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Interdependence, Asymmetric Crises and European Defense Cooperation

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Abstract

Although international crises are often believed to represent windows of opportunity to strengthen European defense cooperation, recent crises have not seemed to produce a clear convergence of European Union (EU) member states' security interests. This article seeks to address this puzzle by arguing that European defense cooperation is a response to crises that place European states in a situation of military interdependence. Conversely, asymmetric crises, i.e. crises that affect European states unevenly, encourage those states to maintain their autonomy of action. This theoretical argument is supported by two case studies: the failure of the European Defense Community in the early 1950s and the current difficulties experienced by the EU's military operations. These two cases illustrate a striking continuity in that, because of (neo)colonial ties in particular, European states are often unevenly affected by international crises, which tends to make defense cooperation less effective.

Keywords: Defence Co-operation, Interdependence, European Defence Community, Common Security and Defence Policy

On 17 November 2015, four days after the Paris terror attacks, France officially invoked for the first time article 42.7 of the Treaty on European Union (EU), which requires member states to come to the aid of one another in the case of armed aggression against one of them. However, officials immediately clarified that this appeal would not trigger any EU military action. For some commentators, it only confirmed that the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) had become a 'busted flush' (Menon and Witney 2015, 2). Although international crises are widely believed to represent windows of opportunity for strengthening European defense cooperation, recent crises have not seemed to produce a clear upgrade in EU member states' common interests or to stimulate their joint action (Menon 2011, Howorth 2014, Müller 2016). On the other hand, the recent wave of terror attacks in Europe and the prospect of Brexit negotiations have renewed the impetus to hold talks regarding the possible strengthening of European defense cooperation (Gentiloni and Pinotti 2016, Le Figaro 2016). In light of these hopes and disappointments, identifying the key factors through which crises can (or cannot) stimulate European defense cooperation is crucial.

Many of the authors who seek to explain European defense cooperation focus on the role of the US and transatlantic relations (Posen 2006, Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010, Weiss 2012, Cladi and Locatelli 2012, Dyson 2013a). One classic argument posits that the European Defense Community (EDC) failed because the massive deployment of American troops in Europe during the 1950s' East-West crisis rendered the EDC useless, whereas the CSDP was necessitated by the relative disengagement of the US during the 1990s Balkan crises (Jones 2003, Rosato 2011, Weiss 2012). Consequently, the impact of crises on European defense cooperation would essentially depend on the military policy of the US.

Without denying the importance of the American factor, this article aims to reopen the debate based on two observations. On the one hand, with regard to the EDC, the US commitment to maintaining a strong presence on the European continent dates back to September 1950. This factor alone does not explain why France supported an ambitious European army project in October 1950 and changed its mind only after much hesitation in 1954. On the other hand, the CSDP might have been initially established to take over for NATO in the Balkans, in a context marked by a relative US disengagement from Europe in the 1990s. However, since the CSDP has become operational, the vast majority of EU military interventions have been deployed to Africa, which had never previously been a favored destination for NATO interventions. In Africa, the CSDP essentially took over for former colonial powers' national policies rather than for NATO. Therefore, in Africa, the key question is not so much why Europeans started to act without the US but why they started to act together.

US policy alone cannot explain why joint EU operations became a regular practice in Africa in the early 2000s and then proved increasingly difficult to launch a few years later (Haine 2011, Koepf 2012). European defense cooperation can only be understood by adopting a more comprehensive analytical framework.

Theoretically, this article aims to demonstrate that European defense cooperation is a response to the military interdependence that international crises impose on European states. In particular, this article investigates the impact of crises on European states' interests. Crises that affect the interests of European states jointly are more likely to lead to stronger interdependence and to stimulate defense cooperation. Conversely, *asymmetric crises*, i.e., crises that unevenly affect European states, tend to generate less interdependence, thus encouraging those states to preserve their autonomy of action. Empirically, this article focuses on the case of France and highlights a striking continuity between the current CSDP and the 1950s' EDC project; in both cases, European defense cooperation suffered from asymmetric overseas crises, which were linked to France's (neo)colonial ties. In particular, this article argues that the CSDP has been hampered by the asymmetric nature of African crises, which unevenly affect European states' interests and generate fears of entrapment and abandonment.

In addition to secondary sources and public documents, this article relies on French archives in the case of the EDC and on interviews with French military and diplomatic officials in the case of CSDP operations. The interviewees worked or had worked at the Permanent Representation of France to the EU or at the Berlin Embassy.

The driving forces underlying European defense cooperation

This article aims to investigate the driving forces behind the aggregation of military capabilities, particularly armed forces, with a view towards joint action, within the framework of the European integration process. This is what is understood here by the generic expression 'European defense cooperation'. The key question is which driving forces can prompt European states to invest in defense cooperation within a European framework as opposed to either purely national policies or transatlantic cooperation within the NATO framework. Although the second part of the problem (European versus transatlantic cooperation) has been thoroughly investigated, the first part of the problem (European cooperation versus national policies) remains understudied.

European defense cooperation as a response to changing transatlantic relations

For neorealists, the CSDP was a response to American hegemony. They state that, since the end of the Cold War, the unipolarity and freedom of action garnered by the US from its power position have made its commitment to European states less predictable and less reliable (Hyde-Price 2006). This situation has led European states to cooperate with one another to ensure their autonomy in the event of American disengagement and to ensure their influence on American policy, which Posen (2006) sees as an attempt to balance US power. Similarly, for Oswald (2006), European defense policy is a form of 'soft balancing between friends' that aims to establish more balanced transatlantic partnership. For Art (2004), a 'looser version of balance of power' can explain the CSDP's development as a 'hedge' against American abandonment. For other neorealists, European states' cooperation out of fear of abandonment by the Americans represents an instance of bandwagoning because it aims to keep the US close rather than competing with it (Cladi and Locatelli 2012, Dyson 2013a).

Certainly, increasing transatlantic frictions after the Cold War and the risk of abandonment by the US prompted European states to develop the practice of autonomous defense cooperation. However, this explanation only resolves one aspect of the problem. It explains why European states may not want to rely solely on NATO; it does not explain why those European states may want to act through a European framework in particular. European states cannot rely on the US as much as they used to, but that does not mean that they can or want to rely on one another within the EU. Howorth and Menon (2009, 741) rightly observe that the focus on transatlantic relations has led many scholars to overlook the *inter-European* dimension of the problem: 'What the soft balancers fail to appreciate is that [the] logic of international politics applies within the EU in much the same way as it does in its relations with the outside world'. Indeed, EU member states seek to preserve their national autonomy of action before considering European cooperation. As such, explanations of transatlantic divergences cannot fully account for the development of European defense cooperation. What is still missing is an explanation of inter-European convergence. Admittedly, Rosato's argument (2011) about the need to balance Soviet power during the Cold War and Jones' argument (2003) about the risk of German hegemony partially address this part of the problem, but they are difficult to generalize. In the late 1990s when the CSDP was launched, Russia was no longer perceived as a serious threat (Meyer 2006, Ch. 3), and Germany was no longer a major security concern; France even encouraged Germany to acquire more capabilities so that it could contribute to the provision of European security (Weiss 2012, 662–663).

Constructivist authors have placed the problem of inter-European convergence at the center of their studies. However, they have focused on *how* this convergence occurs rather than on the driving forces from which it originates (Meyer and Strickmann 2010, 66). Meyer (2006) Giegerich (2006), and Schmidt and Zyla (2013) observe a certain degree of convergence among the EU's strategic cultures through shared experiences during joint missions, similar threat assessments, learning from crises and elite socialization. Overall, a division of labor tends to exist between constructivists and realists. Whereas realists highlight the systemic transformations that underlie European cooperation, constructivists focus on the ideational changes caused by those systemic transformations. Additionally, when constructivists seek to incorporate systemic factors, they tend to focus on transatlantic relations, as realists do. For example, Meyer and Strickmann (2010, 74) state that an increasingly unbalanced distribution of material capabilities between the US and its European allies heightened transatlantic frictions in the 1990s and offered norm entrepreneurs opportunities to promote an autonomous European defense policy. Similarly, Berenskoetter and Giegerich (2010) argue that an enduring 'dissonance' with the US in the 1990s led Germany to turn to a strategy of emancipation by investing in the CSDP. More recently, although Berenskoetter (2013) has denounced the 'American-centrism' of realist analyses, he has also identified a 'transatlantic divergence in strategic cultures' as the main driver behind the CSDP. Therefore, constructivists do not provide an alternative to the realist bias towards transatlantic relations.

Other authors have adopted a bureaucratic approach and have emphasized the role of key actors who pushed for the development of European defense cooperation. Howorth (2004) has highlighted the role of the international epistemic community of defense-related officials who gave birth to the CSDP through their discursive interactions. For Mérand (2010), the CSDP resulted from the strategies of some European diplomats and military leaders who saw an opportunity to protect their bureaucratic capital, which had been challenged by both the Balkan Wars and the end of the Cold War. Buchet de Neuilly (2009) stresses that EU military operations are largely the result of competition among EU institutions, with each actor attempting to promote its own expertise. Similarly, Dijkstra (2012) argues that Council officials in particular have employed agenda-setting strategies to further their bureaucratic interest of launching new missions. However, the bureaucratic approach does not highlight a specific driving force that underlies European defense cooperation. Instead, by focusing on 'meso-level' social interactions, it complements the macro-level approaches privileged by realists and constructivists. Specifically, Mérand (2010) argues that systemic shocks, such as the emergence of a unipolar world, translate into institutional developments only through their impact on

policymakers' career prospects. Similar to constructivist studies, the bureaucratic approach specifies *how* European defense cooperation developed but does not provide a more comprehensive explanation of its development than the neorealists do.

Finally, Pohl (2014) has challenged the realist focus on the international level and has offered a liberal interpretation of European defense cooperation. Pohl argues that governments adapt their behavior according to expected electoral consequences. Therefore, domestic societal expectations are the real drivers of the CSDP. However, this focus on national preferences does not explain why European states have decided that, in some case, they should act together instead of separately. If a state's defense policy is essentially a response to its domestic values, a purely national policy seems *prima facie* to be the most plausible outcome. Moreover, Moravcsik's liberal intergovernmentalist theory, to which Pohl refers, does not simply explain European policies as the product of domestic societal demands; it also highlights that those societal demands tend to favor European integration because of rising trade ties among European economies (1998, 473). However, that type of explanation, which could account for the convergence of national preferences towards European defense cooperation, is precisely what is missing from Pohl's liberal theory.

This article intends to offer a more adequate theoretical approach that can account not only for the transatlantic drivers but also for the inter-European drivers through which crises can stimulate European defense cooperation.

European defense cooperation as an inter-European problem

Focusing on the inter-European level, some authors have analyzed defense cooperation as a collective action problem. Eilstrup-Sangiovanni (2014) and Nováky (2015) note that collective action is easier when it produces not only public goods that benefit all states (e.g., regional stability), thus encouraging them to freeride but also private goods that benefit some states in particular (e.g., protection of a trade partner), thus encouraging those states to react effectively. Eilstrup-Sangiovanni (2014) concludes that the CSDP is highly subject to collective action problems because it focuses on crisis management, which is mainly (although not exclusively) a public good, and lacks a dominant power that is willing to shoulder a greater share of the defense burden. While focusing on the distinction between public and private goods can help understand why European states are quicker to react to some situations than to others, it does not explain why they are encouraged to react collectively or separately. In other words, these arguments leave open the question of what factors potentially encourage European states

to pursue their 'private goods' jointly. Addressing a similar question, Kreps (2011) has argued that the US preferred multilateral to unilateral interventions when it faced a crisis that induced a long time horizon, thereby allowing it to focus on long-term payoffs. This theory could help us understand why some crises are more favorable to cooperation in general than others are; however, it would not explain why some crises are more specifically favorable to inter-European cooperation. We thus need to focus on inter-European relations.

This problem has been partially addressed by Dyson (2013b, Dyson and Konstadinides 2013). Dyson's main argument is that European defense cooperation is an instance of 'reformed bandwagoning' on US power (2013b, 420). He essentially focuses on European states' different degrees of Atlanticism, which he explains by a 'variance in external vulnerability', particularly in terms of energy dependence and geographical position. For example, Dyson argues that France's geographic position and colonial ties encouraged it to 'bandwagon more loosely' during the Cold War (429). However, in the case of the 2011 Libyan crisis, Dyson also contends that the divergence on the question of the military intervention between France and the UK on the one hand and Germany on the other hand can be explained by the divergence in their respective sources of dependable energy supply (436). This type of inter-European approach can actually be systematized beyond geographic positions and energy interests. I next present a theoretical argument based on the concept of interdependence that considers the variation in European states' capabilities and interests and provides a more comprehensive approach to the factors that affect inter-European convergence and divergence.

Instead of presenting European defense cooperation as an effect of transatlantic relations, I argue that it should be primarily seen as a response to the *interdependence* among European states. States are encouraged to act jointly only when they are interdependent in the pursuit of their interests. By interdependence, I mean that several states' interests are mutually *vulnerable* to one another's actions (Keohane and Nye 1977, 13-19). Although the concept of interdependence is often limited to its economic dimension (McMillan 1997), it also includes military interdependence (Keohane and Nye 1977, 10). Two states can be mutually vulnerable at a primary level because their decisions could seriously harm each other's security. Cooperation can respond to that problem by performing a security management function (Wallander and Keohane 1999, 28). The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe is an example. At a secondary level, two states can be mutually vulnerable because they need each other's assistance (Snyder 1984, 471-472) either to confront a common threat or to cope with external risks. Cooperation can respond to those problems by performing the function of an alliance. The French-British *Entente Cordiale* is an example. More specifically, defense

cooperation—that is, the aggregation of military capabilities with a view towards joint actions—can be a response to both primary- and secondary-level interdependence problems. For example, the establishment of NATO responded to a twofold transatlantic interdependence problem. At a primary level, NATO sought to manage its members' vulnerability to one another by controlling German rearmament. At a secondary level, NATO sought to respond to its members' mutual need for assistance to cope with the Soviet threat. NATO has been both a security management institution and an alliance (Wallander and Keohane 1999, 40–46). I argue that, when European defense cooperation occurs, it seeks to respond to specifically inter-European interdependence problems.

Interdependence among states can vary according to the situation, which is why we must explore the impact of international crises. By 'crisis', I mean an intensification of disruptive interactions between two or more actors that increases the probability of (but does not necessarily lead to) an armed conflict, which, in turn, destabilizes international relations (Brecher 1996). Most authors acknowledge the decisive role played by crises in the development of European defense cooperation. For realists, crises essentially play the role of 'catalysts' (Art 2004, 1997) or 'precipitating events' (Posen 2006, 173) through which systemic factors are manifested. Following a constructivist approach, crises also act as formative experiences from which lessons are learned (Meyer 2006, Ch. 4). Finally, from a bureaucratic perspective, crises matter because of their impact on bureaucratic interests (Buchet de Neuilly 2006). I will argue that crises can 'catalyze' variations of interdependence among European states. Because they constitute disruptive events with international implications, crises can affect states' different interests. Crises can affect state security by generating threats, such as the 1950s East-West crisis in Europe that increased the risk of a Soviet invasion. Crises can also simply represent a risk to some entrenched political or economic interest. These more limited interests include, in particular, privileged trading ties, sources of dependable energy supply, and the stability of strategic allies that are sources of diplomatic influence. States whose interests are jeopardized by a crisis are thus encouraged to act to protect their interests. In turn, this incentive can generate interdependence.

To specify the impact of crises on European interdependence, we can distinguish the factors that make European states more or less dependent on their European partners and the factors that make this dependence more or less mutual.

In terms of dependence, the main factor to consider is European states' capabilities in relation to the challenges that are posed by the crises. The less able a state is to cope alone with a crisis that challenges its interests, the more dependent it is on external support and the more

incentivized it will be to seek defense cooperation. Partners' support provides not only additional military capabilities but also additional diplomatic influence, particularly to avoid a backlash from other actors. Conversely, the more a state can rely on its own forces to respond effectively to a crisis, the less dependent it is on external support, and because defense cooperation is costly as a result of interoperability, cohesion and effectiveness challenges (Weitsman 2014), the fewer incentives it will have to seek defense cooperation. Because of the existence of transatlantic ties, we should also consider potential military support from the US. The more American support is lacking or inadequate when a European state faces a crisis, the more this state will depend on its European partners and will be motivated to invest in European defense cooperation.

To study the mutual nature of European states' military dependence in a crisis, the main factor to consider is how these states' interests are affected by the crisis. On the one hand, the more a crisis affects the interests of several states jointly, the more it increases their interdependence. Indeed, states affected by the same crisis can risk *mutually* harming one another's interests by adopting uncoordinated decisions (primary interdependence), or they can *mutually* need one another's support to address the crisis (secondary interdependence). Accordingly, such crises are opportunities to promote defense cooperation. On the other hand, the more unevenly a crisis affects a group of states, the less it increases their interdependence. A crisis that affects some member states much more than others can be called an *asymmetric crisis*, in the sense that it produces asymmetric incentives within this group. Because European states differ in terms of geographic positions, trading patterns, sources of dependable energy supply, and (neo)colonial ties, they are potentially unevenly affected by external threats and risks and are thus subject to asymmetric crises (Dyson 2013b, Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2014, 90–91). Asymmetric crises generate incentives that are the exact opposite of those generated by interdependence. In a situation of interdependence, states are mutually vulnerable to one another and are thus encouraged to act jointly; in an asymmetric crisis, some states are vulnerable to a threat or a risk that does not affect their partners, and they are thus more encouraged to act separately. The notion of an 'asymmetric crisis' in the military realm can be compared to the notion of an 'asymmetric shock' in the economic realm, i.e., an economic event that affects some members of an economic union more than others. In particular, asymmetric shocks increase the cost of monetary unions, as the member states that are affected by the shock can no longer resort to devaluation to adjust their economy (Krugman 2013, 440). Similarly, asymmetric crises make defense cooperation riskier.

In the event of an asymmetric crisis, typical problems that constitute the ‘alliance security dilemma’ (Snyder 1984, Kupchan 1988, Cha 2000, Press-Barnathan 2006, Kim 2011) are more likely to occur. First, the states whose interests are most affected can be *abandoned* by their partners (Snyder 1984, 466–467). Second, states that have no interests at stake can be *trapped* into ‘pulling the other’s chestnuts out of the fire’ (Snyder 1984, 474). Third, states that are eager to intervene in a crisis that does not interest their partners can be *hindered*, even if they do not expect assistance, because their engagement in defense cooperation reduces the availability of their military capabilities. This reduced availability may be because some of their forces are integrated into joint military units or because they are engaged in a joint operation. Hindrance can be analyzed as an intermediate problem between abandonment and entrapment: as in the case of abandonment, a state that fears hindrance is primarily concerned with its insufficient capacity—not with its lack of interest; on the other hand, as in the case of entrapment, the problem arises because the alliance is constraining—not because it is loose. In a monetary union, a state that is affected by an asymmetric shock may be hindered by its loss of monetary flexibility; similarly, in the context of defense cooperation, a state that is affected by an asymmetric crisis may be hindered by its loss of military flexibility. Because they generate abandonment, entrapment and hindrance, asymmetric crises make cooperation less effective and riskier. The negative effects of the ‘alliance security dilemma’ on European defense cooperation have been noted by Dyson (2013b). However, Dyson essentially explored European states’ fear of entrapment and abandonment by the US (2013b, 428). I argue that the inter-European dimension of the ‘alliance security dilemma’ can also be systematically explored, in particular through the concept of asymmetric crises.

The problem of asymmetric crises highlights the importance of considering the geographic dimension of crises. In particular, crises that can only result in overseas conflicts are more likely to produce asymmetric incentives among European states. First, the only states whose specific interests will be challenged by such conflicts are often those states that have privileged relations with the regions at stake. Second, in the context of an overseas crisis, the action of a European state is more likely to depend on its coordination with other powers that are militarily present in the region than on the support of its European partners. In this case, inter-European interdependence competes with dependence to overseas regions. Certainly, asymmetric effects are not limited to the case of overseas crises, but they are more likely in the case of out-of-area operations (Kupchan 1988, Tams 1999, 84–87).

(Table 1)

The difference between a crisis that generates strong interdependence and an asymmetric crisis is a difference of degree, not of nature. For European powers, a crisis is more or less asymmetric. Moreover, the key factors may interact in various combinations. For instance, a crisis in which the US provides important support can nevertheless induce strong inter-European interdependence, leading to some European defense cooperation because it affects all European states' strategic interests. Similarly, a crisis in which the US provides no support can nevertheless induce very limited inter-European interdependence because it affects only one European state's interests.

Finally, I have focused on the material factors that affect inter-European interdependence. However, these material factors essentially affect European defense cooperation through their impact on the actors' perception (Meyer and Strickmann 2010). In particular, it is necessary to consider the elites' perception and interpretation of national interests (Weldes 1996). In the case of France, we will see that French elites perceived the 'French Union' (the French colonial empire) as an essential pillar of France's power in the 1950s and African security as an essential factor of France and Europe's security in the 2000s. In turn, these perceptions tended to reinforce the impact of asymmetric crises on European defense cooperation.

The empirical cases

Two case studies have been selected to illustrate the theoretical argument: the failure of the EDC project in the early 1950s and the evolution of CSDP military operations since the early 2000s. At first glance, these two cases may seem difficult to compare. The EDC was an attempt to achieve a fully integrated European army, whereas the CSDP is an instance of loose cooperation among national armed forces. The EDC aimed to provide collective defense, whereas the CSDP is relatively more concerned with crisis management; the EDC was a treaty, whereas CSDP operations implement treaty provisions. However, the aggregation of European armed forces with a view towards joint action lies at the core of both cases. To some extent, national policymakers had to answer very similar questions in both contexts. In the case of the EDC, they had to decide whether they were ready to accept the integration of national forces within a European army; in the case of CSDP military operations, they have to decide whether they are ready to provide national forces and to place them under European command. Therefore, both cases provide good empirical tests for a theory that aims to identify the key

factors that encourage European states to aggregate their forces. This focus on force aggregation also explains why this article does not aim to explain the CSDP in general—its establishment or institutional development—but only member states’ support and contributions to joint military actions. Since the CSDP has not created an EU army, it essentially aggregates forces through the missions that it undertakes. Finally, this comparison between the EDC and CSDP operations will allow us to identify long-term trends and potential continuities in European states’ defense interests. Indeed, we will see that, in both cases, European defense cooperation was initially stimulated by crises that generated interdependence between some major European powers, but it was then increasingly weakened by the rise of asymmetric crises linked to (neo)colonial ties. In the 1950s, as in the present day, we will also observe a similar tension between (former) colonial powers that are particularly concerned with overseas crises and states that are primarily concerned by the Russian threat.

In light of space constraints, I will focus on the case of France in particular. France inspired the EDC project and eventually scuttled it. Moreover, France has been the initiator of most CSDP military operations and is, overall and by far, the most important contributor of military personnel (Buchet de Neuilly 2009, 84; Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2014, 106). I will specifically focus on CSDP military operations in Francophone African countries, where France has played a particularly prominent role: the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 2003 and 2006, Chad in 2008–2009, Mali since 2013 and the Central African Republic (CAR) since 2014. Of course, the case of France alone cannot fully account for the evolution of European defense cooperation. However, because of the central role that France has played in the EDC and CSDP military operations, the convergences and divergences between France and other European states, such as Germany and the UK, the two other primary military players, should provide good insights into inter-European defense dynamics.

The EDC: The East-West crisis versus colonial crises

In 1950, France suggested the idea of a fully integrated European army. However, after the French government managed to rally its European and American partners around the project, the treaty failed to be ratified by the French National Assembly.

As is the case when they study the current CSDP, realists who seek to explain the failure of the EDC insist mainly on the role of the US. For Jones (2003), the EDC responded to the security dilemma caused by the prospect of a rearmed West Germany. The primary reason for the EDC’s failure was the US decision to maintain a strong military presence on the European

continent. This commitment resolved the security dilemma and thus removed the EDC's purpose. Rosato (2011) argues that European states decided to pool certain aspects of their sovereignty in the 1950s to effectively balance the overwhelming superiority of Soviet power. However, Rosato believes that, although the EDC responded to the Soviet threat while limiting German sovereignty, it was not France's optimal outcome. The solution that consisted of a strong American presence on the continent and the admission of West Germany into NATO proved both more effective in controlling West Germany and less costly in terms of sovereignty. Like Jones, Rosato argues that the American commitment allowed France to reject the EDC.

Although the American factor is fundamental, it nevertheless fails to account for the entire problem. In 1950, the US announced to its allies both the strengthening of its military presence in Europe and its intention to rearm West Germany within the NATO framework (Trachtenberg and Gehrz 2000, 9, 21–22). In 1954, the American commitment to defend Europe while controlling West Germany was not novel. Why, then, did the French prefer to advance their own German rearmament plan within the framework of a European army in 1950 and then give up and return to the NATO option in 1954? A traditional answer focuses on French domestic politics, particularly the shifting of parliamentary alliances (Aron and Lerner 1956, Parsons 2003). However, I will argue that the evolution of the National Assembly was largely encouraged by the evolution of French military leaders, which, in turn, was largely a reaction to the evolution of the international situation. France was confronted by two types of crises: the first consisted of the East-West crisis in Europe, and the second consisted of colonial crises. If the East-West crisis placed France and West Germany in a situation of interdependence and thus initially favored the European army project, colonial crises were asymmetric and solely affected France. These colonial crises' rising importance over the period thus led the French to regard the EDC as a hindrance to their military efforts.

French-German interdependence

North Korea's invasion of South Korea on 25 June 1950 provoked a European crisis. Because the offensive had likely been approved by Moscow, Western leaders feared that it was the prelude to a Soviet offensive in Europe (Fursdon 1980, 67–72). They were even more concerned because a huge imbalance of forces existed in Europe: it was estimated that 12 NATO divisions faced 210 Soviet divisions (Fursdon 1980, 71). Three factors stimulated interdependence among Western European states. First, the crisis could have led to a general conflict in Europe and thus affected all Western European states' interests. Second, no single European power was

able to cope with this threat on its own. Third, because the US was not willing to address the crisis alone and asked for German rearmament, Western European powers (especially France and West Germany) became more dependent on one another's defense policies.

On 12 September 1950, US Secretary of State Dean Acheson declared that the American government was willing to send 'substantial forces' to Europe only if its European allies were prepared to make an effort and to accept German rearmament within NATO (Trachtenberg and Gehrz 2000, 9). The French were firmly opposed to this prospect, but they found themselves isolated and under pressure (Fursdon 1980, 83). Since 1945, their strategy of independence had been based on maintaining a weak and disarmed Germany. They now had to confront the fact that German rearmament would occur with or without their approval. In the context of East-West competition, the risk was that the US might eventually make West Germany a great military power that could rival France within NATO and ultimately pose a threat.

At a primary level, France and West Germany were vulnerable to each other because on the one hand, France, as an occupying power, still had an influence over German rearmament; on the other hand, German rearmament would occur anyway and presented the risk of weakening France's position in Europe. At a secondary level, both countries would have needed each other's assistance to confront a Soviet invasion. This situation of military interdependence led the French government to adopt the idea of a European army as an alternative to a remilitarized West Germany, which could slip from France's control. On 14 October 1950, Jean Monnet, the Planning Commissioner, wrote the following to René Pleven, the French President of the Council:

If we let things go, sooner or later we shall have to accept a compromise solution (priority granted to France, but a German army of small units) that will only be an illusion. The German army will be reconstituted through the back door. Our resistance will have been for nothing. (Monnet 1976, 502)

Monnet recommended that the government reiterate its opposition to the reconstitution of a German army and suggested that the solution could be found in the creation of a European army with a unified command under the direction of a supranational authority. These suggestions formed the basis of the Pleven plan, which was approved by the National Assembly on 24 October 1950. Compared with the American plan, which directly integrated West Germany into NATO, the Pleven plan's aim was to maximize French control over German troops.

It is important to note that, at this stage, the French government had the support of top military leaders. On 24 July 1951, the French Joint Chiefs of Staff stated that the EDC was indeed preferable to the direct inclusion of West Germany in NATO, which would weaken France's influence (David 2006, 119). On 24 April 1952, General Juin, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated his support for the EDC option 'because it is essential to immediately strengthen the defense of Western Europe and because a negative position would have led to the reconstitution of the German army, with the complicity of the United States' (Guillen 1983, 9). The East-West crisis and the French-German interdependence that it had generated thus led to a project to create a European army. However, other crises would impose an increasing constraint on France: the anti-colonial wars.

France's fear of hindrance to its military efforts

From a European perspective, because colonial crises in Indochina and North Africa solely affected France, they constituted asymmetric crises. They thus not only failed to stimulate European interdependence but also made the prospect of an integrated European army much more problematic, as it could become a hindrance to French military efforts.

Since 1946, France had been engaged in a colonial war in Indochina. Beginning in 1951, more than 120,000 soldiers were engaged in Indochina (Bodin 1996, 36). The Indochina War ultimately led to the French defeat of Dien Bien Phu on 7 May 1954. However, French forces remained in South Vietnam until 1956 (Cadeau 2010). Moreover, another colonial conflict broke out during this period: the uprising of France's protectorates in North Africa. In Tunisia, the January 1952 arrest of the nationalist leader Habib Bourguiba sparked riots, bombings and guerrilla warfare. Riots simultaneously broke out in Morocco. Although 16,000 soldiers were already in Tunisia, two infantry divisions were sent as reinforcements in 1954; in Morocco, the number of French soldiers rose from 45,000 in 1952 to 100,000 in 1956 (Cattet 2010, 37).

From the perspective of European defense cooperation, these crises were problematic because they created tension between Europe and overseas territories. On 23 August 1951, the Joint Chiefs of Staff outlined the points on which they urged the government to be firm in negotiating the EDC treaty. First, France would need to keep some of its forces under national command to secure its presence in Indochina and North Africa. Second, France needed to be able to assign more forces than West Germany to the European army to ensure that the EDC Commander-in-Chief would be French (Guillen 1983, 11–12). Indeed, a European army under German leadership would have been much more favorable for West Germany—and much

costlier for France—than the NATO option proposed by the US. However, the problem was that those simultaneous requirements—maintaining enough troops under national command to fight overseas while assigning enough French troops to the EDC to match German troops—actually conflicted with each other.

After the treaty was signed in 1952, the problem was aggravated by the worsening situation in Indochina. The government was thus led to reduce its forecast for French forces that would be integrated into the EDC. The German contingent was expected to outnumber the French contingent by 115,000 soldiers in 1954 (David 2006, 123). The Joint Chiefs of Staff planned to recall French forces from North Africa; however, from 1952–1953, riots in Tunisia and Morocco necessitated the deployment of additional troops from Europe (Guillen 1983, 23). The French army thus faced a dilemma: whether to jeopardize the French presence in North Africa or to allow the EDC to become unbalanced in West Germany's favor. A solution would have been to share the colonial burden with France's European partners. Indeed, in 1952, the French Air Staff suggested the creation of a European political authority capable of 'taking over French external burdens to defend the French Union's overseas territories' (Baudet 1994, 170). However, this suggestion remained vague because, in the context of the Cold War, France's European partners were unlikely to accept being trapped in colonial wars. Weakening the French presence overseas was not seen as a viable option either because French elites perceived the French Union as an essential pillar of France's power. In January 1953, a note by the political director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated the following:

France remains a great power above all through the French Union. It is through the French Union that we can balance Germany's resurgent power. However, it has been amply demonstrated that the European Defense Community presents the greatest risks for the cohesion of the French Union. (Archives nationales 1953)

French diplomats also noted that the EDC would lead to 'extreme difficulties' in the defense of France's overseas territories and in the longer term, to 'the collapse of the French Union, without which France is nothing on the world stage' (Archives diplomatiques 1953). The final option was to reject the treaty. Starting in 1953, most military leaders progressively rallied to this solution. On 3 January 1953, General Juin, who was an ardent advocate for integrating French North Africa into the defense of Europe (Vial 2000, 141), publicly criticized the EDC:

With the events already happening in Indochina and those beginning to happen in North Africa, we would be in an impossible situation, and the Germans would soon

constitute the overwhelming majority of the Community, which was not what was originally planned. (Juin 1960, 260–261)

On 16 January 1953, General Koenig, the former military governor of the French Zone of Occupation in Germany, stated that ‘France cannot accept the French Union being cut in half’ (Service historique de la Défense 1953a). On 25 February 1953, General de Gaulle accused the EDC of ‘killing’ the French Union. In December 1953, General Gérardot, a former Air Force Chief of Staff, wrote an article in the *Revue de Défense Nationale* that stated the following:

Combining our country, a Euro-African power whose future lies essentially within the French Union, with Germany, a purely European power constantly oriented towards the East since the Teutonic Knights, the EDC treaty is designed in line with Germanic concerns and thus leads France to a path that is no longer its own. (Service historique de la Défense 1953b)

In 1953, the French government attempted to address these concerns and managed to have its European partners sign additional protocols that facilitated in particular the withdrawal of some integrated forces in case of an overseas crisis (Service historique de la Défense 1953c). However, although the National Assembly still supported the EDC project in 1952 (Service historique de la Défense 1952), beginning in 1953, the opposition of military leaders, especially Marshal Juin, who was very influential in Parliament (Vial 2000, 157), played a crucial role. During the National Assembly’s ratification debates in August 1954, the Foreign Affairs Committee’s rapporteur, Socialist Jules Moch, highlighted that by not having to carry out missions outside Europe, West Germany would necessarily dominate the EDC. Similarly, the National Defense Committee’s rapporteur, Gaullist Raymond Triboulet, concluded, ‘We are told: “Equip fourteen divisions for the EDC; afterwards, take care of Africa and overseas territories, if you still have resources and men left”. Here comes fully to light what is unacceptable for France in the EDC’ (Journal Officiel de la République française 1954). On 30 August 1954, the Assembly rejected the treaty.

Asymmetric colonial crises had become increasingly constraining since 1952 and transformed the EDC into a hindrance to French military efforts.

CSDP military operations: interdependence versus asymmetry in African crises

The comparison of Europe in the 1950s and post-Cold War Europe reveals two structural changes. On the one hand, the fall of the Soviet Union removed the common threat that had been the source of French-German interdependence in the 1950s. Rosato (2011) argues that after the collapse of the USSR, the emergence of a genuine European military community became unlikely. On the other hand, gradual American disengagement from the continent had the opposite effect: because European states could not rely on the US as much as they had previously, they became more militarily dependent on one another. Jones (2003, 145) highlights the US European Command's personnel decrease from 326,000 soldiers in 1989 to 100,000 in 2000 as a decisive factor. This American withdrawal was accompanied by a certain reluctance to commit troops to European crises, as manifested during the conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo. Many authors agree that the transatlantic tensions that arose during the Balkan crises of the 1990s were the driving force that underlay the birth of the CSDP at the Saint-Malo French-British Summit in December 1998 (Art 2004, 191, 196–199; Posen 2006, 173–178; Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010, 436–441; Hofmann 2011, Weiss 2012, 674–677). According to those authors, European states wanted to be able to respond to a European crisis autonomously instead of relying solely on NATO and US support. Indeed, two of the first EU military operations tended to confirm this rationale: EUFOR Concordia in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (2003) and EUFOR Althea in Bosnia (2004). In both cases, the CSDP took over for NATO in a crisis that affected the stability of EU's close neighborhood at a time when the US was at war in Afghanistan and Iraq and sought to disengage from the Balkans (Pentland 2011, 559).

As in the case of the EDC, although the transatlantic interpretation of the CSDP is essential, it cannot fully explain its evolution over time. Of the twelve EU military missions launched thus far, eight were located on the African continent, and two were naval operations conducted off the coasts of Africa (EEAS 2016). However, when the CSDP was launched in the late 1990s, Africa had never previously been a favored location for NATO interventions. In this region, the CSDP essentially took over for former colonial powers' national policies rather than for NATO. During the Cold War, the US used to regard Africa as a 'special European responsibility' (Schraeder 2000, 399). Therefore, in Africa, the key question is not so much why Europeans started to act without the US but why they started to act together. Gegout (2005, 437) argued that France promoted the first CSDP military operation in Africa, Operation

Artemis in the DRC, to prove the EU's capacity to act without the US and even to 'balance' US power. However, this argument cannot fully explain why, specifically in Africa, EU military operations became regular in the early 2000s and then proved increasingly difficult to launch a few years later (Haine 2011, Koepf 2012). We shall identify another driving force behind CSDP operations, namely, the increased interdependence among Africa's former colonial powers, especially France and the UK. We shall also see that similar to the situation in the 1950s, the CSDP has been hampered by the asymmetric nature of African crises, which unevenly affect European states' interests. This asymmetry has led other continental powers, particularly Germany, to fear entrapment in African crisis and, in turn, France to fear abandonment.

French-British interdependence in Africa

In the late 1990s, three new factors increased the interdependence among former colonial powers in Africa: first, France's decreasing ability to cope with African crises alone; second, the UK's renewed interest in African crises; and, third, the increasingly regional nature of African crises, which tended to jointly affect both former colonial powers' areas of influence.

Despite decolonization, French former African colonies have continued to represent an essential sphere of influence, in which France finds strategic resources, particularly oil and uranium (Martin 1989), trade partners and political support for its international positions (Chafer 2002). In the early 1990s, France had still significant forces permanently stationed in Francophone Africa and had regularly conducted unilateral interventions to support friendly regimes since the 1960s (Gregory 2000). However, after the end of the Cold War, France saw its position in Africa seriously weaken. This situation became particularly obvious with the fall of friendly regimes in Rwanda (1994) and Zaire (1997). France's allies were replaced by new leaders, which were notably supported by the former British colony of Uganda. Moreover, the French military intervention in Rwanda (1994) resulted in accusations of complicity in genocide without restoring France's influence in the country. Noting its increasing inability to cope with African crises alone, the French government reacted by adopting a new strategy based on multilateral cooperation (Utley 2002, Chafer 2002). France thus reduced its forces stationed in Africa by one-third between 1997 and 2002 (Utley 2002, 136–137) and coordinated with the UK and the US to strengthen African states' capacities to participate more fully in peacekeeping. This new multilateral strategy made France more dependent on its allies' support and paved the way for the Europeanisation of its African policy.

The second key factor was the evolution of the UK, the other major former colonial power in Africa. British interests in former African colonies included trade, investments, access to strategic resources, political support in the UN, and the safety of its expatriates (Cumming 2004, 111; Jackson 2006, 356–359; Vines 2011). Unlike France, the UK had abandoned its last African military base in 1975 and manifested a certain reluctance to intervene in Africa during the Cold War. However, starting in the 1990s, the rise of ethnic and civil conflicts encouraged the UK to become more involved in resolving African crises and to even engage in military combat, as in Sierra Leone, where it deployed 1,300 soldiers in 2000 to fight a rebel army (Abrahamsen and Williams 2001, Cumming 2004).

The final determining factor was the nature of the African crises of the 1990s. In the context of regional conflicts, such as the Liberian civil war (Chafer 2013, 236–237) and the Congo wars, which involved both Anglophone and Francophone countries, the policies of former European colonizers towards their African allies were increasingly interdependent (Chafer and Cumming 2010, 1143). This was particularly true in the recurring conflicts of the African Great Lakes region. On the one hand, the French recreated strong ties with the DRC (formerly Zaire) and had important oil interests with neighboring countries such as Congo-Brazzaville and Gabon (Gegout 2009, 233). On the other hand, Uganda was a long-time British ally that London politically and financially supported, along with Rwanda (Cumming 2011, Jackson 2006, 371). The two former colonial powers could not stabilize their respective areas of influence without coordinating. This interdependence, in the sense of a mutual need for assistance, favored the partial Europeanisation of the countries' activities in the region. This trend began at the Saint-Malo Summit of 1998, immediately after the second Congo War broke out, which involved the DRC, Rwanda and Uganda in particular. In addition to a section dedicated to European defense cooperation, the Summit's declaration stated that France and the UK should cooperate more systematically in Africa, both bilaterally and within the EU framework (Chafer and Cumming 2010, 1132). At the Cahors Summit (2001), both states stated their common goal of restoring peace to the DRC. At the Touquet Summit (2003), they explicitly stated their wish to see the EU contribute to African security through CSDP operations. In the field, the Europeanisation of former colonial powers' African policy resulted in the launch of the first autonomous EU military operation, the 2003 Operation Artemis, on the boundary between the DRC and Uganda, which was primarily conducted by French troops (1,785 soldiers) with British support (111 soldiers). Through this operation, France returned to the Great Lakes region, where its traditional policy had failed a few years earlier and from which it had virtually withdrawn since 1994 (Bagayoko 2004). In 2003, military cooperation

between France and the DRC began again after having been suspended in 1994 (French Embassy in the DRC 2012). European cooperation protected the operation against a possible backlash from Rwanda, which maintained very poor relations with Paris but was close to London (Gegout 2005, 438). The UK was also able to convince its Ugandan allies to make the Entebbe Airport available to European forces (Bagayoko 2004, 107). Finally, this French-British strategy of using CSDP operations in Africa was endorsed by the EU in 2005 (Council of the EU 2005).

However, this French-British interdependence in the Great Lakes region was not necessarily replicated in other parts of Africa. In 2013, commenting on the launch of the French-led EU training mission in Mali, British Foreign Secretary William Hague admitted the following:

It is true that Britain is much more heavily represented [in Kenya] because of the myriad of connections, of individuals, families, businesses, as well as the history in countries like Somalia, Kenya and so on, than in Francophone West Africa. (Politics.co.uk 2013)

This quotation illustrates the limits of French-British interdependence in Africa. Since former colonial powers have specific ties in different sub-regions, they are not always evenly affected by localized African crises, which sometimes leads to a ‘postcolonial division of labor’ rather than joint action (Chafer 2013, 249).

Fears of entrapment and abandonment in Africa

Although African crises initially increased former colonial powers’ interdependence, thus stimulating European defense cooperation in Africa, they also constitute asymmetric crises in the sense that they only affect some European states’ strategic interests. This asymmetry has led to fears of entrapment and abandonment and has thus sharply limited the ambitions of recent EU military operations.

In particular, Germany did not have the same colonial ties as France and the UK in Africa. The Germans were not pursuing any strategic interest in Africa (Hofmeier 2002) and long sought to limit the scope of the CSDP to Europe’s neighborhood (Bagayoko and Gibert 2009, 799–802). Therefore, the French-British push for EU military operations in Africa led Germany to fear entrapment. Buchet de Neuilly (2009, 84) reports that when Operation Artemis

was proposed to the EU Political and Security Committee, the German ambassador initially declared, ‘Over my dead body, there will not be any operation in Africa’. Germany had no strategic interest in the African Great Lakes region, and it finally reluctantly consented to the operation under French and British pressures, though offering only a limited contribution (Schmidt 2011, 569–570). In particular, the French President had to make ‘insistent demands’ to the German Chancellor (Fromion and Rouillard 2014, 253). Similarly, during the preparation for EUFOR DRC, a mission pushed by France, with the political support of the UK, which aimed to secure elections in the DRC (Cumming 2011), Germany—particularly its Ministry of Defense—was initially reluctant to participate. The Germans were afraid of being ‘used by France’ and were willing to let the former colonial powers take care of Africa (Le Figaro 2006). Chancellor Merkel’s eventual agreement to German participation was widely interpreted as a strategy to prove her commitment to the French-German relationship (Schmitt 2012, 67–69). According to a French military source, the Germans were not convinced, but they received side payments from the French on other issues (Interview with a French general, May 2016). Germany accepted leading the operation with 740 soldiers, but it imposed preconditions that restricted the mission’s geographical scope and timeframe (Schmidt 2011, 574). In 2006, a report by the French Senate’s Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense already noted that, because of its history, France was suspected to be using ‘the EU to maintain its own influence and interests’ by its European partners (Dulait 2006, 42).

In subsequent operations, the reluctance of France’s partners developed into a clear fear of entrapment. It became particularly obvious in the case of EUFOR Chad/CAR (2008–2009). France, which had proposed the EU operation, had established a permanent bilateral military presence in Chad since 1986 (1,150 soldiers of Operation *Épervier*) and had a clear stake in Chad’s stability (Dijkstra 2010, 397). If EUFOR Chad/CAR officially intended to protect refugees from Darfur, most European leaders, especially those in Germany and the UK, feared that it would actually be used to strengthen the Chadian regime against Sudanese-supported opposition movements, in line with France’s traditional policy (Mérand and Rakotonirina 2009). Generating forces proved difficult, and initial targets could not be fulfilled (Seibert 2010, 17). In the words of a diplomat (Le Monde, 2007), the French did not want the mission to appear as ‘a French operation in Africa painted in blue’, but they eventually had to provide half of the troops (1,711 French soldiers). Germany and the UK refused to send forces, arguing that they were already engaged in Afghanistan. In particular, Germany had initially tried to keep the issue off the agenda, and Schmitt (2012, 73–75) reports that Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Germany’s Foreign Minister, accused his French counterpart Bernard Kouchner of confusing French and

European interests in Chad. More generally, a French military source described the French-German disagreement as a clash between two different visions of the world—the French being orientated towards the South and the Germans towards the East. This clash was particularly visible among the German military, many of whom argued that they had not joined the *Bundeswehr* to fight overseas (Interview with a French general, May 2016). Regarding the decision makers' perceptions, President Sarkozy stated in February 2008 that 'France and Europe's security and prosperity are inseparable from Africa's security and prosperity' (Sarkozy 2008), whereas German elites did not perceive any clear German interest in Africa (Schmitt 2012, 74–75). As EU operations in Africa were becoming more frequent, Germany began to call the CSDP 'the French Africa Korps' (Haine 2011, 590). This mockery echoed that of French military leaders of the 1950s, who used the term 'Teutonic Knights' when accusing the EDC of being too exclusively orientated towards the East and German interests.

More recently, crises have multiplied on the African continent, leading to an increasing French commitment. In 2015, approximately 5,800 French soldiers were engaged in operations in Africa, including 3,000 in the Sahel and 2,000 in Central Africa. Similar to Sarkozy before him, President Hollande reaffirmed that France had a 'special relationship' with Africa and that Europe and Africa faced 'the same threats, the same dangers' (Hollande 2013). Consequently, tensions have grown between France and its European partners, which are often reluctant to send troops to Africa. This situation has led to a feeling of abandonment on the French side.

Those tensions appeared in particular in early 2013, when France intervened in Mali to fight an Islamist rebellion. Apart from its traditional role in a former colony with which it has a military cooperation agreement (French Embassy in Mali 2013), France's prompt reaction could be explained by its specific economic interests in the region, particularly in French-run uranium mines in Niger (Chafer 2014, 522–524; Lavallée and Völkel 2015, 175). In Mali, France relied much more on its African allies, particularly 2,400 Chadian soldiers, than on European support (Le Monde 2013a). This could partially be explained by the urgency of the situation and the fact that EU operations usually take a few months to be launched, which encouraged the French to initially rely on bilateral support (Interview with a French diplomat, June 2016). However, because of the involvement of Jihadist groups, the French Ministry of Defense also believed that the Malian crisis directly concerned European security, thus justifying the EU's commitment. Nevertheless, even with this argument, the French struggled to convince their partners for months, and France was often still considered to be defending its own 'backyard' (Interview with a French diplomat, June 2016). The EU eventually provided the Malian army with a training mission (EUTM Mali) that initially included 551 soldiers, of

which 207 were French. Gathering contributions was difficult and delayed several times. In January 2013, the French Foreign Minister, Laurent Fabius admitted that France could not force its partners to provide soldiers and commented, ‘There are limits to the [Common] security and defense policy, even if we regret it’ (Fabius 2013). In March 2013, Fabius even had to call for European solidarity to provide a 90-soldier protection force for the mission (Pueyo and Fromion 2013, 34). A report by the French Senate’s Committee of Foreign Affairs and Defense considered the Malian crisis to demonstrate that France’s European partners still wrongly perceived Africa as ‘peripheral’ and that it revealed the CSDP’s ‘weaknesses’: ‘The strategic priority that France gives to its southern margins is not shared by some member states’ (Chevènement and Larcher 2013, 21–25). The report particularly regretted that the EU did not engage in combat with a ‘EUFOR Mali’ mission. Similarly, according to the National Assembly’s Committee on European Affairs, European solidarity was not ‘satisfactory’ in Mali, and the difficulty to mount EUTM Mali demonstrated the limits of the willingness to relaunch ‘Defense Europe’ (Pueyo and Fromion 2013, 32–33). However, a more recent report notes that, although the reaction of France’s partners was initially ‘frustrating’, those partners started to slowly take over for French troops in EUTM Mali (Fromion and Rouillard 2014, 253).

The same scenario occurred in the CAR, which has a defense partnership with France (French Embassy in the CAR 2016). At the end of 2013, France intervened in the CAR to disarm violent militias alongside troops from the African Union, which led a former French Minister of Defense to comment that Europe had ‘abandoned the idea of having an impact on world affairs’ (Le Monde 2013b). Germany in particular had initially blocked EU support of the French intervention (IISS 2014). In January 2014, the EU approved a military operation that aimed to secure the Central African capital of Bangui (EUFOR CAR). However, France initially provided more than one-third of the 677 soldiers, and gathering contributions was an ‘ordeal’, according to a French diplomat (Le Monde 2014). In other member states, the operation was often regarded as ‘France’s mission’, and the French Minister of Defense had to ‘hammer’ his demands in bilateral meetings to rally his counterparts (Interview with a French diplomat, June 2016). Moreover, the launch of EUFOR CAR was negotiated in a context marked by the annexation of Crimea by Russia in March 2014, which led Poland and Romania to waver in their commitment, arguing that it was not the right time to send troops out of Europe (AFP 2014). According to a French diplomat, Eastern European states were ‘obsessed with Russia’ (Interview with a French diplomat, June 2016). As in the 1950s, European defense cooperation was thus weakened by the tension between an East-West crisis in Europe and an overseas crisis in Africa. General Pontiès, Commander of EUFOR CAR, noted the following:

Initially, there were some very promising opportunities. However, in the meantime, the Ukrainian crisis occurred. We may have little awareness of this in France, but to Central Europe, this crisis is of considerable importance, if only for geographical reasons. It is true that the evolution of the international situation has slowed the process and reduced contributions. (Le Point 2014)

General Pontières also regretted that most member states only sent symbolic contributions, which made the organization of the force more difficult (Gautier et al. 2016, 127).

As such, France has publicly complained about the lack of support from its partners. On 28 August 2014, French President François Hollande commented, ‘The European Union cannot expect everything from one or two member states—I would say essentially one, namely, France—to cover the bulk of budgetary and human commitment to the security of all’ (Hollande 2014). Similarly, in February 2015, the difficult launch of a small-scale EU military advisory mission in Central Africa (EUMAM CAR) led the French Minister of Defense, Jean-Yves Le Drian, to comment, ‘The burden of European security is not equally shared’ (Bruxelles2 2015).

Finally, the latest manifestation of this French feeling of abandonment occurred when France invoked article 42.7, requiring other EU members to provide assistance after the Paris attacks of November 2015. Indeed, France actually expected more support from the EU in Africa. The Minister of Defense explained his frustration:

France cannot do everything anymore. France cannot be at the same time in Sahel, in Central Africa, in Lebanon, in the intervention and retaliations in the Levant, and in addition secure its national territory with its own forces. (Le Drian 2015)

In response, some European countries agreed to support French efforts in Africa. Some provided logistical support; Germany sent troops to the UN mission in Mali; and Belgium took command of EUTM Mali. However, according to a French diplomat, ‘There was no trigger effect. It was not massive’ (Interview with a French diplomat, June 2016). Similarly, according to a French Senate report, because aid was essentially bilateral, the implementation of article 42.7 was yet again a missed opportunity for the CSDP (Gautier et al. 2016, 129).

Asymmetric crises in Africa have thus led to fears of both entrapment and abandonment, which contribute to the current ‘crisis of CSDP’ and the sense of disappointment that surrounds it (Howorth 2014, 9–10). In the words of a French diplomat, ‘we still launch missions, but they are difficult to put together and the result is not satisfactory. EU missions are increasingly less robust, and we often reach operational capacity thanks to non-member states support’ (Interview with a French diplomat, June 2016).

Conclusions

This article has argued that European defense cooperation is a response to the military interdependence that international crises impose on European states. Inter-European interdependence increases if several European states’ interests are jointly affected by a crisis, if no single state is able to address the crisis on its own, and if American support is lacking or inadequate. Conversely, interdependence decreases when an asymmetric crisis unevenly affects European states or when concerned states can cope with a crisis either on their own or with adequate support from the US.

In 1950, the European army project was stimulated by French-German interdependence in the context of the East-West crisis. In the 1990s, the CSDP was stimulated by, on the one hand, European interdependence that resulted from the US’s relative disengagement in the context of the Balkan crises and, on the other hand, the interdependence among former colonial powers in the context of increasingly regional African crises. Furthermore, the EDC and the CSDP have both suffered from asymmetric crises. In the 1950s, colonial crises solely affected France, leading French leaders to regard the EDC as a *hindrance* to their military efforts overseas. Since the 1990s, African crises have mainly affected former colonial powers’ interests, which has led other continental powers, such as Germany, to fear *entrapment* and, in turn, France to fear *abandonment*.

Theoretically, this article has demonstrated the strong heuristic potential of the concept of military interdependence in the study of European defense cooperation. Realist explanations that are based on the concepts of balancing and bandwagoning tend to produce an American-centric bias, whereas constructivist and bureaucratic approaches tend to focus on *how* rather than *why* European defense cooperation developed. Instead, the concept of interdependence allows us to refocus on the inter-European dimension of European defense cooperation and to further explore its driving forces and impediments. The concept of interdependence emphasizes not so much the nature of external challenges (i.e., unbalanced power, threats, or risks to some

economic or political interest) but rather the impact of these challenges on the relations among European states. This refocus is even more interesting because the concept of interdependence is already central to the study of European economic, monetary and budgetary integrations (Stone Sweet and Sandholtz 1997, Moravcsik 1998, Schimmelfennig 2015). Schimmelfennig, Leuffen and Rittberger (2015) have already built on the concept of interdependence to compare EU integration in the areas of economy and defense. The further development of interdependence-based approaches to European defense cooperation could thus open fruitful cross-sector avenues for future research.

Empirically, the two cases have highlighted a striking continuity between the 1950s and the 2000s: in both cases, tensions arose between France's (neo)colonial commitments and its partners' focus on continental crises. However, because this article is limited to the case of France, further research is necessary to explore the full implications of interdependence and asymmetric crises for other member states. Moreover, asymmetric crises cannot account for all the difficulties that the CSDP faces (Howorth 2014). Nevertheless, because of the central role that France plays in European defense, asymmetric crises in Africa have constituted one of the main obstacles to effective European cooperation in this area.

What conclusions can we draw regarding the future of the CSDP? First, continental crises, such as the 1950s East-West crisis or the more recent Ukrainian crisis, tend to jointly affect most European states because of their geographic proximity. Nevertheless, such crises are not necessarily conducive to more European defense cooperation because of the US's commitment to the defense of Europe through NATO, which tends to alleviate inter-European interdependence. However, if tensions between the EU and Russia worsen in a context marked by a continuing American shift towards the Asia-Pacific region, military interdependence among European states could increase, eventually prompting a stronger defense cooperation. However, even in this scenario, the Russian threat would likely constitute an asymmetric problem, in the sense that it would affect Eastern European countries, such as Poland and the Baltic states, much more than Western European states. This situation could generate fears of abandonment in the East and fears of entrapment in the West, which would undermine European cooperation.

Second, because of the particular importance of former colonial ties, overseas crises are still likely to be asymmetric crises for Europeans. However, even overseas crises could generate more interdependence among European states because of their impact on global phenomena, such as trade, migration or terrorism. Operation EUNAVFOR Atalanta, which has fought piracy off the Somali coast since 2008, could represent the beginning of such a development. In the

case of EUTM Mali, officials from the French Ministry of Defense also noted that France's European partners slowly realized that Mali's stability could have implications in terms of illegal immigration and trafficking and, in turn, became more ready to send troops (Fromion and Rouillard 2014, 253). Even more interesting is the case of EUNAVFOR Sophia, which was launched in June 2015 to counter migrant smuggling in the Mediterranean. Contrary to previous operations deployed to Africa, which tended to mainly motivate former colonial powers with specific interests in the region, this mission addresses the issue of immigration to Europe, which potentially affects all member states' interests (IISS 2015) and renders border countries and destination countries interdependent. This could explain why the political dynamic behind Sophia was 'more consensual' (Interview with a French diplomat, June 2016). Recently, Operation Sophia was also tasked with combating arms smuggling to Islamic State fighters in Libya. A more active defense cooperation could thus emerge out of the increasing interconnectedness between external crises and internal issues, such as migration and terrorism (Ioannides 2014).

Finally, another way to alleviate the negative impact of asymmetric crises may involve transactions between states that fear abandonment in different crises. In 2014, the Director of Strategic Affairs of the French Ministry of Defense suggested that the fact that France had been among the first to support NATO 'reassurance measures' in favor of Baltic states that felt threatened by Russia had encouraged Estonia to send troops to Africa in return (Fromion and Rouillard 2014, 253). In the future, the systematization of such inter-areas transactions could allow the CSDP to become less vulnerable to asymmetric crises by responding to fears of abandonment, rendering entrapment more acceptable and, in turn, making cooperation less risky.

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Table 1. The impact of crises on European states' interdependence

Interdependence +	Interdependence -
Insufficient capacity	Sufficient capacity
Lacking or inadequate American support	Adequate American support
European states jointly affected	European states unevenly affected