chosen back in 1952 was designed to bring together our coal and steel industries and, in a nutshell, to prevent war. Having said this, very soon afterwards, an attempt was made to establish a foreign, security and even defence policy, by creating a European Defence Community, which was rejected by the French National Assembly in 1954. That was a very significant milestone and there were many grounds for the rejection, some involving issues of sovereignty. It was perfectly clear that the French were not prepared at the time to allow Germany's rearmament, although this did happen, of course, a year later when Germany joined NATO.

That was one of the many crises that we have faced, but, as is very often the case, once the crisis was over, we managed to get past it, on that occasion by steering European integration onto a more straightforwardly economic course, reinvigorating the integration process at the Messina Conference in 1955 and introducing the 1957 Rome Treaties, whose 50th anniversary we will be celebrating in Berlin on 28 March next year. So there was a shift in direction and, as regards foreign policy, it is vital to recall, if you will, the respective characteristics of the international system and the European Community. Foreign policy fell outside the scope of responsibilities of the European Community; it continued to be rooted in the national perspective but also, and in particular, fell within the remit of the Atlantic alliance — NATO — which is, of course, dominated by our US friends.

For a very long time, over the initial decades of European integration, this integration developed under the umbrella of US and NATO nuclear protection. And that in a way made it possible for us to opt to overlook foreign policy. In fact, you might say, somewhat paradoxically, integration, European unification, the way in which European unification was carried out was a way of getting around foreign policy and ceasing to pursue it between us, of doing away with it between France and Germany, because that is precisely the objective of European unification. But as life very often shows us, developments take place but you can never quite control them completely.

When you have a Union — and the European Community very quickly developed a common agricultural policy, a customs union and a trade policy, to name just a few of the components forming the foundations of an internal market — it becomes very difficult, if you have a Community like that, to brush over external relations. It is also very difficult because things are then demanded of you from outside, and people do not understand: you are a European Economic Community, you have a very robust trade policy, and yet you say that there must be no mention at all of foreign policy.

Thirdly, even the larger Member States clearly are and were at the time relatively weak on the international stage. So very early on we set about preparing the ground for the foundations not of a foreign policy *per se*, but of a policy of cooperation in foreign policy. The early 1970s saw the creation of political cooperation which was purely intergovernmental, very broadly declaratory and consultative. This period saw the introduction of a number of measures, including the Davignon Report in 1970, the famous Copenhagen Report in 1973, and a communication network, still in use today, called the 'COREU' system.

In 1981 measures were taken to introduce the Troika, which incorporated representation from the country that held the preceding presidency, the country holding the presidency of the day and the country that would hold the following presidency, and represented the Union abroad. I hardly need to add that all this came to a head, so to speak, in the context of the Single Act. This 'single act' has nothing to do with sex or sexology! It is just a way of saying that political cooperation could not be enshrined in the Treaty because the Member States were not ready to do so; they were not willing to transfer foreign policy to the Community. Consequently, the decision was taken to create a Single Act to encompass both the reformed Communities and the part devoted to political cooperation.

Then came two extremely important developments which led to a review of that system, or should I say to a radically new departure in foreign policy. First of all, the Cold War came to an end in 1989; the international order changed completely and, when the international order changes, naturally you have to adapt; you cannot maintain the relationships you had before. We were living in a world that was rigidly fixed, dominated on each side by the superpowers of the United States and the Soviet Union. The space needed for Europe to have a foreign policy was rather limited in those circumstances. Once that international order had crumbled, new problems, issues and challenges arose, which was one of the reasons for reasserting the argument in favour of a foreign and security policy.

The second development — which is, of course, directly linked with the first — was German reunification. It is absolutely clear that the impetus for transforming the European Community into the European Union came from Chancellor Kohl and François Mitterrand; they made it very clear that they did not want to see German reunification take place outside the context of Europe. You will no doubt recall that the decision had already been taken some two or three years earlier, in 1988 or 1989 I think, to hold an Intergovernmental Conference on the single currency. Kohl and Mitterrand wrote a letter, after German reunification and the related talks, in which they expressed the wish to avail themselves of that opportunity to transform the Community into a Union, adding a foreign policy and a 'third pillar' relating to issues of 'Justice and Home Affairs'.

That very important, highly political situation changed the existing order quite fundamentally. It is, in my view, very important … The Maastricht Treaty, in its substance, is much more fundamental in the changes it makes to the European environment than the Constitutional Treaty, or 'Constitution', that we are currently discussing. In fact, Maastricht was, on the one hand, let us say, the crowning glory of the process of economic integration, with the creation of the single currency, and was, on the other hand, the starting point for a new model, a new way of organising things, with the creation of the second and third pillars.

Why are we talking about pillars? I would rather not get into the ins and outs of how Brussels operates, but all in all, it is because the Member States were still not prepared to communitise foreign policy. To recap, they were prepared to enter into such a policy but only if it was placed under a different, more intergovernmental pillar. Under such a pillar, the Commission, for example, does not enjoy an exclusive right of initiative; it covers an area where, very broadly speaking, matters are decided by way of unanimity. Thus its approach is intergovernmental to some degree. At that time, as has happened very often throughout the history of Europe, measures were adopted on paper. A treaty was drawn up to indicate the intention presently to proceed with a common foreign and security policy. However, foreign and security policy is not made by decree or just on the basis of a treaty. The treaty provides the framework but it does not create the foreign policy.

And the fact of the matter is that, immediately after Maastricht, not a great deal happened for a few years.

Why was that? Well, partly because the Member States had agreed to pursue this common foreign and security policy but had not really come together and, in many respects, continued to operate on the basis of the old model of political cooperation, by which I mean that there was a great deal of talking, many declarations were adopted but very few decisions taken, and the Member States did not equip themselves with the means necessary to implement their policy. A second reason for the great difficulty encountered in its implementation was that, since the Member States were not prepared to confer on the Commission the role it has under the first pillar — the European Community — there was no driving force, nobody to push things forward, as the Commission does under the first pillar. And so, ultimately, Maastricht went unheeded in that respect.

But then something happened, again at international level, that was to have major repercussions —and indeed still has today — on European unification: I am, of course, talking about the crisis in the Balkans, the Yugoslav crisis. The US and Europe reacted, for different reasons, wholly inadequately to the crisis in Yugoslavia, which flared up in the early 1990s. The United States' initial reaction had been along the lines of: 'Listen, this is for Europe to deal with. We've had enough, we can't resolve everyone's problems. Europe will have to sort this one out.' And it was around that time that James Baker proclaimed, in his best Texan twang: '*We ain't no dog in this fight.*' In other words: 'This has nothing to do with us.' Then, on the European side, Mr Poos, who was heading up the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council at the time, said that they would seize the opportunity and show that Europe could manage such matters. He then famously declared, and probably went on to regret it, that Europe's time had come.

We all know that Europe's time had not come and that the EU proved ridiculously inadequate in its attempts to resolve the problem. I won't go into the details of what happened in the early years, in the first half of the 1990s, when the death toll in the Balkans reached tens of thousands and the scale of the destruction could only be described as horrific; a country had been riven apart, but reaction to it was muted. The US did not re-enter the fray until much later — with the drawing up of the Dayton Accord — at a time when Europe was beginning to give more serious consideration to foreign policy. In a way, a crisis yet again led to a healthy response. The 1997 Amsterdam Treaty was Europe's healthy response; by introducing the Treaty, Europe was saying that it could not go on like that, it could not continue with a policy that did not exist, where it was completely powerless in terms of resources, structures and strategy alike.

What was decided at Amsterdam? The existing arrangements were bolstered and, in a key development, the office of Secretary-General/High Representative was created. Taking up office in 1999, the position continues to be occupied today by Javier Solana. The EU's motivation for creating that role was that without someone to provide a little visibility, to give some impetus, the entire mechanism would be a non-starter. Then — I will spare you the details — after Amsterdam, steps were taken to begin establishing a comprehensive CFSP mechanism. Then in 1998, Saint-Malo was the venue for a Franco-British *rapprochement* and a political agreement to take significant measures in that regard. Subsequently, at successive European Councils, a mechanism was established, creating Javier Solana's position, creating a Political and Security Committee and creating a Military Committee — this could not spell revolution in Brussels, could it? In the past, no one had ever had the right to admit any military personnel into our ranks or go and visit them over at NATO; it also set up a European military staff and later created a committee responsible for such matters as cooperation and civil crisis management.

So the structures were put in place. Then we started talking about needing capabilities to manage crises. Work began on defining what in military jargon is known as the 'Helsinki Headline Goal', which refers to Europe's having at its disposal, as and when required, 60 000 soldiers who could be mobilised at very short notice and for about a year. So the EU slowly began to equip itself with the means needed to implement its policy. At the same time it began working on a much more serious basis with the US on the Balkans issue.