The relationship between CSDP and NATO after Brexit and the EU Global Strategy

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The Brexit referendum initiated a series of events of still unpredictable consequences for the future of the European Union (EU). Especially in the area of Security and Defence, the EU will lose one of the so-called 'Big Three', at the same time that it tries to redefine its relationship to NATO through the development of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

It is undeniable that during the two and a half years since the British referendum, more things have happened at the level of European Security and Defence that during the last 60 or more. These developments were received by NATO with restrained suspicion, while new international risks and threats made EU/NATO cooperation more necessary than ever. However, NATO is facing new challenges (Putin's Russia, China, internal problems by a member of the Alliance, i.e. Turkey), with the United States (US) President expressing views on an eventual American withdrawal from the alliance.

After the Brexit referendum there is a clear distinction between EU Security and European Security, where the UK and NATO play a central part. The UK is and will definitely be part of the European Security arrangements and architecture without being any more part of the CSDP. At the same time we witness a double trend at the EU level: deepening of the CSDP while enhancing cooperation with NATO. This became all the more obvious during the NATO Summit in Brussels in July 2018.

In this report, after a first presentation of the emergent international environment as presented in the EU Global Strategy, we will try to analyze the state of affairs between the EU and NATO as well as their joint efforts to meet the new security demands of the contemporary world. Finally we will present the Brexit effect and elaborate on the impact the new situation has had both on the transatlantic relationship and on an eventual European Defence Union (EDU).

A. The new security environment and the Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS)

Many things have changed in the world since the European Security Strategy of 2003 (European Security Strategy- A Secure Europe in a better World) and the Implementation

Report of 2008 (Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy- Providing Security in a Changing World). At the international level, the main actors are not exclusively states anymore, but also non-state actors that contribute to the volatility and unpredictability in terms of challenges and risks. Together with more traditional risks, originating in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction or fragile states, for example, we face a series of challenges of an unprecedented nature. These challenges have "*both an internal and external dimension, such as terrorism, hybrid threats, cyber and energy security, organized crime and external border management" (*EUGS, 2016*)*. These emerging risks demand addressing threats in a more comprehensive and integrated way.

The EUGS (Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy), presented by Federica Mogherini, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, in June 2016, is in a way the first true EU strategy as it defines the vital interests, the priorities and the tasks of the Union. The vital interests (EUGS, p.13-15) are peace and security of the Union, the prosperity of its people, the resilience of its democracy and a rules-based international order. The objective, which is underlying the whole text, is the protection of the European way of life, maintaining security in Eastern and Southern neighbourhood, keeping open the commercial sea lanes and assisting and complementing the EU's peacekeeping efforts. Therefore, in the new security environment, the EU will pursue five priorities (EUGS, 2016, p.18-44) : the security of the Union, state and societal resilience to the East and the South, an integrated approach to conflicts and crises, a cooperative regional order and a global governance for the 21st century. But the most important task should be to enhance state and societal resilience in its neighbourhood (Smith, 2016) and in this way prove its credibility as a strategic actor.

In this framework, **strategic autonomy** is a key goal at the level of foreign and security policy. The term implies that the Union will have the capacity to intervene when its vital interests are at stake (Biscop, 2019). The word 'autonomy' in the form of autonomous action, appears for the first time in the St Malo declaration in 1998 (Joint Declaration on European Defence, Joint Declaration issued at the British–French Summit, 1998) when the CDSP was officially launched. At that time, it was a way for the UK to strengthen the North Atlantic Alliance and keep the Americans on board, while for the French it was an effort to

move towards a more autonomous Union at the level of Security and Defence. Since then, the idea of autonomous decision-making and of an autonomous strategy gained ground as the CSDP developed over the years. This signifies as Howorth notes (2017b) *"the ambition of Europe to become self-reliant in defence*" or it could be defined, in more neutral terms, as operational autonomy. Unfortunately, after 20 years we are still far from achieving this. Libya and Ukraine proved that the EU is still dependent on NATO infrastructure more than it would like to acknowledge. They also proved the need to forge a common strategic culture and a common understanding, which are necessary for achieving strategic autonomy.

The Implementation Plan on Security and Defence (IPSD) presented in November 2016, stresses that internal and external security form a continuum and adds that external operations can contribute to the internal security of the EU (par.5C). What is not clear, in both the EUGS and the IPSD, however, is how CSDP could eventually operate inside the EU territory if it needs to protect the Union, as the 'securitization' of aspects of internal security could be a risk for democracy.

The major problem with the EUGS, however, is that it does not take into account the Brexit vote and the potential consequences of Britain leaving the EU at the level of foreign policy and defence. And this is something that has to be strategically addressed.

The announcement of the EUGS was followed by many important steps at the EU level that together constitute the pillars of an eventual Defence Union, a goal presented by the President of the Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, in his State of the Union speech (Juncker, 2017) before the European Parliament in September 2017, with the year 2025 as its horizon. Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) and the European Defence Fund (EDF) are the necessary steps for the strategic autonomy of the EU, a prerequisite of the ultimate goal which is the Defence Union.

PESCO, a dormant provision of the Lisbon Treaty, refers to the possibility for those countries that fulfill higher military criteria and wish to go further, to be able to do so and intensify their cooperation. The EDF is a new instrument designed to finance industrial research, the creation of prototypes and the acquisition of military material, thus boosting technological research in the Union. It will comprise a research fund of 500 billion euros per year and a capability fund of up to 5 billion per year in the medium term. Finally, CARD will compare the

national defence budgets of the Member States and propose new directions of defence spending. All three were announced during 2017, following the EUGS, but also as a consequence of the Brexit referendum that eliminated the British veto to all EU defence initiatives. To that, we should also add the new "Military Planning and Conduct capability" (2017), which will act as a headquarters for non-executive military missions (meaning actions in support of a host nation)[1].

As always, political will is still the crucial element: the new nature of threats, the blurred lines between internal and external security, and military and non-military responses make the description of the Petersberg Tasks[2] too tight a jacket for the new needs of the EU at the operational level. Things have already started to move: the EUNAVFOR Sophia, for example, is the first peace enforcement operation, with a mandate going beyond the classical Petersberg Tasks.

Difficult relations with Russia and the instability in the South form only some of the new challenges that Europe has to face. Hybrid threats, terrorism, climate change form a complex nexus of risks. These threats are located not only in the EU's neighbourhood but have also taken effect inside the Union: the cyber-attacks of the summer 2016 at the National Health System of the UK, the Skripal case, border security with the spillover effects of the migration crisis have opened up the space for new types of operations (Drient, Zandee, 2016) and new possibilities for enhanced cooperation. In this framework, the need for the CSDP to operate inside the EU's territory has just started to appear.

B. CSDP/NATO. The four dilemmas for Europe

One of the objectives of the EUGS is to deepen the strategic partnership between the EU and NATO and enhance cooperation between the two sides (Koenig, 2018b). The EUGS noted that "*a more credible European defence is essential for our internal and external security. This includes fighting terrorism, hybrid threats, economic volatility, climate change and energy security*". However, *"NATO remains the primary framework for most member states*

[1] Executive missions are the ones where EU forces operate independently of any host state and for whom the EU continues to rely on national military headquarters (UK, Greece, Italy and Germany) on an *ad hoc* basis.
[2] These tasks were set out in the Petersberg Declarations adopted at the Ministerial Council of the Western European Union (WEU) in June 1992. They cover: humanitarian and rescue tasks, conflict prevention and peace-keeping tasks, tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peace-making, joint disarmament operations, military advice and assistance tasks and, finally, post-conflict stabilisation tasks.]

when it comes to collective defence" but "*this primacy shall not prejudice the security and defence policy of those members which are not in NATO*". So the way ahead is: "*synergy, complementarity and full respect of the decision making autonomy of the two organizations"* (EUGS, 2016).

NATO currently seems to find itself in a deep existential crisis, mirroring the crisis in many allied countries and especially in the US. Today, it is clear that the US security umbrella through NATO cannot be taken for granted, although a strong transatlantic bond is still necessary. All through the Cold War, NATO was central in the defence of Europe against the Soviet Union. This centrality ended at the beginning of the 1990s, even if NATO remains the agent of collective defence for many EU countries, since, according to the Lisbon Treaty, CSDP operates exclusively outside the EU territory.

Being a community of values as well as of interests, NATO faces real challenges on its 70th anniversary: Shall it change direction or will it continue on a business-as-usual basis, focusing on operational gains? (Keil, Arts, 2018)

The transatlantic bond is currently under great pressure because of the unpredictability of the Trump administration. Trump's willingness to revise or undo certain fundamentals of the US foreign policy, be it the funding of NATO, the Iran deal or the Paris climate Agreement damages the partnership seriously. The EU is not the center of gravity for US interests anymore, as China appears as the new contender. For the first time we see the European Allies trying to keep alive multilateral agreements and pursue their goals even after the American withdrawal. At the end of the day, US strategy and the subsequent US foreign policy will, ironically, determine the level of EU strategic autonomy.

In addition, it seems that the new threats from the East and the South have made the Allies understand that they should contribute more. Favorable economic trends led to increasing defence budgets[3] but also to new initiatives that could bolster European defence. At the level of cooperation between the EU and NATO, the progress was visible since 2016, following the Brexit referendum. Two sets of implementation actions in seven priority areas were agreed: In December 2016 (Common Set of proposals for the Implementation of the joint Declaration , 2016) a first set of 42 actions were announced, followed by a second set

[3] This general trend was more pronounced in the East, also because of the Ukraine crisis.

of 32 in December 2017 (Common set of new proposals on the implementation of the Joint Declaration, 2017). However, most proposals are about enhanced communication between the two organizations at the staff level.

On 10th July 2018 the leaders of the two organizations renewed their commitment to EU-NATO cooperation in another joint Declaration (Joint Declaration of EU-NATO cooperation, 2018). There, they stress the need to deepen cooperation in certain areas (namely cyber security and hybrid threats) and welcome the recent EU efforts in security and defence, which would also strengthen NATO. But no other issue made so many headlines as the question of defence spending, with President Trump reportedly urging Allies to commit to NATO not just 2% but 4% of their Gross Domestic Product.

The problem stems from the fact that the two organizations are different in nature and purpose. But the crucial issue is the omnipotent presence of the US in NATO that determines the priorities and goals of the Alliance.

The CSDP and NATO are not the only frameworks that deal with questions of security and defence in Europe. Bilateral or trilateral agreements[4] come to supplement or enhance cooperation, bringing together EU members or member states and –eventually– third parties. In fact, CSDP and NATO or bilateral agreements should be seen as part of the toolbox the EU and every individual EU Member state has in order to face the new challenges. The essential is to deepen cooperation and harmonize political and strategic objectives (Helwig, 2018).

However, in this complex and volatile environment, the EU is facing four crucial dilemmas that hamper a more harmonious and functional relationship between CSDP and NATO:

1. The 'three Ds' dilemma: decoupling, duplication, discrimination

These 'three Ds', which often serve as the main source of friction between the Europeans and the Americans[5], are an old theme of the EU-NATO dialogue that first appeared under

[4] As, for example, the Lancaster House Treaties between France and the UK on military cooperation signed in 2010 or the United States, Finland and Sweden Trilateral Statement of Intent (SOI) to improve and solidify the defence cooperation between the three countries, signed on the 8th of May 2018

[5] In fact, the main concern of the Americans was for the EU not to take distances from NATO at the security and military level.

Madeleine Albright as the US Secretary of State after the Saint Malo Declaration in 1998[6]. Twenty years later, Jens Stoltenberg, the Secretary General of NATO, warned at the Munich Security Conference in 2018, that the EU should avoid three risks: "*the risk of weakening the transatlantic bond, the risk of duplicating what NATO is already doing and the risk of discriminating against non-EU members of the NATO Alliance".*[7]

The relationship between the EU and NATO[8] has been a difficult one from the start. A specific ambivalence has always been present: the Americans want the EU to take care of its own 'backyard', but when the Europeans try to do so, they are met with American suspicion. As Nicole Koenig notes, Americans love EU defence until it actually happens (Koenig 2018a).

There was momentum from 1996 to 2003 with the Berlin Plus Agreement[9] that shaped for the first time the cooperation between the EU and NATO. However, with the accession of Cyprus to the EU in 2004, the Agreement came to a stalemate: Turkey, a NATO member, refused to share strategic information with the EU and denied the participation of Cyprus in EU missions using NATO infrastructure, whereas Cyprus blocked all further common operations and Turkey's involvement in the European Defence Agency (EDA), hampering in that way substantial cooperation and synergies between the two organizations (Smith, Gebhard, 2017).

Still, despite the political blockade, the new threats have given impetus for more communication and new practices. The first opening came at the Warsaw summit in 2016, less than one month after the Brexit referendum. At the Joint declaration we read that "'*it is time to give new impetus and new substance to the NATO-EU strategic partnership'* (Joint Declaration of EU-NATO cooperation, July 2016). The message is to do more together with our limited resources in order to face the new and unprecedented threats and challenges.

[6] The first American response to Saint Malo, was given by Madeleine Albright at a NATO meeting in Brussels on the 8th December 1998: " *We enthusiastically support any such measures that enhance European capabilities….[but]The key to a successful initiative is to focus on practical military capabilities. Any initiative must avoid pre-empting Alliance decision making by* de-linking *ESDI from NATO, avoid* duplicating *existing efforts and avoid* discriminating *against non-EU members*", (Albright, 1998)

[7] He added that, after Brexit, non-EU allies would account for 80% of NATO defence spending.]

[8] We are talking about the relationship between EU and NATO as an organization to organization. CSDP is the EU policy on Security and Defence, still sometimes we read about CSDP-NATO relations.

[9] Berlin Plus Agreement, is a comprehensive package of arrangements finalised by 2003 between the EU and NATO that allows the EU to use NATO assets and capabilities for EU led crisis management operations. (Berlin Plus Agreement, 2003)

As things stand, the Americans still fear discrimination from the EU side. For example, PESCO commits participating states to using the EDA if they want to develop new weapons jointly. But the agency prioritizes weapons needed for EU missions, and not for NATO. In addition, in some cases, even the choice of weapons could be taken by NATO as discriminating against American companies, which are not based on EU soil. But even if NATO feels in certain instances overshadowed by some EU operations, i.e. Operation Sophia in the Mediterranean, and relations between the two organizations are sometimes strained, the fact is that individual states prefer to act alone or in *ad hoc* coalitions in order to maintain maximum control, making the whole competition meaningless.

The question of duplication also seems to nurture fears within the American establishment, focusing on the fact that PESCO would pull capabilities away from the Alliance. However, the aim of PESCO was set up precisely to strengthen the European pillar of the Alliance and respond to demands of burden sharing. In addition, in order for the EU to guarantee its strategic autonomy, it needs an operational Headquarters (OHQ), necessary for the CSDP missions and operations. By NAT

The EDF was even more criticized by the US: only companies located in EU Member States and associated countries should benefit from it financially, according to the regulation (European Commission, 2018, *Establishing the European Defence Fund*). The aim of the EDF is to tackle the problem of fragmentation within the EU that, in itself, leads to unnecessary duplication and affects the deployability of armed forces.[10]

On the other hand, the fear of decoupling is very real especially among the Atlantist countries such as Poland, which fear that the weakening of the transatlantic link would eventually lead to an American withdrawal from NATO structures.

The 'Three Ds' reappeared in the first half of 2018 again but they will become even more paramount should Brexit materialize and the UK will have to negotiate a new role in the European Security arrangements. But they also concern Turkey that sees the door to the EU closed and searches for an enhanced role in European defence.

[10] There are currently 178 different weapon systems in the EU, compared to 30 in the US. There are 17 types of main battle tanks compared to one in the US. In general up to 30% of annual defence expenditure can be saved through pooling of procurement (Munich Security Report 2017).

2. The identity/autonomy dilemma

If the key word in the EUGS is 'resilience', which is mentioned about 40 times in the document, the idea of strategic autonomy underpins the whole text. This is not something new. Since Saint Malo in 1998, the idea of autonomy, i.e. the creation of "*a European agency that could develop genuine military capacity and generate a strategic approach to regional security challenges*" (Howorth, 2017) has been central in the debate about European Security and Defence. Still, NATO had to be often called upon, either because necessary capabilities were lacking or because there was no clear political will to proceed with the actions necessary. Both these two conditions were present in the case of Libya in 2011, itself considered as a model situation for a CSDP intervention. As we now know, it would have been a total disaster without NATO's support.[11]

Overall then, as Howorth notes: *"The EU aspires to strategic autonomy, the US concur with that ambition, yet in practice the EU finds itself once again dependent on NATO for its collective defence and even its collective security*" (Howorth, 2017). In fact, the question of autonomy is closely linked to vital aspects of the EU's identity, that is to say, how the EU perceives itself: simply as a big market or an international actor and, a great power among others? In this respect, the questions of autonomy and identity are two sides of the same coin.

One could argue that the starting point of the debate on autonomy was the issue of the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI), at first conceived within NATO at the 1996 ministerial meeting in Berlin (NATO ministerial Communique , 1996). The essential element was the preparation of Western European Union (WEU) operations with the involvement of WEU and NATO, based on the identification within the Alliance of "*separate but not separable*" capabilities. However, the creation of European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) in 1999, at the Cologne European Summit, with the objective of providing the EU with autonomous defence structures - later renamed CSDP with the Lisbon Treaty-, marginalized the whole idea of ESDI.

[11] The two countries lacked necessary capabilities for such an operation, for example, air-to-air refueling. Without it, such an ambitious air operation, could not have succeeded. In fact, it proved the lack of necessary strategic enablers for such operations.

Roughly at the same time the new Treaty was being ratified, , the US began to operationalize what the Obama administration called the "Asian Pivot". On the 11th of October 2011 an article appeared in "Foreign Policy" by Hillary Clinton, then US Secretary of State, under the title "America's Pacific Century" (Clinton, 2011). The Obama administration had underlined that the US would adopt a "lead from behind" mentality in the "European neighborhood", as it rebalanced its strategic objectives to the Pacific. The message from the US was that the Europeans had to shoulder the main responsibility for their neighbourhood. In fact, the EU should gradually be able to do what NATO does, minus collective defence[12]. This was also based in the Lisbon Treaty that refers to the use of European capabilities exclusively outside the European territory (Lisbon Treaty, article 42.1 TEU).

If we accept that strategic autonomy can lead to a new definition of EU's identity then one should not forget that the European Defence technological Industrial Base (EDTIB) is also an area where EU autonomy is important, as increased European defence market autonomy and eventual accusations of protectionism have the potential to create friction at the level of transatlantic relations for the foreseeable future.

To sum up, there can be no EU strategic autonomy without a clear definition of the EU identity. The international role that the Union wants to have, determines the ambition, the framework and the means to achieve it. If we don't know "who we are", the limits of an eventual strategic autonomy would be impossible to trace.

3. The compatibility/complementarity dilemma

Among the 74 recommendations for cooperation, announced between the EU and NATO in 2016 and 2017, the majority was about staff to staff communication (common analyses, concepts etc.), without creating new formal cooperation structures. This implies that these recommendations can realistically lead to deepened cooperation at the bureaucratic level but not at the much needed political and strategic or operational level (Helwig, 2018). This is *inter alia* due to political constraints created mainly by the Turkish-Cypriot conflict, as we have already mentioned.

[12] The treaty notes in 42. 2 TEU *"The common security and defence policy shall include the progressive framing of a common union defence policy. This will lead to a common defence, when the European Council, acting unanimously so decides"*. In this framework, common defence can be identified to collective defence. The meaning is that the EU has the right to decide in the future whether and when CSDP may also involve collective defence.

However, even this low level of cooperation should be considered as something inherently positive, as it focused on three very timely thematic areas: hybrid threats, countering terrorism and military mobility.

Concerning the first point, that of hybrid threats (20 out of 74 actions), a new European Center of Excellence for Countering Hybrid threats opened in Helsinki in the autumn of 2017, outside the NATO and EU structures, without the possibility to foster further cooperation between the two organizations. Hybrid threats constitute a vast area where the lines between military and civilian, internal and external security tend to blur and where even article 5 of NATO on collective defence is relevant. On the second point, countering terrorism, the objective would be to guarantee the exchange of sensitive information but still there are no clear signs on that matter. Finally, military mobility concerns both an action plan announced by the European Commission (Action Plan on Military Mobility, 2018) and a PESCO project (PESCO updated list of PESCO projects, 2018). In 2017, US NATO General Ben Hodges called for a "*military Schengen zone*" to be able to move heavy military equipment across Europe in case of crisis (Politico, September 2017). All the above are followed closely by NATO but without having yet created any real synergies between the two organizations.

In any case, the main objective of EU-NATO cooperation should be complementarity without duplication of efforts. This is not an easy task, as the real question is how to combine the call for strategic autonomy on the part of the EU with the need for enhanced cooperation with NATO, which is the most crucial issue, at least at the symbolic level. These two seem to be non-compatible quests, as the EU's CSDP and NATO are competing schemes for European defence (Koops, 2017). In today's complex multipolar world, EU and US interests and values seem to diverge more and more as Europeans and Americans tend to see their role in the world and their security priorities under a totally different angle. For the US, Asia and China is priority number one, hence they expect Europeans to ensure stability of Europe's periphery (Biscop, 2018). Maybe the solution could be to start a dialogue on a new transatlantic arrangement, as Barry Posen proposed (Posen, 2014) that takes into consideration the priorities and interests of each side, without however losing the objective for enhanced cooperation.

The EU-NATO relationship has been and still is a case of both continuity and change (Graeger, 2019). Their asymmetrical relationship (in cases like Kosovo or Afghanistan) in favor of NATO's preeminence, can be a problem at a time when the Union has to prove to its citizens the necessity of a strong CSDP in a challenging environment: rising nationalism in some Member States, risks in the South and the East neighbourhood, ambivalence concerning the American administration under Trump and, of course, Brexit. The relation is an instable one and there is suspicion from both sides. This, especially at a time when President's Trump "America First" policy views alliances as transactional rather than enduring. On the one hand, the Europeans do not share a common understanding concerning NATO, a rift that is clear between the East and the West of the EU, with the East being a more fervent supporter of enhanced cooperation, because of the Russian threat perception. On the other, relations with Russia and instability in the South are the two main challenges that put under scrutiny the capacity of both the EU and NATO to adapt to the new realities.

It is more that obvious that improving NATO-EU cooperation should not be seen as a means to slow down CSDP, but as a process necessary for both organizations. As, for the moment, the EU has no option but to turn to NATO infrastructure, it is in the US interest for the EU to develop military capabilities in order for a real burden sharing to occur.

There are ideas about a division of labour where EU should concentrate on "soft security" and NATO on "hard security". This is highly problematic as it will prevent the EU from becoming a security provider and an international actor. On the other hand, there are proposals about developing inside NATO a series of "soft power" operations.

Within this framework, it remains to be seen how PESCO will interact with NATO, given the fact that the aim is to develop military capabilities that both EU and NATO could use. If EDU is a real objective, one should wonder whether CSDP will have to gradually take over functions currently assumed by NATO, or even better, merge its activities with those of NATO (Howorth, 2017c).

4. The legitimacy dilemma

Enhanced cooperation between the EU-NATO requires strong internal and external legitimacy of both institutions. The EU has to explain to its citizens why the quest for strategic autonomy can and should go hand in hand with stronger ties to NATO, while a new narrative is needed that explains why together we can do more. At the same time, our competitors, such as Russia and in certain respects China, have to realize that the NATO-EU relationship is still strong and effective.

It is a fact that most of Trump's interventions concerning the Alliance undermine its legitimacy and are against any notion of EU strategic autonomy. For the current US administration, the European partners in NATO have to pay more for defence without however having the possibility to act autonomously at the decision making, operational or industrial level. This is not possible any more. But the EU should think beyond Trump. Will the relationship ever return to the pre-Trump situation? Even without Trump's bluntness, it will most probably not.

A new *modus vivendi* must be found between the EU and NATO, in order to face the new challenges and gain the citizens' support. The European pillar of NATO must be gradually strengthened while at the same time the need for burden sharing must be explained to the European citizens (Koenig, 2018). Both organizations should insist on what they can do best together: tackle hybrid threats, cybercrime and terrorism, or manage the migration flows, just to name some of the policy areas where synergies are necessary. What we need are substantive joint actions that can offer the necessary visibility and legitimacy. If the relationship remains, as it is now, an understanding between bureaucracies, it has no future since the advantages of cooperation will not be visible to the citizens. It will lose its legitimacy and provoke the disenchantment of even the most Atlanticists among Europeans. The only way forward is to synchronize NATO with the EU much better, along the lines of what was suggested above.

The debate on a European caucus in NATO is not new, but has been deemed unnecessary until now. However, today, the EU has to deal with the need of an institutionalized European pillar in NATO with common positions and a common voice that will eventually lead to a Europeanisation of NATO.

To put it in other words, the EU will be, sooner or later, obliged to "take over" NATO (as it will be further explained in section D). The EU cannot continue to count on US assistance forever, since new challenges arise for the US in Asia. This next period will likely be characterized by growing US-China antagonism, against which Europe will gradually risk to become less important for American interests. The only solution for the EU is to deal with its limited force projection capabilities and develop all the instruments necessary to make itself capable of handling all possible scenarios in the neighbourhood, especially the southern one. The Union needs to be ambitious for its citizens thus strengthening its own legitimacy in this policy domain; a condition which will in turn amplify the legitimacy of NATO in this new era.

C. CSDP and BREXIT

Brexit opens up an array of political and institutional obstacles for future cooperation between the EU and the UK. And this comes at a moment when new risks threaten not just EU security but European Security as a whole, the notion comprising non EU members such as Norway, Ukraine, Moldova, the western Balkans, Turkey and -eventually- Britain[13]. At the same time, some fear that Britain will use its NATO membership against the EU (Shake, in *Safer Together*, 2018, p.27)[14]. But if the EU excludes the UK from the Union's defence infrastructure, it would not only "*lose British expertise and assets, but it would potentially undermine the EU's own efforts*" (Bersch, 2018).

When (and if) Brexit takes effect, the UK will break from a number of strategic choices it had made that never distanced itself from the Union. Let us not forget that since the beginning of the decline of the British Empire after World War II, the principal concern of British foreign policy was to establish its European credentials. The UK's foreign policy was structured around the idea that the country could be safer with(in) a united Europe than with a balance of power between individual European states.

As indicated above, Brexit will also have severe consequences for the EU. The UK is the second nuclear power in Europe and the only EU Member State –together with France- with a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council. It is a member of the G7 and the G20 and has a unique expeditionary force capacity: it can play a full spectrum security and

[13] In fact Russia should also be considered as a part of the European Security Architecture

[14] "*It probably means that Britain will get more strident about doing things in NATO. That will make it harder for the US because Britain will try to deliver us on a harder policy towards the EU vis a vis NATO",*

defence role and its capacity to project power globally is equaled only by France (Giegerich, Molling, 2018). The UK provided the operational HQ for the Atalanta operation off the Horn of Africa and the country's contribution in the areas of intelligence and counter terrorism, conflict prevention, defence spending and, its military capabilities are considerable. The UK amounts to about a quarter of the defence expenditure of the EU28 and 10% of the total troop numbers, and it is among the two largest R&D spenders (Black et al, 2017, Biscop, 2019, p.131).

For years, the British did not show a great interest in CSDP missions: in terms of personnel serving in EU civilian and military operations, the average share of British troops was 4,33% between 2007 to 2015 (House of Lords 2016, p. 78-84)[15] since the CSDP was never central for the UK in operational terms. In addition, for many years the UK blocked decisions on CSDP, mainly those related to new structures, fearing that they will duplicate NATO. But the interest of close relations with CSDP after Brexit is clearly stated (HM Government, 2017) even in official statements, with the ideas about cooperation in PESCO and the EDA being the most important ones. Post-Brexit, the British are expected to eventually continue to participate in certain missions and operations of the EU, without however any initiating or decision-making authority.

Britain is a very important country, but it is far from its former great power status anymore, despite its aforementioned capacities and institutional positions. Although it is a matter of substantial debate, by a number of measures, one could include only the US, Russia, China and the EU as a whole in the great powers list of today. This means that only inside the EU could Britain hold the role of a great power: even if it is traditionally seen as the US closest ally, the country is much more important to the US as a member of the EU than as an individual country (Biscop, 2018b). Now, should Brexit go forward, the US stand to lose their closest ally in the EU, while the UK becomes a less valuable diplomatic asset, losing at the same time its global role.

Among all EU members, France has the closest relationship with the UK in the field of defence. This dates back to the Balkan Wars in the 1990s when French and British troops worked side by side. Despite their different stance on the issue of the Iraq war, the

[15] Whereas it should have been 14,8%, according to its population

cooperation between the UK and France continued, especially after French President Sarkozy decided to reintroduce France in NATO's integrated military command and took an institutionalized form at the bilateral level with the Lancaster House Treaties of 2010 (Treaty between the UK and France for Defence and Security Cooperation, 2010). These Treaties concerned a wide range of defence and security topics, with a provision for the creation of a Franco-British Combined Joint Expeditionary Force, allowing a French and British brigade to be deployed together. Now it is possible that the UK will try to forge enhanced bilateral deals with other individual member states as well.

But what relation does Britain want with the EU at the security and defence level, after Brexit?

In September 2017, in the official British paper concerning the Security and Defence aspects of Brexit, we read that the objective is a *"new, deep and special partnership with the EU"* while the UK is *"unconditionally committed to European Security*" (HM Government, 2017). In addition, in her Lancaster House speech in January 2017, Theresa May, the UK Prime Minster, launched the slogan of '*Global Britain*" explaining that the British people have decided "*to leave the European Union and embrace the world*".(May, Lancaster House Speech, 2017)[16] On the 9th of May 2018, London published a new document called "*Framework for the UK-EU Security partnership*" (HM Government, 2018). This was more down to earth, realizing that its participation in EU security and defence decision-making is neither obvious nor easy. Still the hope reflected there is to influence this decision making process, as they envisage a partnership that goes far beyond the Framework Participation Agreements[17] (FPAs) that already exist and that would permit them to take command of CSDP missions (e.g. Atalanta).

However, London remains vague in the concrete institutional arrangements it proposes. Up to now, they seem to prioritize close consultations with the option to agree joint positions

[16] In fact, two are the elements of the British strategy: privileged relationship with the EU and renewed bilateral relationships with its Member States.

[17] These agreements are signed between the EU and individual partners for specific missions and operations. For example, Norway or Canada, who often provide civilian personnel to CSDP missions, or Ukraine whose frigate patrolled within EUNAVFOR Atalanta, all have signed a Framework Participation Agreement with the EU that provides the legal and political basis for such cooperation (Tardy, 2014)

on foreign policy issues.[18] In any case, offering the UK the ability to influence CSDP decision-making will make other third countries ask for the same. (Bond, 2018). The measure of flexibility shown by the EU in regard to the UK will stress relations especially with Turkey, which will demand the same arrangements. Indeed, "*the British quest for a deep and special security partnership post Brexit going beyond any existing cooperation models has made non EU Allies such as Turkey and Norway nervous*" (Koenig, 2018). Sooner or later the EU and the UK will have to redefine their relations, in a period where even the transatlantic link is under great strain. Non-EU countries use the FPAs to contribute to CSDP operations, but without a say in the organization, preparation or command process. But with the UK and the organic relationship both sides have had so far, this relationship will most likely have to amount to something more, short of a decision-taking role. A different type of FPA can also be under consideration.

There are various ideas of how to develop a future enhanced relationship with the UK at the level of Security and Defence (Martill, Sus, 2018). For example, there is an idea for the UK to maintain its seat in the Foreign Affairs Council without voting rights (Biscop, 2019a, p. 132). Of course, this should come together with the obligation to follow all CFSP decisions. It could also conclude an agreement with the EDA on a project basis, as Norway. In a March 2018 report by ECFR (Dassu, Ischinger, Vimont et al., 2018) it is argued that the unique status of the UK as a former EU Member State should be the justification for this special partnership, in order to avoid setting any precedent for other third countries. This cooperation should take place in an institutionalized way in order to avoid crucial discussions taking place outside the EU. The challenge here is of course how to involve third countries without discriminating against any one of them, as, even if it is underlined that this cannot be a precedent for third parties, the arrangement will become a model for any future relationship between NATO countries and the EU. In fact, we will most likely witness a change in the European defence landscape whereby more non-EU countries would cooperate with the EU outside the EU's narrow framework. Turkey will definitely press for such an agreement.

Generally speaking, the British want to preserve or even increase the existing level of cooperation with the EU, or in other words "*to keep everything as it is*" (Santopinto,

[18] In terms of the transitional period (21 months since 29 march 2019), this may be shorter in the area of Security and Defence as during that time the UK will still continue to pay its contribution to the budget without however participating in the decision making process.

Izquierdo, 2018). In light of this, London wants to retain its role in the development of the Galileo and Copernicus programs and have a continuous right to bid for contracts managed by the European Space Agency (Besch 2018).[19] What is more, the UK wants to remain involved in the CSDP and its decision- making bodies, acquiring a status that makes them an interlocutor to the whole EU. Which means that, in their view, London equals the weight of all 27 capitals, negotiating with the EU on a one to one basis, thus making the British position more advantageous after Brexit. (Santopinto op., cit) This is what May meant when she said "*working with the EU rather than being part of the EU" (*May, Florence speech, 2017). Such a format cannot be acceptable by the EU because it would mean that a non-member could have more advantages than members. In fact, you cannot leave a club and retain all the benefits of membership.

A potential Brexit will ultimately make it even more necessary for the UK to find a combination of European partnership and transatlantic engagement (Barrie, Barry, Boyd et al, 2018). The consequences of this can be already felt: under the new framework program for research (2021-2027) the European Commission will provide for the first time substantial funding for defence research (Beun, von Schaik, Schout, 2019). The EDA will lose the British financial contribution but at the same time there will be no one to block a budget increase. The British defence industry has a major interest in cooperating with its EU partners and in continuing to benefit from joint research and technology and access to EU financing, particularly under the new EDF. However, numerous statements make it clear that the UK will not be entitled to European Commission funding (Howorth 2017d). The reason is that the regulation on the EDF (European Commission, 2018) specifies that only companies established on EU territory and controlled by Member- States or EU citizens are eligible to its funding, as the industrial dimension of strategic autonomy can be really crucial.

Another form of cooperation, outside the EU format is the European Intervention Initiative (E2I), proposed by the French President Macron at his famous Sorbonne speech of September 2017. It is about forming a group of able and willing states for joint military interventions in the neighbourhood, outside the EU or NATO formats or any other

[19] From the EU side, the Commission wants the UK to give up command of operation Atalanta and leave its leading nation status for the EU Battlegroups in the second half of 2019. In addition it has already initiated the move of a Galileo back-up centre from Southampton to Spain, and questions the UK's participation in Galileo's PRS programme.

institutional framework.[20] The decision to proceed was taken by 9 members[21] in 2018 and a letter of intent was signed at the margins of the Foreign Affairs Council of the 25th June 2018. On the 7th of November 2018, Finland also joined. It can be viewed also as a way to integrate the UK in an initiative on European Defence, the very same period that it is leaving the EU. But more broadly, it is as if there is a general lack of trust in the EU's defence potential (which often is diluted by a German-inspired inclusiveness versus the French preference for effectiveness), or even in the EU's will to act that makes France invest both inside the EU and outside its structures, both in NATO and beyond.

The UK is of great importance for the broader European Security and Defence, as explained above. The British armed forces are important as they are particularly strong concerning the high-end war fighting spectrum but also in providing enablers to international operations and at the level of defence capacity building (Giegerich, Molling, 2018). Maybe when out of the EU, Britain will find it easier to cooperate with allies. The EU red lines were set from the start by the EU's chief Brexit negotiator, Michel Barnier who, in a speech in Berlin in November 2017 said that the UK "*will no longer be involved in decision making, nor in planning our defence and security instruments. It may no longer command an EU- led operation or lead EU battlegroups"* (Barnier, 2017). He added however that an ambitious partnership is in the interest of the Union, while warning that it cannot discriminate against other third countries. Maybe the enhanced opportunities' partnership that NATO developed for Finland and Sweden and four others offer a tried and flexible model (Friends of Europe, 2018). What is needed is a deep and strategic security cooperation agreement, creating a new type of partnership and involving new policy instruments and new legal frameworks for European cooperation (Chalmers 2018).

Having said that, in the foreseeable future it is more likely that, because of Brexit or the lack of necessary strategic enablers and the need for more flexible cooperation structures, major operations, together with defence cooperation, will take place outside the EU structures. When Britain leaves, the EU will be faced with a multiplication of bilateral or trilateral agreements and initiatives that will tend to circumvent European institutions. The UK will

[20] It is interesting that France will achieve its objective for an ambitious alliance at the defence level in Europe outside the framework of EU and CSDP

[21] France, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the UK. The objective is a shared strategic culture that would enhance the ability of the member states to operate together.

tend to increase defence spending, make a bigger commitment to NATO and cultivate bilateral defence relations with European allies. But what will be necessary for European Security is the project of a truly European industrial base between the UK and the EU27. In this framework, it will be in the mutual interest of both the EU and the UK to ensure that the EDF involves UK industries in joint ventures with EU-based companies and to promote joint funding of European initiatives between the EDF and the UK.

D. TOWARDS A EUROPEAN DEFENCE UNION

As the Munich Security Report of 2019 notes, it is not clear where Europe is heading to: strategic autonomy or non-strategic dependency (Munich Security Report 2019). There are many unanswered questions: how will the "strategic autonomy" of the EU coexist with enhanced cooperation with NATO? Are the two visions of "strategic autonomy" and "Global Britain" compatible?

Let us keep in mind that strategic autonomy means acting without US assets, not without NATO assets, for the NATO command structure is staffed in large part by European personnel. So, even in NATO, it should be the collective EU view that shapes the actions of the allies (Biscop 2016b), as Europeans will *de facto* act in the context of the EUGS. The aim is not to abandon NATO but to be sure that Europe is not entirely dependent on US politics. At the end of the day, the EU will "*have to reinforce all of their capabilities, for collective territorial defence as well for expeditionary operations*" (Biscop, 2018a). Not because we need it today, but because we may well need it tomorrow.

In his State of the Union Speech at the European Parliament in 2017, Jean-Claude Juncker mentioned that the final objective is a European Defence Union until 2025. Already we have the basic elements of this Union: PESCO, CARD and EDF constitute the pillars of this Union which will not necessarily lead to a European Army as we often hear, but to something similar to the Monetary Union. The key issue, however, is that this Union will try to establish itself at the same time when the "*natural locus for members states defence cooperation remains within NATO"* (Blockmans, 2018).

For the EDU to become a reality we need a "*highly coordinated, multinational, jointly and tightly integrated defence capacity enabling the EU to engage in high intensity military and civilian operations with a minimal assistance from the US*" (Howorth 2017c). There are many

ideas on how to institutionalize further the EDU: one idea was the one presented by Angela Merkel at the European Parliament in November 2018 about the creation of a European Security Council, in order to make EU better prepared to take decisions about international politics (Kaim, Kempin, 2019). This idea has been under discussion for some time. The main obstacle is that, as it is not provided for in the Lisbon treaty, is must have an informal role. In any case, it is a first step towards debating the idea of a European Commissioner on Defence or even a Defence Minister of the Union, closely working with the Political and Security Committee. This would limit the specter of the High Representative's mandate to foreign policy issues, without excluding close cooperation between the two.

However, we should keep in mind that no Defence Union is possible without collective territorial defence. All HQ on European soil should come under the strategic control and political direction of the EU. Only the Strategic HQ SHAPE should remain a joint NATO-EU HQ, alternating between an American and European Commander (Howorth, 2017).

In the new challenging security environment, it is time for the creation of a European pillar in NATO, through which the EU will be represented in the Alliance, speaking with one voice and agreeing on a common position. The 'Europeanisation' of NATO or, in another words, the EU gradually taking over NATO, as the US inevitably turns its focus onto Asia, is the necessary way ahead if we want to offer protection and security to European citizens. The crisis within NATO, interwoven with the challenges posed by a potential Brexit, prove how much is at stake during this volatile and unpredictable period. A continuous and stable commitment and engagement by all relevant actors is needed in order to find the new balance.

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