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National Europe Centre, Schuman Lecture 2009

The European Union's Contribution to Security in the Twenty-First Century

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About the Schuman Lecture

The annual Robert Schuman Lecture celebrates the remarkable achievements of European integration since its modest beginnings in the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951, announced in a declaration by French Foreign Minister Schuman. The Australian National University has recognised this achievement and foresight by coordinating an Annual Schuman Lecture since 1996. The first lecture was delivered by Lord Leon Brittan, the then Vice President of the European Commission. Since then, the University has coordinated annual Schuman Lectures by distinguished speakers, including The Right Honourable Chris Patten, CH, Commissioner for External Relations, The Right Honourable Alexander Downer, Justice Michael Kirby of the Australian High Court, Professor Sir Neil MacCormick QC FRSE FBA LLD Dlitt, and HE Ambassador Miguel Angel Moratinos.

About the Author

Helga Maria Schmid, Director of the Policy and Early Warning Unit of the Council General Secretariat of the European Union since January 2006, is one of the closest advisors to the EU-High Representative for the Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana. Before joining Solana's team Helga Schmid, a German diplomat, worked in the cabinets of both Foreign Ministers Klaus Kinkel and Joschka Fischer. She headed Foreign Minister Fischer's Political Staff from 2003 until end of 2005. Ms Schmid joined the German Foreign Service in 1988. Beginning of the 90's she worked inter alia as press and public affairs officer for the German Embassy in Washington. Ms Schmid studied English and French as well as literature, history and politics at Munich University and the Sorbonne, Paris.

The EU's Contribution to Security in the Twenty-First Century

Presentation by Ms Helga Schmid

First of all, I would like to thank the National Europe Centre for the privilege to deliver this year's Schuman Lecture. Indeed, I should also take the opportunity to congratulate the Australian National University for setting up, in cooperation with the European Commission, the National Europe Centre. I can see from its numerous activities, and from their success, how committed this institute is to expanding and deepening knowledge of the European Union: institutions, policies and society at large. By doing so, the National Europe Centre provides a real contribution to the ties of friendship between Australia and Europe. It deserves our full appreciation and support.

I am also delighted to be here at time when relations between the EU and Australia continue to flourish. A revised Partnership Framework was adopted at the annual meeting of Foreign Ministers' in Paris on 29 October last year. This set out shared objectives in foreign and security policy, trade, climate change and energy security, and reaffirmed our shared commitment to a multilateral, rules-based system in international affairs. Around the world, from Afghanistan to Burma/Myanmar, we work together closely on the ground. Indeed, I should take the opportunity to express my appreciation for the generous contribution Australia has offered to global peacekeeping including in Europe (UNPROFOR, SFOR and KFOR). But I am deeply sorry to be here at a time when Australia

is experiencing a terrible tragedy. Our thoughts in Europe have been with you and the victims of the horrible bushfires. It is truly a national disaster on an appalling scale, and I extend my sincere condolences.

Today, I would like to focus on European foreign policy. Let me begin with some context. For a long time, the European Union did not have a common foreign policy. Indeed, it was commonplace to caricature it as an economic giant but a political dwarf.

During the Cold War, European security was guaranteed by NATO and the transatlantic alliance. The European Union focused instead on economic and domestic challenges, and with great success. The Single Market stands as the deepest and most comprehensive act of economic integration in history.

That said, the European Union did not evolve in isolation from foreign policy. Arguably, Robert Schuman, along with the other founding fathers of the European Community, was pursuing a political objective - building security on the European continent - through economic means. As the community expanded, enlargement spread that stability, and the prospect of membership has itself become a powerful driver for deep-rooted reform in neighbouring countries. And, even within the sphere of more traditional diplomacy, there were steps during the 1970s and 80s towards what was known as European political co-ordination. One landmark was the Venice Declaration, adopted by the European Council in 1980, which was the first such public statement to talk of a two-state solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

With the end of the Cold War, the picture changed.

Firstly, the nature of security evolved. Previously, we had thought in terms of territorial defence against external aggression. As the 1990s progressed, with events such as conflict in the Balkans and genocide in Rwanda, we begun to understand that the nature of the threat had changed. Failing states and instability breed wider consequences, with the export of organised crime, terrorism, flows of refugees, and, potentially, the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

Secondly, our relationship with the United States changed. A strong transatlantic partnership remains fundamental to our security in Europe. But the European continent is no longer a primary security concern for the US, as it was in the days of the Iron Curtain and Checkpoint Charlie. Europeans could no longer rely solely on the US to guarantee their own security: Europe had to start providing security itself, on the continent and beyond.

The crisis in the Balkans during the 1990s brought these changes into tragic focus. Europe was powerless to halt conflict following the disintegration of Yugoslavia, in the bloodiest conflict seen in our continent since the Second World War. We lacked the co-ordination to speak with one voice, and the means to intervene on the ground with sufficient strength. Fine words were not matched by actions. In Bosnia-Hercegovina, and then in Kosovo, it took US and NATO engagement to put an end to the conflict.

The establishment of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), with the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, and later of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) at the Helsinki European Council in 1999 were answers these challenges. Progress since has not always been automatic or smooth. Yet now, ten years on from the war in Kosovo, the situation has changed significantly, and it has changed for the better. I would pick out three main aspects.

Firstly, Europe is now more able to conduct serious diplomacy, with one voice. Javier Solana has served as High Representative for the last decade, and established the position as a credible and respected interlocutor. His role has provided a clear answer to Kissinger's famous question about a telephone number for Europe. He is supported by an extensive team in Brussels, including the Policy Unit, which I lead, Special Representatives for trouble spots such as Georgia, Sudan or Israel and Palestine, and specialist advisers on different civilian and military operations. Led by the rotating national Presidency, currently held by the Czech Republic, the Member States co-ordinate closely with him, including through regular meetings of foreign ministers. The European Commission, in particular when it comes to aspects such as development, electoral assistance, and trade policy, is also closely involved.

This enhanced diplomatic capability has enabled us to become a serious player on key dossiers. Over the last year, Javier has represented the E3+3 in direct discussions with the Iranian leadership over the nuclear issue, and been closely involved in working towards a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, through the Quartet.

Secondly, we have a clearer common vision about our security objectives. The European Security Strategy (ESS) was adopted in 2003. In December last year, we completed a review on implementation since, which concluded that the Strategy remained valid, but identified various ways in which we can improve our actions, and address new security challenges which have risen in significance over the last five years. I say will more about the conclusions from that process in a moment.

The ESS set out a coherent vision of how to respond to the new security environment that has arisen since the end of the Cold War. As I mentioned, the nature of the threat has changed, and so must our response. Territorial defence is inadequate. We face complex problems, often interlinked, and which defy traditional distinctions between domestic and foreign policy. Instability in Afghanistan and Pakistan, for instance, impacts on our interests in many ways: radicalisation and the threat of terrorism; regional tensions; economic pressures; emigration into Europe; trade in drugs; and a heightened risk of nuclear proliferation, to name a few. We must bring greater security to these countries, if we are to protect our own interests too. Hence over a thousand Australian service personnel are operating in Afghanistan, alongside forces from NATO countries and elsewhere. But weakened states like Afghanistan cannot be supported with military means alone. Instead, we must deploy a mix of policies, which cover economic development, fostering stronger political institutions, strengthened rule of law, and counter-terrorism measures, among others.

At its best, the European Union is uniquely placed to deliver exactly this kind of approach, through the various instruments at our disposal. Indeed, in the Balkans, the EU, in close cooperation with NATO, has done just this, by providing the region with stabilisation, economic development and

the perspective of eventual EU membership. So, when all the instruments come together, the effects can be very significant.

It is the newest of these instruments - ESDP - which is the third aspect of growth that I would identify from the last ten years. The genesis was a joint statement by the UK and French Governments at St Malo in 1998. This was a very important step, not least because it led to recognition that European defence need not be a rival to or undermine NATO and the transatlantic alliance. In 2003, we deployed our first three missions, to Bosnia-Hercegovina, FYROM and the Democratic Republic of Congo. We have now sent over twenty in response to crises around the world, both military and civilian. They range from training police in Afghanistan, to monitoring the ceasefire in Aceh, to border monitoring in Moldova and the Palestinian Territories. In 2008 alone, the European Union sent our largest civilian mission yet to Kosovo, to take over rule of law and policing from the UN, a monitoring mission to observe the ceasefire between Russia and Georgia, a military mission to Chad, to protect refugees from Darfur, and our first naval mission to patrol against piracy off the Somali coast. In such cases, the very presence of outsiders can be a stabilising factor. Javier Solana likes to draw an analogy with physics: just as the act of observation modifies the behaviour of particles in an experiment, so the presence of outside observers changes behaviour. Civilian observers help to re-establish confidence and stability to a given situation.

I believe that these changes have also made our transatlantic partnership with the United States stronger. A few years ago, there was a suspicion that Americans were cautious about the evolution of a distinct European foreign policy and military capability, for the reasons I have just described. These concerns have now lifted, and indeed the US has sent personnel to participate in our Kosovo mission. Washington wants a strong European voice in the world, and, increasingly, looks to Europeans to lend a hand in addressing security issues elsewhere in the world. In recent months, attention has focussed in particular on our shared responsibilities in Afghanistan. But the same is true elsewhere: in Congo or Chad, for instance, the European Union has taken a lead in bringing security with a presence on the ground.

Many of these aspects came together during the crisis over Georgia last summer. Clearly, it is too soon to draw any firm conclusions about that episode. But the European Union played a decisive role in negotiating a ceasefire, which prevented the conflict from escalating into something even worse. We then managed to launch and deploy a monitoring mission on the ground in record time, following commitments undertaken under the ceasefire brokered by the EU. This led to the withdrawal of the Russian troops which were previously stationed just a few miles away from the Georgian capital. Today the EU monitors are still present in Georgia, contributing to the stability and security of that country. And the EU, represented by the EU Special Representative for the Crisis in Georgia Pierre Morel, is co-chairing talks between the parties in Geneva. All this was co-ordinated with the Americans, who were content for Europe to take the lead.

One has only to compare the swiftness and effectiveness of the European response in this case with our performance over the Western Balkans in the 1990s to see what progress we managed to achieve. There is scope for genuine satisfaction at what has been done.

But much work still remains to be done.

This was the purpose of the ESS Implementation Review, which I mentioned a few moments ago. The objective of this process was to identify what we had done since 2003, and where we could improve our game, as well as examining how the security environment has changed. There is an obvious symmetry with the exercise which the Australian Government undertook at the same time, which was set out in the National Security Statement delivered by Prime Minister Rudd to your parliament in December.

Both of these assessments came at an important time. We are experiencing a unique moment in world affairs. Never before have the challenges to our security been so complex, inter-connected, and changing with such speed. Indeed, the year 2008 seemed to symbolize this process. In the space of twelve months, we saw armed conflict between Russia and Georgia; piracy off the coast of Somalia; a shocking terrorist attack in Mumbai; further deterioration in Zimbabwe; a devastating cyclone in Burma; and, overshadowing everything else, a financial crisis on an unprecedented scale.

In our ESS Implementation Review, we drew several conclusions. The first was about the kind of international system that we need to build for this century. Confronted with issues like climate change, energy security, nuclear proliferation, radical terrorism, international crime, migration, failed and fragile states, not to mention the global economic downturn, no international player, no matter how powerful, can address them alone. Moreover, security threats are not coming any more from states alone, as they did in the past; now most of them come from other sources - from insufficient, rather than from excessive state power, for example - blurring the traditional distinction between foreign and domestic policy. All this requires national governments to work together in a cooperative framework. Your national security statement used rather a striking phrase, about "medium power diplomacy". In fact, in today's world, even being a great power doesn't bring any guarantees of security. President Sarkozy made a similar point at the recent Munich Security Conference. I quote: "a single power can't resolve the world's major conflicts....when there are [only] relative powers, then solidarity and cooperation become necessary".

These global issues require global answers; cooperation with other partners is essential. But that co-operation can best happen through an international system which reflects modern realities. We need to explore how to reshape the institutions that were created sixty years ago, at the end of the Second World War, to reflect a very different set of challenges, and a different balance of power within the world. For Europe, and for Australia, there is an urgency about this task. We need to demonstrate to the rising powers of this century - India and China, but others too - that the system can serve their interests, as much as ours, and that we are willing to reform it so as to achieve that. If we fail to act, they may be inclined to seek solutions elsewhere. In 1961, John F Kennedy said, in his memorable inaugural speech, that "united there is little we cannot do in a host of cooperative ventures". On that occasion, his words were addressed to America's traditional allies in western Europe. Today, we should be giving the same message, but to a different, broader, audience.

The second conclusion was about our own capabilities and coherence. I have described what progress has been achieved over the last ten years. But, clearly, there is still much to do. The Lisbon Treaty may provide us with a framework for more efficient and effective structures, including the establishment of a single position of High Representative, who would oversee all the Union's for-

eign policy. It remains for Member States to ratify that Treaty, and bring it into force. But, there are more operational changes that we can make, particularly in improving our capabilities over ESDP. At the moment, each mission requires a complex process of force generation, in which Member States volunteer personnel or assets. Ensuring that these are available, in the right numbers and with the right equipment, remains a challenge. There is also more that we can do to ensure our various instruments work coherently together, especially in bringing long-term stabilisation to war-torn societies.

The ESS Implementation Review also identified those threats which have increased in significance since 2003. The security consequences of climate change, and energy supply, are particularly important. Cyber-security has also risen as a concern, as evidence has increased that attacks across the internet are being used for political objectives.

Your own National Security Statement rightly calls climate change a "most fundamental national security challenge". Javier Solana presented a report on this subject last year, together with the European Commission, which identified how it is becoming a "threat multiplier", whose repercussions will strike various areas of the planet, including in the Pacific. Together, the EU and Australia should work to achieve a new, ambitious international agreement at the UN conference in Copenhagen later this year to reduce emissions; but we should also be thinking through together those security implications in greater detail, and our response.

The consequences in Asia, for instance, could be very serious. Sea level rises could pose an existential challenge to many small-island states in the Pacific, and, as the very geography of our planet changes, raise legal issues over border demarcation, and, potential, territorial disputes. In China, melting of the Himalaya glaciers, which would reduce river flows, could give rise to social tensions, at a time when that vast country is attempting to manage the consequences of rapid economic growth.

Let me conclude. I think that both Australians and Europeans would agree with the picture that I have painted. We face a world in which threats to our security are both more diverse and yet more inter-linked; where individual countries cannot achieve security without working together;

in which the multilateral system needs to be reformed, to reflect a changing global order; and in which we need to become more agile and equipped to respond to threats at source, drawing on all our instruments.

It is also a world in which Europe and Australia will continue to be natural partners. We share history and values, based on freedom, democracy, solidarity, human rights and the rule of law. We share interests: the EU is Australia's largest trading partner; it is the largest source of foreign investment and second largest investment partner overall. We also share the commitment to the UN Charter and to efforts to resolve disputes through the international system.

And, I believe, it calls for a new kind of foreign policy. Historically, states have sought to secure or expand their interests at the expense of others. In a globalised world, this approach cannot bring security - if ever it could. Rather, both Europe and Australia believe in building security through multilateralism and international law; working for consensus, but being prepared to act when we must; combining soft and hard power together - smart power, as has been become fashionable to say. It is on this collaborative diplomacy that Europe was built. And it is only through this kind of foreign policy that we can hope to achieve security in our modern world.

Robert Schuman famously said in his 1950 Declaration that "Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity". If he were here today, I believe that he would say the same about European foreign policy. It takes both idealism and pragmatism. But, with each step, we come closer to our eventual goal.

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