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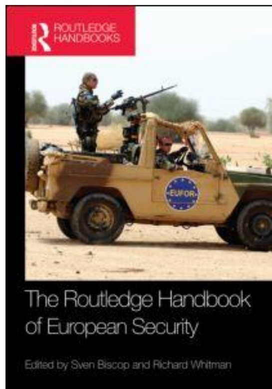

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23
THE UN AND EUROPEAN STRATEGY

Richard Gowan

The relationship between the European Union (EU) and United Nations (UN) has been the topic of copious quantities of public relations material from the two organizations, such as a joint campaign proclaiming their 'partnership for a better world', and a reasonable amount of serious analysis.[1] Of the various strategic goals laid down in the 2003 *European Security Strategy*, the call for 'effective multilateralism' with the UN at its core has proved particularly resonant among academics and policy analysts. This is in part a matter of grand strategy. For the think-tankers of the EU Institute for Security Studies, 'making multilateral structures more effective and more legitimate is both a matter of principle and a question of interest for the EU' (de Vasconcelos, 2010: 4). For scholars attempting to measure the EU's global impact, the relationship with the UN is also appealingly quantifiable. The EU pays two-fifths of the UN's peacekeeping costs and covers even higher percentages of its humanitarian and development budgets, while European diplomats hold well over 1,000 coordination meetings in New York alone each year (Wouters, 2007: 4). In some quarters, the level of EU unity within forums such as the UN General Assembly, which has gradually improved since the end of the Cold War, has become a virtual fetish – although this number-crunching has been challenged by authors who note unity does not always convert into impact (see for example Kissack, 2007: Gowan and Brantner, 2008; and Smith, 2010).

For those specifically focused on European security cooperation, interactions between EU and UN peace operations at the field level have also generated large quantities of material to mine for insights. Two-thirds of the EU's civilian and military missions to date have been co-deployed with some sort of UN presence (Gowan, 2009: 117). In cases including the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Chad, the strategic purpose of the EU's interventions has been to reinforce or pave the way for a UN force. In Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, by contrast, EU police missions took on duties from the UN. To analyse how the EU performs on the ground it is thus often necessary to take the UN into account.

Although theoretical perspectives on the EU–UN relationship vary, a predictably persistent question is whether the EU demonstrates any distinctively 'European (multilateral) identity and interests' vis-à-vis the UN (Jørgensen, 2009: 1). From this perspective, cases where EU member states act within UN structures (such as the rapid dispatch of thousands of European troops to Lebanon in 2006 to secure a ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah)

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matter less than those where the EU is an autonomous actor (such as the slower, smaller deployment of an EU-led force to help the UN in the DRC the same year).

This prioritizes institutional issues over strategic concerns: crisis management is evaluated according to its role in the EU's evolution rather than its actual contribution to security and the alleviation of suffering. The goal of this chapter is to offer an alternative framing device for analyzing EU–UN relations. It emphasizes the extent to which the UN actually implements a security agenda defined by the main European powers and European institutions. Members of the EU have taken a lead role in constructing and financing the UN's systems for dealing with fragile states, humanitarian disasters and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. They also play a decisive role in shaping the priorities of the Security Council. The next two sections of this chapter review Europe's role in the UN system, looking first at the Security Council and peacekeeping and then at humanitarian aid and peacebuilding.

The level of European political and financial investment across these fields raises the (deliberately provocative) question of whether we should treat the post-Cold War UN as a distinctively *European* security institution. If that is a stretch, it is less controversial to argue that one by-product of European powers' investment in the UN has been to create a political and operational framework for many of the EU's own security initiatives. The third substantive section of this chapter looks at ways in which EU military and civilian missions have slotted into this framework. The chapter concludes by shifting its focus to EU–UN interactions over nuclear proliferation, in which the UN also provides the basis for EU action.

Some immediate qualifications are necessary. Although European powers made instrumental use of the UN in the Balkans in the early 1990s, the UN has primarily been of service to the EU outside Europe since the end of the Bosnian war, with the exceptions of Cyprus and Kosovo. More specifically, it has mainly been of use in Africa and parts of the Middle East. As the next section of the chapter argues, this partially reflects European decision-making. But for those EU members without strong historical links or cultural exposure to African or Middle Eastern countries, the UN framework is of no great interest. The 2008 Russo-Georgian war – during which Russia blocked any action by the Security Council – underlined that the UN offered extremely little to those whose overriding security concern is a resurgent Moscow. In this context the EU's position vis-à-vis NATO obviously has primacy. But the UN *has* provided part of the framework for both NATO and EU efforts to stabilize Afghanistan through its mission there, and NATO officials have made strenuous efforts to improve their own ties to the UN.

In spite of these qualifications, situating the emergence of an EU security identity within the UN framework lets us see Europe's global security role in a new light. In some senses, it makes the EU's contribution look small: in purely quantitative terms the number of uniformed peacekeepers deployed under the EU's banner has never touched those under UN command, for example. As of late 2010, the UN had some 85,000 military personnel and 14,600 police in the field – the respective numbers for the EU were 4,000 and 1,600, including personnel involved in anti-piracy operations off Somalia.[2] These comparisons fail to capture important differences in the cost and quality of the forces involved, but the difference in scale remains striking. Yet if we view the UN's activities as – in part – a function of European security concerns, we may also re-evaluate Europe's contribution to global security more positively. Taken in isolation, many of the EU's crisis management efforts appear 'heavily reactive' and 'disjointed' (Rogers, 2011: 4). EU-flagged troops and vessels often scurry to and from trouble-spots to achieve limited goals. Yet if we grasp how some EU-flagged missions fit in with European initiatives launched through the UN system, they make more sense – and Europe's strategic role looks more substantial than before.

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The Security Council and peacekeeping

Since the end of the Cold War, the UN system's contribution to international security has expanded exponentially. The simplest indicator of this process has been the transformation of the Security Council, often paralyzed or lethargic in the years of East–West confrontation, into a constantly active if inconsistently effective crisis-management body. The Council issued just under 600 resolutions between its foundation in 1945 and the conclusion of the Iran–Iraq War in 1988. Since then it has issued over 1,400. As David Malone has noted, elements of the Council's transformation have included a significant drop in the use of the veto by its five permanent members, a far greater willingness to mandate enforcement actions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter and a particular focus on addressing civil wars (Malone, 2010: 60, 63–6). Although the Council's credibility has rested on America's willingness to work through it – an issue brought into focus over Iraq – a close study of the forum's decision-making suggests that European security priorities have been central to its increased activity.

This is underlined by a recent analysis by the International Peace Institute (IPI) of the Council's turn to focus on civil wars (Cockayne, Mikulaschek and Perry, 2010). Covering the period 1989 to 2006, this identifies some 617 resolutions dealing with civil wars, but highlights that the Council's attention appears skewed to wars in Europe and Africa: 'roughly four in five resolutions on intrastate war adopted during that period address those two regions' (Cockayne, Mikulaschek and Perry, 2010: 21). This is partially but not wholly explained by the fact that there have been more internal conflicts to deal with in these two regions than elsewhere. But IPI's data show that Council has definitely had a selection bias in favor of European and African conflicts, engaging less frequently with civil wars in Asia and the Americas. The researchers suggest that this reflects the fact that European powers have leverage within the Council and can use this to prioritize conflicts in their neighborhood and former African colonies. The EU's members typically account for four members of the 15-seat Council, while France and Britain's permanent seats, vetoes and close coordination with the USA give them additional influence in New York. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the Council has often followed a European-inspired security agenda.

In the early 1990s, this agenda centered on the Balkans. In the first phase of the Yugoslav wars, France proposed a military intervention under the auspices of the Western European Union (WEU). Deflected by American concerns over the implications for NATO, the French turned to the UN instead. European countries provided the core of the resulting UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Susan Woodward has argued that the Security Council was reduced to playing 'the handmaiden of European security' while Britain, France and Germany searched for a conclusion to the Bosnian war (Woodward, 2008: 407). UNPROFOR's multiple failures, culminating in the Srebrenica massacre, left many European soldiers deeply suspicious of the UN although the operation's flaws were also attributable to ineffectual European diplomacy. After this catastrophic experience, it appeared likely that European powers would not work through the UN again. Yet the relationship regained vitality from 1999 onwards, as the UN set up interim administrations in Kosovo and East Timor with European support and sent peacekeepers to stabilize a series of ex-colonies in Africa emerging from civil wars, including Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, the DRC, Sierra Leone and Sudan. The number of UN peacekeepers grew incredibly fast from 1999 to 2007, moving from just over 10,000 military personnel to over 70,000 – in addition to police and civilians – before rising more slowly to the figures for 2010 noted above.

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The resurgence of UN peacekeeping from 1999 onwards has multiple explanations. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan played a significant role in overhauling the UN's operational systems, restoring trust in its ability to manage operations (although the number of new missions put the organization under strain). The readiness of African powers, especially South Africa and Nigeria, to invest in peacekeeping helped legitimize these operations. But the European powers played an instrumental role in advocating these missions in the Security Council while, as previously observed, two-fifths of the UN's rapidly expanding peace-keeping budget. However, this level of political and financial support was not matched by a consistent military contribution. In 2000, the UK deployed troops to help beleaguered UN peacekeepers in Sierra Leone. French units have operated alongside the UN in Côte d'Ivoire since 2004. Yet both permanent Security Council members avoided putting these forces under UN command, a legacy of their experiences in Bosnia. Some EU members, including Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands and Sweden, did contribute to UN operations in Africa, but all avoided making open-ended commitments.

As we note later in this chapter, the European powers' desire to support UN operations in Africa without deploying large numbers of troops in blue helmets led them to deploy EU missions to work alongside the UN instead, giving the European Security and Defence Policy much of its momentum. Nonetheless, European investment in UN peacekeeping in Africa was mainly an exercise in *indirect* security-building. In a period in which even France, the last European power to maintain significant forces in Africa, was disengaging from ex-colonies, the UN framework offered an alternative way to stabilize the continent.

European powers have utilized the Council less consistently on non-African issues. In 1999, they were willing to bomb Serbia during the Kosovo crisis without a Security Council resolution, but pushed for a UN mission (including a European Commission pillar dealing with economic affairs) after the air campaign. In 2001, the Europeans advocated for a UN presence in post-Taliban Afghanistan. In the run-up to the Iraq War, the pro- and anti-invasion camps within the EU aired their differences in the Council in the false belief that the UN's blessing mattered to the Bush administration. Once the invasion was over, however, Europeans who had been for and against it concurred that they wanted the UN involved in post-conflict reconstruction. EU officials contacted the UN with an offer of gendarmerie for Iraq, but the bombing of the UN's Baghdad offices in August 2003 led it to cut back its mission (Power, 2008: 409).

The UN's importance to the European position in the Arab world would be emphasized by two further episodes: the 2006 Lebanon war and the 2011 Libyan crisis. In the first case, France took the lead in negotiating a ceasefire through the Security Council in tandem with the USA. While the French and other EU members – most notably Italy and Spain – recognized the need for a significant post-conflict peace operation in Lebanon, their initial preference was to send an EU-flagged or ad hoc multi-national force. The Lebanese government rejected this option, and the Europeans deployed under a UN banner instead (Novosseloff and Gowan, 2010). In the Libyan case – which is still ongoing at the time of writing – the main European powers were unable to agree a coherent political response to the civil war that broke out between Colonel Gaddafi and his opponents through either the North Atlantic Council or EU Council. Instead, after much Franco-British pressure and with belated American support, it fell to the Security Council to mandate the use of force to protect civilians in Libya from attacks by forces loyal to Gaddafi. Germany abstained on this resolution, and it is unlikely that those EU members that favored an intervention could have gathered a military coalition without the legitimacy offered by the UN: even after the Security Council mandated force it took NATO some days to agree to take on the mission.

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In both the Lebanese and Libyan cases, therefore, the UN offered European powers a mechanism for initiating action at moments when there were diplomatic obstacles to doing so through NATO or the EU.

By contrast, the UN's role in Europe has been slight since the 1990s, with two exceptions. One has been Cyprus, where the UN has remained central to efforts to find a route towards reunification. Although most Europeans may not perceive this as a 'UN issue', it has proved a time-consuming business for successive Secretaries-General. The second, more widely recognized, exception is Kosovo. After taking over administration of the Serbian province in 1999, the UN embarked on a prolonged process of state-building with the – often very explicit – goal of one day handing responsibility to the EU. This project almost broke down in 2007 and 2008, when Serbia rejected a plan to give Kosovo supervised independence and Russia and China threatened to veto any proposals to this effect in the Security Council. After Kosovo unilaterally declared independence in February 2008, the UN and EU went through eight months of agonizing diplomacy to find a *modus vivendi*, complicated by a split within the EU over whether to recognize the self-proclaimed state. In October 2008, the Security Council adopted an interim solution permitting the EU to take over responsibility for most aspects of Kosovo's tutelage – most importantly oversight of policing and justice – while the UN maintains a token political presence.

In both broad terms and individual instances, therefore, it is possible to argue that the Security Council and UN peacekeeping continue to serve European interests – and that the UN has sometimes offered EU members a level of diplomatic flexibility that other organizations, including the EU itself, have not. Without European initiatives, the Security Council could well have been far less active in recent years, and UN peacekeeping would probably never have recovered from the disasters of the 1990s. The UN framework for crisis management consists of more than the Security Council and peacekeepers, however, and the EU's influence has arguably been as great in humanitarian affairs and peacebuilding.

Humanitarian aid and peacebuilding

The international humanitarian aid system, which is dominated by UN agencies and the Red Cross, has not only undergone huge growth since the Cold War but also prioritized war-torn countries. Between 1997 and 2005, the number of humanitarian aid workers worldwide jumped from just over 130,000 to more than 240,000 (Stoddard, Harmer and Haver, 2006: 8). Meanwhile, there was an observable increase in the percentage of humanitarian aid going to conflict-affected states. Lydia Poole calculates that by 2008, nearly three-quarters of all humanitarian by Western donors – including the USA, EU members and the European Commission – was directed towards territories in conflict (Poole, 2010). While these included Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan, there was also an emphasis on countries where the UN had peacekeepers such as Sudan and the DRC. In the DRC, humanitarian spending rose from $52 million in 1999, when the UN peacekeeping operation to the country began, to $549 million in 2008. While humanitarian aid is ostensibly apolitical, it has clearly become a conflict management device.

Although the USA is the biggest single donor, a number of European states and the Commission have also been significant financiers of humanitarian aid – making combined contributions comparable to the American figure – and have taken the lead in driving reforms in the UN humanitarian system. Abby Stoddard observes that Britain in particular 'has emerged as an undisputed leader of humanitarian reform and champion of multilateral cooperation in the field' (Stoddard, 2010: 259). Other EU members with a major stake in

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the UN's humanitarian structures include the Netherlands, Nordic countries, Germany and Spain. The EU's humanitarian aid arm, ECHO, has also emerged as a key donor. A report by the European Court of Auditors noted that 'in 2008 ECHO committed a total of 937 million euros of which 404 million euros (43%) was channeled through UN organizations' (European Court of Auditors, 2009: 9). Although this was not all earmarked for conflict-affected states, European officials noted that the UN's ability to access insecure zones was a key argument for a close relationship. While the Court heavily criticized the UN's accountability systems and efficiency, ECHO has continued to be a staunch supporter of UN agencies. While calling for the EU to develop stronger humanitarian mechanisms, the Lisbon Treaty stipulates that its efforts should be 'coordinated and consistent' with those of the UN system.

If European support has been vitally important in shaping the UN's peacekeeping and humanitarian systems, the same is true in the field of post-conflict peacebuilding. Within the UN system, the importance of long-term peacebuilding strategies – involving the use of development aid to revitalize war-damaged economies, building up effective public administration and in many cases security sector reform – has become a commonplace. In 2006, the importance of these concepts was recognized through the creation of an inter-governmental UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), a corresponding Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) in the UN Secretariat and a new Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). Although these instruments got off to a difficult start due to the UN's internal politics, EU members played a significant role in their start-up phase. Sweden and Germany gave particular attention to the PBC, and 57 per cent of the $334 million committed to the PBF by 2010 came from European governments.[3] The bulk of the PBF's grants in this period went to projects run by UN agencies in African countries.

Most EU members' support for the UN's peacebuilding efforts continues to flow through direct grants to specific funds and agencies, however, and it is difficult to trace and quantify as a result. Catriona Gourlay has undertaken a detailed study of the European Commission's cooperation with the UN in this field, and notes a 2008 Commission report that calculated that it had contributed some €318 million to UN programming 'with direct links to peacebuilding' the previous year, of which two-fifths covered institution-building and nearly a third went on rule of law and human rights issues (Gourlay, 2009: 72). Another study shows that 'total [Commission] spending for peacebuilding increased dramatically from €86 million in 2001 to over €1 billion in 2007, totaling some €5.9 billion from 2001 to 2008' (Gourlay, 2009: 74). Of the total sum disbursed by the Commission in this period, €2.2 billion (37 per cent) was funneled through the UN. The Commission's peacebuilding priorities – including UN and non-UN programming – were the Palestinian Territories, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan and the DRC, replicating its humanitarian spending.

The level of Commission funding disbursed through the UN varies significantly by case (this paragraph follows Gourlay, 2009: 78–81). In Iraq the percentage was very high as the Commission and EU member states directed funds through the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq, which was administered by the World Bank and UN Development Programme (UNDP). By contrast, a large part of Commission aid to Sudan in the 2000s went via its African Peace Facility to support the African Union operation in Darfur, although it also partnered with UNDP on post-conflict reconciliation schemes. EU and UN relations have been most closely intertwined in the case of the DRC. Here, UNDP and the Commission jointly managed preparations for the countries first post-conflict national elections in 2006, and the Commission provided tens of millions of euros for UN-led projects to demobilize combatants and rebuild the justice sector. The EU and UN presences in the DRC expanded and gained in complexity as the 2000s progressed, sometimes creating frictions

between them. The DRC also proved to be the primary laboratory for EU–UN cooperation in both military and civilian crisis management operations. We now turn to how EU missions fit in to the peacekeeping and peacebuilding framework supplied by the UN in DRC, and how this was replicated in 2008–9 in Chad and the Central African Republic.

An uneasy fit: EU and UN operations in Africa

In 2003, the UN peacekeeping mission in the DRC (MONUC) faced a major crisis in the northeastern region of Ituri, where it was unable to contain anti-government militias. Since its initial deployment in 1999, MONUC had gradually grown and attempted to restore order throughout the country's east, which had been the epicenter of the country's extremely bloody civil war in the later 1990s. The Ituri crisis, centered on the town of Bunia, threatened to undo the peacekeepers' progress and undermine the mission.

Kofi Annan turned to France for help. The French, looking for ways to revitalize European security cooperation in the wake of the Iraq debates, suggested that the EU mount a mission to assist MONUC. The result was Operation Artemis, which deployed to Bunia for three months and succeeded in quelling the militias. In spite of some hard fighting, the EU force sustained no fatalities, and MONUC went on to mount further anti-militia operations throughout the eastern DRC. Artemis was not quite the straightforward success for EU–UN cooperation it first appeared: coordination between the two organizations' personnel was minimal, and the EU mission's departure was arguably too abrupt. Equally, Artemis consisted almost entirely of French troops – with the important exception of a Swedish contingent that engaged in combat – and its EU identity was more significant politically than operationally. Nonetheless, many analysts saw this episode as a model for future EU–UN cooperation in Africa. While the UN took on long-term, large-scale peacekeeping, the EU could offer a high-end reserve capacity ready to swing into action in a crisis (see Ulriksen, Gourlay and Mace, 2004; Morsut, 2009).

This strategic vision was iterated in an EU–UN joint declaration on crisis management in 2003, and a more narrowly focused paper on military collaboration the following year. Although the latter flagged potential obstacles to future Artemis-type deployments, the operation was clearly the model for the EU's Battle Groups initiative, launched in early 2004 by Britain, France and Germany. The initial Battle Group proposal stipulated that these brigade-sized rapid reaction forces would be particularly useful in support of the UN in Africa. The Ituri crisis thus brought into focus the potential importance of the UN as the provider of a strategic framework in fragile states that the EU could plug into when necessary.

After Artemis, EU officials looked for further ways to slot EU elements into the UN framework in DRC. These extended beyond immediate peacekeeping to aspects of peacebuilding, as the EU deployed a police mission – initially sent to train a Congolese police unit to protect the government in Kinshasa – and a Security Sector Reform (SSR) Mission. The police mission, deployed in 2005 as EUPOL Kinshasa and later relaunched as EUPOL RD Congo with a new mandate to help stabilize the east of the country, did not fit into the UN framework easily, not least because its mandate overlapped with that of MONUC's own police component (Vircoulon, 2009: 228). Turf wars also emerged between the EU and UN over the direction of SSR after the launch of EUSEC RD Congo in 2005 – a situation exacerbated by the presence of numerous other players with influence over the ramshackle Congolese army, ranging from Angola to China. Nonetheless, the head of EUSEC RD Congo and MONUC's chief of staff collaborated on devising an SSR strategy with the Congolese army in 2007, and in 2008 the Security Council directed MONUC to

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ensure that it coordinated with both EUSEC and EUPOL (Clément, 2009: 251–2). Even if the EU's small civilian missions found it hard to fit in with the UN at the operational level, it should be clear that they have ultimately contributed to a common strategic project to stabilize the DRC.

This project was further advanced in 2006 when the EU responded to a request from the UN for military assistance during the DRC's national elections (which, as we have noted, also involved collaboration between UNDP and the European Commission). EUFOR RD Congo, which deployed to Kinshasa in the last quarter of the year, differed from Artemis in that it involved contingents from a wide range of EU members, with a German general as overall commander. The level of collaboration with MONUC was much better than 2003, although it was still complicated by the EU and UN's very different command and control arrangements (Major, 2008: 27–31). Intelligence and risk assessments were also sources of contention. But EUFOR and MONUC personnel managed to contain significant street violence in Kinshasa, and the EU mission's presence arguably deterred worse trouble during the polls. It was, however, criticized for leaving too soon – sticking rigidly to its schedule – and there were major riots once it had concluded. MONUC had to deal with these alone. Nonetheless, by the end of 2006, it was possible to argue that the EU's mix of financial, military and civilian support to the UN in the DRC represented both a unique level of inter-organizational integration and a real strategic success story.

This optimistic assessment requires some revisions in retrospect. The eastern DRC has remained disorderly, and the UN has struggled to manage the situation – a challenge exacerbated by the need to work with the Congolese army, which has an appalling record of military failures and human rights abuses. In late 2008, MONUC was again thrown into crisis when militia forces launched an offensive around the eastern Congolese town of Goma, driving over 200,000 civilians into flight. In spite of a surge of pressure within the EU for another Artemis-type operation, the EU Council did not meet a request from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for reinforcements. Although the EU had been happy to plug into the UN framework in the past, its support was very far from unconditional (Balossi-Restelli, 2011).

While the EU failed to intervene in the DRC in 2008, it did deploy a force (EUFOR Tchad/RCA) to Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR) in close cooperation with the UN in the same year. The EU's primary goals were to help secure UN-led humanitarian aid efforts in eastern Chad – where hundreds of thousands of refugees from Darfur were living in camps – and open the way for a UN mission, MINURCAT. MINURCAT was meant to deploy in two stages, getting police on the ground alongside EUFOR and then taking over military duties in 2009. In this case, therefore, the EU was attempting to both reinforce the UN's existing humanitarian framework in Chad – which was well established but endangered by widespread violence – and lay the groundwork for a longer-term UN peacekeeping framework. The European Commission pledged a sizeable package of funding to boost humanitarian aid and reconstruction efforts in EUFOR's area of operation, as well as €10 million to fund a Chadian police force to operate in the refugee camps in tandem with MINURCAT police officers (Helly, 2009a: 343). As in the DRC, EU–UN relations were testy: MINURCAT was very slow to get police on the ground and the UN struggled to identify sufficient non-European troop contributors to take over from EUFOR in 2009. A number of EU member states, including France, Ireland and Poland, agreed to 're-hat' their EUFOR contingents under UN command to fill the gap. Relations between MINURCAT and Chad's government deteriorated after the end of the EU mission, and MINURCAT was closed down at the end of 2010.

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In spite of these problems, the EUFOR/MINURCAT combination has been credited with both successfully facilitating the supply of humanitarian aid in eastern Chad and contributing to a gradual increase in stability in the region. Damien Helly concludes that the EU and UN managed to 'agree to disagree' often enough to make the joint operation function, and useful lessons were learned for future cooperation (Helly, 2009a: 348). Although imperfect, the Chadian episode arguably underlines the extent to which the EU has adapted its strategic thinking to fitting in with UN frameworks in Africa. A further, operationally unusual, example of this trend has been EU's anti-piracy operation off Somalia (Atalanta) which is tasked with protecting humanitarian shipments by the World Food Programme. This is a small part of its mission – taking up less than 10 per cent of its efforts – but is an indicator of how cooperation with UN agencies is now a standard part of the EU's African operations (Helly, 2009b: 398).

Turning to EU–UN operational cooperation outside Africa, we find a more mixed picture. We have already noted the uneasy transition in Kosovo in 2008, during which mid-level EU and UN officials often sparred over the procedural aspects of the shift to the EU. In the case of Georgia, there was tentative cooperation between EU and UN observers in the aftermath of the 2008 war, but this came to halt when Russia insisted that the UN mission close down in 2009 (Fischer, 2009: 388). UNDP is also involved in the EU's Border Assistance Mission to Moldova as an 'implementing partner', although this is a technical rather than political relationship and there were only four UN staff working in the mission as of mid-2011.[4] While the European Commission and EU members are essential funders of UN humanitarian activities in the Palestinian Territories (and both the EU and UN are members of the Quartet dealing with Israeli–Palestinian diplomacy, along with the USA and Russia) accounts of the small EU missions deployed to the West Bank and Gaza do not emphasize their cooperation with the UN.

The model of the UN providing a framework for EU-flagged missions that we have laid out is, therefore, rooted in both organizations' commitments to Africa in the 2000s – although we have seen that European powers have found other ways to utilize the Security Council and UN peacekeeping in the Middle East. In recent years, a number of analysts have concluded that the EU is likely to avoid sending further sizeable military crisis management missions to sub-Saharan Africa in the years ahead in light of shifting financial and strategic priorities (Norheim-Martinsen, 2011: 27). It is possible that the foregoing narrative is of historical interest only, as the EU is likely to rely on the UN less in operations outside Africa. There is also growing evidence that financial constraints will place limits on the EU's financial support to the UN's humanitarian and development arms may shrink in the future for budgetary reasons (Vaïsse and Kundnani, 2011: 122 and 127).[5] But it would be unwise to rule out the possibility that future conflicts and humanitarian crises in Africa will compel the EU to re-engage on the continent. And even if it does not, the UN provides a strategic framework for the EU in at least one other field: the struggle to halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The nuclear option: the UN and proliferation

This chapter has shown how European countries have helped build up the UN's peacekeeping, humanitarian and peacebuilding structures and then plugged EU operations into them. If we turn to the architecture for combating nuclear proliferation, a similar pattern emerges. Since 2003, when the EU agreed its first strategy on weapons of mass destruction (distinct from the *European Security Strategy*) its members have prioritized reinforcing the

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existing UN-centered system for dealing with proliferation, including the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Security Council as the primary enforcement mechanism, in addition to the international mechanisms dealing with biological and chemical weapons. Sten Rynning has nicely dubbed the EU a 'force for multilateral conservation' in this field (Rynning, 2007: 272). The EU has prioritized funding for IAEA programmes aimed at securing nuclear materials in the former Soviet Union (Meier, 2008). But the main tests for the EU's strategy have been Iran's nuclear activities and the stagnation of diplomacy around the NPT. The 2005 NPT Review Conference even failed to agree an agenda. There were warnings that the Treaty – and with it much of the architecture for stopping the spread of nuclear weapons – was losing credibility.

France, Germany and the UK have led the EU's efforts to deal with Iran's nuclear ambitions – with EU High Representatives Javier Solana and Catherine Ashton also playing lead negotiating roles – but their goal has been to manage the problem through the UN system. This was a source of strain with the Bush administration while it was still in its most hawkish phase after the Iraq War, although Bush's team gradually moved closer to the European approach during his second term and the Obama administration committed itself to the UN route. Having taken up the file in 2003, the EU initially offered a series of incentives – even including assistance to Iran's tourism industry – to persuade Tehran to suspend its nuclear enrichment activities and work with the IAEA (Gowan, 2007: 57). As relations with Iran deteriorated, the EU proceeded to champion strengthening UN-based sanctions. When the USA and UN secured a Security Council resolution to this effect in May 2010, the EU followed up with an extremely stringent set of sanctions of its own that – coupled with a comparable set of American measures – appeared to throw Iran off balance (Vaïsse and Kundnani, 2011: 124). Although Iran appears to continue its proliferation activities, the EU can take some credit for both sustaining UN-based diplomacy in the period when the USA opposed it and for giving the UN's sanctions teeth.

Yet the EU's members are far from entirely united over nuclear issues, in part because of an inevitable split between the interests of France and Britain as nuclear powers and the Union's other 25 members. The EU's attachment to the NPT and UN-centric non-proliferation regime duly contains many ambiguities, not least concerning the NPT obligations on nuclear powers to disarm. While the EU's members agree that they would like to see the NPT strengthened – through, for example, greater use of intrusive inspections – they have also had to modify their ambitions to maintain a minimum of global consensus over the Treaty's future. At the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the EU had to 'accept compromise language on contentious issues including tactical nuclear weapons, intrusive IAEA inspections of nuclear sites and the cessation of the production of fissile materials' (Vaïsse and Kundnani, 2011: 125). The 2010 conference at least generated more agreement than that in 2005.

Some analysts have seen the EU's reliance on the existing non-proliferation system as reflecting a lack of sufficient strategic clarity to devise more innovative responses to shifting nuclear threats (Rynning, 2007: 283–4). While EU members have participated in both the Bush administration's non-UN-based Proliferation Security Initiative and the Obama administration's 2010 Nuclear Security Summit (a leaders' event similar in style to the G20 summits) they have not yet unveiled comparably creative non-proliferation initiatives of their own. But this fits in with the diagnosis of the EU's engagement with the UN system outlined above: European powers prioritize strengthening multilateral institutions and then launching EU initiatives within these frameworks, rather than attempting to set up rival frameworks.

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Conclusion

The EU's attachment to the multilateral system can appear excessively defensive (Vaïsse and Kundnani, 2011: 114). In a period of rapid and fundamental global power shifts, emerging powers are increasingly challenging European powers' privileged place in the international system. China and India have, for example, both attempted to constrain European-backed human rights initiatives at the UN and insisted (with US support) on being given a greater share of voting rights in the international financial institutions (Gowan and Brantner, 2008; Vaïsse and Kundnani, 2011: 117). It is increasingly a commonplace that the EU's members should accept a diminution of their influence in the UN and wider international system if they wish that system to retain its credibility. But this chapter has tried to show why this is so hard: the EU's members have been among the most dedicated architects of global multilateral structures, to the extent that there is often a blurring of the line between EU and UN policies towards important security issues. This is not something that can be easily untangled, however powerful the dynamics in favor of change may appear.

The purpose of this chapter has not, however, been to make a case for or against maintaining the current relations between the EU and the UN. Its more modest goal has been to show how an analysis of the EU's contributions to international security must treat the UN not only as a useful partner but as both a tool of European policy and a strategic framework for the EU's own actions. Greater recognition of how European powers work *through* the UN may help us grasp how and why the EU works *with* the UN in managing specific crises, giving us a more comprehensive picture of Europe's global influence.

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Notes

1 For details of the EU–UN 'partnership for a better world', see <http://www.un-eu.org/>.
2 These figures are based on CIC, 2011: 120, 121, 149 and 151.
3 Figures are available at <http://www.unpbf.org/pledges.shtml>.
4 For a profile of the mission see <http://www.eubam.org/en/about/who_we_are>.
5 The author of this chapter researched and drafted the section on multilateral issues for Vaïsse and Kundnani, 2011, which is drawn on here and in the next section.