



LIBERAL VOICES

ON EU-NATO COOPERATION

INTRODUCTION

BY SUSANNE HARTIG

Dear Liberal friends,

Europe's security landscape has undergone a rapid transformation over the past years. With new threats in cyberspace, aggression from Russia and a war in Syria, it is safe to say that geopolitics is back. This also raises questions about the way we organise Europe's security, and particularly the cooperation between the EU and NATO. Who should take the lead in safeguarding Europe's security? What capabilities should be developed to do so? And what should be the balance of competences between the EU, NATO, and the Member States.

To facilitate this discussion, the European Liberal Forum launches an e-series, in which liberal voices can comment on the previously mentioned questions. The publication will focus on the relationship between the EU and NATO, and on how, from a liberal point of view, cooperation between the two should look like in the future. Prominent stakeholders have been invited to contribute

to the series, which is an on-going work that started at the 2016 ALDE Congress in Warsaw.

The first two chapters of this series have been written respectively by ALDE Party President, Hans van Baalen MEP, and by former Ukraine Defence Minister, Anatoliy Grytsenko. Further chapters will be added to the e-series throughout the year. Through continuous discussion, we hope to highlight different liberal perspectives and find common approaches.

I hope this e-publication will contribute to a fruitful discussion and wish you all an informative e-reading.

Best regards,



Susanne Hartig
Executive Director



EUROPEAN DEFENCE

BY HANS VAN BAALEN MEP

After Brexit and the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States, France and Germany announced new plans for the further integration of European security and defence capabilities. Many leading figures in the European Parliament and the European Commission have long called for this. Earlier this year, the German and French ministers of Foreign Affairs presented a blueprint for comprehensive European Defence co-operation, which should eventually develop into a genuine European Defence Union.

The European Union is surrounded by ring of instability; the ongoing conflicts in Eastern Ukraine, Iraq and Syria, an expansionist Russia and a growing terrorist threat from Daesh. Our first priority should be to upscale the newly established European Border and Coast Guard to manage the refugee problems and combat human traffickers. The case for common European action is pressing. However, establishing a separate European army with its own headquarters and command structures would be a waste of money and resources. In addition, this risks undermining our NATO efforts.

Irrespective of Brexit, the United Kingdom remains a crucial military ally within NATO, as Britain has a strong army, advanced intelligence services and a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. European security without Britain is unimaginable. Therefore, NATO should remain the cornerstone of the European security strategy. Our defence initiatives should strengthen NATO, instead

of weakening it by duplicating command structures and erecting a new headquarters. EU member states can pool their operational forces, like the amalgamation of the Dutch and Belgian navy or the integration of the Dutch and German tank divisions. Other member states could follow such successful and effective examples; NATO should coordinate the military deployment of these pooled forces.

In spite of all the institutional visions on a future European army, Europe is lagging behind in terms of defence investment. Currently, only four European member states, including the UK, fulfil the NATO criteria to spend 2% GDP on defence. The statements of President-elect Donald Trump, urging Europe to raise its defence budgets, are not unfounded. Obama said the same and he was right. For the EU battlegroups it's the same story: not using them means losing them. Therefore, the time has come for European NATO member states to increase their defence expenditures. This is not a matter of more policy papers on defence, but a matter of real investment. We should put our money where our mouth is. As a last resort, we should be prepared to fight. In the world of today, we can't defend the European Union's borders and deliver security with rhetoric alone. We need to combine the carrot with the stick.

HANS VAN BAALEN MEP is ALDE Group coordinator Security and Defence in the European Parliament and ALDE Party President. He wrote this article in his capacity as ALDE Group coordinator Security and Defence.



A FUTURE NATO: A VIEW FROM A PARTNER COUNTRY

BY ANATOLIY GRYTSENKO

NATO is the strongest military alliance on the planet. In the course of over 70 years, many trillions of US dollars have been invested by the member states in building its military infrastructure and attaining the military capabilities necessary for preventing and/or localizing possible security threats.

Despite the clear need for some adjustment and renovation, these capabilities are more or less in balance with the current and emerging threats.

Military forces and capabilities per se do not ensure peace and security. Readiness to deploy and employ them, quickly and decisively, is a necessary precondition to dissuade and deter an adversary with hostile intentions.

What is really lacking and highly needed in NATO now is an improved and streamlined decision-making process, first and foremost – not only at the highest political level, but also in the military chain of command.

OODA-LOOP: THE CIVILIZED WORLD IS BEHIND ITS ADVERSARIES

The OODA-loop can help to analyze the weaknesses and recommend ways in which improvements can be made. The OODA-loop refers to the decision cycle of observe, orient, decide, and act, developed by military strategist and US Air Force Colonel John Boyd. According

to Boyd, decision-making takes place in a recurring cycle of observe-orient-decide-act. An entity (whether a state, non-state actor, or an organization such as NATO or the EU) that can process this cycle quickly, observing and reacting to unfolding events more rapidly than an opponent, can thereby “get inside” the opponent’s decision cycle and gain an advantage.

Let us take a closer look, through the prism of the OODA-loop, and analyze how prompt and effective NATO and EU actions in the security sphere have been in the recent years. In 2008-2009, Europe saw two wars in the space of six months: between Russia and Georgia in the Caucasus, and the gas war that caused harm to many European states. Neither NATO nor the EU dared to call what took place in the Caucasus a ‘war’; they went only as far as to term it an ‘excessive use of force’. A real war goes on in Europe, people are dying, territories are being occupied, but the EU ministers meet only for a week, after a seaside holiday. Then the Chair of the European Union, French President Nicolas Sarkozy, flew to Moscow – the capital of the aggressor-state, where he got a prescribed plan (six principles of “peaceful settlement”) and a proposal to fly to Georgia to get it signed by President Saakashvili. The Kremlin’s document was signed, but never implemented. Georgia lost two of its autonomous regions, to this day remaining under the control of the aggressor – Russia. Why did it happen? After all, Sarkozy is an experienced

A FUTURE NATO: A VIEW FROM A PARTNER COUNTRY

BY ANATOLIY GRYTSENKO

politician, representing a strong nation – France. This happened because he had no unified position of the European Union behind him. The reason: Russia.

Now, what happened in January 2009, when Russia cut off natural gas supply, and tens of millions of Europeans were freezing cold? The President of the European Council, Premiere Mirek Topolánek, secured the signing of the “peace memorandum” by the Ukrainian representative and the EU energy commissioner. He flew from Brussels to Moscow for a third signature, but failed to get it. In the Kremlin, the Brussels document was thrown out, and a new one was written — for Mr. Topolánek to fly further to Kyiv and to secure a signature of the Ukrainian Government, which was finally done. The reason was the same: the absence of a unified position of the EU members. Why? Because of Russia.

History repeated itself in 2014-2015, when Russia committed an act of military aggression against Ukraine, annexed the Crimea and occupied a large portion of Donbas. The position of the West: stand still, do not provoke, there is no military solution, the main thing is diplomacy and sanctions – proved ineffective. It represented a defeat for Ukraine, for Europe, and a victory for Russia – the aggressor – alone. Putin bluffed and scared the West with the possibility of a large-scale war in Europe, forced the French and German leaders to drop everything, to fly to Kyiv and then to Minsk, to agree on the “peace plan”, prepared (as well as in the Georgian case) in the Kremlin. A document that does not even call the war – a war, the aggression – an aggression, Russia – the aggressor? A document that, if ever implemented, will tear Ukraine, until recently – an integral peaceful country, into three separate parts, a document giving Russia-aggressor the role of kind of a third party, a ‘guarantor of peace’?! Neither the EU nor NATO took actions to defend Georgia and Ukraine, even though they are obliged to defend their allies. Further, it seems that despite the concerns of the Baltic states after the Georgian War, there was no workable contingency plan, drawn up in the “dark rooms” of SHAPE, near Mons, to defend Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in case of Russian aggression. This is once again because of Russia. If this is the case, why should NATO members maintain NATO structures, or why

should EU states develop the military component of the EU, if in the case of war their defence is not guaranteed? If we speak about security seriously – and the threats we are currently faced with are more than serious – this is a question we should consider.

There is no European security system, despite much having been said about it. Decades-long attempts by the EU to create its own military potential have not been successful so far. Apparently, without NATO infrastructure, the EU military component will not materialize in the forthcoming decades. Moreover, the NATO infrastructure (strategic intelligence, command, control, communications, logistics, transport) relies primarily on US capabilities. The Europeans know this – and they know the cost of creating such an infrastructure.

INEFFECTIVENESS AS THE DARK SIDE OF DEMOCRACY

The internal system of key decision-making in the EU and NATO rests on political dialogue and the search for a compromise, ideally – a consensus. But when a threat arises, and one should act quickly and resolutely – consensus does not work, internal democratic procedures also fail. NATO has been conducting a military operation in Afghanistan for years. Its success is critical for the Alliance’s future. But what do we see? NATO countries for months or even years democratically discuss which of them will send its brigade, a battalion or a helicopter squadron to Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the operation faces setbacks and people are dying. Ukraine refuses and finds valid reasons for that, but the issue of the Alliance’s effectiveness remains on the agenda.

Here is one example of ineffectiveness. Every year, Ukraine experiences a flood in five or six of its regions. People suffer, manpower and resources for emergency assistance are limited. A question arises: why don’t they use the Tisa multinational engineering battalion, established under NATO auspices? After all, Ukraine, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania set it up in 2003 exactly to deal with such emergencies. Every year, cooperation plans are drawn up — visits, staff trainings, field exercises are organised; funds are allocated. On paper, everything looks fine, everything works, but when time comes

A FUTURE NATO: A VIEW FROM A PARTNER COUNTRY

BY ANATOLIY GRYTSENKO

to deploy the unit — it does not work! The reason is obvious: when the Tisa battalion was formed, for some reason, nobody cared to prescribe a mechanism of prompt decision-making, for instance, to empower the defense ministers of the member countries to deploy the battalion, when and where needed, in order not to bypass parliament and avoid losing precious time. NATO and the EU, on their own or together with partner countries, have created a great many such dead structures. Audit and honest analysis are needed.

I am confident that the time has come for honest assessments and convictive answers. NATO officials have long been speaking about the problems of NATO effectiveness. For instance, four-star generals, former Chiefs of Staff of the British, Dutch, French, German, and the US armed forces, released a special report on NATO ineffectiveness and modernization. The advice these individuals give is worth attention: they had millions of soldiers under their command, and they led them to battle.

THREAT REASSESSMENT: WHY IS AN ENEMY AHEAD?

In the recent years, Europe has finally become aware of the danger and aggressiveness of Russia. Eastern NATO countries feel they are on the front line. In addition to having Russia to the East of NATO, we can draw a strip on the map, from North Korea, via Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Sudan, Libya, up to the Balkans. It is an area of danger, not the only one on the planet but the most dangerous one. This explosive area has everything: frozen, simmering and hot conflicts; transnational terrorist and criminal groups, uncontrolled by governments; huge financial resources; nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, their technologies and components, capabilities for cyber-attacks; a great many of the most dangerous conventional weapons; booming world drug business. The troops of many countries are stationed there, governments are inefficient, new terrorist attacks every day take their human toll.

Those who can attack the Alliance, its vital interests and values, are rather quick in making decisions and running military or terrorist operations. Centralized authoritarian regimes with reckless leadership do not 'waste' time with

rather long democratic procedures and parliamentary discussions. They enjoy full control of the media, can directly shape public opinion, and therefore do not really care about political rating and public support. They are flexible in the allocation of the necessary budget resources, are not limited with transparent long-term tender/acquisition procedures, or with real democratic control over the military, including in budget spending. They are much less sensitive to the victims of war, including the so-called 'collateral damage' of innocent civilians killed and wounded. Their defense ministers are mainly well experienced generals [not short-term political appointees] with professional military knowledge and experience of deployment and employment of armed forces. To launch a military operation and deploy forces, they do not need months for preparation and logistic support. Their soldiers are not 'spoiled' with air conditioning and a wide variety of meals and drinks in field camps. For the offensive surprise, they can recklessly break any international commitments, including the verification of troops' movement/deployment under confidence-building measures.

To launch a military operation and deploy forces, they do not need 6-12-18 months for preparation and logistic support. Their soldiers are not 'spoiled' with air conditioning and a wide variety of meals and drinks in field camps. For the offensive surprise, they can recklessly break any international commitments, including the verification of troops' movement/deployment under confidence-building measures.

Due to the aforementioned features, adversaries have an initial time advantage and further higher speed within the OODA cycle, as compared to the NATO community and armies.

ENTRENCHED WEAKNESSES OF THE CIVILIZED WORLD: FOUR LEVELS

I would argue that, like never before, the civilised democratic world is weak when it comes to tackling military threats. Why is this? Below are more of what I consider to be the most important factors of ineffectiveness and retardation in the face of serious threats.

A FUTURE NATO: A VIEW FROM A PARTNER COUNTRY

BY ANATOLIY GRYTSENKO

FIRST. All developed democracies vote in elections, be they presidential or parliamentary. The results are more or less fifty-fifty. It cannot be otherwise in a democratic country. Taking Western Europe, the USA or even Ukraine as an example, we can see that one cannot get 80-90% of the votes, i.e. absolute support, in an election. This only takes place under authoritarian regimes, or in countries at turning points of their history. In the rest of the world, it is fifty-fifty. What does this mean? Weakness and political vulnerability at the top level, at the level of the national political leadership. The closer a country is to the election period, the weaker and more politically vulnerable it become, even if the heads of state have a strategic vision and firm leadership qualities (qualities which are rare in today's Europe). In such a situation, it is very difficult to take critical, responsible, unpopular decisions, such as the decision to send troops to battle. It is very difficult to take decisions at the highest political level while thinking about elections, and while being subject to criticism in mass media and by the opposition. We have witnessed some NATO/EU countries withdraw troops from the coalition as soon as two weeks after an election period. For example, Ukraine began its gradual withdrawal of troops from Iraq over the space of a year, in close coordination with the coalition partners. This shows us that the top political level is too vulnerable, especially when a country nears an election period. This is currently evident in the United States, Germany and France.

SECOND. We go down to the next level — military-political, the level of defense ministers. I was the Defense Minister of Ukraine in 2005-2007, a total of 34 months. When I left my post, only five out of 40+ defense ministers with whom I began to work continued in office – in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Denmark. In other countries, defense ministers were changed several times, which is not good for the effectiveness and implementation of long-term strategies. In many European states, experts in healthcare, finance, culture, journalism, etc. are appointed defense ministers (such is the practice of the civilized world). An exotic case took place in Spain: there, a woman who was seven months pregnant was appointed defense minister. This means that they rely on the military for experience. Despite all my respect for the country and for its minister, did

anyone think about the minister's working capacity in case of a military threat, when one has to work 24/7 for many days, weeks, or even months in a row? When the top political level is weak, the next level — that of defense ministers, called to suggest to the top political leadership of the country calculated options of military-political decisions figured out in terms of their consequences, and to insist on the most optimal option — is not ready for this role, for natural reasons. This means that they rely on the military.

THIRD. The next level — the top brass — as a rule, is made up of the chiefs of general staff. Let us ask a question: in what countries do these people — multi-star generals — have personal experience of planning, deployment and combat use of troops? Not a battalion or brigade but a large combined-arms task force of an army corps equivalent and above? These can be counted almost on one hand: Great Britain, Israel, Russia, Turkey, the USA, and nowadays Ukraine – that's actually all. The rest of the generals read textbooks, as a rule, written after the lessons of somebody's previous wars. It means that the top political leadership of a country cannot rely on firm professional recommendations of the military at a difficult time either.

THE FOURTH FACTOR — low effectiveness of international organizations in the security sector, starting with the UN, with its veto right in the Security Council, and ending with regional structures, like the OSCE, their limited mandate and lack of promptness in decision-making – has been already criticized virtually by everyone.

And now, let us recall who can challenge the stable, peaceful, quiet, and slow decision-making civilized world? They are those who are ready to kill thousands and to die in their thousands. To deliver death to the NATO territory and zones of its vital interests, they do not need a huge logistic system: they can move on any terrain for weeks with packed lunch (a handful of rice), so long as they have arms. The main thing is that they are trained and ready to act asymmetrically, delivering severe blows to the sorest spots of democratic societies.

A FUTURE NATO: A VIEW FROM A PARTNER COUNTRY

BY ANATOLIY GRYTSENKO

Leaders of democratic nations should realize and admit the vulnerability and weakness of separate countries and international organizations. Maybe it will be easier for them to do this right now, against the background of the Russian aggression upon Ukraine, the war in Syria and the escalation of ISIS in a dozen of Asian and African states, when some weaknesses cropped up – to make the necessary changes and in this way to secure hundreds of millions of people.

MODERNIZATION OF NATO: PROPOSALS FROM A PARTNER COUNTRY

The aforesaid deficiencies can and should be corrected, by modernizing NATO with a focus on the effective and timely use of the available capabilities against the security threats. The following measures presented in a bullet-point format can help to achieve this objective.

AT THE POLITICAL LEVEL

- Article 5 of the NATO Washington Treaty must be deliberately translated into clear-cut procedures/ actions for the military and the executives – to be enforced automatically in case of aggression, without any delay for additional political discussions and consultations, not giving an enemy the hope of breaking the Alliance's unity. This is key! Russia is skillful at playing on contradictions among NATO member states and on 'special relations' with some of them for its own benefits – we saw that in the cases of Georgia and Ukraine under the Russian aggression. Therefore, any political delay in NATO defense must be ruled out. The price of the delay is too high, in all aspects.
- The very fact that the NATO military machine has the necessary political blessing to go ahead immediately with its contingency plans of collective defense if member states are attacked should not be a secret – that NATO message must be widely known and well taken by the potential aggressors in advance. In itself, it will be a key factor of deterrence for anyone with hostile intentions. No doubt, it will also help to bypass the possible lack of united political leadership within NATO which may not allow the use of NATO capabilities in case they are really needed to protect hundreds of millions of civilians in Europe and beyond.
- Consensus as a sexy feature of democracy in decision-making must not undermine combined efforts, especially in NATO out-of-region operations. These operations are very politically sensitive and costly, but they are needed. To localize a threat effectively and decisively, one must reach its support base and hit in its 'center of gravity', which in many cases is far beyond the NATO territory. Here, timely and convincing intelligence is key to succeeding or avoiding unnecessary strikes. Another precondition for success: political commitments to the provision of forces and resources must be settled by the member states at the planning stage, before deployment; when the military operation is underway, force generation conferences, endless approval and allocation procedures should be abandoned.
- Civilian politicians, to be qualified for the posts of defense ministers and high level NATO officials, should first obtain a certain scope of military knowledge, preferably through [two-three-month] strategic courses in the national defense universities. If implemented, such a practice would, first, substantially enhance the effectiveness of democratic civilian control over the military and, second, ensure high quality policy advice on the military-political and military budget issues for the heads of NATO member states as well as the NATO political leadership.
- NATO should be tasked with an additional important mission – the protection of civilians in case of the use of WMD or their components, nuclear and biological, first of all. Protection civilians and critical infrastructure, civil defense and medical first aid require not only general use, but specialized resources in vast volumes, as well as the renewal of additional training for local authorities, police forces and the medical corps. NATO assets for protection of troops, its warning, transport and medical capabilities will certainly help to minimize casualties among the population, if WMD are used.

A FUTURE NATO: A VIEW FROM A PARTNER COUNTRY

BY ANATOLIY GRYTSENKO

AT THE MILITARY LEVEL

- Since conflict prevention is more preferable and cheaper than military engagement in all dimensions, to recognize a threat in a timely manner with the necessary warning time, intelligence and surveillance, is of primary importance. This must be reflected in the priority budgeting and permanent renovation of the relevant NATO capabilities.
- Forward presence and prepositioning of arms and resources, including command and control facilities, airfields and dispersal areas for the arriving allied troops is key for deterrence and timely response. The recent NATO decision on the forward deployment of a few international battalions in frontier states is a politically important, but militarily inadequate reaction to possible Russian military aggression. That political decision should be corrected based on the professional military advice, the sooner the better.
- In order to block enemy's deployment and supply at the early stage of the conflict escalation, NATO must be ready to establish, enforce and sustain no-fly and/or no-sail zones. The military means for that can include 7-10 air squadrons of tactical aviation, 4-5 battleships with air surveillance and air defense capabilities, drones, and an air carrier with extended airspace control and combat aircraft. To demonstrate strong unity of efforts in NATO, it is advisable that some of the important military assets are provided by France and Germany – to diminish rumors of their lack of decisiveness because of 'special relations' with Russia.
- To dissuade the enemy from further escalation, NATO must be ready to use the 'demonstration of force' option. To be convincing, it would require the quick deployment of 5-7 airmobile/airborne brigades, a few special operations units followed by a substantial number of fully manned, equipped and combat-ready regular army brigades reinforced with the army aviation component (combat helicopters with anti-tank capabilities). These forces should be ready for deployment within two weeks.
- If a NATO defense operation is unavoidable, the first thing necessary for success is air superiority with full control of the airspace in the theatre of operation, with the ability to deliver airstrikes, if necessary, on the enemy's territory. The required number of air wings/ squadrons, both tactical and strategic, air defense, special forces' and combat helicopter units with air-to-ground anti-tank capabilities will depend on the scale of the enemy's offence. In any case, up to 25-30% of the overall NATO capabilities will be needed, and the member states must be ready to allocate those forces under the NATO military command to run a sustainable defense operation which will not be quick and short.
- There is a need to re-evaluate and define new combat readiness and deployment terms for ground forces of the member states – to reduce those sharply and to be able to prevent the enemy's offence with an adequate military grouping (150,000-200,000 men) in two or three directions within a week, maximum two weeks.
- For a quick large-scale deployment and movement of the allied troops [with arms and ammunitions] through the national territories to the deployment zones, all the necessary national legislative and executive decisions must be taken and the corresponding procedures must be adopted deliberately, according to the NATO contingency plans. In case of a serious threat, the military must not waste time on any bureaucratic barriers and delays to win the battle.

The aforesaid proposals are based on the need for NATO to move faster and to 'get inside' the enemy's OODA-loop with much higher chances of deterring and winning.

It is needless to remind that security has never been cheap. Nowadays, two or three cents from a euro (2-3% of the GDP) for NATO modernization and defense per nation is a good deal. Cheapest is the dearest.

ANATOLIY GRYTSENKO (Ukraine), Leader of Civic Position Party, Defense Minister (2005-2007), Chairman, National Security & Defense Parliamentary Committee (2007-2012); Ph.D, Colonel (Ret.), currently Associate Professor



BREXIT, TRUMP AND THE LASTING IMPORTANCE OF THE TRANSATLANTIC LINK

BY DANIËL TURK

In 1954, an initiative from six European nations to establish a European Defence Community (EDC) failed in the French Parliament. France had no desire for military integration with 'two defeated nations and three small states'. Britain's sovereign wish to leave the European Union that became clear on 23 June 2016 and the election of Donald Trump on 8 November 2016, unfortunately opened the door again for far-reaching European military integration.

DEFENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY

Between the EDC failing in 1954 and the Brexit referendum of 23 June 2016, various steps were taken for further European military collaboration. In 1999, the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) was established – which after Lisbon in 2009 was extended to the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)¹. There is a European Defence Agency (EDA), tasked with supporting the member states with more efficient spending of the defence budget. The *EU Battlegroups* (multinational rapid response units, consisting of

1,500 troops) established in 2005 may well exist on paper, but they have never been actually deployed and the 1999 Helsinki objective that the EU should be capable of deploying a response force of 60,000 troops proved nothing but a pipe dream. However, during all these steps taken and all these discussions on further European military collaboration, defence always remained separated from the concept 'supranationality'.

This is no coincidence. 'War made the state and the state made war'², wrote American historian and sociologist Charles Tilly about the process of state-building. The formation of states and the armed forces have been inextricably linked with each other through the course of the past centuries. Not having an army does not entail that the sovereign status is automatically lost, but the armed forces are an ultimate means to defend the sovereignty of the state. An army, more so than the currency, is an attribute of sovereign power. This fact by no means excludes military collaboration, but it does imply that the sovereign power to dispose of the deployment of the armed forces may

1 The CSDP is one of few policy domains within the EU where each member state has the power of veto.

2 Charles Tilly, *The formation of national states in Western Europe*, Princeton, 1975.

BREXIT, TRUMP AND THE LASTING IMPORTANCE OF THE TRANSATLANTIC LINK

BY DANIEL TURK

not be transferred to a supranational body. The national parliament should always be able to exercise democratic control over troop deployment.³

Eurofederalists in the European Parliament, or here in the Netherlands in the form of the political party D66, who aim for a European army, have always been around, only such delusions were never a serious option in the European capitals. The year 2016 is a significant watershed in this regard; starting with the Brexit referendum on 23 June.

THE BRITISH OBSTACLE

The military consequences of the Brexit are not entirely clear-cut yet. However, from a Dutch perspective it would be highly unfortunate if the further elaboration of the Brexit would result in obstacles to intensify the long-lasting military collaboration with the United Kingdom, or, for example, to deploy the UK/NL Amphibious Force for EU missions as was done up to now.

What is certain is that many European leaders believe (or perhaps even hope) that the Brexit will cause the British to turn their backs on Europe. As Derk Jan Eppink wrote in Dutch daily newspaper *de Volkskrant* earlier this year: 'When the EU suffers a setback, it instinctively reacts with 'more Europe' and the flight into symbolism.'⁴ For Eurofederalists, the outcome of the British referendum was therefore an opportune moment to realise a long-harboured wish: the formation of a European army.

Jean-Claude Juncker advocated the formation of a European army back in 2015. The spokesman of then British Prime Minister David Cameron said about this that 'our position is crystal clear that defence is a national, not an EU responsibility and that there is no

prospect of that position changing and no prospect of a European army'. Prime Minister Theresa May's current Cabinet of Ministers, which was installed after the Brexit referendum, shares this point of view. British Defence Secretary Michael Fallon also informed London that as long as it is a member of the European Union, it will block any attempt to set up 'a rival to NATO'. The country has the support of the Netherlands, Sweden, Poland, Latvia and Lithuania on this issue. The United Kingdom withdrawing from this block, which further consists of smaller EU member states, would be a great loss for the Netherlands. This is especially more so, now that since 23 June there is an increasingly loud call from the continent for further European military integration.

That started with a joint statement from France and Germany, immediately after the outcome of the British referendum, in which the relevant foreign ministers reconfirmed their dedication to the Union, but also called for a 'European Security Compact' in order to increase the European contribution to international security. This includes military means. The white paper published by the German defence this past summer also stated that Germany is aiming for the 'long-term goal of a common European Security and Defence Union' and the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Paolo Gentiloni, advocated 'Schengen for Defence' after the Brexit – a proposal which does not yet include a European army, but which does lay the groundwork for one. It was Jean-Claude Juncker, who during his 'State of the Union', came up with specific proposals, including a European military headquarters and joint investments in military hardware.

In all this, the United Kingdom up to now is the main obstacle for the realisation of these plans, causing great annoyance among some politicians in Europe. German Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen informed that the United Kingdom has been thwarting steps towards further European military collaboration long enough now. Her compatriot Martin Schulz, the former President of the European Parliament, is sorry to see the EU losing an important member state in the field of defence, but argued that the Brexit 'could give the necessary impulse for a closer integration of the remaining member states'.

³ More on this in the document *Soevereiniteit (Sovereignty)* published in Dutch in 2016 by the TeldersStichting.

⁴ Derk Jan Eppink, 'Europa, stop het gejammer', (*Europe stop complaining*) *Volkskrant*, ...

BREXIT, TRUMP AND THE LASTING IMPORTANCE OF THE TRANSATLANTIC LINK

BY DANIEL TURK

The French-German proposals in the field of European security and defence are 'a clear sign of things to come'.⁵

TRUMP AND THE EUROPEAN FLIGHT FORWARD

The Brexit was one of the catalysts causing the concepts 'defence' and 'supranationality' to no longer be separated from each other by definition in the discussion about military collaboration. Now that not only European federalists like Juncker, Verhofstadt and Schulz have expressed their opinions on this, but reports about far-reaching military collaboration are also heard out of Berlin, Paris and Rome, it appears that a momentum is establishing itself; something the Netherlands and other like-minded countries should be concerned about.

This momentum was also strengthened when Donald Trump was elected as the new American President on 8 November 2016. The fact that for the first time since the Second World War, an American President takes office who openly has doubts about a United States-led world order – including the credibility and validity of the NATO alliance – is reason for concern and for many in and outside of Brussels increases the urgency for further military integration in a European context.

'It was always obvious Americans would not always be there to protect the European Continent', Jean Claude-Juncker stated shortly after Trump was elected.⁶ For a change, Juncker is right. The economic, military and demographic power shift towards Asia prompts the United States to reroute its strategic focus to the East. This policy was already set in motion under President Obama and will only be reinforced under Trump – in any case the military dimension will be (the free trade agreement TPP, which was also part of Obama's strategy in Asia was buried by Trump during his first week in office).

The fact that defence is back on the political agenda – be it with or without Trump – is no more than logical and even necessary. However, the question is whether the concerns due to Trump (and the Brexit) are reason for further military integration in a European context, with its threat of overstepping the bounds into symbolism, or that each country in itself should separately be willing to invest in the armed forces. After Trump's election, Juncker stated in that same speech that 'that is why we need a new start in the field of European defence, up to the goal of setting up a European army'.⁷ The problem is he is no longer a voice crying in the wilderness, but he has the support of a number of large EU nations, Germany and France among them.

STEPS TOWARDS A EUROPEAN DEFENCE UNION

'So the ambition is there, now it's time to suit the action to the word'.⁸ Not entirely surprising, these words from D66 members Salima Belhaj (member of the Dutch Lower House) and Marietje Schaake (Euro MP) in a published op-ed article in Dutch newspaper *Trouw*, where they called for a European army. The cause for this was the implementation of the new EU security strategy, presented on the day of the Brexit referendum. This EU Global Strategy was discussed shortly after Trump's election and was embraced by the European defence ministers, including the Dutch Minister of Defence Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert. She underlines the importance of European military collaboration, but also points out that to her this does not mean 'a single set of European armed forces. This, I think, is a pipedream'.⁹ Belhaj and Schaake, however, hope for this dream to become a reality.

⁵ Charlie Cooper, 'Martin Schulz hits back at UK over EU army', Politico EU, 23 September 2016.

⁶ David M. Herszenhorn, Maia de la Bauma and Jacopo Barigazzi, 'Trump gives EU defense plans new sense of urgency', Politico EU, 11 November 2016.

⁷ Steven Swinford and Harriet Alexander, 'Britain to warn NATO allies to pay 'fair share' amid fears Donald Trump will withdraw US support', The Telegraph, 11 November 2016.

⁸ Salima Belhaj and Marietje Schaake, 'Na Trumps verkiezing hoogste tijd voor eigen Europese krijgsmacht' (After Trump's election it is high-time for an own European army), *Trouw*, 16 November 2016.

⁹ 'Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert shares her vision on the security situation in the world with German military leaders, politicians and corporate world', Speech given on 17 October 2016.

BREXIT, TRUMP AND THE LASTING IMPORTANCE OF THE TRANSATLANTIC LINK

BY DANIEL TURK

The implementation of the Global Strategy is a first step towards this. The announced measures should provide the EU with more striking power to enable autonomous action in military and civil missions, where and when required. In the past, European security policy was strictly focused externally, but now also lays emphasis on the protection of the 'Union and its citizens'. Moreover, a centre is set up for the coordination of missions in weak states, which will make it much easier to coordinate civil and military missions. There will also be more collaboration in the purchase of equipment and to promote this, the European Committee wishes to release funds on an annual basis. 'A quantum leap forward to a European security and defence policy', said Mogherini after the summit and according to the German Minister of Defence Von der Leyen, the member states expressed 'their political desire' to expand the EU to a European Defence Union.¹⁰

The implementation plan does not mention the formation of the European army so fiercely coveted by Juncker (his wish to set up a European military headquarters has also been put on ice), but nevertheless, parts of the plan indeed encroach on the territory of the power of the sword of the sovereign European member states, a disturbing development that the Netherlands should be wary of.

Under the label of the Framework Nations Concept, Germany has been working on the creation of what some have dubbed a 'Bundeswehr-led network of European miniarmies'.¹¹ In the next several months both the Czech Republic and Romania will integrate one of their brigades into the Bundeswehr. With these initiatives Germany shows its willingness to proceed with European military integration. In the newly elected French president Emmanuel Macron, Germany has found an equally willing ally. The appointment of

ultra-Europhile and arch-Federalist former MEP Sylvie Goulard as France's Defence minister is an indication of the course Macron's administration will set. London fortunately is the main voice, as yet, against these latest EU initiatives, which may in due course undermine NATO, and therefore the vital Transatlantic connection.

THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE TRANSATLANTIC CONNECTION

More important than this European institutionalism, which should create the appearance that there is such a thing as a European foreign and security policy, is the fact that the European member states should themselves invest more in the instruments of hard power.¹² Part of this is that politicians are in favour of new investments in the armed forces, in order to prove to our most important ally, the United States, that we are serious about our own security (again). The words expressed by Trump with regard to NATO may have been reckless, but they are also justified. In the past year, the United States paid for 72% of the defence expenses within NATO and while the defence ministers of the EU-27 were discussing the implementation of the Global Strategy in Brussels, British Defence Secretary Fallon was the one to point out to his European allies they should spend their 'fair share' on defence. This is the only way to prevent the American security umbrella from being folded shut under Trump. As he threatened to do at the latest NATO summit in Brussels.

Bilateral and multilateral forms of military collaborations with like-minded partners, such as the Netherlands currently has with neighboring countries such as Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom are very important to strengthen the European branch of the Transatlantic allegiance, but they may not create the illusion that it may one day replace NATO. After all, NATO remains *the* corner stone of Dutch and European security and the departure of the British from the EU

10 Natalie Righton, 'Het Europese leger staat nog ver voorbij de horizon' (The European army is still far beyond the horizon), Volkskrant, 25 November 2016.

11 Elisabeth Braw, 'Germany is quietly building a European Army under its Command', Foreign Policy, 22 mei 2017.

12 Julian Lindley-French, 'Trumxit', Lindley-French's Blog Blast: Speaking truth unto Power, 9 November 2016, http://lindleyfrench.blogspot.nl/2016_11_01_archive.html, consulted on 6 December 2016.

BREXIT, TRUMP AND THE LASTING IMPORTANCE OF THE TRANSATLANTIC LINK

BY DANIËL TURK

also means the disappearance of the most important European link in the Transatlantic connection. We should also remember the long historical, cultural and economic Transatlantic ties are stronger than the Trump administration.

The answer to this is not the creation of a European military headquarters, or joining together the European defence budgets as an alternative for serious investments in the armed forces. The will to invest in this is a responsibility of each nation separately. Let us therefore harbour the British presence in the EU and their resistance against a 'European army' as long as possible.

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