Towards a European Military Culture?

Abstract:

Recent discussion of the Common Security and Foreign Policy has focussed on the international relations between European member states. Such a focus is entirely valid since the project is being driven forward by nation states. However, the success of the Common Security and Foreign Policy and especially the development of a specifically European military capability under the European Security and Defence Policy will depend not merely on the will of the participating nation-states. Above all, it will depend on the development of a common military culture at the level of weapons development and procurement and at the level of doctrine. The problem is that at neither level is the development of a European culture remotely in sight.

The Common Security and Foreign Policy

The Common Security and Foreign Policy was established as the second pillar of the European Union at the Maastricht Treaty in 1991.[1] The first pillar of the treaty was economic involving an expansion and deepening of the original European Economic Community ultimately through monetary unification, while the third and least important pillar was concerned with Justice and Home Affairs. The Common Security and Foreign Policy was a developed version of European Political Cooperation which was an initiative in the early 1970s aimed at bringing member states together to discuss the possibility of a joint security programme (Piening 1997: 39).[2] In contrast to the first pillar, the second pillar was ratified as an intergovernmental arrangement; the sovereignty of nation-states was unalienable and integration could only proceed on the basis of inter-state agreement (Gressotto 1996: 19, 21). The CFSP initially required a unanimous decision by member-states but this was later altered to qualified majority voting. Nevertheless, the basis of the CFSP remained intergovernmental. The decisive

moment for the development of the CSFP occurred in 1998 and 1999, when Britain finally committed itself to a common European defence policy. In 1998, Tony Blair announced his intention to contribute to the development of CSFP at Portschach and in 1999, at St Malo, the French and British governments formally tied themselves to co-operative military action (Johnsen et al. 1999:14; Howarth 2001: 769; Youngs 2002; Boranski 2000: 14; Howarth 2000: 35; Hoffman 2000: 193; Webber et al 2002: 78). As a result of this announcements, a European Defence and Security Policy (ESDP) was developed a specific programme within the wider CFSP. The European Defence and Security Policy denoted a quite dramatic shift in European defence orientation. It committed the Union to the fulfilment of certain military 'headline goals' in 1999 (Howarth 2000: 36) and was ratified at the Treaty of Nice in 2000 where it was the only notable outcome of that Treaty.[3] The key headline goal of the ESDP was the creation of a European Rapid Reaction Force by 2003. This would consist of a force of 60,000 troops which would by deployable anywhere within the world within 60 days, capable of fulfilling the Petersburg tasks and which was to be sustainable for a year (Youngs 2002: 102; Council of Europe 2002: 5-6). The ESDP marked an important development of the CFSP but it did not alter its political underpinnings; the ESDP remained resolutely intergovernmental.

Not unreasonably most academic commentary about European military capability has focussed on the political implications of the CFSP and the EDSP. In particular, commentators have examined the strategic reasons why a Common Foreign and Security Policy has become necessary in the 1990s and have analysed its potentially paradoxical intergovernmental basis (e.g. Bellamy et al. 2002; Hoffmann 2000; Petersen 2001; Galen Carpenter 2001; Heisbourg 2000: 5; Piening 1997; Gowland et al. 2000). In every case, commentators have rightly pointed up the immense political difficulties of military integration. It is very difficult for European member-

states to co-operate even less to integrate on a political issue of such sensitivity. It seems impossible that states would relinquish any sovereignty over the issue of national defence. Indeed, some have wondered whether the entire CFSP project is not disadvantageous to Europe which has benefited politically from its status as a 'civilian power' (Stavridis 2001). The academic discussion about the CFSP has been important but the focus on inter-state politics has cast some equally important considerations into the shade. In particular, focussing on the negotiations between member-states, the question of the development of a European military culture has generally been ignored. Yet, the very viability of the CFSP and especially the EDSP relies on the production of a common European military culture. The EDSP depends upon the creation of multinational forces which can operate closely together. Military professionals have to share at least some common culture if a coherent force is to be developed.

Since the end of the 1990s, a (much contested) paradigm shift has been evident in the study of international relations. Throughout the Cold War, realism was the dominant theoretical framework (see Keohane 1996). According to realism, s of nation states were best understood as rational actors who maximised their material self-interest in an anarchic environment. States sought to increase their power, wealth and security. After the end of the Cold War, the so-called 'constructivists' drew on sociology to argue that state strategies could not be understood merely as the product of rational calculation. On the contrary, state strategy was the product of indigenous organisational cultures which finally determined the kinds of strategy which any state could pursue (Farrell 2002; Checkel 1998; Legro and Moravcsik 1999; Legro 1995; Kier 1999; Wendt 1992; Wendt 1999; Kratochwil 1989; Lapid and Kratochwil 1997). Realists decisively forgot that humans are social animals who interact with each other on the basis of shared understandings. These shared understandings which differ from group to group and nation to nation determine human practice not some putatively universal

utility-maximising rationality. It is unnecessary establish here whether constructivists have indeed created a new paradigm in international relations (see Desch 1998; Duffield et al. 1999) but their emphasis on organisational culture illuminates a potentially useful line of research in relation to the CFSP. The 'constructivist turn' suggests that instead of focussing purely on state policy, it might be fruitful to focus on the institutional and professional cultures within nation-states which make the prosecution of certain forms of policy possible. In this case, an analysis of the indigenous military cultures within European nation-states may illuminate the future prospects of the CFSP. In particular, an analysis of the organisational culture among the military in Europe may reveal whether a European military capability is a possibility.

Military capability is usually conceived of as consisting of three elements, the physical, the moral and the conceptual. The physical refers to the material assets which a nation possesses primarily referring to its military technology. The moral refers to the collective values and ideals of the military and its will to fight. The conceptual to its doctrine; its strategic thinking. The development of a genuinely European military capability would see the transnational integration of all three elements. Although the three elements are formally divided, the division is, in fact only analytical for all three elements are aspects of what might more broadly be called a nation's military culture. For instance, although it is commonplace to conceive of technology as somehow independent of culture, technology is always a product of and employed within a social environment (Collins 1990). In his work on the development of ballistic accuracy, Donald Mackenzie (2000) demonstrates that technological developments are always a product of the institutions which produce and employ them. Technology arises in a specific social matrix from which it can never be dissociated. In the case of the developments of ballistic accuracy, the political relations between the United States Air Force and Navy were crucial in the eventual creation of missile accuracy. There was no

intrinsic reason why nuclear missiles had to be accurate, especially given their extraordinary destructive potential. Accuracy became an issue because the massive retaliation facilitated by the Navy's Polaris missiles threatened the Air Force with redundancy. Accuracy became the means by which the Air Force could retain its position as the primary service in the American military. The moral and conceptual components are more evidently inseparable for the kinds of strategies which can be adopted necessarily reflect the moral disposition of the particular force in question. Military capability is ultimately the product of the cultures of particular societies. The point is economically expressed by Basil Liddell Hart: 'The nature of armies is determined by the nature of the civilization in which they exist' (Liddell Hart 1933: 16). The development of a European military capability presupposes the development of a unified military culture across the European union. Political commentators have emphasised the enduring intergovernmentalism of the CFSP, the issue is whether this internationalism at the political level is reflected at the level of military culture in Europe or whether the development of a shared culture is evident among military professionals in Europe today. The point is that the persistence of national military cultures will decisively influence the nature and character of the ESPD.

Military Technology and the CFSP

In the 1990s, various commentators, national governments and the Commission itself have attempted to rationalise the European defence industry and to transform a plurality of small national economies into a single European arms market. The creation of a unified European arms industry would bring the rewards of an economy of scale from which the United States has benefited since the 1930s. The fragmentation of the European arms industry is costly and ensures that it is extremely uncompetitive in

comparison with the United States. The fragmented arms industry also reduces the military capability of any European force because different national militaries operate with incompatible systems. It is not only that the European Union's arms industry is fragmented but that states spend their budgets inappropriately. In 1999, the EU spent $36 million on defence some 40 per cent of United States military spending. Yet, there were 1.8 million soldiers in the EU in comparison with less than 1.4 million in the United States. So, while the United States spent $59, 000 on each soldier, the EU spent only $20,000 per year (O'Hanlon 1997: 8: also Heisbourg 2000: 11). The under-investment in the individual soldier ensures that Europe has less flexible and technologically sophisticated forces than the United States. If a European military capability is to be viable, it ideally requires a coherent European industrial base, including a unified budget and procurement system. Yet, the development of such an industrial base or a European market is exceedingly unlikely. Nation-states remain too independent to countenance a unification of the arms industry and even attempts to purchase compatible equipment have been exceedingly problematic (Hoffman 2000: 196). The different organisational cultures of each member state militate against the development of a coherent European arms industry.

The difficulties of creating a joint Europe arms industry are economically demonstrated by the case of the self-propelled 155 mm howitzer, the SP-70, even though this project was undertaken before the CFSP. This self-propelled gun was the product of British, German and Italian cooperation in the 1970s and 1980s. It was designed to replace the existing self-propelled guns in all three armies by the mid-1980s. The Germans were responsible for ordinance, powerpack and chassis, Italy for the cradle, recoil system, elevating and balancing equipment and Britain for the turret, ammunition handling system and the sighting system (Bonds 1980: 16). The Germans understandably decided to use the chassis of their very successful Leopard 1 Main

Battle Tank (Bonds 1980: 17). While initially understandable, the use of the Leopard

tank as the base for this self-propelled gun proved disastrous. Self-propelled guns

operate differently to tanks. They are moved into a firing position usually away from

the front line at which they remain for relatively long periods in comparison with a

tank. From this position, they operate like a normal artillery piece, usually firing large

numbers of rounds at unseen targets as directed by forward observers. It requires a

constant supply of artillery ammunition which needs to be fed easily into the working

parts of the gun. A tank by contrast is primarily designed for offensive tasks and its

decisive capability is its mobility and it must consequently carry its own (limited)

supplies of ammunition. It cannot be dependent on other vehicles for its function of

engaging enemy positions and vehicles with direct fire. The alternative functions of

tank and self-propelled gun vitiated the SP-70. Using the Leopard 1 chassis, designed

for a direct offensive role and, therefore, without easy external access, it proved

impossible to supply the SP-70 with sufficient ammunition. The British eventually

designed a complex crane mechanism which loaded ammunition through the turret but

this mechanism was slow, overly technical and prone to breakdown. The result was that

the SP-70 was unserviceable and was abandoned in the mid-1980s as an international

venture.[4] The differing organisational cultures of national arms industries and militaries

prevent the development of economies of scale. The production of military technology

requires coherent decision-making process which produces a unified project. As

Mackenzie has shown, even within national arms industries, organisational barriers,

vested interests and alternative institutional cultures render this coherent executive

control difficult but in international ventures the problems are compounded. In the case

of the SP-70, the independence of the national partners produced a weapon which was

fundamentally defective because the design was developed in piece-meal fashion. The

Germans selected the chassis for certain independent reasons which suited their needs

and interests to which British and Italian partners responded. There was no overarching and prior conception of the weapons system to which each partner worked. These divisions at the level of design produced an unworkable weapon. It is very difficult to overcome vested national and institutional interests to produce genuinely European capabilities.

Less dramatically, the difficulties of international cooperation is demonstrated with the procurement of the A400M transport plane. The A400M was developed by Aerospatiale (France), BAE SYSTEMS (UK), EADS (formed by DaimlerChrysler Aerospace of Germany, Aerospatiale Matra of France and CASA of Spain), Flabel (Belgium) and Tusas Aerospace Industries (Turkey) but the kinds of development problems which occurred with the SP-70 were not repeated (see http://www.airforce-technology.com/projects/fla/). The A400M promises to be an excellent transport plane which is a viable replacement of the now ageing transport fleets when it is introduced in 2007. In 2001, eight European countries eventually agreed to purchase the A400M to create interoperability between European military forces and to ensure that Europe as a whole had sufficient air transport to emplane a significant reaction force. France ordered 50, the UK 25, Spain 27, Turkey 10, Belgium and Luxembourg 8 and Portugal 3. However, the most important order was from Germany which wanted 73 A400Ms. Nevertheless, although Germany originally agreed to 73 of these planes, they eventually reduced their order to 60 at the end of 2002. Under economic and political pressure, the government was forced into cutting the military budget. As a new acquisition for introduction in 2007, the A400M was the obvious target for this cut especially since it was aimed at overseas deployment which was still politically problematic for many Germans. Portugal withdrew their order for three planes on similar economic grounds. Germany's (and to a lesser extent Portugal's) unilateral decision to cut their order for the A400M has inconvenienced the other member states. The EDSP presumed that 196

A400M would be available for use by the European Rapid Reaction Force. The availability of only 180 planes because of Germany's reduced order is a serious blow to the lift capability of the EDSP as a whole (Youngs 2002: 108). Moreover, the reduction of Germany's order has increased the unit cost of each aircraft for every other European country. Germany has effectively defrayed its own economic difficulties onto its partners. The unilateral decisions of nation-states have a direct effect on the viability of a combined European military capability as a whole. The A400M denotes an important and partially successful European project but it also demonstrates the cultural difficulties of creating a unified European arms industry. At the present time and for the conceivable future, only nation-states have the legitimacy to procure weapons because only states are able to prosecute war legitimately. Nation-states are unignorable political and cultural entities. Consequently, as the A400m demonstrates, the most that can be expected is for greater co-operation and discussion between nation-states in the development and procurement of weapons. States can never relinquish their autonomy in the matters of national security. The A400M demonstrates above all else that the European weapons development and procurement will take place on the basis of inter-state negotiation and alliance.[5] The physical component of European military culture remains resolutely national, presenting significant organisational barriers to the kinds of capability which can be developed.

Military Culture and the CFSP

It would be mistaken to conflate military capability with technical capacity. Even the most advance forms of technology are dependent on the way that the institutions which own them, employ them. The point has in fact long been recognised in military affairs. Napoleon himself declared that, 'in war the moral is to the physical as three to one'. By 'the moral', Napoleon did not just mean 'morale' but an army's collective values and its

social cohesiveness. Napoleon unsurprisingly was talking specifically of the moment of battle. In direct confrontation, the technical capabilities of any army will only be finally decisive if it has the moral character to exploit it potential. Although the decisive battles at which Napoleon made his name have been rare since 1815 (Weighley 1993) and seem to be becoming rarer, his point remains valid. The capability of an armed force relies as much on its 'moral' character, as on its technical ability. The specific culture of the armed forces, their professional skill, their *esprit de corps*, their values and the social relations within them finally determine the effectiveness of a nation's military. Usually, the moral and conceptual components of military capability are divided. This is a valid division since the conceptual component refers more specifically to more cerebral strategic orientations while the moral component denotes the more visceral element of the will to fight. Yet, the division is far from absolute for the conceptual component will always depend upon and reflect the moral character of the fighting force whose function it is to fulfil certain strategic goals. The two components might more usefully be thought of a inseparable aspects of military culture and analysed as such. Indeed, the argument forwarded below will try and demonstrate that formal doctrine is never in practice separated from the moral component by military professionals themselves. If the CFSP denotes the development of some supranational European reality, then we would expect the development of common military cultures (including conceptual and moral components) in each of the nations of the European union. The development of a unified military culture among the armed elites of European society would be expected. A brief examination of the culture of the British officer corps would suggest that no such European military culture has developed nor is likely to develop in the near future.

In typically pragmatic fashion, the British armed forces never committed their doctrine to paper until 1989: 'When *British Military Doctrine* (BMD) was first issued

in 1989 it was breaking new ground – we had not before sought to articulate doctrine at the level above the tactical' (BMD 1996: Foreword). Doctrine refers to the way in which the military operates. It denotes the strategic, political and professional orientation of an armed force. It is decisively divided from 'procedure' which refers merely to the fulfillment of certain technical procedures.[6] Thus, there are NATO procedures with regard to communication and the giving of orders. All NATO countries abide by these so that they can operate together as effective allies. Doctrine does not refer to procedure. It precedes it. Doctrine refers to the way in which the armed forces of a particular country will approach their operations. It describes the way that forces are configured and trained and above all the way commanders are expected to orient themselves in the face of any problem. In Britain, doctrine refers to the common culture of military professionals. Until the 1990s, this common culture was established and re-affirmed informally but from that time, British military doctrine has been increasingly committed to print. This seems to have been a response to the changing political circumstances in which the diversity of operations on which United Kingdom troops were deployed had increased. By describing doctrine in written form, the armed services seem to be communicating to potential allies, the ways in which they operate. There were also more immediate reasons why doctrine was committed to print at this time. The armed forces like the rest of the public sector was coming under increasingly close scrutiny from government which has sought to reduce and rationalise public spending. Documented doctrine demonstrated to government the institutional values of the armed forces in a way which might protect them from budgetary cuts or at least prevent disastrous ones.

Nevertheless, whatever the reasons for producing written documentation of British military doctrine, these texts provide an interesting insight into the professional elites of the British armed forces and especially its the officer corps. These documents,

consequently, illuminate the prospects for the EDSP. The second edition of *British Defence Doctrine* (BDD), which is issued to all trainee officers in the British forces, was published in 2001. In clipped prose, it outlines the political and strategic context for this doctrine and describes its main features. The text was produce by the Joint Doctrine and Concepts Centre following anonymous, private interviews with six 'highly reputable, recognised senior commanders from all three services' (Stephen Haines September 2002).[7] From these interviews, a core of British military doctrine was distilled. Although the interviews were conducted independently, there was almost complete consensus between the officers who were interviewed. All highlighted six basic elements which constitute British doctrine at the turn of the millennium; the principles of war, a war-fighting ethos, the manoeuvrist approach, the application of mission command, the joint, integrated and multinational nature of operations and, finally, flexibility and pragmatism (BDD 2001: 3.1). Each of these elements are discussed in detail in BDD and in certain cases such as the principles of war and the manoeuvrist approach technical, strategic and even tactical principles were imparted. Although the details are important, *British Defence Doctrine* communicates the general orientation of military culture in Britain today. It describes the broad professional approach currently adopted by British officers. BDD reveals that British forces are oriented to joint expeditionary operations alongside other nations. This is the primary sort of mission on which BDD is predicated. These operations, conducted by specialised professionals, aim not at the lengthy attrition of the enemy but at breaking the enemy's will to fight by attacking where least expected. The central point of British doctrine is flexibility. This flexibility is extended to the relation between senior and junior officers and indeed, all the way down the chain of command. Unlike either the USA or the former USSR, British military culture actively encourages the initiative of junior commanders. They are trained and expected to take the initiative if they believe

that action initiated locally will further the strategic goals and BDD notes that 'this requires a style of command that promotes decentralised command, freedom and speed of action and initiative, but which is responsive to superior direction' (BDD 2001: 3.7). This devolution of authority is technically known as 'mission command' and is closely linked to the other five elements of British defence doctrine. For instance, a manoeuvrist approach which aims at dislocating the enemy rather than destroying him through attrition requires that opportunities for surprise are taken. Such opportunities will be missed if junior officers require the consent of seniors at every moment. British defence doctrine emphasises above all an openness to transformation and innovation: 'It is inherently flexible, allowing commanders to size the initiative and adopt unorthodox or imaginative courses of action as the opportunities arise' (BDD 2001: 3.1) Interestingly, *British Defence Doctrine* emphasises that doctrine itself is merely a statement of doctrine as it stands and that doctrine must never become ossified. The officer corps must constantly re-invigorate their doctrine through critical thought and in the face of practice. BDD explicitly demands that it does not become dogmatic:

> It is assessment of the best approach based on a sound understanding of current imperatives and lessons learned from past experience – both good and bad. It is dangerous, however, to assume that past success necessarily provides the best route for the future. Indeed, successful past practice may contain the seeds of future disaster if applied rigidly in different circumstances. They development of sound doctrine is, therefore, as much to do with challenging received wisdom as it is with codifying established practice. (BDD 2001: 3.1)

In this, contemporary British doctrine differs quite markedly from descriptions of army officer culture in the past. Kier, for instance, has recorded the conservativism of senior army regiments in the 1930s in which officers were expected to behave as if they were guests in a country house and where disagreement with a senior officer was seen as bad manners (Kier 1999: 130).

It should be noted that this new flexibility cannot be learnt by rote. *British Defence Doctrine* does not consist of a series of unchangeable and universally

applicable principles. Rather, doctrine is what Wittgenstein would call 'a form of life' (Wittgenstein 1976: §241). In his later philosophy, Wittgenstein rejected the notion that humans practice could be understood by reference to inferred existence of certain internal mental mechanisms which determined what each individual did. Individuals were not internally programmed to act in appropriate ways. On the contrary, Wittgenstein insisted that all human practice was social and individuals learnt to act properly as part of social groups. Together group members publicly established what constituted proper individual conduct. The social group, oriented to shared, public understandings, was decisive in explaining human action. Wittgenstein summarised the point: 'What has to be accepted, the given, is – so one could say – forms of life (Wittgenstein 1976: 226). The form of life refers to the taken-for-granted assumptions established over decades and inculcated daily by members of the groups in the course of their interactions. This culture determines what constitutes appropriate and meaningful conduct. The professional culture of the British military is one such 'form of life' which is created in the course of this group's activities. These officers mutually promote in each other a certain way of acting. They expect certain courses of action in any given situation but the form of life does not determine what should happen. In each case, there is a loose horizon of possible action which it would be appropriate for any British army officer to follow. It does not have a precise border but that does not mean it does not suggest specific courses of action in certain situations. In each particular case, appropriate action is finally decided by the group and rule-following involves what the group recognises as according with the broad understandings of this group. This 'form of life' cannot be reduced to a deadening series of autonomous principles. The rules, loose and uncertain though they are, gain their life from the group itself which honours some forms of action and dishonours others. As Wittgenstein notes:

> A rule stands their like a sign-post. Does the sign-post leave no doubt open
> about the way I have to go? Does it shew which direction I am to take when I

have passed it; whether along the road or the footpath or cross-country? (Wittgenstein 1976: §85)

The social groups of which humans are members decide how in each particular case a rule is meant. The form of life, the social group, determines appropriate conduct. Doctrine is a form of life created by a social group, in this case, officers and doctrine gains its life and its reality not from the text, nor any formal set of rules, then but from the broad culture of the British officer corps. Indeed, written doctrine is ultimately no more than a description of this living culture.

As an expression of this common culture, doctrine is ultimately reproduced during the course of innumerable rituals in which British officers participate. In his famous study of aboriginal religion, Durkheim argued that social groups require periodic rituals in which the group gathers and celebrates its collective values (Durkheim 1964). In the course of the ritual, these collective values become sacred and the members of the group commit themselves publicly to these values. Without rituals, in which group members commit themselves to each other, the group fissures. Durkheim noted that among aboriginal clanspeople the values of the group were symbolised as a totem which the tribe regarded as its god. Significantly, since the totem represented the group and since the clanspeople only experienced this god in ritualistic moments when the clan was physically gathered together, Durkheim noticed that the god which the aborigines worshipped was in fact their own society. The extreme emotions or ritualistic 'effervescence' which the aborigines attributed to the totem was in fact a product of their own social group gathered ecstatically around them.

> The believer is not deceived when he believes in the existence of a moral power upon which he depends and from which he receives all that is best in himself: this power exists, it is society. (Durkheim 1964: 225)

Although Durkheim's focus was aboriginal religion, Durkheim claimed that all social groups ultimately operate in the same way. All social groups need to reaffirm their

collective values and their social relations with each other periodically if they are not to fragment. In these periodic rituals, certain symbols will be employed to represent the group and its collective values. In its rituals, the culture of the officer corps is re-created ecstatically in Durkheimian fashion (1964).Each group member commits themselves to their fellow officers, each publicly establishing what group membership involves. This common culture and the social relations which arise out of it, is often symbolised by regimental badges or the ship or the squadron for which professional officers develop an intense and personal allegiance. These symbols unify the officer corps, enjoining communal action from them. Like all professional groups, British officers are involved in a myriad of rituals in which their common culture is reproduced. The training of new officers is very important here. Officer training involves instruction in technical, tactical and strategic matters. Yet above all, officer training is a rite of passage in which trainees demonstrate their allegiance to the group of which they would be part. They must demonstrate that they can engage in the practices and conduct relations with fellow officers which define this particular group. This inculcation continues formally at Junior, Advanced and Higher Staff College which trains officers for more senior staff appointments. However, the development of a common officer culture in which flexibility and independence is inculcated occurs above all in the everyday informal interaction rituals between officers. In his discussion of the formation of status groups, Max Weber emphasised the decisive importance of 'intercourse which is not subservient to economic or any other purpose' (Weber 1968: 932). In order to create unifed social groups, the members need to engage in distinctive and exclusive forms of social interaction to which only members are party. For British officers, raucous 'runs ashore' or after-dinner mess games all constitute exclusive forms of social intercourse in which these groups are forged and re-forged. In these everyday encounters, officers re-affirm their allegiance to each other and mutually call forth the practices which are

expected of British officers.

Significantly, *British Defence Doctrine* (*BDD*) has noted the importance of these informal interactions in producing a common military culture and, therefore, in creating doctrine. In describing the attribute of command, BDD perhaps surprisingly lists a 'sense of humour' as crucial for successful command: 'And last but not least, it is highly desirable that they have a sense of humour; the importance of this in maintaining morale and motivation should never be downplayed' (BDD 2001: 7.3). BDD continues:

> Many of those who have no personal experience of the UK's modern, volunteer Armed Forces tend to assume that their efficiency and ability to achieve success is due to a rigid, disciplinarian's approach to getting things done. Nothing could be further from the truth. Ultimately, in the tightest and most demanding operational circumstances, orders need to be given and carried out with a sense of urgency and without question. However, those circumstances are few and far between and the essence of sound military organisation is achieved by instilling in people a discipline based on co-operation and team-work. (BDD 2001: 7.3)

Humour and irony are more or less impossible in formal situations in which individual's roles are pre-assigned and unchangeable. This is especially the case in he military where the rank structure is more rigid than in most civilian institutions. Irony emerges in those informal interactions in which roles are flexible and in which values, ideas and even orders can be questioned. By emphasising a sense of humour, BDD are illuminating the importance of everyday face-to-face interaction in the inculcation of a common officer culture. Only in these informal settings can the flexibility demanded of the new British doctrine be developed because it is then that officers mutually question and criticise their roles and modes of operations. These informal encounters provide an opportunity for what Erving Goffman would call 'role-distance' (1961: 115). At these moments, social actors can separate themselves from the roles which they have been designated to fulfil. In this way, the roles themselves become open to criticism and transformation. Actors can begin to see the elements of the role which are necessary and

those which are merely the formal status appendages which have coalesced around any role

Senior officers in the British armed forces are well-aware of the importance of this informal interaction in the production of common officer culture. At a recent conference, Admiral Sir James Eberle confirmed the importance of independence and innovation among officers.[8] In particular, he noted that naval officers needed to recognise the 'golden moment' when an opportunity arose and have sufficient presence of mind to seize it. He described how such an attitude could be developed by training but more important than training was a sense of 'fun'. Appropriate officer culture was instilled in moments of informal interaction when officers laughed and joked together. At these moments of heightened emotion, of joy or 'effervescence', as Durkheim would call it, officers have learnt the appropriate values of the Royal Navy. 'Fun' was according to Eberle an 'important part of life' and it was a crucial part of the efficiency and success of Britain's armed forces. In order to illustrate the point, Eberle recited a story of how an oversized engineer officer had become stuck while inspecting a water-drum simultaneously trapping the ship's officers who preceded him into the water-drum. There was some concern about the procedural difficulties which this posed. The status of the wedged engineer officer was compromised and a lengthy sojourn in the water-drum was a potentially major inconvenience to the entire vessel. According to Eberle, the political difficulties of the situation were resolved by a brilliant witticism from the engineer officer. In a sudden outburst of laughter, he informed the fellow officer who was stuck in the turbine with him ; 'I've just realised, I'm all right; they can feed me through my back-side. But you are going to starve to death'. The assembled company were reduced to understandable hysterics. Yet while amusing, the story illustrates an important point. The formal difficulties of the situation were resolved by this recourse to humour. The joke eliminated at a stroke the status problems which the

group faced at the prospect of having to heave the engineer officer indelicately from the water-drum. The joke bracketed the wedged officer's status during these unceremonious moments so that the officer's inconvenience could be overcome without loss of face to anyone. For Eberle, the sense of fun – informal, interaction ritual in which juniors and seniors can slip out of formal roles – is vital to the capabilities of the British forces. Through this fun or humour, officers can distance themselves from their role, recognise how others see them but more specifically all can see more clearly what their role is and what is expected from them. The sense of humour, an ability to step out of the shackles of a formal situation, is crucial to the overall flexbility of the British armed forces. It is the way by which the British officer corps allows its members to recognise and seize 'golden moments'.

Doctrine reflects the ingrained culture of the officer corps, inculcated in training and at formal and informal events thereafter, and partially derived from the specific national culture. It is sustained and reproduced in countless interactions between officers in and away from operational duty. In these interactions, where a collective sense of fun is created, officers have the understandings of the group emotionally inscribed into them; they commit themselves to this form of life. Through these interactions, officers learn from each other what is expected from them; they learn which way this group interprets any sign-post. These interactions give doctrine its life and its power. Away from them doctrine is dead. In *British Maritime Doctrine*, the centrality of informal rituals to the creation of a coherent officer culture is illuminated historically. Understandably, Horatio Nelson has become a key totem for the navy. He has become the symbol of the virtuosity which the Navy wishes to instil in its officers and sailors. Significantly, Nelson's memory does not so much emphasis the importance of his personal genius but rather the decisiveness of a common culture among its officer corps which promoted independence. *British Maritime Doctrine* begins with Nelson's

evocative memorandum before Trafalgar: 'No captain can do very wrong if he places his ship alongside that of the enemy' (BR 1806). In another navy, such a command might have been disastrous or ineffective. Officers might have required far more precise orders in order to promote the overall strategy. It might have resulted in a disordered and ragged advance as each captain genuinely steered his own course. In the Royal Navy in 1805, nothing more than a statement of the obvious was required because the officers under Nelson's command were already thoroughly oriented to the Navy's mode of operation and understood intimately what was expected of them. They knew what to do because they knew what their fellow officers up and down the chain of command would also do. Independence of action was possible because the informal connections between officers ensured that they all could anticipate what each would do. It is noticeable that in his last communication to Nelson, Lord Barham, First Lord of the Admiralty, began his orders with the words 'As your judgement seem best' (BR 1806: 172). Barham similarly recognised that Nelson would do what Barham himself intended without detailed instruction. Although Nelson has become a symbol of virtuosity, he in fact demonstrates that it was the social group of which he was part which made him what he was. His virtuosity was the product of the group not the individual. As Villeneuve himself was reputed to have said that every captain in the Royal Navy was a Nelson. The Royal Navy has changed enormously since 1805 but while the culture of this force has changed, the use of Nelson denotes an enduring point.[9] The Navy's effectively relies on the development of a common culture among the officer corps so that each acting as they see fit does not produce a chaos of random actions but, on the contrary, tends towards the strategic whole to which all officers are necessarily oriented.

The problem for EDSP is that this is only how the British forces work. British Army Doctrine cannot be transported wholesale to other countries.[10] The specific culture of the British officer corps is British. *BDD* makes no mention of Europe or any

other country. On the contrary, the Britishness of this flexible culture is emphasised throughout. For instance, *BDD* emphasises that 'mission command is the British way of achieving this' (BDD 2001: 3.7). The concept of national interest and national culture is a central leitmotif running through *BDD*. While *BDD* recognises that in the future the most likely operations will be multilateral, there is no even nascent sense of supranational identity among British officers. Officers bear allegiance to their regiment or ship or squadron, to their service and their country. This presents a potential problem for the ESDP for while British service-people will be willing to fight for Europe if the British government thinks it in the national interest, no development of any unified professional military culture is in sight. The ESDP can only be a multinational force rather than a European one because the cultures of the military professionals who will form the core of any Rapid Reaction Force must be national. Significantly, the German armed forces reject British doctrine quite strongly. They regard the British as too interventionist and reject British criticisms of their conscription and defensive-oriented formations. Mid-level German officers display only limited interest in British styles and methods as guidelines for the Bundewehr (Sarotte 2001: 18). There is no prospect of a common European doctrine emerging among the military elites of Europe.[9] Different armed forces operate differently according to cultural, historical and social factors and it would be impossible to force the adoption of a British style on German or any other nation. The institutional reality, consisting of a myriad of interaction between officers, is primary. Out of these interactions based on shared understandings, the specific culture of each officer corps emerge. New doctrine can only emerge in the course of these exclusive social interactions. For a European doctrine to emerge, new interaction rituals between the European participants in the EDSP would be necessary. Yet, in order to create a genuinely European orientation, the density of these interactions would have to be increased dramatically. As it is, the key interactions occur at national level.

Officers of each nation train and work together and the EDSP can only be promoted by an international co-operation not European unity.

Conclusion: A European Military?

In the long term, the development of a more coherent European alliance is potentially discernible among military professionals in Europe. Although of limited operational validity at the moment, over the past decade there has been a development of links between different European militaries. The first multinational (i.e. international and intergovernmental) European forces began to be created in the mid-1990s. The most significant of these was the Franco-German brigade which while proposed in 1987 became operational in 1995 (Cameron 1999: 75). The Eurocorps consists of mainly conscripted soldiers trained primarily for defensive operations (van Ham 1999: 6). Other multinational formations came into being in the 1990s alongside the Eurocorps such as the Multinational Division Centre (Germany, Belgium, Holland and the United Kingdom), Eurofor (the Rapid Deployment Force) (France, Italy, Portugal and Spain) and Euromarfor (European Maritime Force) (France, Italy, Portugal and Spain) (Cameron 1999: 75; Edwards 2000: 8). There are other developments which may prove to be more significant in the future. The Royal Marines have a close and formal relationship with the Dutch Marines, training together for potential deployment since the early 1970s. The Royal Naval Signals School now trains candidates from all the European member states in an attempt to create unified procedures across all European navies. Indeed, although the Signals School focuses on procedure, it is apparent that in fact doctrine is simultaneously inculcated. Although the number of European students is relatively small, the Signals School at least suggests a growing awareness of different military cultures among European nations. Informal connections between higher ranking officers are also noticeable. In his account of the Bosnian crisis, General Rose

revealed a close affinity with and respect for French commanders there (Rose 1999: 39-40, 277, 282-3).

> Some evenings I would dine with Soubirou [Brigardier General André, French commander, Sector Sarajevo]. After dinner he would call on his officers one by one to sing legionnaire songs, which are very slow, with a sadness all of their own. One evening he invited a colonel to declaim Victor Hugo's, 'Waterloo'. By the end, everyone including the British, had tears in their eyes at the image of wavering lines of soldiers vanishing into the smoke and fire of battle. (Rose 1999: 40)

On UN and NATO deployments, the officers of different member states have the opportunity to develop social relations through the kinds of intense social interaction which Rose describes. All these developments may increase the density of exclusive social interactions among officers of different nations, from which the emergence of a broadly more common culture may be possible. Yet, none of these developments suggest the development of a European military culture as such, though they do suggest that some military professionals are recognising the increasing importance of European operations. Indeed, in certain cases such as in Bosnia, the ability of military professionals to operate together, despite alternative military cultures, contrasted with the mutual intransigence of national governments. The CFSP demonstrates the enduring salience of the nation state and national cultures. European integration will not efface the distinctive military cultures of the participating nations. Successful integration will involve the increasing interdependency between member-states and between the professional groups in each nation.

Notes

1 The possibility of a common European defence policy, the European Defence Community was first proposed in May 1952. It was never ratified and the French Assembly voted decisively against it in 1954 (Piening 1997: 32; Buzan et al. 1990: 137; Van Eekelen 1998: 8).

2 European Political Co-operation was created in the early 1970s. The end of the de Gaulle regime and the détente between the USA and the USSR provided the appropriate international conditions for discussion about common European security to take place (Piening 1997: 34; Buzan et al. 1990: 147; Howarth 1995: 319).

3 The origin of the Petersburg Tasks lies in a meeting in Bonn of the foreign and defence ministers of the Western European Union (WEU) member states on 19 June 1992. Following this meeting, the so-called Petersburg declaration was made (Hayward and Page 1995: 334). This declaration outlined a set of humanitarian 'tasks' which the WEU should commit itself to fulfilling fulfilling military intervention up to the level of peace-keeping. Although the WEU was finally dissolved in 2001 in the light of the ESDP, the Petersburg Tasks remain its enduring contribution to European foreign policy (see Duke 1996).

4 I am grateful to Professor Philip John, Director of Systems Engineering, Cranfield University/RMCS for information about the failure of the SP-70.

5 Demonstrating the difficulty of international procurement, the British military now procure on the basis of seven criteria: personnel, force structure, real estate, concepts and doctrine, sustainability, training and development and equipment and technology.

These extensive criteria reflect the very different culture of European militaries and they do not allow for easy international agreement on procurement.

6 As a rule of thumb, procedure refers to those activities performed at company level and below, doctrine to the processes of command and control which occur above the company level. Of course, the divide is not total since the kinds of strategic doctrine which are developed at battalion level and above will necessarily reflect and mould operational and tactical procedures at company level.

7 Commander Steven Haines, who was one of the authors of BDD, described this method of research at a meeting of the Strategic Policy Studies Group at Exeter University in September 2002.

8 Sir James Eberle's comments were made at a meeting of the Strategic Policy Studies Group at Exeter University in September 2002.

9 Gordon's work on the Battle of Jutland is pertinent here since it involves a rich discussion of the relationship between naval doctrine and individual initiative (1996). However, although Gordon fully recognises that individual initiative is, in fact, the product of a wider culture and, indeed, that individual initiative can be institutionalised through the adoption of the appropriate doctrines (e.g. Tryon's TA signal), Gordon more generally contrasts institutional cultures and personal genius. The argument forwarded here is just the opposite. The very virtuosity of individual commanders is itself also a product of group culture.

10 Commander Steven Haines emphasised this point in his presentation at Exeter in September 2002.

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