



Cuadernos de Estrategia 228-B

## **EU Common Security and Defense Policy. Quo Vadis?**

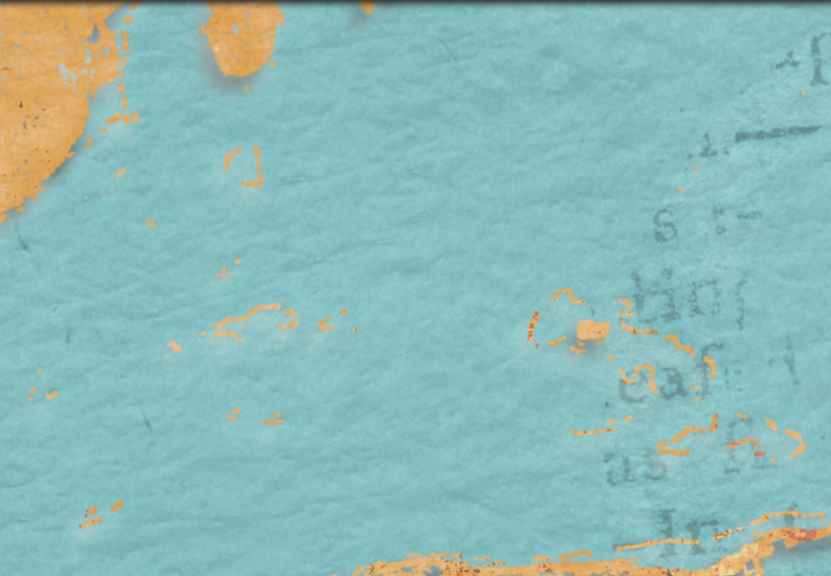
How European capitals  
understand CSDP

Instituto  
Español  
de Estudios  
Estratégicos

**ieee.es**  
Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos



MINISTERIO DE DEFENSA





Cuadernos de Estrategia 228-B  
**EU Common Security  
and Defense Policy. Quo Vadis?**

How European capitals  
understand CSDP

Instituto  
Español  
de Estudios  
Estratégicos

**ieeee.es**  
Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos



MINISTERIO DE DEFENSA



Catálogo de Publicaciones de Defensa  
[publicaciones.defensa.gob.es](http://publicaciones.defensa.gob.es)



Catálogo de Publicaciones de la Administración General del Estado  
[cpage.mpr.gob.es](http://cpage.mpr.gob.es)

[publicaciones.defensa.gob.es](http://publicaciones.defensa.gob.es)  
[cpage.mpr.gob.es](http://cpage.mpr.gob.es)

Edita:



Paseo de la Castellana 109, 28046 Madrid

© Autores y editor, 2024

NIPO 083-24-267-7 (edición impresa)  
ISBN 978-84-9091-962-0 (edición impresa)

NIPO 083-24-266-1 (edición en línea)

Cuadernos de Estrategia, ISSN 1697-6924 (edición impresa)  
Cuadernos de Estrategia, ISSN 2952-3443 (edición en línea)

Depósito legal M 20509-2024

Fecha de edición: octubre de 2024

Maqueta e imprime: Imprenta Ministerio de Defensa

Las opiniones emitidas en esta publicación son de exclusiva responsabilidad de los autores de la misma. Los derechos de explotación de esta obra están amparados por la Ley de Propiedad Intelectual. Ninguna de las partes de la misma puede ser reproducida, almacenada ni transmitida en ninguna forma ni por medio alguno, electrónico, mecánico o de grabación, incluido fotocopias, o por cualquier otra forma, sin permiso previo, expreso y por escrito de los titulares del copyright ©.

En esta edición se ha utilizado papel procedente de bosques gestionados de forma sostenible y fuentes controladas.

This notebook has been got done in collaboration  
with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.



# INDEX

	Page
<b>Foreword</b>	
<i>Natividad Fernández Sola</i>	
1. How important are national approaches to CSDP.....	13
2. Content of this special issue.....	16
Bibliography.....	28
<b>European Defense, with or without the CSDP</b>	
<i>Sven Biscop</i>	
1. Pretending to commit.....	31
2. A new Strategic Situation.....	34
3. Finally, a force package?.....	35
4. A new beginning for the CSDP?.....	37
<b>Chapter one</b>	
<b>Inside out: the French stance on European Defense.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<i>Marjorie Vanbaelinghem</i>	
1. A robust legacy of firepower and political-military views.....	44
1.1. In the beginning was grandeur, De Gaulle and the bomb... ..	44
1.2. The conundrum of being collectively autonomous: France, Europe and the EU.....	47
1.3. The NATO-EU defense equation.....	50
2. <b>Europe de la défense</b> or European Defense? The highs and lows of France's rationale and political communication.....	53
2.1. The French <i>discours de la méthode</i> on European Defense...	53

	Page
2.2. The pitfalls of concertation and communication .....	55
2.3. Beyond conceiving and hectoring, delivering .....	57
3. Getting real? France faced with the Ukraine war and the “European Zeitenwende” .....	59
3.1. What happens when Cassandra is suddenly heard? .....	59
3.2. Making compromises, building a European pillar for NATO? .....	61
3.3. Solving the nuclear equation .....	63
3.4. Taking the defence industrial plunge? <i>Non, merci</i> .....	65
4. Conclusion .....	67
Bibliography .....	68
 <b>Chapter two</b>	
<b>Finland’s EU Security Politics and NATO Membership</b> .....	71
<i>Tuomo Melasuo</i>	
1. Introduction .....	73
2. Short security and military history of Finland .....	75
3. Road to EU and prelude to NATO .....	81
4. NATO joining process .....	85
5. The content and ambitions of Finland in NATO and Europe’s Stra- tegrical Autonomy .....	88
6. Conclusion .....	94
Bibliography .....	97
 <b>Chapter three</b>	
<b>The View from Berlin</b> .....	103
<i>Karl-Heinz Kamp</i>	
1. European Common Defense: more appearance than reality .....	105
1.1. German motives for living with the contradictions .....	108
2. The consequences of the Ukraine War for security and defense .....	110
2.1. The Ukraine War and CSDP .....	112
3. The German <i>Zeitenwende</i> .....	115
3.1. The <i>Zeitenwende</i> and the Common European Security and Defense Policy .....	117
4. Europe’s security and the United States’ shift to the Asia Pacific .....	119
5. European Defense and a new Transatlantic Bargain .....	123
Bibliography .....	125
 <b>Chapter four</b>	
<b>Italy’s role in the European Defense project</b> .....	127
<i>Alberto Pagani</i>	
1. Introduction .....	129
1.1. Foreword .....	129

	Page
1.2. What kind of war will it be?.....	129
1.3. Systemic crisis .....	130
1.4. Supranational governance.....	132
2. Italian Defense today .....	132
2.1. Analysis and evolution of the Italian Defense and Security System .....	132
2.2. The employment of the Italian Armed Forces.....	133
2.3 The necessary coherence of Italian Defense with the NATO strategic concept.....	134
3. The European Union and the need for security .....	135
3.1. Why no Common European Defense?.....	135
3.2. The progressive enlargement of EU borders and European security .....	136
3.3. A necessary change of step .....	137
3.4. New problems and new threats call for a new policy.....	138
3.5. The second political question .....	140
4. European Defense.....	142
4.1. An integrated defense and security system .....	142
4.2. Enhanced and permanent cooperation for European defense.....	143
4.3. Permanent Structured Cooperation.....	143
4.4. The political decision to create a hard core.....	144
4.5. PESCO and enhancing operational and technological capabilities.....	146
5. Necessary steps in industrial cooperation.....	147
5.1. PESCO and land capability: the new tank.....	147
5.2. PESCO and air capability: the sixth-generation fighter.....	148
5.3. PESCO and naval remote air projection capability.....	149
5.4. PESCO and space launchers.....	151
6. Concluding summary on Italy's role .....	153
Bibliography .....	154

## Chapter five

### **If not now, then never. Poland towards the European Defense development**.....

*Agnieszka Bieńczyk-Missala*

1. Introductory remarks.....	159
2. Historical context - from the Eastern Bloc to NATO and EU Membership.....	160
3. The specificity of Poland's perspective on threats and security environment.....	162
4. Poland's contribution to the evolution of ESDP.....	164
5. Practical engagement .....	168
6. Poland's response to the war in Ukraine: implications for European Defense policy perspectives .....	171

	Page
6.1. Self-investments.....	173
6.2. NATO.....	174
6.3. European Union.....	176
7. Conclusions.....	179
Bibliography.....	180

## Chapter six

### **Understanding Security and Defense in Spain. A national view on CSDP and its relationship with NATO.....** 187

*Abel Romero Junquera*

1. Introduction.....	189
2. Security and Defense Policy in Spain. A European vision understood from a domestic perspective.....	191
2.1. A historical overview of defense and security in Spain.....	193
2.2. "Security and Defense Culture" in Spain.....	194
2.2.1. What do sociological studies say about Spanish defense culture?.....	195
2.3. Spain's "Strategic Culture" in recent decades.....	198
2.3.1. National Defense Directives (NDD); from 1992 to 2020.....	200
2.3.2. Defense White Paper (2000).....	203
2.3.3. National Security Strategies (NSS); from 2011 to 2021.....	204
2.3.4. Strategic Defense Review (SDR). A 2003 exercise that has not been continued.....	208
2.3.5. External Action Strategy (EAS) for the 2021-2024 period.....	209
3. Spain's contributions to CSDP.....	210
3.1. Missions and operations abroad.....	211
3.2. Institutional contributions. Spanish presidencies of EU Council.....	213
3.3. Defense industry and military capabilities. Spanish contribution towards a strong European cooperation.....	214
4. Conclusions and final summary.....	217
5. Possible recommendations for future action.....	219
Bibliography.....	221

## Chapter seven

### **A regional pillar in a world of conflict: Sweden, the Nordic-Baltic area and European Defense.....** 225

*Magnus Christiansson*

1. Europe once again.....	227
2. Europe and the global security order.....	230
3. The regional context: from the Baltic Sea to the high North.....	232
4. The Nordic-Baltic region and the global security order.....	236
5. The regional factor: a new northern flank.....	239
5.1. Closer Nordic cooperation.....	241

	Page
5.2. Strategic implications .....	242
5.2.1. Operational perspectives.....	243
5.2.2. Bilateral defense agreements with the U.S.....	244
5.2.3. Nuclear issues.....	245
5.3. Concluding remarks.....	246
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>246</b>
<b>CSDP – List of abbreviations</b> .....	<b>251</b>
<b>Biography of the participants</b> .....	<b>267</b>
<b>Composition of the working group</b> .....	<b>261</b>
<b>Cuadernos de Estrategia</b> .....	<b>263</b>



## Foreword

*Natividad Fernández Sola*

---

### 1. How important are national approaches to CSDP

EU policies are the result of the member states' needs and their perceptions of what the EU can do better than them individually. This is particularly true when applied to European intergovernmental policies developed within the EU framework, like the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

Therefore, an EU defence strategy (or lack thereof) can only be understood from the way in which states perceive the threats to their security and the means to confront them. The forging of common interests to which we can respond with common actions is only possible provided that the positions of the main actors, the Member States, are aligned. In other words, it is difficult to see progress in the CSDP based on decisions voluntarily adopted by the European institutions, if the divergences of political, economic, historical, or cultural interests among the Member States are not blurred.

Hence the need to analyse national positions on European security and defence policy.

Moreover, there are other reasons for an IEEE monographic strategic paper on national positions concerning Common Security

and Defence Policy (CSDP) or, in general, on national approaches to European Defence. One is that the defence of member states was the first reason leading the European integration process after the Second World War, even if the European Defence Community never saw the light of day. The second takes into account the impact that national defence policies have on CSDP as they determine and delimit the former. This is the other side of the national policies' Europeanization by virtue of the European ones.

In the past, some books delved into the question. In 2013, under the coordination of Santopinto and Price, *National Visions of EU Defence Policy – Common Denominators and Misunderstandings* (Santopinto & Price, 2013) was published. The contributions of different authors highlighted the positive factors that followed, but also the CSDP actors' misperceptions that acted as a burden on the development of this policy. Two years later, the Egmont Institute published its book *The Common Security and Defence Policy: National perspectives* (Fiott, 2015). The editors decided to classify member states into four categories: the lynchpins, the believers, the undecided and the outsiders. No further explanations required. From the reading of these contributions, it became clear that, even if there are initiatives, like EDA's Pooling and Sharing within the EU and NATO smart defence, pretending to act as platform in the interest of participating States, these ones prefer bilateral or "minilateral" fora for defence cooperation which they actually trust more. After all, cooperation on capability development, mutualization or joint procurement can be achieved without CSDP or NATO. The main conclusion was that military cooperation happens and the aim is that nation states have the suitable capabilities to defend their territory and to deploy in CSDP and NATO operations. What is at stake here is not awarding ownership of European defence to a particular organisation but making sure that European countries remain capable in the years ahead (Fiott book conclusions)<sup>1</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> On the specific topic of the EU Battlegroups concept and the position of Germany and Poland, see Chapell, 2009. The article evaluates, after the examples of Germany and Poland, the impact that differing member state-strategic cultures have on the EU Battlegroup Concept. Whilst the article highlights that the role that member states want to play within CSDP "as well as international expectations" can override constraining factors, the Battlegroups rely on a rotation system. As some member states are more willing to deploy the Battlegroups than others, the concept risks becoming a declaratory policy, thus undermining CSDP.

A decade after from these academic publications, some things changed dramatically: the United Kingdom left the EU, and a new President arrived at the White House in 2016 unwilling to pay the Europeans' defence bill. Whoever the US President might be, his/her position from now on will be the same. Moreover, there is a new strategic document on the EU side, the Strategic Compass 2022, and a new NATO strategic concept, both deeply concerned by the war in Ukraine, after the special military operation started by the Russian Federation on 22 February 2023. Finally, and as a consequence of the instability and war in the East, two EU countries, Sweden and Finland, joined NATO.

These events had an impact on the way European see the CSDP, but didn't radically change the main obstacles for a full integration. Anyway, the new environment asked for a clear review of the previous positions. One of the most repeated questions is to which extend the war in Ukraine impacted on national positions concerning the approach to CSDP.

To address and better understand these issues, "*European defense. Quo Vadis?*" is the title of this special issue, an initiative of the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies (IEEE), the Spanish national military think-tank on strategic and geopolitical issues, in collaboration with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.

The axis of our reflection is the will of Europe to be a relevant geostrategic actor. According to Bzrezinski (1998), to enter this club one needs will and ability. The authors contributing to this monographic will answer to the question "If there are real reasons to think that Europe can become one?" At first glance, the outlook is not completely optimistic.

A previous terminological clarification is required: this book uses different terms like *European Defence*, *EU Defence Policy*, *the Europe of Defence* or *the Defence of Europe*. Clearly, they are not synonymous. They denote a greater or lesser degree of Europeanization of national defence policies as a consequence of CSDP. As of today, a European defence doesn't exist. It would require a unique defence policy and, as a corollary, a European Army. There is, instead, a European defence policy, albeit not a full one, as the EU has political-military bodies and institutions with decision-making power, but only when Member States reach a unanimous agreement. The reason is that there is no transfer of sovereign powers from the states to the Union in defence policy; CSDP, as Common Foreign and Security Policy, are intergov-

ernmental policies, not supranational (Fernández-Sola, 2024), namely that EU member States are the CSDP actors of *L'Europe de la défense* (the Europe of defence), or that the "defence of Europe" is a more suitable expression, taking into account that most of the EU members are also NATO members and consider the Alliance an essential element for the European defence. Once this clarification has been done, we get back to with the aim of this monographic volume.

After more than two decades, the EU gave birth to new bodies, procedures, and concepts, that is, ideas to boost CSDP. Apathy or indifference have followed the initial enthusiasm on the part of the Member States and even of those very institutional structures.

## 2. Content of this special issue

Based on this idea, our purpose is to analyse the approach of seven EU members to EU Defence Policy, their national defence policies to know their perceptions of threats, the ways to cope with them, their military capabilities and doctrines about the use of force, or their position concerning the suitable relationship between NATO and CSDP.

When it came to deciding countries (those relevant to CSDP) geographical and political factors determining the country's position were taken into account. So, we have two Nordic countries, Sweden and Finland, which recently joined NATO, and the first of which with some examples of defence industry. Moreover, both are part of a cooperation body looking after the Nordic countries's interests. Two southern countries, like Italy and Spain, who develop a bilateral defence cooperation, with similar threat perception but different policies to face them; and both with defence industry. France is also a Mediterranean country but, because of its peculiar approach to NATO and its readiness to deploy military forces, plus its deterrence capacity, we consider it, together with Germany, as the engine who would move the CSDP, even if the perception and reaction of the Two Great Ones are dissimilar and even more so after some important changes in Berlin's traditional approach to defence. Finally, we chose Poland as an eastern country, the most developed among them, and with a defence industry, even if it is not the most important.

Even the classification of these seven countries, as explained, is not totally shared. Finland and Sweden are Nordic countries but,

according to recent policies, Finland considers itself, in some way, closer to Eastern European countries. Moreover, Sweden sees itself, together with Finland, in support of a Nordic approach within NATO; however, there are some suspicions in Helsinki towards its former invader for six centuries. Germany and France, the main engine for the CSDP and other EU policies, have a very different way of seeing security threats and reacting to them and, therefore, their cooperation is usually not easy, at least in CSDP. On another note, Germany and Poland are part of *Mittleuropa*, but historical mistrust remains in Warsaw. At the same time, France is also a southern country, but it is not acting as such but rather just promoting its own individual approaches, specially concerning North Africa and the EU Mediterranean policy.

Spain and Italy are similar countries but with slight different positions concerning NATO; the Alliance is plays a fundamental role in European defence according to the Italian position, while Spain usually follows the French and German position, which does not exist under CSDP. Evidently, among them, some countries lean more to the Atlantist side, whereas consider themselves more Europeanists both groups can experience an evolution depending on the topics and context.

Each author presents the assessment from his or her national perspective, considering the circumstances, conditions and elements, both political and military, that affect and/or condition that national vision. It is not about making an analysis of the country's official position, but analysing, from a critical perspective, what the possibility of a Europe of defence really looks like in each country, in its defence culture. The contributors to this volume, prestigious experts on European Defence, come from Germany (German Council of Foreign Relations), Finland, France (IRSEM), Italy (Bologna University), Spain (IEEE), Poland (University of Warsaw), and Sweden (Swedish Defence University), and from Egmont Institute, with an additional chapter on a critical view from Brussels.

The contributions of experts collected in this IEEE special issue highlight the persistence of several realities. First, the reluctance of the states towards "centralizing" multilateral institutions, such as the EU — and NATO — with regard to a policy that is particularly sensitive to national sovereignty. Second, the resistance to a standardization, among the twenty-seven members, of defensive interests, of capacity requirements, of military and operational planning in general, of regulation of the defence industry, or of

decisions on acquisitions, production, sales and R&D projects in the field of defence.

Compared to the aforementioned previously-published studies on the defence policies of the Member States, this special issue will also present different national sensibilities and approaches, and will highlight some new developments in the positions of Germany, France, Sweden and Finland, as well as certain nuances in those of Spain, Poland and Italy.

France, a staunch defender of EU strategic autonomy, is blasted with criticism that it is disruptive and unrealistic, contradictory and self-centered, guided by the French grandeur supported on its dissuasive nuclear power, autonomous armaments industry, and arms export policy. Its domestic politics and national interests outlined throughout its history explain its strong strategic identity, which requires highly-capable armed forces and a sophisticated geopolitical orientation. France has acted as a catalyst for the CSDP or at least for a European security and defence policy, promoting the international deployment of European armed forces, the manufacture of weapons or initiatives such as the European intervention initiative (EI2) (Mills, 2019) in the French style; that is, not necessarily following the slow pace of the European institutions, nor their unifying and centralizing style, which erase the national prominence. Moreover, the French approach to CSDP has always been intergovernmental and utilitarian for France's global influence; no matter if the country. For Instance, supporting the Spanish initiative for establishing a Defence formation of the European Council, or the appointment of a Deputy linked to the Commission for Defence and Space. The utilitarian and pragmatic side can be perceived in its support for the European Defence Industrial Base, as the European level can keep alive the French defence industry.

The war in Ukraine raised debates about the country's capacities to defend its own land and opens the boosting of the European pillar of NATO as part of the solution for European defence. It remains to be seen if this approach, present in the National Strategic Review 2022, is a shift in France's ambition (Fuente Cobo, 2016) the acceptance of a European pillar for NATO is in itself a change from the traditional commitment to European strategic autonomy showing a bold and pragmatic attitude to what is necessary to go forward. French strategic culture has an impact on the country's position towards NATO, but new generations are more open to the US influence, mainly because geopolitical Europe seems just a dream to them, a non-pragmatic concept. A handicap for

French initiatives is the mistrust of other more Atlantist member states, or Europeanist but supranationalist states, rising an isolation feeling in Paris.

This mistrust, together with the desire to reach concrete agreements at the European level, drives the relationship between France and Germany, in particular, their difficult cooperation in defence policy.

Their misunderstandings and lack of political will block the Fighter Jets Project (FACS) and the Main Ground Combat System (MGCS)<sup>2</sup>, and differences continue on arms exports rules.

German defence policy has taken a historic turn that has an existential impact on the country's approach to the Europe of Defence. For the first time and after the war in Ukraine, Berlin commits itself to sensibly increase its Defence budget; it puts an end to the historical reluctant to be more involved in the defence of Europe, and defence of the country. The nuance is that it only accepts NATO as manager and (co-)responsible for the European security. Moreover, it declares its disengagement from the non-realistic CSDP and the increase in its defence spending will be mainly allocated to its territorial defence, dispensing with projects and, above all, with military or mixed operations for EU crisis management.

In this scenario, Berlin advocates closer collaboration between the EU and NATO, each dedicated to its own competences: defence is in the hands of NATO, and the political and economic response is in the hands of the EU, which thus becomes a heavyweight in international politics. Taking the EU reaction to the Russian invasion of part of Ukrainian territory as a reference, the author understands that the Union has been able to transform its economic importance into influence on the political and security scene. The priority dedication of European countries to their security and deterrence will limit CSDP operations by having to use almost all material and human resources to said priority. In this vein, the German *Zeitenwende* or new era in German defence policy with a 100 billion special budget, military procurement "off the shelf" due to the urgency of the situation, or its first National Security Strategy (2023). Most of this budgetary effort will go to national territorial defence and so contribute to burden-sharing

---

<sup>2</sup> Just at the end of April 2024, the two countries reached an agreement to deblock the situation and substitute both, the Leopard and Leclerc tanks.

with NATO. The consequence will be the disengagement from EU crisis management operations. Anyone, therefore, can conclude it is the end of the German-French axis, at least in CSDP.

To face an evident limitation of the US military involvement in Europe, Germany is committed to engage in a burden-sharing negotiation in such a way that the United States defends European security interests in the Pacific region, and Europe safeguards its own security and territorial integrity. In any case, a hypothetical confrontation with Russia would only be possible with Washington's support.

This move in German defence policy puts Berlin closer to the Polish or Baltic countries' position than to the French.

After the French and German approaches, the Polish approach to CSDP is simple because it is shaped by its history. Just looking back to the 20th century, Poland was invaded by Germany's Third Reich and then subjected to Soviet rule after the unwritten division that resulted from the end of World War II. It is reasonable for them to fear Russia, which they identify with the defunct USSR, but also to mistrust a common security and defence policy led by Germany and France, the latter associated with the memory of Napoleon. Hence, the option door is the US, the only power able to protect Poland from an eventual Russian attack, and NATO as the alliance whose member Poland became in 1999.

As member of the EU since 2004, Poland supported attempts to consolidate a CSDP, but always considered that the European effort should be complementary to that of NATO. It thus actively participated in the Battlegroups, integrated into PESCO with different projects and took part in EU military missions, even before its accession, such as EUFOR Concordia in Macedonia. Poland has been involved in security initiatives in the Mediterranean Sea (EUFOR Althea, or naval operations Sophia and Iriini) and even in Africa (EUTM RCA, EUFOR RCA). In this way, it has sometimes symbolically shown its solidarity with the security problems of other European countries, which has resulted in southern EU countries becoming involved in the defence of the Baltic states and, now, Ukraine. It was also involved in the Weimar triangle with Germany and France.

Warsaw feels that other EU countries did not understand its security concerns about Russia and, after the start of the Special Military Operation in Ukraine, the Polish defence policy, in practical terms, focused on its role as NATO members. The CSDP, if anything, should be a way for European countries to actively

support NATO as the only security guarantee for the Continent. Its Atlantism and first line in military supplies to Ukraine provided the country better conditions to acquire modern military US equipment, but also from the United Kingdom, as well as some from France and Italy.

The EU is useful for its military support to Ukraine via the European Peace Facility and the EU Military Assistance Mission to Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine) hosted by Poland. To this end, Warsaw engaged in the initiative aimed at strengthening Europe's defence capabilities and aims to have EU support for its defence industry modernisation.

One may state that the Paris-Berlin axis turned into the Washington-London-Warsaw axis in terms of defence, as clearly Poland improved its power in Europe finding an optimal way to attain its interests, as do most of the EU countries.

Like the rest of the European countries, Italy considers its defence budget and its integrated defence system insufficient and non-competitive. To be coherent with this statement, the country adapts its strategic concept with that of the Alliance. Consequently, Rome limits EU strategic autonomy that is supplementary and complementary to NATO. Any other interpretation would require unsustainable investments, especially given the need to address new hybrid threats. Within this framework for the strategic autonomy, the growing contribution of EU countries should be the foundation of new common capabilities, instead of just increasing those of the individual states. Nothing will be possible without a common foreign policy, but it seems quite difficult to achieve. So, the steps of the proposal would be a standardization and harmonization of defence systems and military equipment, the promotion of PESCO and use of the enhanced cooperation; thus, the main EU countries could ease decision-making to share operational requirements and fulfill the steps mentioned. The option would be a hard core for developing a European defence complementary to NATO.

Moreover, Italy highlights the EU role in the European security through its enlargement policy, specially to the Balkan region.

Spain is one of the most Europeanist countries within the EU, even if every strategic document emphasizes the engagement with NATO, prior to joining the Alliance, the country already had a bilateral military agreement with the United States of America. The difference with Italy is domestic. The lack of external enemies for more than 200 years, the loss of global power, plus a tortuous nineteenth

century of violent changes of government, and a twentieth century featured a brief republican period, a civil war, an authoritarian regime and finally a return to democracy at the hands of a constitutional monarchy have led to a lack of interest in foreign policy and defence issues. The EU membership was a path for a new period and, hence, following certain official positions from Brussels, both in CFSP and CSDP, sometimes was more the result of consensus between the big players than of Spanish interests.

In practice, the country is one of the main contributors to CSDP, more in military operations than in capabilities. Is the only member present in every EU military operation and gets itself involved in responsibilities of command and tactical planning, even in places with secondary national defence interest. The support of CSDP initiatives has been enthusiastic, whether for battlegroups or in PESCO, in the European Defence Fund or in the European Peace Facility, Rapid Deployment Capacity, as well as in the promotion of the Defence Industry (EDTIB), just to mention the most recent initiatives. This approach is coherent with the institutional position of Spain as one of the big EU countries, and one of the five to take into account in terms of Defence industry and participation in European Consortia.

But equally serious is the Spanish engagement with NATO. The country has probably contributed more than it has received and definitely more than it has been recognized in terms of the appointment of senior officials of the Alliance, even compared to countries that are less relevant to the transatlantic security than Spain. The only issue in which Madrid is below what is required by the Alliance is the percent of the GDP devoted to the Defence budget; however, the progressive increase is already planned. It is worth mentioning the bilateral military cooperation agreement with the US after NATO membership in 2015 and its reinforcement in 2023. This agreement increases the deployment with two U.S. Navy destroyers permanently based at Rota Naval Base. The destroyers join four others already stationed at Rota, which are the only permanently homeported U.S. destroyers in Europe; which is a relevant contribution to collective defence, with daily operations in a variety of missions, including ballistic missile defence and anti-air warfare<sup>3</sup>.

---

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Embassy and Consulate in Spain, Deepening U.S.- Spain defence agreements, Press Release, 8 May 2023, <https://es.usembassy.gov/es/profundizacion-de-los-acuerdos-en-materia-de-defensa-entre-estados-unidos-y-espana/>

Under the international security environment, the threat perception now is clear, mainly the one coming from the Maghreb and Sahel regions. Within this framework, the poor CSDP outcome and the persistence of obstacles for its success have raised awareness of the need for a more powerful and capable European dimension of defence in Spain, probably within NATO as the only realistic option. Meanwhile, Spain shall adapt National Security and Defence strategies and act to increase national defence budget and promote defence industry coordinated with other European countries.

Last, but not least, the recent NATO members, the Nordic countries, clearly perceive Russia as a threat to their security, but their approaches to CSDP are slightly different. For Sweden, the EU is secondary to NATO in the defence dimension because of its weakness as a strategic limited actor, as the reaction to the war in Ukraine showed. The starting point of its strategic vision is very similar to that of Poland regarding the perception of the threat. Serious concerns on a potential evolving hegemonic war have led the country to significantly increase its defence budget and to consider the Nordic regional dimension as the best complement to the eventual application of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty; in addition to the bilateral defence cooperation treaties that all countries in the region have with the United States of America. Sweden defines its interests primarily in regional terms and the implication of the Moscow-Beijing-Teheran axis, as well as the Middle East's and East Asia's, in Sweden. The aim of this quick move is to the strategic interest of the Northern-Baltic region to Western security and, thus, to promote a new NATO Northern Flank, increasing the Alliance's resources in the region and Swedish influence over NATO planning on the region. This will boost a stronger European pillar of NATO. This proposal is based on a continued active presence and participation of American armed forces, and US nuclear deterrence, something that is not likely to happen.

Finland's starting point is slightly different, coming from a tradition of neutrality and relations with the Soviet Union. Therefore, until that relationship was broken, it was not possible to apply for NATO membership given the Soviet Union's relations with Finland. Greatly developing its role as mediator, peace keeper and important agent of development aid, Finland welcomed the EU membership, while NATO membership had more mixed feelings among the population. The growing confrontation with Russian Federation action in Ukraine led to the deci-

sion to apply membership to the Alliance, it joined in 2023. As important as this membership is the bilateral defence cooperation agreement with Washington allowing the presence of US troops and defence material in Finland and moving Finnish position closer to Eastern European countries than to Nordic ones. Differing from Sweden, Finns are against storing nuclear weapons on its soil.

For Helsinki, the most important aspect of Nordic cooperation is the Arctic dimension; this will allow Sweden and Finland to have an impact on the European Union and NATO. Similar to other European countries, Finland also believes that a more autonomous Europe is necessary, which must imply a stronger Alliance. However, it points out the convenience for Helsinki and Stockholm to profit from their experience on peaceful conflict resolutions understanding the Global South; something that sounds quite different from the Swedish point of view.

As a result of this compilation of national positions, we have several findings that are no less interesting just because they are known. The main one is that different approaches to CSDP are growing within the framework of the international system where competition among big powers is more and more evident and unavoidable. In this vein, national positions show that, even in some cases, member states are competing with each other, like projects for the Future Combat Air System (FCAS). Everyone tries to show how essential its geopolitical position is for European/Western strategy.

In addition to the problems of competence, the lack of political will or the difficulties for a Common European Foreign Policy, there are two national handicaps for a European defence policy: Firstly, the angle from which each State views European defence makes this concept seem like a completely different thing. Secondly, and the source of misgivings between member states, each capital, due to its particular security perception, its history and its strategic culture, tends not to see that "the emperor is naked" and that none of the national approaches gives the true vision of the CSDP, which "without a single voice" is nothing.

The conclusion of the independent expert from Brussels, professor Biscop, is devastating: the CSDP has failed; however, it remains indispensable that Europeans integrate their defence efforts. Thereby, if the current schemes did not achieve the expected result - seriously expected? - , the used approach will

change. A tangible European pillar within NATO is also the proposal submitted here. More doubtful is his idea that the EU should be able to support candidate countries threatened or aggressed.

To reach this level of European pillar within NATO and build a comprehensive force package, Europeans have to gain logistic depth, military mobility, and defence industrial base, and so improve their expeditionary skills, for the Rapid Deployment Force or for the Allied Response Force. This is perhaps the only way to reach a European force. But several questions arise again. Do Member States follow this process from top to bottom losing their little sovereignty? If there was a European force, would member States agree on the political agenda to use it? Unanimously? Forced by the NATO leader?

The danger of the hegemonic power disengagement from the defence of Europe is more evident than ever. Although the evolution of the CSDP towards its consolidation is not satisfactory, it should not be forgotten that other initiatives of defensive cooperation, bilateral or "minilateral" remain in force between the Member States, in addition to the one existing within NATO. Such is the case of French-British cooperation from the Lancaster House treaties, the Weimar Triangle, the Nordic Defence Cooperation, the European Air Transport Command (EATC), or the Visegrad Group Defence Cooperation which offers a joint battlegroup, or a joint defence planning process.

The Lancaster House treaties between France and the United Kingdom were signed in 2010. Far from ending cooperation after the British exit from the EU, it continues with new commitments on different areas, mainly on defence and security partnership. Both parties show their ambition to foster further integration of the UK and French armed forces (Mills, 2023; Whitman, 2023). They work for common positions on nuclear deterrence, non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament; as well as preparing key projects that develop the Future Cruise/Anti-Ship Weapon programme, the future missile requirements, or commitments to A400M Air Transport, industrial cooperation, operational cooperation through the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force (CJEF) (Whitman, 2023; O'Neill, 2023) or intelligence sharing and access to respective military bases. Finally, they include mutual support for carrier deployments in regions of shared interests, including the Indo-Pacific, and the Balkans in support of EUFOR Althea in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is obvious that not every EU member State, neither not every NATO member consider the Indo-Pacific

as an strategic priority. Hence, it is normal to channel this cooperation bilaterally.

The Weimar Triangle, which unites France, Germany and Poland since 1991, aims to promote cooperation in cross-border and other European issues. In 2011, among these issues, defence cooperation was included to offer a joint EU Battlegroup, ready to deploy in crisis areas since 2013. Brexit reinvigorates its functions. In the first few years of this century, the Weimar Triangle was seen as a potential “new engine” for Europe, notably because of the defensive cooperation (Kulesa, *et al.*, 2024). Its proposal in 2011 to reinforce European defence, by means of a suitable functioning of civil-military structures, battlegroups and more cooperation within the European Air Transport Command (EATC), was supported by Spain and Italy in 2013 (“Weimar Plus” format) and opposed by the United Kingdom. Today, the Weimar Triangle has become less and less visible.

In the same vein, we can highlight the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEF), created in 2009 as a “minilateral” cooperation between Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden with the overall purpose to strengthening, from top to bottom, the participants’ national defence, exploring common synergies and facilitating efficient common solutions through cooperation. Each country decides the participation in different activities. Its structure includes both political and military cooperation levels. NORDEF develops activities in areas such as capabilities, armaments, human resources and education, and training and exercises. Third countries, i.e. Baltic countries, can be involved in these activities, if decided on a case-by-case basis.

It is remarkable that those frameworks can comprise operations, capability and industrial cooperation. There are less taboos and posturing than within multilateral formal fora, like the EU and NATO (Egmont, 2015). These Organisations, even if inter-governmental in their functioning, raise national fears of loss of sovereignty, despite being conscious about the need to improve military capabilities and to do it with other partners,

These defensive cooperation initiatives may be the seed of a progressive harmonization of needs and positions on the content and orientations of a European Security and defence policy.

In general, these frameworks unite countries with similar ambitions and interests, and complementary capabilities. Most importantly, states remain the masters of the actions to be followed;

they set the rules and the way to verify their compliance; they are accountable only before themselves (Fiott, 2015). Thus, the "minilateral" frameworks are more flexible and suitable to simultaneously keep national interests guaranteed. As such, they can support the European pillar within NATO or EU CSDP.

Even if that outcome cannot be achieved, we may accept that the success of the current CSDP is not possible because it lacks the foundation of any defence policy: an identity element (Bueno, 2019). First, Member States do not agree on the political entity they pursue. Is it a European Defence Union? It is a Political Union of which one element would be a European Defence Policy? It is just an evolution of the current situation of national defence policies, plus elements of CSDP managed intergovernmentally?

An element that contributes to the formation of identity is the presence of an enemy, a common external enemy; the basis of defensive alliances. Despite the apparent unity generated around the defence of Ukraine against Russia, it cannot be considered that there is a consensus on the existence of this external enemy, nor simply who the external competitor is. Just think of the divergent position of European countries towards China, not only in political terms, but also in purely commercial terms.

According to the philosopher:

"Europe cannot be confused with a club of European nations, or even with a United States of Europe, which could not, under any circumstances, form a nation, much less a "nation of nations," a concept as absurd as the "circle of circles"; only if the nations are dissolved or all reabsorbed into one of them, would it be possible to speak in these terms. ... Europe is a kind of "biocenosis of nations," a common coexistence, but a coexistence that, like that which constitutes biological biocenosis, does not only imply peace but also the struggle for life between its members, constant war. And if the internal war is averted, by virtue of the solidarity of its partners, it will be due not only to the internal community of its interests, but to their solidarity with third parties (with the Islamic third world, for example, or with the Asian continent, China mainly)." (Bueno, 1999).

The search for European unity in the face of a common enemy began by singling out Germany and creating the WEU for the exclusion of this country. Once Germany was integrated, the USSR quickly became that enemy that acted as the EU external

federator. With the USSR gone, there is no longer an enemy but a global hegemonic leader; hence the first demands for strategic autonomy when the decisions of the superpower differ from those of Europe and even divide European countries. At this time, no matter how hard we try to unify this external enemy in a simple way, the disparity of opinions about the future is evident because it is difficult to think of a European security that does not take into account the role of Russia (Baqués, 2023).

## Bibliography

- Baqués Quesada, J. (2023). *La construcción de una política exterior y de seguridad común en Europa. ¿Por qué es tan problemática?* Madrid, Libros de la Catarata.
- Brzezinski, Z. (1998). *El gran tablero mundial. La supremacía estadounidense y sus imperativos geoestratégicos*. Barcelona, Paidós, pp 48-56.
- Bueno, G. (1998). España. *El Basilisco*. Oviedo. 24, pp. 27-50. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.filosofia.org/rev/bas/bas22403.htm>
- Chapell, L. (2009). Differing member state approaches to the development of the EU Battlegroup Concept: implications for CSDP. *European Security*. 18, pp. 417-439. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2010.498419>
- Fernández Sola, N. (2024). *La europeización de la política exterior española: consecuencias y desafíos*. Seguridad y defensa: la Política Europea de Defensa y su impacto en políticas nacionales. Los actores de la Europa de la defensa. En: Beneyto, J. M.(coord.). *La europeización de la política exterior española: retos y desafíos*. Madrid, Centro de Estudios Ramón Areces (CEURA), pp. 115-128. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.fundacionareces.es/recursos/doc/portal/2018/05/03/la-europeizacion-de-la-politica-exterior-espanola.pdf>
- Fiott, D. (ed.). (2015). The Common Security and Defense Policy: National Perspectives. *Egmont Paper*. Brussels. 79. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://aei.pitt.edu/64766/1/ep79.pdf>
- Fuente Cobo, I. (2016). *La política de defensa de Francia: ¿el fin de la independencia estratégica?* Madrid, Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos (IEEE). Documentos de análisis.
- Kulesa, L. et al. (2024). *The Weimar Triangle and the future security order in Europe*. Warsaw, Polish Institute of International

- Affairs and the Hanns Seidel Foundation. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: [https://www.pism.pl/webroot/upload/files/Raport/The%20Weimar%20triangle\\_Feb2024\\_report.pdf](https://www.pism.pl/webroot/upload/files/Raport/The%20Weimar%20triangle_Feb2024_report.pdf)
- Mills, C. & Brooke-Holland, L. (2023). *UK-French defence cooperation: A decade on from the Lancaster House treaties*. London, House of Commons Library. 21p. Research Briefing 9743. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9743/CBP-9743.pdf>
- Mills, C. (2019). *The European Intervention Initiative (EII/EI2)*. London, House of Commons Library. Research Briefing 8432. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8432/>
- NORDEFECO: *Nordic Defense Cooperation* [online]. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.nordefco.org/the-basics-about-nordefco>
- O'Neill, P. (2023). CJEF: A solution in search of a problem? *Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/cjef-solution-search-problem>
- Santopinto, F. *et al.* (2013). National Visions of EU Defence Policy – Common Denominators and Misunderstandings. *Centre for European Policy studies (CEPS) and Group for Research and Information on Peace and Security (GRIP)*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/national-visions-eu-defence-policy-common-denominators-and-misunderstandings/>
- U.S. Embassy and Consulate in Spain (2023). *Deepening U.S.-Spain defence agreements*. Press Release. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://es.usembassy.gov/es/profundizacion-de-los-acuerdos-en-materia-de-defensa-entre-estados-unidos-y-espana/>
- Whitman, R. (2023). The Anglo-French summit: a modest advance in foreign, security and defence policy? *UK in a Changing Europe*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://ukandeu.ac.uk/the-anglo-french-summit-a-modest-advance-in-foreign-security-and-defence-policy/>



## European Defense, with or without the CSDP

*Sven Biscop*

The EU's Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) has failed. Comparing the results, or even the current level of ambition, with the ambitions that were stated twenty-five years ago when the policy was launched, that is the inevitable conclusion. And yet it remains indispensable that the Europeans align, pool, and integrate their defense efforts. That is, if they want Europe's armed forces to form a coherent, full-spectrum force package, which constitutes the first line of conventional deterrence and defense, and in addition has the capacity for expeditionary warfare in Europe's periphery. Europe's geopolitical situation combined with the shifting strategies of the US and Russia certainly require this high level of ambition. Europeans could also achieve this through NATO rather than through the CSDP, by putting to use EU instruments such as the European Defense Fund (EDF). With or without the CSDP, that is not the question: do Europeans really want European Defense? That is the issue.

### 1. Pretending to commit

The European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), as it was known initially, started out very ambitiously. The so-called

Headline Goal (HG) adopted in 1999 was to constitute an expeditionary force package: an army corps of twelve to fifteen brigades or 50 to 60 000 troops, plus air and naval assets, to undertake autonomous crisis management operations. In 2004 a specific rapid response element within the HG was created: the EU Battlegroups (EUBGs). The aim was for Member States to put two EUBGs on standby, on a rotational basis, each consisting of a reinforced battalion plus enablers or some 1500 to 2500 troops. Very soon, however, many began to understand the EUBGs as replacing rather than complementing the HG, which was conveniently forgotten. Even though the EU Military Staff (EUMS) continued to run the HG process (and still does), producing lists of expeditionary requirements, of theoretically available forces, and of shortfalls, Member States in reality no longer felt committed to it. Two EUBGs for the entire EU can hardly be called an ambition at all; clearly, there are very few scenarios in which one or two battalions will be sufficient to safeguard the European interest.

The broader Capability Development Plan (CDP), which the European Defense Agency (EDA) has been producing since 2008 (and which usually leads to friction with the EUMS), soon befell the same fate. The CDP addresses the full scope of Member States' defense efforts, including the capabilities needed for territorial defense. But, as it sets collective rather than individual targets and is not binding, the CDP ended up having as much influence on the national defense planning of the Member States as the HG process: none. The national targets assigned by the NATO Defense Planning Process (NDPP) drive the defense planning of NATO Allies, i.e. 23 out of 27 EU Member States. And national priorities, of course.

Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, failed to change this reality. The 2017 Council Decision establishing PESCO followed the right approach, stating that "A long term vision of PESCO could be to arrive at a coherent full spectrum force package, in complementarity with NATO, which will continue to be the cornerstone of collective defense for its members". "Could", not "should", so this was an option rather than a decision. Nevertheless, the binding criteria that PESCO entails did point to the establishment of a force package. Member States committed to bringing their defense apparatus into line with each other, notably by harmonising the identification of military needs, addressing the commonly prioritised shortfalls, and making available strategically deployable formations.

When PESCO was launched, Member States understandably re-labelled several existing or planned initiatives as PESCO projects, to demonstrate progress. But this created a path dependency that PESCO has not been able to escape. Member States forgot about the commitments and continued to focus exclusively on a plethora of projects, often without a link to the priorities of the HG or the CDP. Many are not really projects, because they come without timeline or budget, or they are but exploratory studies, that might or might not lead to an actual project. Most concern equipment; very few concern capabilities, i.e. people, doctrine, and equipment. But designing, building, and procuring equipment: that is what the EDF and the other initiatives of the European Commission are for. The aim of PESCO ought to be to develop capabilities, i.e. national or multinational units that use that equipment. None of the PESCO projects are useless, but very few are important; most would also have happened had PESCO not existed.

In 2022, just after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the EU adopted a first defense strategy, the Strategic Compass, which had been nearly two years in the making. This includes the ambition of creating a Rapid Deployment Capacity (RDC), capable of brigade-level operations, i.e. 5000 troops. Often presented as a scaling up of the ambition compared to the EUBGs, it is, of course, still but a fraction of the level of ambition of the HG. And, while the RDC is a promising modular concept, envisaging enabling modules around a core force, that core actually remains in the EUBGs. Unless that changes, the RDC remains in effect as an empty box. Moreover, whereas, in 1999, the EU aimed to undertake the full range of expeditionary operations (including, effectively, warfighting), the RDC will focus only on capacity-building and evacuation. Yet when evacuation of EU citizens from the Sudan had to be carried out in the spring of 2023, Member States refused even to discuss the possibility of a CSDP operation. In any case, as Churchill famously said after Dunkirk: "wars are not won by evacuation". The Strategic Compass also listed priority investment in capabilities to strengthen Europe's overall military posture. A few weeks later, Heads of State and Government meeting in Versailles again emphasized the need to invest in big-ticket capabilities (listing a slightly different set of priorities, just like the CDP produces yet another similar but not quite the same list). Member States did not act on this, however.

There is some good news too. The CSDP has failed to generate capability development or to steer defense planning. The opera-

tional dimension of the CSDP works, however. The EU ought to be more ambitious in terms of when, how, and at which scale it acts, but it does act: witness the deployment of a new naval operation in the Red Sea in February 2024. The other piece of good news is that, as already mentioned, the Commission has entered the field of defense, by way of defense industrial policy. If the budgets allocated are, so far, insufficient to allow the Commission to have a decisive impact on Member State decisions, this is additional money, on the EU budget, and it is likely to increase.

The history of CSDP is cyclical. Member States sign up to ambitious schemes, in full knowledge that neither they nor their fellow members are serious about implementing them. When a few years later, the scheme inevitably has produced but limited results, a new one is dreamed up, and so the cycle goes on. After twenty-five years, the only conclusion can be that Member States do not want to build a comprehensive force package through the EU. It does not make sense, therefore, to carry on as if nothing has happened. Or, rather, nothing has happened, so if one wants to make European Defense happen, one will have to shift focus. For some form of coordinated European defense effort has become even more imperative in the evolving strategic environment.

## 2. A new Strategic Situation

One major structural change in the strategic context is anything but new. While EU Member States were pretending to pursue a defense policy, the US changed its strategy. First, US defense planning shifted from the ability to fight two regional wars to that of fighting one war against a great power. Second, since 2012, when President Obama announced the “pivot to Asia”, the priority theatre is no longer Europe, but Asia, for the first time since the Second World War. In other words, if ever the US were faced with simultaneous wars in Europe and Asia, Europeans must assume that Americans will prioritise the latter. Thus, even after Russia launched its war on Ukraine, the Biden administration in its October 2022 National Security Strategy re-emphasized that the US sees China as the only peer competitor. The implications for NATO are massive. Europe will increasingly have to ensure its own conventional deterrence and defense, under the American nuclear umbrella (on which the “pivot” has less immediate impact, given the size of the American nuclear arsenal). Europeans have not yet adapted, however, because for any European leader, the

temptation remains huge to convince oneself that, in the end, the US cavalry will always ride to the rescue. And once one believes that nothing is urgent anymore.

Another change also goes back to at least 2014, the first Russian invasion of Ukraine and subsequent annexation of the Crimea: for the first time, the EU's outreach to its neighbours, through association agreements and enlargement, is being actively contested by a hostile power. This change may also be structural, if Russia retains its aggressive posture in the long term (i.e. post-Putin). One EU candidate country, Ukraine, is at war with Russia, and the EU and its Member States are massively supporting it as non-belligerents. But Georgia and Moldova, EU candidates too, are very vulnerable to Russian aggression as well. If necessary, the EU must do for them what it is doing for Ukraine: offering candidate status entails responsibilities for both sides. There is a direct link with collective defense: the EU and its Member States can confidently support candidate countries without undue fear of direct Russian retaliation because NATO provides deterrence and defense. The conventional part of that, the Europeans will largely have to provide themselves.

Meanwhile, Europe's southern flank is as instable as ever, and Russia is acting as a spoiler and a multiplier of security threats. The EU is facing multiple crises in the Sahel, the Middle East, and the Red Sea. Additional crises could easily erupt in those three regions, and in North Africa, the Gulf, and the Indian Ocean, but also in the Caucasus and the Black Sea (where the Eastern and Southern flanks directly interconnect). If and when European interests necessitate intervention, Europeans will have to act, for American intervention in Europe's periphery is increasingly unlikely. A credible European expeditionary capacity is necessary to have a deterrent effect on Europe's neighbours and strengthen European diplomacy.

### 3. Finally, a force package?

The new strategic situation calls for a new European force posture. All the troops of all European Allies / EU Member States added together do not make for a complete set of forces. In many essential areas they have little or no capability. Europe's forces are fully operational only if the US makes up the difference. In view of current American strategy, that poses an unacceptable strategic risk. The solution is, within NATO, to align the European

contributions (including the UK) in such a way that, collectively, they form a coherent force package that is fully employable without any US plug-in. The NATO New Force Model, launched in 2023, actually goes in this direction already. It aims at 300 000 European troops in a high state of readiness to secure the Eastern flank. But these European forces will remain highly dependent on American strategic enablers. The European Allies should take this one step further and commit to creating their own enablers for this force. They would thus have to agree on additional capability targets. Eventually, the 300 000 should need but a single American to be 100% operational: SACEUR. The result would be a tangible European pillar in NATO, in military terms.

Europeans will have to rebuild the logistical depth, military mobility, and defense industrial base needed to sustain this force package by themselves. As the Russo-Ukrainian War proves, great additional depth is required to support candidate countries that are being threatened or aggressed.

In addition, Europeans must take their expeditionary needs seriously. The EU's planned RDC of up to 5000 troops, even if it were not a theoretical concept, is clearly insufficient to address multiple crises. A single brigade allows one to deal with one crisis for one third of the year. Europeans need a much larger pool of robust expeditionary forces (army, navy, and air force), along with their own strategic enablers, to deal with all scenarios in their broad neighbourhood by themselves. A credible European expeditionary force requires nations to declare entire brigades (as well as air squadrons and ships) and forge them into a force package (within the overall European force package) through systematic multinational manoeuvres. No standby scheme is necessary, just, European enablers. From such a force package, a tailor-made force can be generated for specific operations. The EU could rethink the RDC along these lines, but NATO, as part of the New Force Model, also envisages an expeditionary Allied Response Force (ARF) as the successor to the NATO Response Force (NRF). Europeans will likely not have sufficient expeditionary units to staff both schemes. Of course, if the RDC remains an on-paper concept, it may not pose a problem. But would it be advisable to create a NATO-only stand-by force, which means that the European forces on rotation in the ARF cannot be deployed under any other flag during that time? For the reality is that, since the turn of the century, nations prefer to conduct the large majority of operations implying combat or the risk thereof through neither

NATO nor the EU, but through *ad hoc* coalitions. The important thing is that the European nations are able and willing to organise themselves, so that, in a crisis, they can flexibly deploy under any flag without needing non-European assets.

The resulting European force package will be neither EU-owned nor NATO-owned; it will consist of national capabilities. But nations can choose to cooperate to build the package. That is where EU instruments come in.

#### 4. A new beginning for the CSDP?

If the Europeans decided to build a comprehensive force package, and if they agreed to finally make real use of the CSDP and other EU instruments to that end, the EU might make a fresh start in the field of defense (rather than carry on pretending). In that scenario, PESCO could be the central hub where the EU Member States that want to cooperate to achieve capability targets translate these into concrete initiatives and steer *all* defense cooperation within the EU-framework, under the CSDP, as well as the Commission.

Capability targets include, first, those apportioned to each NATO Ally through the NDPP. Second, the additional targets that the European NATO Allies collectively have to set themselves in order to build a coherent force package within NATO. Third, the targets implied by the need to militarily support EU candidate countries. And, fourth, the targets implied by the need for an autonomous European expeditionary capacity. The role of the CDP would be to specify the latter three, complementing the NDPP without duplicating it. Together, these targets would constitute the framework for PESCO: nothing that falls outside it should be allowed to carry the PESCO label.

Within this framework of targets, Member States could then choose to collectively initiate research to develop new technologies; design and build new equipment, and/or procure new equipment. And they can opt to form multinational capabilities, by permanently anchoring national units (brigades, squadrons, ships) into multinational formations (divisions, wings, fleets), or by operating as a single unit, a capability made up of nationally owned platforms (drones, air transport, air defense, cyber, space, etc.). The resulting European force package would, in essence, still consist of national combat units. But, by anchoring each

national brigade into a multinational division, and those, in turn, into a multinational corps, nations can cooperate at division and corps level and ensure that through a combination of a division of labour and pooling of capabilities, all combat support and combat service support and all enablers, which many individual nations can no longer provide, are present.

There would no longer be any distinction between PESCO projects, EDF projects, and double-labelled projects. Instead, all of the collective initiatives that are relevant to the framework of targets would receive the PESCO label. Some would be implemented through the EDF and other Commission instruments or through the EDA (e.g. CAT B projects), others through clusters of Member States. There would be no need for any other EDF projects, outside PESCO. EU instruments and resources should be focused on the single goal of building a coherent European force package.

This implies, though, that in addition to the Member States, all relevant institutions be included in the PESCO Secretariat and obtain the right to propose projects: the EU Military Staff, the European Defense Agency, and the European External Action Service. The Commission must be associated as well. This to ensure that Member States are forced to, at least, discuss all necessary projects, even if, in the end, capitals still decide whether or not to join any initiative. For experience has shown that a fully bottom-up process, relying on Member State initiative only, does not spontaneously generate initiatives to address all priority shortfalls. Moreover, the advice of the PESCO Secretariat on whether or not a Member State-proposed projects fits into PESCO, should be binding. Member States could still undertake a rejected project, of course, but it could not benefit from EU funding, nor could it use the PESCO label.

## 5. Conclusion

On many occasions, many analysts have listed all the reasons why, objectively, Europeans needed to integrate their defense efforts. But Europeans never did. Instead, every crisis has deepened the existing divide between those preferring an EU and those preferring a NATO framework. "You see," say the latter, when things get serious, "we need NATO and the US". "You see," say the former, when things get serious, "we can only have impact collectively, through the EU". And so, it goes on.

After twenty-five years, the CSDP has reached a turning point. Carrying on as before is meaningless. Member States will begin

to care even less, and, in the end, risk stopping to second the necessary officers and diplomats to make the system work. Europeans must be honest with themselves. Either capitals admit that they actually do not see the need for defense planning and capability development in the EU framework, and they halt that dimension of the CSDP, maintaining it only as an operational framework (while the Commission carries on its defense industrial policy, of course) or they change tack and decide that they really want to have a complete European force package. But then they must do it in the NATO framework and reconfigure the CSDP as a supporting scheme to that end. The reason, and perhaps the main explanation for the failure of the CSDP, is that, in the field of defense, Europeans do not trust each other (unlike with currencies, borders, external trade, etc.). Ask any European who will save them if Russia invades, and only the French will (perhaps) answer: "the French". Everybody else will say: "the Americans". One may deplore it, but this is the political reality.

It also is a political reality that American commitment to the defense of Europe is less certain than it used to be, because of the US' focus on China, and, obviously, because of domestic developments in the US. But that is exactly another reason for the Europeans to shift their focus to NATO and to Europeanise conventional deterrence and defense. That should put them in the position to seamlessly take over any task that the US might withdraw from, and maintain the credibility of deterrence and defense, whatever happens. The time to act on that is now.



## Chapter one

### Inside out: the French stance on European Defense

*Marjorie Vanbaelinghem*

#### **Abstract**

France is known for its ambitious, almost swashbuckling posture on European defence. Deciphering the French views requires understanding a strong legacy of deterrence, security and diplomatic policies as well as a robust bedrock of industrial power. These characteristics have often intersected with the European and multilateral stances, generating on occasions a sense of contradiction or misunderstandings with allies and partners. After identifying the pillars of the French positions and sketching their recent evolution, we distinguish their objectives from the actual achievements, and the achievements from the strategic communication and the capacity to engage partners. While France sees itself as a harbinger for collective defence, the magnitude of its strategic assets, interests and firepower gives it a critical mass that is adequate to act autonomously, but too big to compromise and engage and too small to lead. In that regard, the Ukraine War acted both as a wake-up call for Europe and as a reality check for some of the French positions and key concepts. It proved them right on strategic autonomy but put them to the test regarding unfinished business such as the scope of their nuclear deter

rence policy, the evolution of their defense industry and the tug between CSDP and NATO.

***Keywords***

France, European Union, NATO, Defense Industry, Nuclear Deterrence

A program recently broadcast on the French public radio<sup>1</sup> invited guests from the strategic community to ponder over “whether France had been right all along about European Defense”. The very question – and the debate that ensued – illustrated the mixed feelings that have been rife in France since the breakout of the Ukraine war and, increasingly, with a Trump come-back looming. France may feel today like a modern-day Cassandra. Its vision of a strong, autonomous Europe de la défense used to be touted as unrealistic, at best. Some partners also claimed that the French did not always “walk the talk” or only thought of their industrial interests. Nevertheless, the emphasis recently put by Brussels on security and defense and the many initiatives launched by the Europeans show that France, in calling for autonomous EU defense capabilities and culture, has been visionary and consistent. So why wasn’t it heard before? More importantly, what is France’s role due to be now, since the need for European defense has materialized?

Beyond being perceptive, France acted disruptively. Disruption came in deeds, like when De Gaulle pulled the country out of the integrated military command of NATO in 1969, but also in statements, as when Macron recently spelled the possibility of European boots on the Ukrainian ground. Yet, being at the vanguard does not necessarily mean being correct and effective in the implementation.

Any member state’s stance on European Union affairs can be analyzed through its domestic politics and national interests. In the case of France, we need to go back in history, to the enduring French political, geopolitical and strategic psyche. I contend that France has developed such a strong strategic identity, grounded in capable armed forces and a sophisticated geopolitical compass, that it made its urge for autonomy feel like intransigence.

The notion of a “third way” or alternative geopolitical posture designed by De Gaulle and later resuscitated by posterior leaders, as well as many social, institutional and economic idiosyncrasies, have intersected with France’s European commitment. These characteristics explain the sense of responsibility and legitimacy expressed by the French when voicing their plans on how to defend Europe. They also account for some contradictions and miscommunication with partners and allies. Complex and per-

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.radiofrance.fr/franceculture/podcasts/le-temps-du-debat/otan-la-france-avait-elle-raison-sur-la-defense-europeenne-5628284>

vaded by economic and political interests, the French vision was never easy to absorb nor even understand. My point is that the unease expressed by some partners is the paradoxical result of the French self-sufficiency and a vision ahead of its time.

The question "Quo vadis?" had looked very clear to the French as long as they were alone in claiming that Europe could not blindly rely on a US-led NATO. Now events have accelerated, the time has come to "get real", to manage consultations and to improve the partners' comprehension and acceptance of the French views, in order to deliver. Yet, many stumbling blocks are still in the way.

This paper doesn't aim at being comprehensive regarding the many initiatives and concepts devised by the French on European security and defense over the years. Rather, it attempts at (I) clarifying the main specificities in the French practice and culture of defense and how they intersect with the European positions, and analyzing (II) what France brought to the table of European defense (and how it behaved at that table) and (III) to what extent the Ukraine war acted as an accelerator, or developer - in the photographic sense of the term - revealing the pivotal role of France as well as a lot of unfinished business on the French side.

## 1. A robust legacy of firepower and political-military views

How have the French defense culture and strategic idiosyncrasies intersected with rising European defense awareness and needs? Looking at the main invariants of French strategic and foreign policy allows to highlight the uniqueness of certain characteristics - which are also likely to determine the policies to come.

### 1.1. In the beginning was grandeur, De Gaulle and the bomb...

The key concept and priority for the French state, well before the post-Second World War context, has been defined as "grandeur"<sup>2</sup>. The notion harks back to Ancien Régime (pre-revolutionary era), with the politics of conquest of Louis XIV. Napoleon, then the colonial wars, gave another turn to the "policy of grandeur" as one of the main characteristics of France. Such grand monuments as the Invalides or Ecole Militaire, still used by the ministry of Armed Forces, embody the recognition granted to the

---

<sup>2</sup> Fontanel, Jacques, Hébert, Jean-Paul "The end of the "French grandeur policy", *Defence and Peace Economics*, 8:1, 1997, pp. 37-55.

military by the nation. "Grande nation" is a moniker frequently used by Germans for France.

Another concept akin to "grandeur" is that of "puissance", which is distinct from that of "power"<sup>3</sup> and is perhaps better translated as "agency". Both notions account for de Gaulle's quest for practical sovereignty, which materialized through armament policy and nuclear deterrence. For Fontanel and Hébert, "until 1990, the policy of "grandeur" was based on four main characteristics: (a) the creation of a nuclear force, (b) the importance of military expenditure, (c) the development of an autonomous armaments industry and (d) arms exports"<sup>4</sup>. Strikingly, all four components have endured well into the 21st century.

From the 1960s on, France gave priority to capital expenditure meant to modernize the weapon systems. Military equipment became a large economic aggregate, with a defense budget growing to over 4% in the 1960s and remaining above 3% in the 1970s and most of the 1980s. Even when it went down, it remained comparatively high<sup>5</sup>. The tradition of multiannual budget planning installed by de Gaulle also allowed to afford and organize nuclear force building as well as force projection.

Therefore, the Fifth Republic governments stressed the development of French arms production. The Délégation Générale pour l'Armement (DGA), a unique administration populated from "armament engineers", created in 1961 and benefiting from unique prerogatives, acted as an interface between the armed forces and the industry. It coordinated the manufacturing, research and development activities while being engaged in arms production, with the direction of the arsenal and ship-building complex inherited from the Ancien Régime, the responsibility for the direction of the military part of output in cooperation with firms producing civilian and military goods and the control of nationalized firms.

As a result, one of the main features – and assets – of France is its defense industry ecosystem, known as Defense Industrial and Technological (BITD): some 2000 companies, which employ between 165 000 and 200 000 workers<sup>6</sup>, with 25% to 40% of their production being exported generating 30 billion in export

---

<sup>3</sup> Spinoza is the conceptual reference on the distinction between "potentia" and "potestas".

<sup>4</sup> Fontanel, Hébert, op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> The author used SIPRI Military Expenditure Database (<https://milex.sipri.org/sipri>).

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.defense.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/ssm/Ecodef%20185.pdf>

revenue<sup>7</sup>. This complex ecosystem is made up of small but highly specialized companies, some of which produce exclusively for large corporations such as Airbus Group, Naval Group and Dassault Aviation). They are characterized by a high level of interdependence and - until recently - little opening to foreign companies. The French state remains nowadays one of their main customers, as well as instrumental in supporting their exports.

It was also de Gaulle who instituted, with the Fifth Republic's Constitution, the legal framework that made the French President the "chef des armées" (Head of the Armed Forces; article 15 of the French Constitution of 1956), with comparatively little accountability to the Parliament. As a result, another French idiosyncrasy is that

each and every French President is compelled to embody a vision of the world. Such embodiment comes by way of exterior operations, including military ones – since the 1970s, there were many of them, in Africa, in the Middle East as well as in the Balkans. The idea is to show that the head of state embodies the message of France to the world and contributes to the defence of the democratic international order<sup>8</sup>.

From this political compulsion comes what the French call the "culture de la projection" – the capacity of "first entry" onto a war theatre and "out of area" full-fledged operation conduct.

Moreover, France has maintained many overseas territories, scattered all around the globe<sup>9</sup> (to name only two, which are the furthest ones, Tahiti is 17,000 km East of mainland France, whereas Clipperton is 15,000 km South), giving France the impulse to set up specialized forms military presence and to punch above its weight. The existence of potential war theatres at such distances accounts for the acquisition and maintenance of enabling projection capacities. Last but not least, most military deployments (in French: OPEX, i.e. external operations) can be initiated without

---

<sup>7</sup> Claude Serfati, *L'industrie française de défense*, La Documentation française, 2014. Also <https://ecodef-ihedn.fr/impact-economique-de-la-defense/>, last checked March 29th 2024.

<sup>8</sup> Frank, Robert, « Une culture française de la puissance », in Badie, Bertrand, ed., *La France, une puissance contrariée*, La Découverte, 2021.

<sup>9</sup> The French Exclusive Economic Zone covers approximately 7% of the surface of all world EEZs, while the mainland territory of France is only 0.45% of the world's land surface.

parliamentary approval and funded independently from the multiannual military budget law, which gives a lot of leeway<sup>10</sup>.

Lastly, even after the military conscription was scrapped off in the 1990s (see *infra*), the French have kept a strong bond with their armed forces. In sociological terms, the "service militaire" was a true institution, which is why it remains on the French political agenda under the guise of a project of new "universal national service" (SNU, Service National Universel). Another illustration of that bond is the flexible use of military forces for internal security and counter-terrorism missions (this is currently the case with the "opération Sentinelle", which involves military personnel in arms patrolling in the streets).

## 1.2. The conundrum of being collectively autonomous: France, Europe and the EU

De Gaulle's shadow lingered in French strategic thinking for decades but the deepest trace it left was, by far, the objective of strategic autonomy. The French emphasis on autonomy is nothing excentric if one looks back and considers the trauma engendered by the German occupation, followed by the liberation of the country by foreign forces and then by the Suez episode of 1956. Nowadays, autonomy is more manifest – and seen as more legitimate – than "grandeur". The objective and the practice of autonomy, grounded in the robust French strategic culture and military resources have, time and again, intersected and even collided with European projects.

First of all, France was both the initiator and the undertaker of the European Defense Community (EDC). The "plan Pleven"<sup>11</sup> issued in 1950 went as far as suggesting appointing a defense minister for Europe, with a common budget for defense and an army of 40 divisions of 13,000 soldiers (including German personnel) under a common uniform. The treaty funding the EDC was signed in May 1952 by the then six member states of the European Community. Nonetheless, a formidable political debate ensued in France (not only stoked by de Gaulle, as many tend to believe in retrospect, but also by an unlikely coalition including the Communist Party)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.vie-publique.fr/eclairage/18474-les-operations-militaires-externes-de-la-france-opex>

<sup>11</sup> René Pleven was President of the Council (the Fourth Republic highest executive office) at the time, and the "plan Pleven" was actually the brainchild of Jean Monnet.

over the supranationalist logics underlying the EDC project, and also against the very idea of a German rearmament and participation. The EDC project had to be scraped off, paving the way for a real takeoff of NATO's prerogatives. De Gaulle had not only opposed the EDC, but also criticized Euratom, which he blamed for hijacking France's nuclear autonomy. Eventually, in 1969, De Gaulle also made France leave NATO's integrated command structure.

De Gaulle's legacy remained influential after he left power: as the French developed the political and security aspects of the EU project, they conceived of it from an intergovernmental approach. In the mid-1970s, President Giscard d'Estaing saw the potential of investing in the EU's external relations, but was wary of any supranational instance in that area. He thus launched several initiatives aimed at fostering a "European Political Community" (a concept later revived by Emmanuel Macron<sup>12</sup>, see *infra*) and beefed up intergovernmental consultations through the G7, in order to coordinate communication on world crises.

The use of Europe as a lever for France's prosperity and influence was nothing new. De Gaulle had claimed that "Europe was the best device for France to become what she has never ceased to be since Waterloo – a prime world power"<sup>13</sup>. Under Giscard d'Estaing's presidency, the Minister for foreign affairs, Jean-François Poncet, coined the concept of "Europe puissance". It meant a Europe endowed with agency, or Europe as a hard power – which is eerily close to the Commission's current rhetoric. The notion of "Europe puissance" was widely used in the circles of French negotiators for EU affairs or diplomats. However, many European partners thought such a level of ambition was in fact part and parcel of the French national objective of keeping its "grandeur", therefore they saw it as an egotistic enterprise. As such notion of "Europe puissance" supposed that the Europeans acquired their own military capabilities and security resources, it was not always understood, not to mention accepted.

The French transpartisan political culture of military ambition and interventionism (culture de la projection, cf. 1.1.) endured and the country increasingly looked to Europe for help - in the deliv-

---

<sup>12</sup> <https://institutdelors.eu/en/publications/the-european-political-communitys-own-merits-and-limits/>

<sup>13</sup> Peyrefitte, Alain, *C'était De Gaulle*, Fayard, 1994. "L'Europe c'est le moyen pour la France de redevenir ce qu'elle a cessé d'être depuis Waterloo : la première au monde ».

ery, but not so much in the conception part. It was in that search for ways to achieve "Europe puissance" that François Mitterand revitalized the Western European Union in the 1980s, then that Chirac stood firm – albeit alone –, during the Maastricht treaty negotiations in defending the idea of a European defense that would be an alternative to NATO.

Under the Chirac presidency, France took stock of the changing era and made its transition to the EU more explicit. In a televised interview, on February 22nd, 1996, Chirac announced the abolition of compulsory conscription, the creation of the new missions of "projection de forces", a new role for nuclear deterrence, which became the guarantee of the conventional forces, and – last but not least – an important decrease in defense budget. All these changes were to be conducive to a strengthened European strategic policy.

What didn't change, however, was France's unique posture on foreign policy and its vision of its role in the world. The ideal of "universalism" present in the French intellectual culture reverberated into a strong diplomatic identity, so strong that it entailed divergences with allies, and at points even tensions. On several occasions, it even led the French authorities to make statements that run counter to the spirit of equality and coordination. Chirac's harsh reaction to the "new member states" and some of the candidates supporting the US's operation in Irak are a case in point. Everyone remembers its famous gibe: "ils ont perdu une bonne occasion de se taire" (meaning: "they missed a great opportunity to keep their mouth shut").

Lastly, given its geographical location, its colonial past, and its continued engagement in Africa, France tends to look South rather than East for the defense of its core strategic interests. That tendency is strengthened by a strategic outlook that remains shaped partly by Cold War, Gaullist foreign policy legacy, "based on the willingness to carve out a 'third way' between the Soviet-led and the U.S.-led blocs, through some form of accommodation with Moscow while maintaining an independent nuclear force and a French area of influence in Africa"<sup>14</sup>.

However, for France, European cooperation no longer appears as one option among others but as the only way out.

---

<sup>14</sup> Hugo Meijer, Stephen Brooks, "Illusions of Autonomy – Why Europe cannot provide for its security if the United States pulls back", *International Security*, vol. 45, n°4 (Spring 2021), pp. 7-43.

Today, European interests are France's interests. It would be wrong to say that France has given up on its ambition to assert global influence. But it is safe to claim that France went from seeing Europe as an instrument to gain global influence to an end in itself, thereby largely projecting its nationalist ambitions at the European level <sup>15</sup>.

### 1.3. The NATO-EU defense equation

In 2009, France returned to NATO's integrated command, mostly in order to solve the crisis in trust it had perceived in allies and partners. It didn't come as too difficult a move, as France's robust strategic culture was able to thrive in the NATO environment. But the full [but for nuclear contingency planning] reintegration into the military command in 2009 didn't mean that the French forsook their idea of grandeur, nor their idea of a Union endowed with military might and standing autonomous in the world. Indeed, contrary to the British, who systematically saw the EU as a threat to their sovereignty and their influence, and contrary to the "new Europeans", integrated in 2004 and 2007, who focused on the economy and trusted only the US with their security, the French wanted to see the EU as maximizing the agency, the protection and the visibility of their country.

In a 2019 report, the French Parliament observed that France was increasingly listened to at NATO and had gained credibility and a pivotal place within the integrated command, thanks to its participation in the Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP), but also on account of its operational competence in overseas operations. The report concluded: "It is therefore in a good position to advocate for the strengthening of European defense, not against the United States but with it"<sup>16</sup>. In other words, the reintegration into NATO's integrated command and the efforts made by the French reassured many European partners and helped legitimize the French claim that the EU should be endowed with hard power.

To this day, and despite having rejoined NATO's integrated command structure, part of the French political elite sees NATO with

---

<sup>15</sup> Dempsey, Judy, "France's military pivot to Europe", Strategic Europe blog, Carnegie Europe, 2022.

<sup>16</sup> Conway-Mouret, Hélène, Le Gleut, Ronan, Senate report, "Défence européenne, le défi de l'autonomie stratégique », 2019 available in English at <https://www.senat.fr/rap/r18-626-2/r18-626-20.html>

reluctance, and, at best, as a third party. Macron once dubbing NATO as “braindead”<sup>17</sup> is a prominent example. There is a strong tug, in the French strategic mind, between autonomy and reliability as an ally. In the latest National Strategic Review (2022), one of the objectives is to be an “exemplary ally” while the bulk of the document keeps reiterating the need for European autonomy in defense. All in all, when the French and the other member states talk about the defense of Europe, they simply may not have the same perimeter – nor the same defenders – in mind. Central Europeans, along with other staunchly Atlanticist countries, often believe that when Macron speaks about strategic autonomy for Europe, he is suggesting a gradual weakening of NATO or the creation of a defense structure that would compete with the U.S.-led military alliance. The level of commitment put into building European defense – and the amount of sophistication put into the numerous non-papers and other initiatives – created a perception of France as domineering, although some commentators<sup>18</sup> recently recognized that there was a definite shift in France’s views.

Jean-Pierre Maulny considers the “strategic culture inculcated in France’s civil and military elite”<sup>19</sup> as a determining factor for France’s positions towards NATO. For years, the elite professed that the French view, as inherited from de Gaulle, was unique and that Paris was right in advocating for EU defense. However, that culture is not inflexible, firstly because of the turning point which occurred in the 1990s, but also because of the increasing Atlanticist influence that came along with the Sarkozy administration in 2000. The bureaucratic and the sociological angles are important ones to consider, since the divide is not so much between military and civilian actors as it is between the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but also, and more importantly, between generations. Even before the reintegration into NATO’s military command, the US-led military operations following the September 2001 attacks fed a new generation of strategists, diplomats and officers – as usual, mostly men, apart from the unusual figure

---

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/11/07/emmanuel-macron-warns-europe-nato-is-becoming-brain-dead>

<sup>18</sup> Ignacio Fuente Cobo, “La política de defensa en Francia: ¿el fin de la independencia estratégica?”, Documento Analysis IIEE, 2016.

<sup>19</sup> Maulny, Jean-Pierre, “France’s reception of the EU defence industrial toolbox”, IRIS/ARES group paper, February 2024, <https://www.iris-france.org/notes/frances-perception-of-the-eu-defence-industrial-toolbox/>

of Therese Delpech – who was under greater US influence. The older generation of French executives could not or would not speak English and had remained part of the era when the European elite spoke French. In contrast, the new generation of think-tankers and policy-makers voiced much sarcasm with regard to the French endeavours in Brussels and the plans for a “geopolitical Europe”. They expressed impatience toward the herbivore Europeans who failed to see they evolved in a world of carnivores, while the French political-military staff reveled in the pragmatism and responsiveness of NATO.

In such evolving context, the decision made by Jacques Chirac in 2003 to refuse his support to (and threaten with a veto) the American military campaign in Iraq was much criticized in France. It almost became a generational controversy. Eventually, the US attacked Iraq without a UN resolution, and everything that happened since, from the invasion of Crimea to the wave of terrorist attacks in Europe, then the Russian attack on Kiev, reinforced the appeal of pragmatism and of the “hard power” perspective on foreign affairs. The change in perspective was made evident with Emmanuel Macron’s choice of appointing Jean-Yves Le Drian, a former minister of Defense, as his first minister for Europe and Foreign affairs, as well as by his recurrent use of war rhetoric (‘war on COVID’, ‘war economy’, ‘demographic rearmament’).

It is important to state that all that never amounted to a full, definite and admitted Euratlantic perspective, nor to a renouncement to the objective of a EU “hard” power. Indeed, at the political level, the French also felt growing impatience towards the United States, especially during the Syrian crisis. When President Obama decided not to retaliate against Syria’s Assad regime following the use of chemical weapons in 2013, or when President Trump left the Kurdish fighters at the mercy of Turkish troops in 2019, “the French felt similar sentiments of abandonment and betrayal to those European NATO allies are now experiencing after the Afghan debacle”<sup>20</sup>.

For all the soul-searching that characterized the post-Cold War period, the advocacy for “Europe puissance” remained as a consensual trait in France, one that President Macron reasserted

---

<sup>20</sup> Bouemar, Victor, “European defence : what does France want ?”, *Clingendael Spectator*, September 2021, <https://spectator.clingendael.org/en/publication/eu-collective-defence-what-does-france-want>

clearly and forcefully, from the 2017 Sorbonne speech<sup>21</sup> to more recent declarations ("I do not believe that Europe waters down France's voice: France has its outlook, its history, its view of international affairs, but it builds much more useful and stronger action when it does so through Europe"<sup>22</sup>)

## 2. *Europe de la défense* or European Defense? The highs and lows of France's rationale and political communication

In order to use Europe as a lever for its defense and security interests, France tried to bolster European cooperation beyond the economic and trade projects and to give it firepower as well as a political impulse. The successive French governments have put bold initiatives on the EU table and tried to improve their communication, beyond the cryptic notion of "*Europe de la défense*", into something more palatable for its partners as well as more pragmatic.

### 2.1. The French *discours de la méthode* on European Defense

"Few European countries have erected political-military independence from the USA as one of the key, constitutive elements of EU's identity and even political sovereignty in general"<sup>23</sup> (my emphasis). Nicole Gnesotto showed how France managed to extend the ideal of autonomy beyond the national scope to Europe itself. Nevertheless, while the French accepted the hybrid (supranational and intergovernmental) method of European construction in many areas and projects, they considered the sectors of foreign policy and defense as a "*domaine réservé*", confined to intergovernmental methods. With such a level of ambition contrasted with such a cautious approach on the methods for defense and security, it is hardly surprising that the French positions sometimes raised a few eyebrows in European capitals.

In fact, the expertise acquired over the decades of exercising autonomous decision-making, launching operations, and perfect-

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2017/09/26/initiative-pour-l-europe-discours-d-emmanuel-macron-pour-une-europe-souveraine-unie-democratique>

<sup>22</sup> «The Macron Doctrine», interview of Emmanuel Macron by Gilles Gressani for Le Grand Continent, November 2020, <https://geopolitique.eu/en/2020/11/16/the-macron-doctrine/>

<sup>23</sup> Gnesotto, Nicole, "France-Europe : un projet toujours contrarié?", *Revue Défense nationale*, 2021-06, Vol.841 (6), p.31-37.

ing deterrence doctrine resulted in a growing distrust regarding the expertise available in Brussels. On the one hand, French policy-makers sided with Ursula Von der Leyen and back her notion of «geopolitical Europe»; on the other hand, they felt uneasy when it came to armament-related issues (see 3.3.2), as when France opposed the Commission's first communication on defense industry in the 1990s. Yet, it is important to recall that such reluctance was not based on unilateralistic whims but on France's praxis. As a matter of fact, when the French diplomats and military staff pushed the European Defense Agency to the forefront, in the same decade, it was because they considered that the EDA, being a specialized agency, had better expertise.

The French method for *l'Europe de la défense* was not born out of intrinsic or desired isolation, but rather out of uniqueness. As a result of the characteristics listed in the first chapter, France set for itself very structured and ambitious defense policies through the successive White Books regularly published since 1972, and updated through National Strategic Reviews. France was among the few European countries keeping the concept of high intensity in its doctrine documents (see for example, the Concept d'Emploi des Forces Terrestres<sup>24</sup> for 2020-35, for the Army).

Also, for the French, more than for many other member states, the Balkans war was a true wake-up call, as it made it clear that there was no phone number on which Europeans could be called. Security on the continent depended on the Americans, and that was felt as a failure, given the French objective of self-reliance. France thus supported the efforts made by Javier Solana to reconcile the member states' views and develop a bedrock of diplomatic and geopolitical consensus. The French endeavored to make the Berlin Plus arrangements work, laid out huge planning efforts for operation Concordia (EUFOR Macedonia, 2002) and went as far as appointing a general to head the small mission. The French had very precise ideas of what had to be done and set out to achieve it, sometimes even without the assurance it would be approved by other member states, as was patent in the battle group project. Artemis (or EUFOR Congo, 2003), one of the operations that followed the creation of the battle groups, was set up and then led by France, with up to 75% of its military personnel being French. Last and certainly not the least,

---

<sup>24</sup> [https://www.c-dec.terre.defense.gouv.fr/images/documents/documents-docrtrine/20210929\\_NP\\_CDEC\\_DDO\\_RFT\\_3-2-0-CEFT.pdf](https://www.c-dec.terre.defense.gouv.fr/images/documents/documents-docrtrine/20210929_NP_CDEC_DDO_RFT_3-2-0-CEFT.pdf)

the French felt many times the pain of solitude in their fights against terrorism as well as for stabilization in Africa (operations Epervier, Sangaris, Serval, Licorne...). So many solo combats – and the expertise gained from them – also explain the attitude sometimes perceived as intransigence or hauteur.

Nevertheless, Emmanuel Macron's election in 2017 was accompanied by a rhetoric calling for reviving and strengthening European defense cooperation. The moment was ripe: the United Kingdom had just voted on exiting the EU, which gave French aides and advisors around Federica Mogherini, in the spring of 2016, the opportunity to sprinkle mentions of "strategic autonomy" all over the new doctrine document, the EU Global Strategy<sup>25</sup>. This "pivot to Europe" was not just opportunistic, it was necessary. Still, some observers kept criticizing what they deemed unrealistic ambitions, while others mocked the French talent "to paint broad and vague vistas on the fate of Europe and France, often based on grand philosophical and theological debates"<sup>26</sup>.

## 2.2. The pitfalls of concertation and communication

In addition to the strong strategic culture of France, the level of commitment of its national armed forces is very high and comes with the acceptance of potential casualties in operations (known in the French military as *le prix du sang*, i.e. the price of blood). This operational specificity resulted in a gap in experience, which at points translated into misunderstandings, with most European partners.

In a 2019 report on defense, the French Senate emitted a warning about the communication gap in forceful terms:

The terms "strategic autonomy" or "European army" should not be used lightly: these terms are of concern to our partners, because they provoke a fear that the protection of NATO that is considered to be effective might be progressively replaced by a system that is still not clearly defined, and the fear that American disengagement in a virtual sense may end up leading to American disengagement in a real sense. Many misunderstandings with our European partners also arise from linguistic and semantic differences: we tend to use expressions that are ambiguous or not

<sup>25</sup> "Shared Vision, Common Action : A Stronger Europe", [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs\\_review\\_web\\_0.pdf](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> Bouemar, Victor, op. cit.

easily translatable, to which each assigns a different meaning. France has long spoken of a “Europe de la défense” [a Europe of defence] - an untranslatable expression that should be replaced by the notion of “European defence,” which is also closer to what the majority of the European countries want <sup>27</sup>.

While European defense bears a functional meaning, *Europe de la défense* has an almost teleological significance, harking back to France’s hope to have a voice through Europe. France has been using more often the phrase *défense européenne*, or “European defense”, which came with admitting that the defense of the continent could not aspire to be a mere copy of French defence policies at a greater scale. It also signalled a stronger awareness of the the importance of the “strat-com” homework in the French political-military milieu.

Until then, France had never gone to great lengths to develop a culture of compromise, essentially because of its strong capacities of projection and expertise. The country was often seen as “demanding” while it was in fact frustrated at the lack of efficiency and ambition on common defence, and also proved visionary about the risks of relying too heavily (and creating a burden) on the United States. The French had grown accustomed to acting on their own, launching initiatives and expressing strong views on European defence, but they had little practice of explaining, negotiating and cooperating with other member states, especially heavyweights like Germany. To be fair, practice was scarce to everyone, as European defence was not really an item: conflict prevention and terrorism were, for a long time, the only aspects tackled under the security and defence categories. Such lack of consultation was aggravated by German coyness regarding everything military.

Many French practitioners, politicians and officers admitted then, and still admit today, that it can be difficult to work with Germany<sup>28</sup>. Even recently, with the shock of the Russian invasion of Ukraine making collaboration on defence indispensable, French Senator Hélène Conway-Mouret expressed, after a mission to Berlin in January 2024 that “our relationship with Germany is complex because our objectives are different, as is our vision of European defence”<sup>29</sup>. The French see Germany as ready to com-

---

<sup>27</sup> French Senate Report, op. cit.

<sup>28</sup> Interviews carried out from December 2022 to March 2024.

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.helene-conway.com/2024/01/mon-deplacement-a-berlin-4/>

ply with all requirements and requests made by the US in the hope of keeping them onboard, whereas they claim, with some amount of bravado (as well as realism) that they have to get their destiny into their own hands.

Such distrust led France to go around Germany as much as it could and to make opportunistic coalitions or technical arrangements with other member states, for example with the United Kingdom (the bilateral summit held in Saint-Malo in 1998 was a landmark in European defence advancement), with Spain (on which France relied time and again for capacities), with the Czech Republic (especially in 2012-15) or more recently with Baltic states like Estonia (who took an active part in Operation Takuba). The French also turned to Poland in the framework of the Weimar Triangle, which allowed them to avoid the frequently awkward *tête à tête* with Germany. With such ability to identify whichever member state was closer to such or such aspects of defence policies and needs, France developed a vibrant defence diplomacy.

### 2.3. Beyond conceiving and hectoring, delivering

In terms of national personnel contribution, France has never been the highest contributor to CSDP missions<sup>30</sup>. As all of our above explanations show, that is not for lack of capacities, nor expeditionary culture. Rather, their pragmatism, desire for autonomy and preference for intergovernmental mechanisms have led the French to keep carrying out their own military operations and to explore all kinds of formats, such as Operation Takuba, a non-EU “coalition of the willing” in Africa. Such operations “of course” preempted many of the French capacities.

Still, few countries have been as bold in putting initiatives on the EU table as France. Long before the need for a common, Europe-grounded defence capacity was admitted amidst the strategic circles, France promoted a vision of “shared strategic autonomy”. Some of the initiatives seemed either too bold or ahead of the times, such as the French design for an Operational Headquarters (OHQ, 2009), then firmly rejected by the British<sup>31</sup>. Others have slowly gained support such the European Rapid

---

<sup>30</sup> In 2022, out of 2500 member states military personnels sent to CSDP missions, 118 were French (vs. 889 Spanish, 128 Austrians, 47 Germans, 396 Italians and 106 Portuguese)

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/jun/07/eu.france>

Deployment Capacity (EU RDC) of up to 5.000 troops, but are yet to be implemented. France also put the Lisbon Treaty to the test when it activated – for the first and only time – the mutual assistance clause (article 42.7 of the Treaty on European Union) in the wake of the terrorist attacks of November 13th, 2015 in Paris, with debatable results. The French Senate, in consideration of the lessons learned from that episode, recommended to clarify the functioning of that clause by assigning an informational and coordinating role to a specific EU body, for example the High Representative, as well as to set clearer procedures for providing the assistance requested<sup>32</sup>.

The French authorities realized the need to change the French approach in order to build a credible European defence; such pragmatism was expressed in the speech made by President Macron at the Sorbonne in September 2017<sup>33</sup>. President Macron somewhat provocatively stated that European defence would not be achieved through some grand designs crafted in Brussels. That shift in approach resulted in the launch of several initiatives at various levels, such as the development of structuring bi- or multinational capability programs such as the CaMo army interoperability project with Belgium, the Eurodrone, the FCAS and MGCS, but also the European Intervention Initiative (EI2) around “able and willing” countries. The EU’s Strategic Compass was even, by virtue of the EU presidency rotation calendar, adopted under French presidency. Despite France’s initial reluctance, the “Compass” was enthusiastically lauded by French pundits (some of whom candidly marvelled at “how relevant it was even though it was made in Brussels”<sup>34</sup>). France also tried to close the gap between “too much rhetoric” and “too little action” by pushing the European Defence Fund (EDF), the European Peace Facility (EPF), and by operationalizing the “mutual defence clause” (Art. 42.7 TEU).

Interestingly, as early as 2019, the French Senate made ambitious – and even visionary- proposals including raising the profile of defence issues within the European institutions by appointing a Director-General for Defence and Space, or European Commissioner or Deputy to the High Representative in these domains, and instituting a “Defence” format of the European

---

<sup>32</sup> Senate Report, op. cit.

<sup>33</sup> ‘Initiative pour l’Europe - Discours d’Emmanuel Macron pour une Europe souveraine, unie, démocratique’, Élysée website, September 2017.

<sup>34</sup> Interviews carried out between March 2023 and February 2024.

Council. Moreover, the French parliament proved very proactive and pragmatic proposing a defence and security treaty with the UK<sup>35</sup>.

In sum, while some European partners viewed the French as mavericks, France saw itself as a harbinger – and quite legitimately so. Unfortunately, foresight does not solve all the equations. Two major constraints are in the way of European defence : the “profound defense capacity shortfalls that will be hard to close, and ‘strategic cacophony’, that is, profound, continent-wide divergences across all the domains of national defense policies”<sup>36</sup>. The strategic cacophony was partially solved by Brexit and by the Russian aggression of Ukraine, while the capacity conundrum remains.

### 3. Getting real? France faced with the Ukraine war and the “European Zeitenwende”

#### 3.1. What happens when Cassandra is suddenly heard?

Before Ukraine was attacked by Russia, some EU administration voices had expressed the need for Europe to grow into a geopolitical force. The special adviser to European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Nathalie Tocci, in 2019, stressed that Europeans should not “stick their heads in the sand”<sup>37</sup> and instead should continue to pursue strategic autonomy. Commission President Ursula von der Leyen claimed during the State of the Union address of 2021 that it was time to create a European Defence Union<sup>38</sup>. From a French perspective, this seemed to prove right their call for an autonomous system of European collective defence. However, besides Brussels officials, few member states put their money on the EU to defend Europe. Even when the war broke out in Ukraine, some claimed that it led to a “reinforced legitimacy” and attractiveness for NATO<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> Senate report, op. cit.

<sup>36</sup> Hugo Meijer, Stephen Brooks, “Illusions of Autonomy – Why Europe cannot provide for its security if the United States pulls back”, *International Security*, vol. 45, n°4 (Spring 2021), pp. 7-43.

<sup>37</sup> Meijer, Brooks, op. cit.

<sup>38</sup> ‘2021 State of the Union Address’, European Commission, September 15th, 2021.

<sup>39</sup> Zima, Amélie, “NATO and the war in Ukraine – Limited role but reinforced legitimacy ?”, Research paper, IRSEM, 2023.

It certainly was propitious that France hold the EU Council presidency when Russia attacked Ukraine. The unprecedented shockwaves of the aggression accelerated the turn in risk assessment. The French presidency of 2022 became a turning point to raise awareness on the need to have the institutional framework and capability to respond to any type of crisis, across the full spectrum of operations, from hybrid to high-intensity conflicts. The need for autonomy was also connected to the imperatives of “war economy” and of the reduction of extra-European dependencies on energy as well as on military equipment and critical infrastructures in strategic areas such as transport, energy, space, or digital technologies.

One of Donald Tusk’s first statements upon his reelection as Polish Prime Minister was that Europe had to become a “serious military power”<sup>40</sup>. Yet,

“while France welcomes the new awareness and the announced increase in defence spending by several EU countries, there is a clear concern that insufficient coordination between Member States and off-the-shelf purchases might benefit the US industry rather than Europe’s, ultimately creating new dependencies”<sup>41</sup>.

France thus seems less and less alone in thinking Europe has to become a hard power. Nevertheless, its role cannot remain limited to advocacy or initiatives: the impact of the general, European *Zeitenwende* is due to reverberate into the French industry and strategic positions. The need for consultation is stronger than ever, yet the French domestic politics are also at stake.

The war in Ukraine clarified two aspects: it demonstrated that the EU was and had to be a major geopolitical actor, and, for that purpose, had to be better armed. Further, it clarified how the necessary complementarity between NATO and the EU was to be achieved, but not in the way the French had envisaged it. It is true that “France intends to maintain a unique position within the Alliance. It has a demanding and visible position because of the specificity and independence of its defense policy, in particular because of its nuclear deterrent”<sup>42</sup>. Yet, misunderstandings arise from the confusion between NATO as a security provider (acceptable for the French) and a US-led-NATO-only-defence perspective

---

<sup>40</sup> Joint press conference with Olaf Scholz, February 13th, 2024.

<sup>41</sup> Interview by IRIS researcher Gaspard Schnizler, <https://www.iris-france.org/166676-for-the-sake-of-autonomy-frances-defence-agenda-for-europe/>

<sup>42</sup> Dempsey, Judy, op. cit.

(unconceivable since the Republicans showed their reservations on spending more to defend Europe).

### 3.2. Making compromises, building a European pillar for NATO?

In a January 2023 declaration, the French MFA reiterated their official views on EU-NATO cooperation. On the occasion of a joint declaration by the EU and NATO on strengthening cooperation between the two organizations, they emphasized yet again the importance of “European defence” by reaffirming the importance of a “stronger, more operational European defense that contributes positively to global and transatlantic security and is complementary to and interoperable with NATO [...] France encourages the deepening of cooperation between the EU and NATO, with a concrete road map”<sup>43</sup>. The National Strategic Review of 2022 tasked France with being a driving force for cooperation between the EU and NATO. For the French officials and think-tankers not under the Atlanticist influence mentioned earlier, defending Europe should be possible without NATO, and NATO should theoretically be able to function even in case of an American retrenchment.

However, while France opposed the view held by many member states that nothing would be done outside of NATO, it ended up adopting the notion of “European pillar for NATO”<sup>44</sup>, called for by the German minister for Foreign Affairs Heiko Maas<sup>45</sup>. Macron used the phrase shortly after Mr Maas, during the London NATO Summit of 2019, and did do to specify that European defence was not an alternative to NATO but a pillar within the alliance. The notion that there could be a “European pillar within NATO” instead of a European defence evolving independently from the Alliance is doubtlessly a portentous move (or an important clarification) in the French doctrine. It showed the ability to evolve in a more flexible, pragmatic position, taking into account the worries of allies and partners as well as the gravity of the moment.

With increased capacity or volition to compromise, France recently surrendered its fixation on the “Europeanisation of conventional

---

<sup>43</sup> French MFA website, Jan 11th 2023.

<sup>44</sup> Cadier, David, “France and Central Europe are converging on security”, Carnegie Europe, February 2024, <https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/91826>

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/maas-rzeczpospolita/2279414>

deterrence and defence"<sup>46</sup> and on the "préférence communautaire"<sup>47</sup> for armament purchases, when faced with the need to provide ammunitions for the Ukrainians. Further, by getting tougher on Poutine, the French government also managed to make Eastern allies forget the "Bregançon" diplomatic attempt at soothing Poutine. France seems to be in the process of regaining the trust of East and Central Europeans, who "converge in noting a real, profound and impressive change in France's policies toward Ukraine and Russia—but also toward their own region"<sup>48</sup>.

The shockwave of Ukraine aggression has proved that France had been a harbinger of autonomy; yet, some partners claim that France has not really walked its security talk, because it remains short of NATO's 2% spending target in recent years. Other analysts see limitations to France's Ukraine war efforts. Germany's Kiel Institute research group published figures according to which France ranked 14th, behind Germany and the Netherlands, in terms of defense commitments to Ukraine. In their efforts to convince partners of their good faith and reliability, the French authorities went as far as clarifying both the spending goal and the figures of donations made to Ukraine.

While Germany remains a key ally for France, with which several agreements were made during Brexit (e.g. French support on PESCO, in return for German support on the European Defence Fund), the two EU heavyweights still cannot seem to converge on how European defence should work<sup>49</sup>. Nor do they seem able to fully coordinate: "Germany, traditionally France's closest ally in the EU, often complains about not being consulted whenever Macron delivers ambitious speeches about Europe"<sup>50</sup>.

France has remained at the vanguard and has kept an ambitious approach for security, as illustrated by its initiative to revive the European Political Community - yet another bold move. In the 1970s, the EPC was an intergovernmental forum, thus a way to talk without the European Commission leading the debates. Today, the intergovernmental vs. supranational debate remains

---

<sup>46</sup> Biscop, Sven, "The New Force Model: NATO's European Army?", Egmont Policy Brief, September 2022.

<sup>47</sup> Yves Bourdillon, «Les pays de l'OTAN se mobilisent pour fournir plus d'obus à l'Ukraine », Les Echos, April 5th 2024.

<sup>48</sup> Cadier, David, op. cit.

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.politico.eu/article/france-germany-macron-scholz-russia-defense-policy-european-union/>

<sup>50</sup> Dempsey, Judy, op. cit.

one sticky domestic issue. Several opposition parties, such as Rassemblement National, Les Républicains and others, claim that defence should remain a strictly national prerogative<sup>51</sup>. Then, while France has not been the only European country to sign a bilateral defence agreement with Ukraine<sup>52</sup> (Germany and the United Kingdom also did, and Poland is contemplating following suit<sup>53</sup>), it is yet another way of dealing with security matters outside of the EU framework as well as separately from the Atlantic Alliance and putting oneself ahead of the others.

Jan Joel Andersson recently showed that the network of defence and security cooperation of each EU member state, on top of that built by the EU as a whole, ended up looking like a bowl of “messy spaghetti”, making it difficult to envisage coordinated and effective common defence policies<sup>54</sup>. Among the EU member states, France has one of the most comprehensive and intricate network of such defence diplomacy bonds, which reflects the many economic and industrial interests. As exposed in the first part, the linkage between foreign policy and defence diplomacy is tight, and it regularly stirs France’s partners’ suspicion of a gap between what the French profess and the actual leeway and will of the French Government for “Europeanizing” defence.

At the operational level, France’s European defence agenda remains guided by three key priorities whose urgency has been emphasized by the current crisis in Ukraine: accelerating the operationalization of the European command structures (EUMS/MPCC) guaranteeing the EU’s field engagement capacity, operationalizing the “mutual defence clause” (Art. 42.7), and increasing the use of the European Peace Facility (EPF) to support partner countries. However, the industrial and political part of this agenda could remain a stumbling block.

### 3.3. Solving the nuclear equation

With the UK now out of the Union, France is the only European country endowed with military nuclear power. This national

---

<sup>51</sup> Interview of Annie G nevard, Secretary General of Les R publicains party, France Info, March 29th, 2024.

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.elysee.fr/en/emmanuel-macron/2024/02/16/agreement-on-security-cooperation-between-france-and-ukraine>

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.pism.pl/publications/bilateral-security-agreements-with-ukraine-present-opportunities-and-challenges>

<sup>54</sup> J.J. Andersson, “Stronger Together : European Defence Partnerships”, EUISS, 2023

nuclear deterrent, as explained, has been the core of French sovereignty for sixty years. The stumbling block is this intricacy of nuclear policy and ballistic deterrence within NATO and without France and of the French uneasiness over the question of extending deterrence to Europe.

NATO's nuclear posture, which is based on airborne weapons supplied and controlled by the United States and potentially deployed by the air forces of allied countries, has been developed without France. The war in Ukraine reactivated the reflections and preoccupations around deterrence<sup>55</sup>, and Trump's recent declarations fuelled the uncertainty about the future of the American commitment to NATO. This could weaken NATO's nuclear deterrent.

The National Strategic Review (NSR) of 2022 reasserted one important point of the French doctrine on nuclear deterrence : the recognition of the European dimension of France's "vital interests", which had been primarily spelled out in a speech in 2020 by Emmanuel Macron<sup>56</sup>. President Macron's NSR presentation speech in Toulon<sup>57</sup> confirmed that the French deterrence policy could apply to attacks outside the French territory. It came as a rectification of a slip of the tongue which had dismayed the strategic community, when the French president, in a televised interview, had said that a nuclear strike in Ukraine would not put France's vital interests at risk and thus would not call for a nuclear response from France. Some claimed that "the blunder [was] not fortuitous, and [was] probably due to [Far Right opposition party] Rassemblement National's bill on "nationalizing nuclear deterrence" <sup>58</sup>.

The French President reaffirmed, during the 2023 Munich Security Conference, that the French nuclear deterrent also comprised a European dimension and suggested European partners should attend the exercises of the French strategic force and take part in dialogues on French nuclear deterrence. However, one cannot

---

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/european-issues/737-the-defence-of-europe-by-europeans-a-myth-a-necessity-an-ambition-a-hope>

<sup>56</sup> [https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2022/10/15/macron-comment-raises-doubts-on-french-position-in-case-of-russian-nuclear-strike-in-ukraine\\_6000434\\_4.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2022/10/15/macron-comment-raises-doubts-on-french-position-in-case-of-russian-nuclear-strike-in-ukraine_6000434_4.html)

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2022/11/09/a-toulon-le-president-de-la-republique-presente-la-revue-nationale-strategique>

<sup>58</sup> Lydia Wachs, Liviu Horovitz, France's Nuclear Weapons and Europe, Options for a better coordinated deterrence policy, SWP Comment 2023/C 15, March 9th 2023, <https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/frances-nuclear-weapons-and-europe>

deduce from this that France would be prepared to simply offer its nuclear deterrent<sup>59</sup>, due to the aforementioned internal political tensions, but also due to the fact that, practically speaking, France's nuclear arsenal would not be enough to protect all of Europe<sup>60</sup>.

It can be argued that by virtue of the "aggressive sanctuarization" principle the French nuclear deterrent capacities give more credibility and weight to any form of potential French participation in the Ukraine war. Nevertheless, with the credibility of the nuclear protection far from assured, as it cannot cover the whole continent, other member states have scrambled to envisage new ways of protection. In particular, the "European Sky Shield" project led by Germany created frustration<sup>61</sup> on the French side because of the potential impact on the latter's national deterrence.

#### 3.4. Taking the defence industrial plunge? *Non, merci*

An even greater ambivalence, or "push and pull" dynamics, can be observed on the issues of European capabilities and of the European Defence and Technological Industrial Base (EDTIB), where enthusiasm and increased sense of urgency contrast with defensive interests.

As far as political doctrine is concerned, France supports consolidating a stronger and more competitive EDTIB, bringing the different national industrial bases closer together, helping SMEs and encouraging the emergence of European champions. Those ambitious and enthusiastic views are shared by many member states as the way to go, especially now that the Ukraine war has made the risks more visible. As such, Paris advocates for a greater harmonizing of the recently introduced capability instruments (CARD, PESCO, EDF). This vision materialized in the Versailles Declaration<sup>62</sup>, released in March 2022, in which Member States manifested their intention to focus their investments on identified strategic shortfalls, and develop new

---

<sup>59</sup> Emmanuel Maître, French Deterrence in the Third Nuclear Age, FRS research paper, December 2023.

<sup>60</sup> <https://www.ifri.org/fr/espace-media/lifri-medias/armes-nucleaires-francaises-peuvent-protoger-leurope>

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2023-06-22/france-against-germanys-european-sky-shield-initiative>

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/54773/20220311-versailles-declaration-en.pdf>

incentives to encourage collaborative investments and joint procurement programs.

France echoed the views expressed by the European Commission, putting the financing of the defence industry as a priority. Unsurprisingly, it supported the Internal Market and Defence Commissioner Thierry Breton when he promoted more EU funding for defence – for example by commenting that EDIRPA, the €500 million EU fund to boost military equipment common procurement, was “admittedly of small magnitude,” and that Europeans had to “mobilize a much more significant budget”<sup>63</sup>. In some concrete projects, the participation of France has also been enthusiastic : it is now the first beneficiary country for amounts from the European Defence Fund and is also one of the most active countries in PESCO projects (it takes part in 48 out of the 68 currently under way, and leads on 14 of them). France has also petitioned to bring defence-related industries within the scope of the new sovereignty fund, only to be faced again with scepticism. Indeed, some claimed that such enthusiasm only concealed the interests of French defence industrial spearheads such as Dassault and Thalès<sup>64</sup>.

Yet, one can deny that changes have occurred : the traditional French views on defence industry could evolve now, just because France needs the European level to keep its own industry alive<sup>65</sup>. It is not so much the official position that has matured: the industrial sector itself has evolved and restructured, allowing some thinking room. Thus, the French industry was able to see with more optimism the market liberalization. However, the institutional and administrative organization is so deep-rooted that it is hard to question and even more to transform.

Then, the “special” (or, rather, peculiar) relationship between France and Germany is, yet again, at the heart of the industry and interoperability issues<sup>66</sup>. Two key armament projects, FACS (fighter jets) and MGCS (tanks), were long blocked by the lack of political will, then by delays on finding a consensus on the division of labour. As France does not manufacture Leclerc tanks any

---

<sup>63</sup> Speech, Business Bridge Europe’s defence conference, Brussels, October 2023.

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.euractiv.com/section/defence-and-security/news/france-wants-european-defence-industry-in-on-eu-sovereignty-fund/>

<sup>65</sup> [https://www.lemonde.fr/en/economy/article/2024/01/10/france-s-defense-industry-threatened-by-new-competitors\\_6418389\\_19.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/economy/article/2024/01/10/france-s-defense-industry-threatened-by-new-competitors_6418389_19.html)

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.politico.eu/article/france-germany-macron-scholz-russia-defense-policy-european-union/>

more and badly needs some replacement, whereas Germany still builds Leopard tanks, interests, once again, diverge. French MPs recently complained of the lukewarm attitude of their German counterparts<sup>67</sup>.

Concerning arms exports, Berlin would prefer more harmonized rules at the EU level, while Paris is very reluctant to let anyone have a say in whom they sell weapons to - as recently expressed by a member of the Parliament's defense committee<sup>68</sup>. A looming case of friction could materialize over sales to Saudi Arabia. France is one of the country's main supplier of military gear and the current question is whether weapon systems built in collaboration with Germany could be sold there.

France was supportive of the announcements made about European defence industry initiatives during the 2024 Munich Security Forum. Paris knows there is dire need for concertation, collective action and policies at the EU level in order to gain clout on the world stage but also to support national defence industries. Nevertheless, as Jean-Pierre Maulny reckons : " France is probably not ready to take the plunge and delegate this responsibility to the Commission"<sup>69</sup>. This constant tug between ambition for the EU and fear of losing control was illustrated by the French reservations on ASAP, the ammunition purchase initiative<sup>70</sup>. Any such ad hoc initiatives makes France, as defence industry heavy-weight, queasy. In this specific case, the French seemed to be surpassed by more pragmatic and agile member states such as the Czech Republic, whose initiative had not initially been bought by the French.

#### 4. Conclusion

"Are the Europeans serious?" was the question put by Sven Biscop<sup>71</sup> about the actual amount of political will EU leaders are ready to leverage to foster robust European defence. The question may be relevant at the EU level, but needs not be asked

---

<sup>67</sup> Blog by H el ene Conway-Mouret, op. cit.

<sup>68</sup> Tweet by French MP Jean-Louis Thi eriot : "France will not accept that export policy isn't steered at national level", [https://twitter.com/JL\\_Thieriot/status/1751974675079389219?s=20](https://twitter.com/JL_Thieriot/status/1751974675079389219?s=20)

<sup>69</sup> Maulny, Jean-Pierre, op. cit.

<sup>70</sup> [https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/act-support-ammunition-production-asap\\_en](https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/act-support-ammunition-production-asap_en)

<sup>71</sup> Biscop, Sven, op. cit.

about France. Ever since the French understood they needed the European level to exist on the international scene, they have been serious about European defence, perhaps even unrelenting. Whenever France could not act as an engine, it did as a catalyst. Through the invocation of article 42.7 of the treaty, the insistence in making Europeans take part in “out of area” interventions, the impulse to build weapons together (even though it had to be the French way) and initiatives such as EI2, they have hectored member states, as well as the Brussels administrations, into getting progress under way. Sometimes, by hectoring them, they also irked them, but they paved the way for debates and moves that proved crucial since the beginning of the Ukraine war.

Nonetheless, France is too big to merely act as a goad, and too small to remain the sole engine for European defence. The dynamism of its internal strategic culture, the heft and strength of its industry scene, the rich legacy of geostrategic positions and ventures, all of this gives the country the critical mass to act but can also be cumbersome or even blinding when compromise is needed. The capacity to engage other member states – diplomatically but also politically - without losing the level of ambition will remain crucial in the years to come.

The reintegration in NATO’s military command is relatively recent and has not shown yet the full potential of France for transformation, adaptation and contribution to articulating NATO and CSDP. Also, as the war in Ukraine sparked internal debates - further intensified by the June 2024 snap elections - and uncertainties about their capacities to defend their own land, the French still seem to be holding back. This has an impact on the current follow-up to the “Sorbonne speech” of President Macron, but it does not limit the long-term potential of the country. If the European pillar of NATO holds part of the solution, France does certainly possess a lot of the stamina, competence and capacity necessary to make it work.

## Bibliography

- Biscop, S. (2022). *The New Force Model: NATO’s European Army? Egmont Policy Brief*. Brussels, Royal Institute for International Relations. 285, pp. 1-6
- Bouemar, V. (2021). *European defence: what does France want?* [online]. Amsterdam, Clingendael Spectator. [Accessed:

- 2024]. Available at: <https://spectator.clingendael.org/en/publication/eu-collective-defence-what-does-france-want>
- Bourdillon, Y. (2024). Les pays de l'OTAN se mobilisent pour fournir plus d'obus à l'Ukraine [online]. *Les Echos*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.lesechos.fr/monde/europe/les-pays-de-lotan-se-mobilisent-pour-fournir-plus-dobus-a-lukraine-2086948#:~:text=Les%20pays%20de%20l%27Otan%20se%20mobilisent%20pour%20fournir,de%20munitions%20de%20leur%20alli%C3%A9%20face%20%C3%A0%20Moscou.>
- Breton, T. (2023). *Business Bridge Europe's defence conference*. Brussels.
- Cadier, D. (2024). France and Central Europe are converging on security [online]. *Carnegie Europe*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/91826>
- Conway-Mouret, H. & Le Gleut, R. (2019). Défense européenne, le défi de l'autonomie stratégique. In: *Senate report*. Paris. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.senat.fr/rap/r18-626-2/r18-626-20.html>
- Dempsey, J. (2022). France's military pivot to Europe [online], *Strategic Europe blog, Carnegie Europe*, [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://carnegieendowment.org/europe/strategic-europe/2022/11/frances-military-pivot-to-europe?lang=en>
- Fontanela, J. & Hébert, J. (1997). The end of the "French grandeur policy". In: *Defence and Peace Economics*. 8(1), pp. 37-55.
- Frank, R. (2021). Une culture française de la puissance., In: Bertrand, B. (ed.). Paris, La Découverte, pp. 23-33
- Fuente Cobo, I. (2016) *La política de defensa en Francia: ¿el fin de la independencia estratégica?* Madrid, IIEE.
- Gnesotto, N. (2021). France-Europe: un projet toujours contrarié? *Revue Défense nationale*. Paris. Vol.841 (6), pp. 31-37.
- Gressani, G. (2020). The Macron Doctrine [online]. *Le Grand Continent*, [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://geopolitique.eu/en/2020/11/16/the-macron-doctrine/>
- Horowitz, L. & Wachs, L. (2023). France's Nuclear Weapons and Europe, Options for a better coordinated deterrence policy [online], *SWP*. 2023/C 15. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/frances-nuclear-weapons-and-europe>

- Maillard, S. (2023). *The European Political Community's own merits and limits* [online]. Paris, Jacques Delors Institute. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://institutdelors.eu/en/publications/the-european-political-communitys-own-merits-and-limits/>
- Maître, E. (2023). French Deterrence in the Third Nuclear Age [online]. *FRS*. 16/2023. ISSN 2273-4644. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.frstrategie.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/recherches-et-documents/2023/162023.pdf>
- Maulny, J. P. (2024). *France's reception of the EU defence industrial toolbox* [online]. Paris, IRIS/ARES. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.iris-france.org/notes/frances-perception-of-the-eu-defence-industrial-toolbox/>
- Meijer, H. & Brooks, S. (2021). Illusions of Autonomy—Why Europe cannot provide for its security if the United States pulls back [online], *International Security*. Vol45 (4), pp. 7-43. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://direct.mit.edu/isec/article/45/4/7/100571/Illusions-of-Autonomy-Why-Europe-Cannot-Provide>
- Peyrefitte, A. (1994) *C'était De Gaulle*. Paris, Fayard. 600 p.
- Serfati, C. (2014). *L'industrie française de défense*. Paris, La Documentation française. Les Etudes de la Documentation Française, 5398.
- Thiériot, J. L. (2024): "France will not accept that export policy isn't steered at national level" [online]. *X Social Media Network*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: [https://twitter.com/JL\\_Thieriot/status/1751974675079389219?s=20](https://twitter.com/JL_Thieriot/status/1751974675079389219?s=20)
- Zima, A. (2023). *Limited role but reinforced legitimacy? In: NATO and the war in Ukraine*. Paris, IRSEM. 11 p.

## Chapter two

### Finland's EU Security Politics and NATO Membership

*Tuomo Melasuo*

#### **Abstract**

Besides geopolitics, political culture is essential for understanding Finland. Joining the EU and NATO are major changes in Finnish foreign and security politics. The history of the last two centuries explains how these memberships are integrated in the Finnish society.

Finland is an old cultural and socio-political entity that is very young as a nation and a state. For most of the past millennium, the Finns have been governed by outside forces - Swedish more than anything else, Russian also but much less.

When a part of Sweden, Finnish civil servants participated in the administration by using Swedish as bureaucratic vehicle with two consequences. First, Finns used to be governed in another language instead of their own, and second, in order to enter the state administration, they needed to learn Swedish and to work in a language that was not their own.

For the political culture, this resulted in the Finns relying on forces from outside their own sphere. This was visible in country's evolution between the World Wars, in the relations with Soviet

Union, and during the EU and NATO membership process. These features form the political culture from which the security and defence policies evolve.

From a global perspectives the NATO membership of Finland and Sweden has two dimensions. First, it impacts Europe's strategic autonomy and defence capabilities. What is the relationship between USA-led NATO and independent Europe after these two countries joined?

Second, in what measure do Finland and Sweden benefit from their neutrality despite their NATO membership? This heritage could be important to the relations towards the "Global South". The positive elements of this neutrality heritage could be important to Europe and NATO, maybe even more than their individual membership in the Atlantic organisation.

### ***Keywords***

Nordic Countries, Soviet Union, Neutrality, Defence, NATO.

## 1. Introduction

For understanding and analysing Finland's political evolution, particularly in the field of security politics, we must also consider, besides history and geopolitics, its cultural dimension, especially that of political culture. Paying attention to political culture might help us to avoid many problems, many traps connected to simplification related to analyses lying too much on geopolitical particularities.

Of course, joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, is a major change in Finnish foreign and security politics. As was even more becoming the member of the European Union, the EU, almost 30 years ago. In order to understand all the parameters and all the dimensions how the NATO membership impacts the Finnish society we need to have a look to the country's history at least during last two and half centuries.

This longer perspective allows us to understand why Finland had this "particular" relationship towards the Soviet Union, SU, after the Second World War until to the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the SU.<sup>1</sup>

However, this concerns mostly only the visible foreign policy of the country. Most of her national life can be explained by the internal and cultural evolution and by accumulation of different trauma.

Finland is an old cultural and socio-political phenomenon that is very young as a nation and a state. This forms a paradox where her way of observing the outside world and her place in it consists of particular flavours. One of these features is that most of the last millenary the Finns have been governed by outside forces - Swedish more than anything else, Russian also but much less.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Few words about finlandization.* Usually, it meant Finland giving up lot of things to SU for geopolitical reasons. However, if we look upon it from the point of view of Finland's political and general culture the picture is very different. Before 1917 there were very little experience of Finland as independent entity. Myself I was criticizing this tradition by saying that we the Finns, our grandfathers were trying to please the Germans and Third Reich 1918-1944, our fathers the Soviets 1944-1990 and our own generation the Americans. The joining NATO process is the third, until now the last and the highest stage of Finlandization. And we managed to Finlandize even Sweden. Myself, I was thinking already for two decades that if Sweden joins, we should also join NATO. But it went differently, Finland went first and took Sweden at board.

Since 15<sup>th</sup> century the Finnish civil servants and clergy have increased their participation in administration of the country then part of Sweden. However, in doing so they have used mostly and mainly Swedish as bureaucratic vehicle. This has had two main consequences. First, Finns are used to be governed in another language than their own, and second, in order to find their place in state or church administration they needed to learn Swedish and so to work in a language that is not their own.

From the political culture's point of view this has resulted that Finns are used to rely on forces emanating from outside their own sphere. In practice this can be seen in country's political evolution between the World Wars, in the relations with Soviet Union after the Second World War, and lately during the NATO membership process. These particular features in Finnish political culture form the background where the security and defence policies of the country evolve.

From more global perspectives the signification of Finland and Sweden joining the NATO can be observed from the point of view of two essential dimensions.

- First, what is its impact to Europe's strategical autonomy and her own defence politics and defence capabilities? In other words, what is the relationship between USA led NATO and the independent Europe after these two countries have joined the alliance.<sup>2</sup>
- Second, in what measure Finland, and especially Sweden, will be able and have the will, the desire to maintain and to benefit from their long and rich heritage of neutrality despite of their new membership in the military alliance. This heritage could be very important to the relations of these two countries towards the so-called "Global South"<sup>3</sup> in the context of the

---

<sup>2</sup> Monday 29 April 2024 there was an extremely interesting webinar "The impact for Europe of Finland and Sweden joining NATO", with three panellists *Mr. Jan Eliasson*, Swedish former minister of foreign affairs, ambassador and UN Deputy Secretary-General, as well as *Mr. Pekka Haavisto*, member of the parliament and the former minister of foreign affairs of Finland, and *Mr. François Heisbourg*, Senior Adviser for the IISS, International Institute for Strategic Studies, and for the FRS, Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique, Paris. This webinar was organised by EUROCAPITALES International - Helsinki. <https://www.eurocapitales.com/en/activites/webinaire-24>

<sup>3</sup> This is an unhappy concept that is nowadays in mode, it is only used here because of its convenient commodity. Actually, it would be better to use it in plural "Global Souths". Another possibility would be "Third World", however it would need explanations and is, in fact, old-fashioned.

overall international evolution. The maintaining of the positive elements of this heritage of neutrality could be important also to Europe and to NATO, maybe even more than their individual membership in the Atlantic organisation.

## 2. Short security and military history of Finland

At least during six centuries Finland formed the eastern province of the Swedish Kingdom, one of the first four then six provinces, until 1809 when Sweden lost that province to Russia. In what comes to foreign and security politics of the kingdom, the Finns were important in a rank and file of the royal army who participated in most of the Swedish military campaigns. Some of the Finnish regiments became famous because of their participation in the "Thirty Years' War" between the Catholics and the Protestants during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Same took place also in the following century during the "Great Northern War", where all the existing regular army units, and also those specially created for that war in Finland, were sent to the battlefields in eastern and southern shores of the Baltic Sea.

The Finns and those of them who had military experiences did not benefit from that experience when, in the "War of Finland", Sweden lost her eastern provinces to Russia in 1809. Local elites welcomed the Russian troops to Turku and even organised balls to Russian officers.

- *Autonomous Grand Duchée*. From 1809 onwards Finland was a part of Russian Empire as Autonomous Grand Duchée, with personal union with Russian Tsar, until 1917. This autonomous status meant that Finland emerged as an individual political entity. "Swedes we are no longer, Russians we do not want to become, let us therefore be Finns" became the slogan of many inhabitants of the Grand Duchée.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was rather prosperous period when the country progressed in many fields and when bases for modern Finland were laid. The strategy of the Finnish elite was to locate their representatives so high as possible in Tsarist civilian and military structures for defending the interest of the Grand Duchée. So, for instance, four Finns served as governors of Alaska in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1860's the Grammar school structure was created in the cities. At the end of the century the relations with the Tsarist administration deteriorated and the Finns felt the repression against autonomous

status stronger.<sup>4</sup> This led towards the desire of independence that was declared the 6<sup>th</sup> of December 1917, and the troubles started.

- *Independent Finland*. Immediately after the Independence in December 1917 Finland entered in the Civil War at the end of January 1918. Mainly because social and economic inequalities, this civil war broke out between the "Reds", mostly closed to worker's movement and poor or landless population in Southern Finland, and the "Whites", more bourgeois owning-class citizens. During the First World War some patriotic young Finns had gone clandestinely to Germany for getting military training. In early spring 1918 these "Jaegers" returned to Finland and joined the White Army where they became officers. In theory, the civil war ended in mid-May 1918, but in reality, the executions went on longtime after the cease-fire. Altogether almost 40.000 casualties died in that war and its aftermath.

The "nationalist" viewpoint says that the decisive battle was that one of Tampere in March-April 1918. However, let us notice that at the same time the German Baltic Division and its 13.000 soldiers embarked in southern coast of Finland and marched to Helsinki "liberating" the capital and few other cities in the vicinity. Who is in power in Tampere is much less important than who can control the southern Finland's coastal area and so also master the sea road to Saint Petersburg.

After the Civil War this German contribution was recognized by the Finns when they elected a German prince as the King of the country. However, this gentleman never came to Finland saying that there must be too cold. But the gesture was there, and it also reflected the beginning of the long Germanophilia in the country. Nevertheless, same time Germany lost the First World War, and it meant also that the Finnish dreams about close German relations could not be realized immediately, and Finland selected a "republican regime" for government. How largely this Germanophilia was spread is difficult to evaluate so sensitive the item is. Anyhow it was maybe more loudly advocated by a minority than shared by the majority of the Finns.

---

<sup>4</sup> Ángel Ganivet y García was the first Spanish consul in Helsinki 1896-1898. He was one of the few foreigners observing Finnish society at that epoch and wrote articles for *Defensor de Granada*, which were later published under the name "Cartas finlandesas" in 1905. Today these texts are understood as rather objective description of that time.

After the Civil War, in the 1920's, and even more in the 1930's, Finland was a divided society. This internal division reflected also to foreign policy orientations where three tendencies co-existed, namely the Nordic, the "Mitteleuropa", and the German Third Reich proximity. One particularity in this interwar period in Finland was the so-called "Greater Finland" ideology and movement that aimed to attach to the Finnish Republic all the Finnish speaking areas and populations in neighbouring countries. This was intended to concern those living in Soviet Union, but also in the North of Norway and Sweden as well as some Baltic areas were considered. Some ethno-racial theories were also linked into this movement. It also consisted of some military adventures crossing the Soviet Union borders by radical right-wing groups.

This kind of mental environment formed the frames where the Finnish society faced the Second World War, which in her case was divided in four parts - Winter War, Interim Peace, War of Continuation, and War of Lapland.

- *Second World War*. At the end of November 1939, the "Winter War" broke out between Finland and Soviet Union. It ended in mi-March 1940 and Finland lost about one tenth of her territory, especially the province of Karelia and the city of Vyborg. In Finnish collective memory the Winter War is mythic, and heroic story - country was fighting alone against huge enemy, it managed to avoid occupation, and finally the peace treaty was reached after enormous Soviet casualties.<sup>5</sup>

Almost one and half year later, in June 1941 Finland joined Germany in attack called "Operation Barbarossa" against the Soviet Union, the "War of Continuation" had started. The Finnish war goals were to conquer back those territories she had lost in Winter War. In theory, Finland was fighting a separate war of her own and thus was not a German ally. In practice, these two countries were very closed and fought together the Soviet Union. The Finns were fighting in south-east of the country, in Karelia, Petroskoi, and Ladoga area. The Germans had their troops in Lapland, that is in the North of Finland, and

---

<sup>5</sup> Finland fighting alone in the Winter War is a myth. At least, UK and even more France were ready to help Finland against SU aggression. Besides important arm aid from both countries France was preparing to send even troops to Finland when the peace treaty ended the war. The government of Edouard Daladier collapsed because of having failed to rescue Finland earlier. See Henrik Tala, "Talvisodan ranskalaiset ratkaisijat. Ranskan apu Suomelle 1939-1940", Minerva Kustannus, Helsinki, 2014.

they were responsible of the battle-front concerning about two thirds of border with Soviet Union<sup>6</sup>. There were about 40000 German troops in Finland already few weeks before the Operation Barbarossa. The war went on with changing success and failures for both sides until summer 1944 when Soviet Union started a massive attack on south-east of Finland. This led to the breakdown of Finnish-German partnership, as well as to separate cease-fire and to the "Moscow Armistice" between Finland and Soviet Union in September 1944. This treaty obliged Finland to get rid of German troops in Lapland and so led to the "War of Lapland" against Third Reich until the end of April 1945. During that war the withdrawing German troops burnt the province of Lapland in a significant degree.

- *Treaty of Cooperation, Friendship and Mutual Assistance, as well as the Cold War 1945-1990*. After The Paris Peace Treaty 1947 Finland and Soviet Union (SU) signed the "Treaty of Cooperation, Friendship and Mutual Assistance" in 1948 for regulating their reciprocal relations. The most important paragraph in this treaty implied that if there was a threat that somebody, especially Germany would attack the SU by using Finnish territory, the SU and Finland should have common consultations and decide how to react together. The treaty also said that the existence of this threat must be recognized by both partners.

In real life these consultations never took place during the 44 years' existence of that treaty. Once, in early 1960's the SU asked if the consultations should take place, but President Urho Kekkonen refused them. Nevertheless, this treaty also meant that Finland refused to benefit from the US Marshall Aid program after the Second World War in the late 1940's.

In September 1990 Finland announced unilaterally that she is regarding the Paris 1947 Peace Treaty as out of date and also that the paragraph on German threat was no more valid when the German unification had already taken place. Two years later, after the final collapse of the Soviet Union, both countries, Finland and Russia recognized that the "Treaty of Cooperation, Friendship and Mutual Assistance" has become obsolete.

---

<sup>6</sup> Pekka Visuri, Pasi Kesseli and Carl-Frederik Geust, "Suomen sodat 1939-1945. Selviytyminen maailmansodasta", Docendo, Jyväskylä, 2024, pp. 191-194, 198-199, 208-209, and 214-221

Along the "Moscow Armistice" and the Paris Peace Treaty, the Soviet Union had a base, a naval base in Southern Finland, in Porkkala. A year after Finland joining in 1955 the United Nations, the UN, the Soviet Union gave this Porkkala-base back to Finland. Both events signified that the relations between Finland and the SU were becoming more stabilised after the fighting during the Second World War.

From the mid-1950's onwards the main orientations of foreign and security politics of Finland can be condensed into three principal dimensions.

First, the country wanted to build up a neutral foreign and security policy profile, which meant that she stayed out of all the military alliances and blocs. It also implied that all the international actors, especially her neighbours and the big powers, would recognise and respect Finland's neutrality. However, this was a long road to go as it was only at the end of the 1980's that the SU's President Mihail Gorbatshev recognized Finland as neutral Nordic country.<sup>7</sup>

Secondly, Finland wanted to keep on to maintain her army, still in the limits of Paris Peace Treaty, for showing the outside world that she will be ready and able to defend the country and its borders.<sup>8</sup> Let us notice that the Finnish defence forces are based on conscription, which means that the country has important reserve forces as almost every men and nowadays also many women have had military training.

Thirdly, almost immediately after having joined the UN, Finland started to systematically build up an image of an active participant into international peace keeping activities. Following these principals, Finland took part for the first time into UN Peace Keeping operations in 1956 in the Suez crises. Second time was in Cyprus in early 1960's.

From the "Six-Day War" in the Middle East in 1967 onwards, Finland has participated without interruption in the peace keeping operations in the area, in such a degree that she has become

---

<sup>7</sup> Forsberg, Tuomas & Vogt, Henri, "Suomen ulkopoliittikan eurooppalaistuminen", in Suomen kansainväliset suhteet ja ulkopoliittikka, Suomen poliittinen järjestelmä - verkkokirja, URN:NBN:fi-fe20041404 and <https://blogs.helsinki.fi/vol-spj/ulkopoliittikka/>

<sup>8</sup> This was also a requirement of the "Treaty of Cooperation, Friendship and Mutual Assistance" with the SU. Even more, this was a kind of sine qua non condition for showing to the Soviet Union that Finland was able to defend herself alone, and that no consultations were needed.

"A Superpower of Peace Keeping". Maybe this was more obvious in the years after the October 1973 war when a Finnish General Ensio Siilasvuo, after having been second in command for UNTSO (United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation), took over the command of the UNEF II (United Nations Emergency Force II). Later he acted as the main coordinator for all the UN troops in the Middle East until the end of the year 1979. This phase consisted also the founding and organisation of UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon) in Southern Lebanon. Partly, one of the results of General Siilasvuo's activities was the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. Finland's participation into the UNIFIL has continued still recently especially in the framework of Finnish Irish battalion, today Finnish French common peace keeping unit.

On the field of neutrality politics and diplomacy the highest achievement of Finland until today has certainly been "The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe" (CSCE) in 1975. That conference was also a kind of consolidation of the Helsinki Process leading, two decades later, to the establishment of the "Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe" (OSCE), established in 1995 under the Paris Charter of 1990.

Last two decades of Cold War were politically, economically, and culturally rich for Finland and for Finnish society. Because stable relations with the Soviet Union Finland managed to further develop her belonging to Western Europe and to closer group of Nordic Countries.

In the field of economic cooperation Finland had joined the "European Free Trade Association", EFTA, as an associate member already in 1961. It was much later, in 1986, she became a full member of that free trade association. Already much earlier, in 1973 Finland had started to approach the EEC, which became later the EU, "European Union", by a free trade agreement. In practice this meant that little by little Finland started to fulfil the requirements of "acquis communautaires", of the "Copenhagen criteria", and became "EU compatible".

Finland wanted also to be active in other, more international domains such as many UN organisations. She also created already at the end of the 1960's a tool, the FINNIDA, to participate in development cooperation with other Nordic countries. In the UN context she took also actively part, for instance, to UNCTAD, "UN Conference on Trade and Development". The Finnish relations with the "Movement of Non-Aligned Countries", were more com-

plicated. Finland was not a member of this movement, not even an observatory member, still she wanted to show her positive attitude towards it, at least in those periods when the movement managed to reduce Est-West tensions between the superpowers. Despite of this, in the UN context, Finland was referring to the group of the Non-Aligned and Neutral Countries.

During those last two decades before the end of the Cold War Finland systematically developed her global profile and aimed to reassure her neutral status outside military alliances and her belonging culturally to Western Europe. As we have seen through the performances of the "The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe" and its consequences she was rather successful.

This "multipolar" approach has continued until our days. For instance, already since the first half of the 1990's, Finland created for herself "a Mediterranean policy". The reason for this was to show to Southern European countries that she wanted to support their goals in the Mediterranean context. Of course, Finland hoped that the southern countries would reciprocally show comprehension to her ambition in Nordic and Baltic environment. Today her participation, even if modest, in EU's Sahel activities follows the same logic. In 2021, Finland published her strategy for Middle East and North Africa including Sahel until 2024. The focus was on development cooperation trying to reinforce the gender equality. Finland also participated in EU's peacekeeping military operation. The military coups d'état during last two years have of course, impacted on all these activities that are now reduced into minima<sup>9</sup>.

### 3. Road to EU and prelude to NATO

After the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union Finland started to prepare herself to join in the European Union and her rapprochement to NATO. Further of recognising the precedent treaty with Russia obsolete the year 1992 seems to have been that of many radical changes and innovations.

In May 1992 Finland bought 64 F/A-18 Hornet fighters, this was a clear attempt to get close to the USA when neglecting European

---

<sup>9</sup> "Finland's strategy for development cooperation. Middle East and Northern Africa 2021–2024", Department for Africa and the Middle East, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Helsinki, 3 May 2021

or Nordic alternatives. This is seen as the first act preparing country's way to NATO.<sup>10</sup> In the same year 1992 Finland joined to recently founded NACC, North Atlantic Cooperation Council that was rather modest in its performances. Thus, together with Sweden, Finland joined already in 1994, the PfP, NATO Partnership for Peace Program. Because of their status of being neutral in military terms they joined the PfP program's field activities only in 1997.

After changing national legislation in 1995 Finnish forces could participate in NATO operations. Finland joined the NATO Response Force, NRF in 2008, and signed in 2014 with NATO a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) as did Sweden in same time. This MoU defines the frames for possible cooperation within the Finnish territory if both parties, especially the government of Finland, will express the will and the need to have such a cooperation.<sup>11</sup> In 2017, once again together with Sweden, Finland joined the JEF, Joint Expeditionary Force. This UK led rapid action group is composed by Dutch, Nordic, and Baltic countries that will support NATO, EU and UN in many civilian and military tasks if invited to do so. In practice, it also allows the UK to maintain and to reassure a presence and cooperation in Nordic and Baltic countries after having voted the previous year for leaving the EU - Brexit oblige!

From 1992 onwards, besides the UN peace keeping activities, Finland has participated in two NATO led crises management operations. These were, first, in 1999 the KFOR, the Kosovo Force for international peacekeeping in Kosovo, and second, in Afghanistan where Finland participated first in ISAF, International Security Assistance Force already since 2002 together with Sweden, and then also in RSM, Resolute Support Mission until 2021 both led by NATO.

All this evolution since the end of Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union meant that little by little Finland became NATO compatible and also said to practice what she called the "NATO option". This option occurred in public debate in spring 1995, just few months after that Finland had become EU member. This doctrine of NATO option consisted of the idea that Finland would take part in so many NATO activities than what was possible with-

---

<sup>10</sup> Unto Hämäläinen, "Kenraali valoi sillan yli Atlantin", in Helsingin Sanomat, 7.4.2024.

<sup>11</sup> Martti Lehto, "Suomen NATO-jäsenyyteen 20 vuoden matka", in Sotilasaikakauslehti, No. 2, 2022.

out becoming a member. And the open possibility to ask for the membership was exactly the "NATO option" that could be activated if and when necessary.

However, as nothing is simple, the Finns in their majority were not following this somehow elite led evolutions. It was only a clear minority which was in favour of joining the Atlantic alliance. And this had nothing to do with being pro or against of Soviet Union, later Russia, on the contrary, Finland is one of the most American oriented country in the world.<sup>12</sup> This pro-NATO minority, sometimes called "NATO Boys", was rather loudly in the media even if in different surveys since 2000 they presented only between 20 and 26%, when those against Finland joining NATO were between 40 and 52%. Those who did not express their opinion varied between 28 and 33%<sup>13</sup>. After the war had started in Ukraine these figures changed significantly.

Nevertheless, the Finns simply were respecting their neutrality tradition that had shown its value of keeping the country out of international conflicts for more than half of a century.

The situation was very different in what comes to joining the European Union, which was certainly the most important evolution for Finland in the 20<sup>th</sup> century since the independence of the country in 1917 if not even more. As previously noticed the Free Trade Agreement with the EEC was concluded already in 1972.

In the first half of the 1990's when Mr. Martti Ahtisaari was the president of the Republic the process went rather quickly and smoothly. The negotiation for joining the EU started concretely in 1992 when Finland applied for the membership, once again this crucial and almost mythical year of 1992. She did it together with Austria, Norway, and Sweden. In the consultative referendum in October 1994 almost 57% of the Finns voted for joining the EU. In November 1994 three quarters of the parliament members of Finland voted for the European Union membership.

The joining the EU was understood as important in political and even more in economic domains where Finland now had integrated the Western European community. Nevertheless, this was also felt

---

<sup>12</sup> After the end of the Cold War, one of the USA ambassadors in Helsinki said that he gets often reddened because of the Americanization of the Finns. Just a couple of months ago in 2024, a university professor proposed that English should be introduced as third official national language, even when there are not official languages in Finland.

<sup>13</sup> Sami Metelinen, "Nato-jäsenyyden kannatuksessa on tapahtunut hyppäys", EVA artikkelit, Helsinki, 26.10.2021

as having an impact to Finnish security and defence landscape without being properly a defence community. Since the beginning Finland wanted to become an active EU member who plays a full-scale role in all the fields that are important in the evolution of the union. She joined the monetary union since the beginning in 1998 and was among the 12 countries which took Euro as their common currency 2002. In what comes to free mobility in Europe Finland joined together with all other Nordic countries, the Schengen agreement, the European border-free area treaty.

In practice this desire to play an active role in the EU resulted also that Finland took her tours to assure the EU presidency very seriously. First time was in second semester 1999, Europe had just come out from the crisis in Kosovo that accentuated the need to advance in common security and defence policies. The strengthening of the Nordic and Arctic dimensions was also then in Finnish agenda.

The second Finnish EU presidency took place in the second half of the year 2006 when the war broke out in Lebanon in July. Finland managed to be active and re-enforced the role of the EU in the Middle East. Also, the EU cooperation with the Mediterranean and African countries was strengthened during that presidency. This obviously had also clear security policy dimensions.

In autumn semester of 2019 Finland was responsible for the EU presidency for the third time. Finland was perhaps better prepared for this third time, and she concentrated her overall approach to the strengthening of the value-bases of European Union, especially the principle of the rule of law.

This was in line with the new 2019 strategical program of the European Council. The performance of the Finnish 2019 Presidency implied that the EU finances should be bound with the respect of the rule of law principles. In this context there had been several specific consultations with Hungary and also with Poland. Some perhaps real progress was in the making when the Covid-19, immediately after the Finnish presidency, pushed the value debate behind the screen<sup>14</sup>.

Nevertheless, the Finnish performance during these three presidencies shows that the country takes her membership seriously

---

<sup>14</sup> Hanna Tuominen, "Suomen EU puheenjohtajuuskausi arvojen näkökulmasta" Poliitikasta - Ajankohtainen ja ajaton tiedeverkkolehti, 16.2.2021, <https://politiikasta.fi/suomen-eu-puheenjohtajuuskausi-arvojen-nakokulmasta/>

and wants to invest in development and in improvement of the political and practical capacities of the European Union.

#### 4. NATO joining process

The concrete process of Finland joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, can be traced in June 2015 when a committee of specialists recommended to Ministry of Defence that Finland needs to modernize her air force by acquiring a fleet of 64 new multi-role fighter aeroplanes<sup>15</sup>. The decision was taken in autumn 2015 to start this "HX Fighter Program", as it was called, for procuring circa 64 fighters. First call for propositions was sent to five countries in spring 2016.

The multiple and complex evaluation project was more or less concluded in spring 2021 when final offers concerning the five fighters that were on the table arrived in Helsinki. They were Boeing F/A-18 Super Hornet - USA, Dassault Rafale - France, Eurofighter Typhoon - UK/Europe, Lockheed Martin F-35 - USA, and Saab Gripen - Sweden.

When regarding this complex as well as time and effort consuming evaluation process and taking into consideration the needs of Finland in organizing the defence of her air space the technical differences between these five fighters cannot be significant, they are all as good than others for Finnish defence needs. Almost the same is valid in what comes to the other dimensions of the deal, all the candidates could propose technological, innovative, and commercial cooperation more or less on equal value.

The decision was then more political than something else. The 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2021 Finland decided to acquire 64 the Lockheed Martin F-35A Lightning II fighters. Its lifespan should go until the years of 2060's. With this decision Finland clearly showed that the close cooperation with the USA is more important than that with European or Nordic alternatives. This deal bounds the development of Finnish fighter fleet to USA Air Force for several decades to come.

This selection process had its importance also inside Finland, it strengthened those favourable to NATO membership, and it was a message to EU and to other Nordic Countries.

---

<sup>15</sup> "Esiselvitys Hornet-kaluston suorituskyvyn korvaamisesta. Loppuraportti", Ministry of Defence, Helsinki, 2015.

If Finland was reluctant to express her position towards European fighter producers, the Swedish Saab Gripen would have been excellent choice. It would have strengthened the Nordic air industry as well as also Finnish and Swedish defence cooperation in general. In fact, it would have strengthened the overall economic cooperation capabilities in both countries.

In second semester of 2021 when the fighter acquisition took its last steps there was simultaneously an active and strong media campaign - *du jamais vu!* - in Finland. In this campaign there were only one truth, one alternative what the "elite" was advocating to the ordinary city dwellers. That was Finland must join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the NATO, so soon as possible.

The speech of Mr. Vladimir Putin in December 2021 did not make things easier when he said Russia being against any extension of NATO towards its borders. The higher political leadership of Finland took this very seriously and started to alter its approaches towards NATO membership. The growing tension between Russia and Ukraine also increased the Finnish attitudes concerning the NATO membership.

The crucial element in this evolution was, of course, Russia's attack and the beginning of the war against Ukraine 24 February 2022. This created a situation what the pro-NATO elements inside Finland were able to benefit. They were very successful, in the beginning of March 2022, along surveys, 53% of the Finns were in favour of joining the Atlantic Alliance<sup>16</sup>.

This internal evolution implied that also Sweden was included in the debate where Finland took the lead. In mid-May 2022 both countries applied for the NATO membership simultaneously in the same audience in Brussel. The evolution had been very rapid in both countries, especially in Finland. When the President of the Republic Sauli Niinistö and the Prime Minister Sanna Marin both expressed that they were in favour of Finland joining the NATO, the Finnish Parliament discussed the matter the next day and voted for joining the alliance by 188 votes out of 200. The ambassador of Finland, together with that of Sweden, brought the application letter to NATO Secretary General the following day 18 May 2022<sup>17</sup>.

---

<sup>16</sup> Jesse Mäntysalo, "Suomalaisten Nato-kanta kääntyi jyrkästi - muutos lienee pysyvä ja pakottaa päättäjät ulos kuorestaan, tutkijat uskovat", Yle, 1.3.2022.

<sup>17</sup> Anne Orjala, "Eduskunta hyväksyi Suomen Nato-jäsenyyden äänin 184-7 - katso, miten edustajasi äänesti", Yle, 1.3.2023.

After this phase started the ratification process for both candidate countries which took time, especially concerning the case of Sweden. Both candidate countries faced difficulties to convince Hungary and Turkey to accept their membership. This was the beginning of some particularities in the membership project.

Concerning the case of Finland some important principles and plans were not respected. The first one was that in the government program it was stated that the NATO membership would not take place during the government's ongoing mandate. This promise was forgotten very quickly. Of course, it can be understood by the new force majeure situation that the Russian attack to Ukraine had created.

Nevertheless, when Finland started her concrete process for joining NATO Russian president Vladimir Putin was astonished and stated that nobody is threatening Finland, and that Finnish and Swedish NATO membership is not a problem for Russia<sup>18</sup>.

The second neglect concerned the issue of referendum. The political elite had for years debated that joining NATO was such an important issue that it requires a referendum. This was also quickly forgotten, here we should take into the consideration that, along the opinion-polls, clear majority of Finns (65%) thought that the referendum was not necessary, but waste of time, and that the Parliament should decide on the NATO membership<sup>19</sup>.

The most difficult and delicate point concerning the principles and promises was the membership of Sweden. In spring 2022 the government of Finland said several times that the country will join NATO only together and simultaneously with Sweden. Hungary and Turkey were hesitating to ratify the membership of these two countries. The situation started to be solved when Turkey announced to be able to accept Finland as member of the Alliance. However, concerning Sweden Turkey needed more clarification about Swedish policies towards Kurdish refugees. In this situation Finland proceeded alone towards NATO membership. In a way, Finland did not respect her own words and left Sweden alone. Hungary was also a difficult partner, and she was the last one to accept the memberships of these two Nordic countries.

---

<sup>18</sup> Erkkä Mikkonen, "Venäjän johdon kommentit kertovat karua kieltä: Suomesta tuli vuodessa 'merkittävä uhka'", Yle, 21 August 2022.

<sup>19</sup> Pekka Kinnunen & Matti Koivisto, "Ylen kysely: Nato-jäsenyyden kannatus vahvistuu – 62 prosenttia haluaa nyt Nattoon", Yle, 14.3.2022

One can presume that if Finland would have respected her own word and refused to enter in the NATO without Sweden, the things might have gone differently. The common efforts of both these countries, and especially the collective pressure of 27 other partner countries on Turkey and Hungary, would have been stronger and more efficient than by Sweden left alone.<sup>20</sup> In fine, Finland became NATO member the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 2023 and Sweden 7<sup>th</sup> of March 2024.

## 5. The content and ambitions of Finland in NATO and Europe's Strategic Autonomy

Finland has been a member of the Atlantic Alliance for about nineteen months, and it is understandable that her NATO politics is still very much in the making, that she is just learning what it means in practice. This in spite that Finland had taken part actively to PfP, Partnership for Peace program, and to many other NATO performances since about three decades.

Concerning Europe's Strategic Autonomy there are certain number of evolutions and developments that have particular flavour from the point of view of this strategic autonomy. Majority of them concerns Finland's bilateral relations with the USA, and with UK in a second degree.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, is certainly a common and collective defence alliance of all its members. However, this does also imply that it is, at the same time, maybe even more, a USA foreign policy tool. This dimension of NATO naturally varies. Sometimes USA needs more her European allies, sometimes less. As NATO's European members form a very heterogeneous entity USA sometimes needs certain of its members to counterbalance the ambitions of the others. That is why the USA has a full network of European partners for serving its interest

---

<sup>20</sup> This issue is more complex than Finland just "eating her words". Then foreign minister Pekka Haavisto told in recent webinar that when he mentioned in summer 2022 to the Turkish minister of foreign affairs that Finland joins NATO only with Sweden this one asked him: "Pekka, is this your last word? If yes, I must inform the international community that Finland refuses to join the Atlantic Alliance". Pekka Haavisto told in the webinar that this would have provoked a governmental crisis in Helsinki. And so, Finland entered NATO without Sweden. Webinar "The impact for Europe of Finland and Sweden joining NATO", organised by EUROCAPITALES International - Helsinki, 29 April 2024, opacity, <https://www.eurocapitales.com/en/activites/webinaire-24> .

both in global, regional, and local context. This network is based on bilateral relations outside the NATO framework.

Nowadays bilateral defence cooperation between Finland and the USA, but also the UK, can be traced back to 2016 when a "Statement of Intent" were signed with the defence ministers of these two countries and that of Finland.<sup>21</sup> Let us notice that it was the same year Finland started the process of fighter jets acquisition, and the advancing her rapprochement with NATO.

Concerning the UK the real treaty "UK-Finland Framework Arrangement on Enhanced Defence Co-operation" was concluded in June 2022. This treaty was of temporary character, it was intended to contribute to the security of Finland until the day she would become a full member of NATO.<sup>22</sup>

More generally and in practice for Finland this means that the particular bilateral relationship with the USA has been developing close to NATO but still separately. Maybe the most important is the so called DCA, "Defence Cooperation Agreement" negotiation that is going on since August 2022. This agreement concerns the presence of US troops in Finland, the deposit and storing of defence material as well as issues of taxation. The agreement allows the US government to allocate the financial resources of the Congress for the investments on infrastructures in Finland.

Along the agreement Finland indicates 15 military areas<sup>23</sup> what the USA can use, where it can store military material and where its troops can create their premisses and bases. However, these USA troops are temporary, changing, and not permanent by their character.<sup>24</sup>

This agreement was signed in Washington D.C. on the 18th of December 2023. The DCA was ratified by the Finnish Parliament the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2024. However, the legal authorities, such as Parliamentary Ombudsman and Chancellor of Justice, have asked more clarifications, mostly concerning the juridical position and

---

<sup>21</sup> Only the statement with USA is available, the one with UK not. Statement of Intent (pdf) (590.7 KB) [https://www.defmin.fi/files/3543/Statement\\_of\\_Intent.pdf](https://www.defmin.fi/files/3543/Statement_of_Intent.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> UK-Finland Framework Arrangement on Enhanced Defence Co-operation. [https://www.defmin.fi/files/5459/FIN\\_UK\\_FA.pdf](https://www.defmin.fi/files/5459/FIN_UK_FA.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> This would be first time foreign troops would have bases in Finland since the Soviets in Porkkala 1944-1956, and German Third Reich in Northern Finland 1941-1945.

<sup>24</sup> DCA Finland Prime English\_signed.pdf. [https://um.fi/documents/35732/0/DCA%20Finland%20Prime%20English\\_signed.pdf/2f5d41c2-1385-8626-0559-a059154c990a?t=1702985096702](https://um.fi/documents/35732/0/DCA%20Finland%20Prime%20English_signed.pdf/2f5d41c2-1385-8626-0559-a059154c990a?t=1702985096702)

legal status of the US civilian and military personnel, especially in those bases that are allocated to be used by the USA in Finland. Especially Chancellor of Justice is asking more precisions on decisional powers Finland would cede to US authorities, which could dictate, for instance, when their personnel are in duty and when not. A respected scholar Academician, Professor, Emeritus Martti Koskenniemi has criticized the DCA with the USA by saying that its preparation does not take enough into the consideration of the Constitution of Finland and the legally bounding international treaties country has signed. At the same time he criticizes the exceptional procedures the actual government applies when trying to pass "the push-back" laws on Russian border simultaneously in the Parliament.<sup>25</sup>

Towards the end of June 2024 the Constitution Committee of the Finnish Parliament stated that the acceptance of the DCA requires two thirds favorable votes in order to pass. This statement of the Constitution Committee has recently been strongly criticized by Professor, Emeritus Kaarlo Tuori, one of the most internationally recognized Finnish constitutional jurists, former chairperson and today Honorary President of the "Venice Commission", that is the European Commission for Democracy through Law. Professor Kaarlo Tuori is afraid that Finland is giving up the principles of "Etat du Droit" and ceding to political parties the possibility to modify the Constitution with exceptional laws and rules, in this Finland gets closer to the regimes such as Poland before Donald Tusk and Hungary of Viktor Orban<sup>26</sup>. How difficult the acceptance

---

<sup>25</sup> Valtioneuvoston oikeuskansleri, Lausunto 1 (7), 10.4.2024 OKV/855/21/2024 / -OKV-2

Viite: Ulkomministeriön lausuntopyyntö 28.3.2024, VN/36586/2023

Asia: Luonnos hallituksen esitykseksi eduskunnalle Suomen ja Yhdysvaltojen välillä tehdyn puolustusyhteistyösopimuksen hyväksymiseksi ja voimaansaattamiseksi ja siihen liittyviksi laeiksi

[www.oikeuskansleri.fi](http://www.oikeuskansleri.fi) ; <https://oikeuskansleri.fi/en/frontpage>; [https://oikeuskansleri.fi/documents/1428954/196899331/julkaistu\\_lausunto\\_suomen\\_ja\\_yhdysvaltojen\\_valilla\\_tehdy\\_puolustusyhteisty%C3%B6sopimus\\_DCA\\_OKV\\_855\\_21\\_2024.pdf](https://oikeuskansleri.fi/documents/1428954/196899331/julkaistu_lausunto_suomen_ja_yhdysvaltojen_valilla_tehdy_puolustusyhteisty%C3%B6sopimus_DCA_OKV_855_21_2024.pdf)

<https://oikeuskansleri.fi/-/suomen-ja-yhdysvaltojen-valilla-tehdy-puolustusyhteistyosopimus-dca>

"Ristiriitojen takia käännytyslakia ei voida säätää, toteavat asiantuntijat", Martti Koskenniemi and Päivi Leino-Sandberg, YLE News, 18 June 2024.

<sup>26</sup> "Perustuslakivaliokunta: Suomen ja Yhdysvaltojen DCA-sopimus hyväksyttävä kahden kolmasosan määränemmistöllä", YLE-STT, 24 June 2024 at 20h25, <https://yle.fi/a/74-20096055>.

- Martin Scheinin, "Perustuslakivaliokunnan rajalakilausunto PeVL 26/2024 vp ja suomalainen oikeusvaltio", Martin Scheinin, A Research Professor in British Academy,

of this DCA deal is for Finnish institutions and political actors can be seen when the most leftist group and party in the Parliament publish a statement where the president of the group gives free hands to its members to vote as they wish<sup>27</sup>.

Many NATO countries have this kind of DCA with the US, for instance Norway and Baltic countries have it, Sweden and Denmark signed both it in December 2023.<sup>28</sup>

It is difficult to say what is the impact of these DCAs to strategic autonomy of Europe. It is sure that they strengthen the importance of USA in the continent. Same time they re-enforce the cooperation between different European NATO countries<sup>29</sup>. Nevertheless, it seems that these treaties are more popular in the northern and north-eastern part of the continent than in the western and southern Europe.

The Finnish defence and security cooperation with the USA has recently had a new element when rather surprisingly the country's Minister of Defence signed the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 2024 a "Letter of Intent" for Finland joining the SPP, "State Partnership Program" for cooperation with National Guard in the State of Virginia. The

---

Oxfordin University, Perustuslakiblogi - Suomen valtiosääntöoikeudellisen seuran ajankohtaispalsta, 26.6.2024, <https://perustuslakiblogi.wordpress.com/2024/06/26/martin-scheinin-perustuslakivaliokunnan-rajalakilausunto-pevl-26-2024-vp-ja-suomalainen-oikeusvaltio/>

- "Ulkoasiainvaliokunta puoltaa DCA-sopimusta", Helsingin Sanomat, 27.6.2024, <https://www.hs.fi/politiikka/art-2000010527791.html>

- Petri Sajari, "Oikeusvaltio on vaarantunut Suomessa ennennäkemättömällä tavalla, sanoo professori Kaarlo Tuori", Helsingin Sanomat, 29.6.2024, <https://www.hs.fi/politiikka/art-2000010522334.html>

<sup>27</sup> Jussi Virkkunen, "Vasemmistoliiton Saramo suosittelee DCA-sopimuksen hyväksymistä - "Edustajilla on vapaat kädet vastustaa sopimusta", KU - Kansan Uutiset, 27.6.2024, <https://www.ku.fi/artikkeli/5028398-vasemmistoliiton-saramo-suosittelee-dca-sopimuksen-hyvaksymista-edustajilla-on-vapaat-kadet-vastustaa-sopimusta>

<sup>28</sup> "Denmark Signs Historic Defense Cooperation Agreement with the United States", Aero News Journal, December 21, 2023, <https://www.aeronewsjournal.com/2023/12/denmark-signs-historic-defense.html>

<sup>29</sup> - Iro Särkkä, Minna Ålander, Joel Linnainmäki and Antti Pihlajamaa, "Finland's Partnership as a NATO Member. Prospects for Defence Cooperation in a Multilateral Framework", FIIA Report 76, Helsinki, June 2024, [https://www.fia.fi/en/publication/finlands-partnerships-as-a-nato-member?utm\\_source=FIIAReport76&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=FIIAReport76&utm\\_id=newsletter250624](https://www.fia.fi/en/publication/finlands-partnerships-as-a-nato-member?utm_source=FIIAReport76&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=FIIAReport76&utm_id=newsletter250624)

Notice also that in the publishing seminar of this new FIIA Report in Helsinki 25 June 2024, A Member of the Parliament and former General Officer of the Finnish Defence Forces stated that "the EU has no real military capacities, and will never have neither", <https://www.youtube.com/live/VYbQvWaQpBs>, (14min:15second).

cooperation concerns, first of all, army, air force and cyber activities. Its main purpose is to deepen and to complete the defence cooperation between the two countries. The USEUCOM, "United States European Command" has an important role in the application of the SPP with the European countries. It is obvious that for the USA the State Partnership Program has at least two goals. First, to get state-level actors in the USA mobilized in their presence in Europe and, secondly, keep Europeans also acquainted with their troops.

For Finland this SPP is also a tool to get closer the US military, and so familiarize the citizens with the USA maximum presence in the country. The actual Prime minister said it publicly when the news reported about the treaty in early May 2024, and it is also openly stated in the Letter of Intent.<sup>30</sup> In fact, this kind of attitudes get Finland closer to former Eastern European countries, in spite all the discourses pretending that Finland is a typical Nordic country.

Same kind of problematic can be seen in the issue concerning the NATO command centre Finland should be attached. When joining NATO in March 2023 Finland became, at least temporally, under the Brunssum command centre in the Netherlands. Also, Denmark, Germany, Poland, and the Baltic countries are attached to it. The Norway and UK are under the Norfolk command centre in Virginia, USA.

The hesitation and the "rivalry" between the two command centers have raised some passionate discussions in Finland. Those, mostly "NATO Boys", who vote for Norfolk have ideological identity reasons imaging being closer to USA if Norfolk will be the final choice. Those, maybe more realistic, who are in favour of Brunssum advocate their choice by taking into the consideration that the real threat for Finland comes from the East and the Baltic Sea area. That is why Brunssum would be more rational choice<sup>31</sup>.

Concerning Brunssum there are two other arguments which go in favour of this alternative. Being in the Netherlands one is much closer Brussel and Mons where NATO headquarters are. It

---

<sup>30</sup> Defence Forces to join US National Guard Partnership Program [https://www.defmin.fi/en/topical/press\\_releases\\_and\\_news/defence\\_forces\\_to\\_join\\_us\\_national\\_guard\\_partnership\\_program.14297.news#61b4c96d](https://www.defmin.fi/en/topical/press_releases_and_news/defence_forces_to_join_us_national_guard_partnership_program.14297.news#61b4c96d)

<sup>31</sup> Jukka Seppinen, "Mikä Naton komentokeskus olisi paras Suomelle, Brunssum vai Norfolk?", in Uusi Suomi - Blogit, 27.7.2023.

is also a natural choice if one aims to consolidate the European Strategic Autonomy.

One theme the Finns have been discussing in the frames of NATO is the country's policy towards nuclear arms. Finland has not required any limits or restrictions in her NATO membership status. This means that in theory she can accept nuclear arms in her territory. However, this really is only theoretical question because nobody is proposing them, and Finland herself is not encouraging neither. On the contrary, she advocates disarmament in general and nuclear disarmament particularly. Let us also notice that 77% of Finns are against to storing nuclear arms on Finnish soil, and 61 % even against any transfer via Finnish territories in air, sea, and land<sup>32</sup>.

Nevertheless, Finland states that she must have a nuclear arms policy. This implies that even if she does not want to develop or to own nuclear arms, she still is part of NATO nuclear deterrence and takes part into NATO nuclear arms planning committee. Once again, this attitude is showing that Finland wants to be a full NATO member and takes all her responsibilities within the alliance. At the same time, she advocates nuclear arms disarmament and support the non-proliferation policies<sup>33</sup>.

Despite of these concerns, the Sorbonne discourse of French President Emmanuel Macron at the end of April 2024 where he proposed adoption of new strategic agenda to European Union for years 2024-2029, and also asked whether the French nuclear protection should be extended to cover the whole European Union was hardly noticed in Finland<sup>34</sup>.

---

<sup>32</sup> Tapio Juntunen, Jyri Lavikainen, Matti Pesu, Iro Särkkä, "Naton ydinasepelote ja Suomi", in Valtioneuvoston selvitys- ja tutkimustoiminnan julkaisusarja 2024:2, ISBN pdf: 978-952-383-031-8; ISSN pdf: 2342-6799, Helsinki 2024 [https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/165400/VNTEAS\\_2024\\_2.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/165400/VNTEAS_2024_2.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

<sup>33</sup> Jyrki Lavikainen, Matti Pesu, and Iro Särkkä, "NATO nuclear deterrence and its implications for Finland", Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA) & Tampere University Research Project Report, 1/2024. RJISSF-Policy-Roundtable-III-2-2.pdf <https://www.fia.fi/en/project/nato-nuclear-deterrence-and-its-implications-for-finland>

<sup>34</sup> Emmanuel Macron, "Discours sur l'Europe", Elysée, Paris, publié le 24 avril 2024, <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2024/04/24/discours-sur-leurope>, and Thierry Chopin, "Discours de la Sorbonne: «Pour que l'Europe agisse de façon unie, il faudra dépasser la tentation du repli national»", Le Monde, le 28 avril 2024, [https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2024/04/28/discours-de-la-sorbonne-pour-que-l-europe-agisse-de-facon-unie-il-faudra-depasser-la-tentation-du-repli-national\\_6230421\\_3232.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2024/04/28/discours-de-la-sorbonne-pour-que-l-europe-agisse-de-facon-unie-il-faudra-depasser-la-tentation-du-repli-national_6230421_3232.html)

There is one more domain where the role of Finland is having an impact on NATO policies and European Strategic Autonomy, that is the Northern Dimension. With the climate change the importance of Arctic area is increasing to all stakeholders. The climate warming means that more and more sea space is getting free from ice, at least for several months per year, and so becomes navigable. Besides all kind of transfer possibilities this allows also different kind of exploration for raw material resources. Today more actors are interested about Arctic or Antarctic areas than ever before.

Even if Finland and Sweden do not have any Arctic coast they do belong to Polar circle and are so considered as Arctic countries and are part of almost all Arctic cooperation structures, such as Arctic Council, for instance. After the war broke out in Ukraine the NATO members and partners in the "Grand North" can be divided in four categories along their role in defence strategies - frontline nations, hubs, security providers, and, finally, security guarantor. Those of frontline nations are Baltic countries, Finland, and Poland. Poland can also be counted as security provider together with UK and Germany, when Denmark, Norway, and Sweden are hubs. The main security guarantor is the USA<sup>35</sup>.

This Nordic and Arctic dimension is, in fact, an excellent example how the NATO membership of Finland and Sweden is having an impact on the European Union and the Atlantic Alliance. Let us remember that in spite all strategical and military rivalries Arctic is important to EU and the rest of the world for its sweet water resources, and so requires responsible regulation policies and international institutions. Thus, via European Union and NATO, the relatively small countries like Finland and Sweden are in position to strengthen the international activities in Arctic region and so to create more stable and saner environment for future development in the Polar area.

## 6. Conclusion

The strategical autonomy of Europe has, during last couple of years, been much more on the table than since several previous

---

<sup>35</sup> Matti Pesu, "NATO in the North: The emerging division of labour in Northern European security", FIIA Briefing Paper 370, FIIA, Helsinki, 19 September 2023. [Nato-in-the-North\\_UPI\\_bp370.pdf](https://www.fia.fi/julkaisu/nato-in-the-north) <https://www.fia.fi/julkaisu/nato-in-the-north>  
This is a very Anglo-Saxon way of seeing the Northern European security dilemma. Where are France, Italy, and Spain as provider of security for the Alliance and Europe?

decades. This is mainly due to war in Ukraine since February 2022. Among its consequences have been the Finnish and Swedish membership in NATO, and the increase of importance of common security and defence policies for the European continent.

Political evolution in the near future is volatile, mostly for two, even three reasons. First, the consequences of the Parliamentary election for European parliament in June 2024 remain a question mark. There is a possibility that it is the extreme right that will be the winner. In that case, many plans on how to develop the European Union are under the reconsideration. In Finland, the extreme right lost the election but still remains in the government. Second, in November 2024 there are presidential elections in the USA. If Donald Trump wins the US presidency again that will also have a strong impact on European political scene.<sup>36</sup> The third possibility is that both these problematic scenarios will come through, at least partly.

It is obvious that the responsible actors both side of the Atlantic are already now elaborating plans how to react to all these three eventualities. Behind this landscape it is the question of the Strategic Autonomy of Europe and the European Union that is at stake. In practice that concerns the relations between the European Union and NATO. Naturally these relations are complicated and imply many passions as well as past negligences and future expectations.

The wars in Ukraine and also in Gaza, when the EU and NATO have both failed to influence efficiently on the evolution of those violent crises, have resulted, if not even provoked, the strengthening of the requirement for much more autonomous strategic defence and foreign policies. Especially the coming US presidential elections and their unpredictable results seem to provoke new conscience about the need for the increasing European autonomy.

Even the government of Finland is speaking out in this direction, and states that more autonomous Europe means also stronger NATO.<sup>37</sup> This renewed Finnish approach was visible already in March 2024 when the government representative commenting

---

<sup>36</sup> One can presume that after the November 2024 presidential elections the role of USA in Europe, and maybe also elsewhere in the world, may no more be the same than until now, independently about who will be the winner.

<sup>37</sup> Matt Berg & Eric Bazail-Eimil, "Don't rule out troops to Ukraine, Finnish FM says", in *Politico*, 15 March 2024, <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/national-security-daily/2024/03/15/don't-rule-out-troops-to-ukraine-finnish-fm-says-00147374>, and

together with the Latvian Foreign minister the French President Emmanuel Macron's idea of sending troops to Ukraine. The comment of the Finnish government was that in theory it is possible, however in practice let us not even speak about it - "nothing has changed in our line"<sup>38</sup>.

If we think in more general terms the impact of Finland's and Sweden's membership in NATO and their behaviour in the context of European Strategic Autonomy the following viewpoints could be taken into the consideration.

We have already paid attention to the heritage of the long neutrality tradition of Sweden and Finland, as well as to its impact to EU and NATO. In Swedish case it covered circa two centuries and had personalities as Dag Hammarskjöld and Olof Palme with global profiles. Sweden was also seen as close to the Third World and the Non-Aligned Movement. Both these Nordic countries have also emphasized the importance of the United Nations for the small countries and the rule of law based international order<sup>39</sup>.

After the Second World War the foreign and security policies of Finland have been based on neutrality, especially in military affairs, and called "Paasikivi-Kekkonen" -doctrine<sup>40</sup>. This doctrine was guiding Finnish foreign policy until early 1990's when neutrality was replaced by non-alignment. The systematic applica-

---

Kaisa Paastela, "Elina Valtonen EU:n tulevaisuudesta: Vauraus ja turvallisuus kulkevat käsi kädessä", in Verkkouutiset, Helsinki, published 08.04.2024, 15:40, updated 09.04.2024, 07:43 <https://www.verkkouutiset.fi/a/elina-valtonen-eun-tulevaisuudesta-vauraus-ja-turvallisuus-kulkevat-kasi-kadessa/#ac4e6af2>

<sup>38</sup> "Näin Latvian ja Suomen ulkoministerit kommentoivat Macronin pohdintaa joukkojen lähettämisestä Ukrainaan", in Demokraatti, 19.3.2024, <https://demokraatti.fi/nain-latvian-ja-suomen-ulkoministerit-kommentoivat-macronin-pohdintaa-joukkojen-lahettamisesta-ukrainaan>

<sup>39</sup> Melasuo, Tuomo, "From Bandung to Ukraine: - About Decolonisation and about Cold War", in Jaroslaw Suchoples, Stephanie James and Heikki Hanka (edited), "The Cold War Re- called - 21st Century Perceptions of the Worldwide Geopolitical Tension", Peter Lang, Berlin, Bruxelles, Chennai, Lausanne, New York, Oxford, 2024, <https://www.peterlang.com/document/1484172>

<sup>40</sup> "Paasikivi-Kekkonen" -doctrine name comes from its two fathers, two Finnish presidents. First Juho Kusti Paasikivi, 1946-1956, whose devise was "The beginning of all wisdom lies in the recognizing of the realities", and second, Urho Kaleva Kekkonen, 1956-1982, who used to say that "In international relation Finland does not want to be a judge, she prefers to behave as a medical doctor".

- J.K.Paasikivi, "Puheet 1944 - Itsenäisyyspäiväpuhe 1944", <https://jkpaasikivi.fi/book/paasikiven-linja-juho-kusti-paasikiven-puheita-vuosilta-1944-1956/puheet-1944/>  
Matti Pesu, "Lääkärin takki olisi riisuttava", in The Ulkopolitist, Helsinki, 22 February 2013, <https://ulkopolitist.fi/2013/02/22/laakaran-takki-olisi-riisuttava/>

tion of neutrality allowed Finland to have an active role in UN peace keeping performances, and, in diplomacy conducted 1975 to CSCE, "The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe" in Helsinki.

How much these two countries can and want to benefit from their tradition of neutrality when being NATO members is to be seen in near future. In the case of Finland, the 50 years anniversary of the CSCE will show us some coming tendencies<sup>41</sup>. Nevertheless, if we keep in mind that European Strategic Autonomy is much more than just military security policy and the alliance, there is certainly space for more holistic approach that can also apply the Nordic traditions and knowhow of non-violent and peaceful conflict resolutions. If Finland and Sweden are able to contribute this kind of understanding about Europe's strategic role in today and future world their performance might gain respect also from the "Global South" where the majority of our fellow human beings live.

## Bibliography

- Berg, M. & Bazail-Eimil, E. (2024). Don't rule out troops to Ukraine, Finnish FM says [online]. *Político*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/national-security-daily/2024/03/15/dont-rule-out-troops-to-ukraine-finnish-fm-says-00147374>
- Chopin, T. (2024). Discours de la Sorbonne: "Pour que l'Europe agisse de façon unie, il faudra dépasser la tentation du repli national". *Le Monde*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: [https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2024/04/28/discours-de-la-sorbonne-pour-que-l-europe-agisse-de-facon-unie-il-faudra-depasser-la-tentation-du-repli-national\\_6230421\\_3232.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2024/04/28/discours-de-la-sorbonne-pour-que-l-europe-agisse-de-facon-unie-il-faudra-depasser-la-tentation-du-repli-national_6230421_3232.html)
- DCA Finland Prime English\_signed.pdf. [https://um.fi/documents/35732/0/DCA%20Finland%20Prime%20English\\_signed.pdf/2f5d41c2-1385-8626-0559-a059154c990a?t=1702985096702](https://um.fi/documents/35732/0/DCA%20Finland%20Prime%20English_signed.pdf/2f5d41c2-1385-8626-0559-a059154c990a?t=1702985096702)
- Defence Forces to join US National Guard Partnership Program [https://www.defmin.fi/en/topical/press\\_releases\\_and\\_news/defence\\_forces\\_to\\_join\\_us\\_national\\_guard\\_partnership\\_program.14297.news#61b4c96d](https://www.defmin.fi/en/topical/press_releases_and_news/defence_forces_to_join_us_national_guard_partnership_program.14297.news#61b4c96d)

<sup>41</sup> In both countries, the actual government is the most right-wing one since the Second World War.

- Denmark Signs Historic Defense Cooperation Agreement with the United States [online]. (2023). *Aero News Journal*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.aeronews-journal.com/2023/12/denmark-signs-historic-defense.html>
- "Finland's strategy for development cooperation. Middle East and Northern Africa 2021-2024", Department for Africa and the Middle East, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Helsinki, 3 May 2021
- Forsberg, T. & Vogt, H. (2005) Suomen ulkopoliitiikan eurooppalaistuminen [online]. *Suomen kansainväliset suhteet ja ulkopoliitiikka, Suomen poliittinen järjestelmä*. URN:NBN:fi-fe20041404. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://blogs.helsinki.fi/vol-spj/ulkopoliitiikka/>
- Ganivet y Carcia, *Cartas finlandesas*, in Defensor de Granada, Granada, 1905.
- Haavisto, P. (2024). The impact for Europe of Finland and Sweden joining NATO [online]. In: *EUROCAPITALES International Webinar*. Helsinki, EUROCAPITALES. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.eurocapitales.com/en/activites/webinaire-24>
- Hämäläinen, H. (2024). Kenraali valoi sillan yli Atlantin. *Helsingin Sanomat*.
- Juntunen, T. et al. (2024). Naton ydinasepelote ja Suomi [online]. *Valtioneuvoston selvitys- ja tutkimustoiminnan julkaisusarja*. Helsinki, Finnish Institute of International Affairs. (2), ISBN pdf: 978-952-383-031-8; ISSN pdf: 2342-6799. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: [https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/165400/VNTEAS\\_2024\\_2.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/165400/VNTEAS_2024_2.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)
- Kinnunen, P. & Koivisto, M. (2022). Ylen kysely: Nato-jäsenyyden kannatus vahvistuu – 62 prosenttia haluaa nyt Natoon. *Yle*, [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://yle.fi/a/3-12354756>
- Koskenniemi, M. and Leino-Sandberg, P., *Ristiriitojen takia käännytyslakia ei voida säätää, toteavat asiantuntijat*, YLE News, 18 June 2024.
- Lavikainen, J., Pesu, M. & Särkkä, I. (2024). NATO nuclear deterrence and its implications for Finland. *Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA) & Tampere University*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.fiaa.fi/en/project/nato-nuclear-deterrence-and-its-implications-for-finland>

- Lehto, M. (2022). Suomen NATO-jäsenyyteen 20 vuoden matka. *Sotilasaikakauslehti*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://upseeriliitto.fi/verkkolehti/suomen-nato-jasenyyson-20-vuoden-prosessin-tulosta/>
- Macron, E. (2024) Discours sur l'Europe. *Elysée*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2024/04/24/discours-sur-leurope>
- Mäntysalo, J. (2022). Suomalaisten Nato-kanta kääntyi jyrkästi – muutos lienee pysyvä ja pakottaa päättäjät ulos kuorestaan, tutkijat uskovat. *Yle*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://yle.fi/a/3-12337319>
- Melasuo, T., "From Bandung to Ukraine: - About Decolonisation and about Cold War", in Jaroslaw Suchoples, Stephanie James and Heikki Hanka (edited), "The Cold War Re- called - 21st Century Perceptions of the Worldwide Geopolitical Tension", Peter Lang, Berlin, Bruxelles, Chennai, Lausanne, New York, Oxford, 2024, <https://www.peterlang.com/document/1484172>
- Metelinen, S. (2021). Nato-jäsenyyden kannatuksessa on tapahtunut hyppäys. *EVA*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.eva.fi/blog/2021/10/26/nato-jasenyyden-kannatuksessa-on-tapahtunut-hyppays/>
- Mikkonen, E. (2022). Venäjän johdon kommentit kertovat karua kieltä: Suomesta tuli vuodessa merkittävä uhka. *Yle*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: Venäjän johdon kommentit kertovat karua kieltä: <https://yle.fi/a/74-20045930>
- Ministry of Defence, Statement of Intent (pdf) (590.7 KB). [https://www.defmin.fi/files/3543/Statement\\_of\\_Intent.pdf](https://www.defmin.fi/files/3543/Statement_of_Intent.pdf)
- Ministry of Defense. (2015). *Esiselvitys Hornet-kaluston suorituskyvyn korvaamisesta. Loppuraportti*. Helsinki.
- (2024). *Defence Forces to join US National Guard Partnership Program*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: [https://www.defmin.fi/en/topical/press\\_releases\\_and\\_news/defence\\_forces\\_to\\_join\\_us\\_national\\_guard\\_partnership\\_program.14297.news#61b4c96d](https://www.defmin.fi/en/topical/press_releases_and_news/defence_forces_to_join_us_national_guard_partnership_program.14297.news#61b4c96d)
- Näin Latvian ja Suomen ulkoministerit kommentoivat Macronin pohdintaa joukkojen lähettämisestä Ukrainaan [online]. (2024). *Demokraatti*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://demokraatti.fi/nain-latvian-ja-suomen-ulkoministerit-kommentoivat-macronin-pohdintaa-joukkojen-lahettamisesta-ukrainaan>

- Orjala, A. (2023). Eduskunta hyväksyi Suomen Nato-jäsenyyden äänin 184–7 – katso, miten edustajasi äänesti. *Yle*.
- Paasikivi, J. K. (1944) Puheet 1944 - Itsenäisyyspäiväpuhe 1944. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://jkpaasikivi.fi/book/paasikiven-linja-juho-kusti-paasikiven-puheita-vuosilta-1944-1956/puheet-1944/>
- Paastela, K. (2024). Elina Valtonen EU:n tulevaisuudesta: Vauraus ja turvallisuus kulkevat käsi kädessä. *Verkkouutiset*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.verkkouutiset.fi/a/elina-valtonen-eun-tulevaisuudesta-vauraus-ja-turvallisuus-kulkevat-kasi-kadessa/#ac4e6af2>
- Perustuslakivaliokunta: Suomen ja Yhdysvaltojen DCA-sopimus hyväksyttävä kahden kolmasosan määränemmistöllä*, YLE-STT, 24 June 2024 at 20h25, <https://yle.fi/a/74-20096055>
- Pesu, M. (2013). Lääkäriin takki olisi riisuttava. *The Ulkopolitist*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://ulkopolitist.fi/2013/02/22/laakarintakki-olisi-riisuttava/>
- (2023). NATO in the North: The emerging division of labour in Northern European security. *Finnish Institute of International Affairs*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.fiia.fi/julkaisu/nato-in-the-north>
- Sajari, P., "Oikeusvaltio on vaarantunut Suomessa ennennäkemättömällä tavalla, sanoo professori Kaarlo Tuori", Helsingin Sanomat, 29.6.2024. <https://www.hs.fi/politiikka/art-2000010522334.html>
- Särkkä, I., Ålander, M., Linnainmäki, J. and Pihlajamaa, A., "Finland's Partnership as a NATO Member. Prospects for Defence Cooperation in a Multilateral Framework", FIIA Report 76, Helsinki, June 2024, [https://www.fiia.fi/en/publication/finlands-partnerships-as-a-nato-member?utm\\_source=FI-IAReport76&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=FI-IAReport76&utm\\_id=newsletter250624](https://www.fiia.fi/en/publication/finlands-partnerships-as-a-nato-member?utm_source=FI-IAReport76&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=FI-IAReport76&utm_id=newsletter250624)
- Scheinin, Martin, "Perustuslakivaliokunnan rajalakilausunto PeVL 26/2024 vp ja suomalainen oikeusvaltio", Martin Scheinin, A Research Professor in British Academy, Oxford University, Perustuslakiblogi – Suomen valtiosääntöoikeudellisen seuran ajankohtaispalsta, 26.6.2024, <https://perustuslakiblogi.wordpress.com/2024/06/26/martin-scheinin-perustuslakivaliokunnan-rajalakilausunto-pevl-26-2024-vp-jasuomalainen-oikeusvaltio/>

- Seppinen, J. (2023). Mikä Naton komentokeskus olisi paras Suomelle, Brunssum vai Norfolk? *Uusi Suomi*.
- Suchoples, J., James, Stephanie and Hanka, Heikki, (edited), "The Cold War Re- called - 21st Century Perceptions of the Worldwide Geopolitical Tension", Peter Lang, Berlin, Bruxelles, Chennai, Lausanne, New York, Oxford, 2024, <https://www.peterlang.com/document/1484172>
- Tala, H. (2014). *Talvisodan ranskalaiset ratkaisijat. Ranskan apu Suomelle 1939–1940*. Helsinki, Minerva Kustannus. 336 p. ISBN: 9789523120822.
- The impact for Europe of Finland and Sweden joining NATO", Webinar organised by EUROCAPITALES International - Helsinki, 29 April 2024, <https://www.eurocapitales.com/en/activites/webinaire-24>
- Tuominen, H. (2021). Suomen EU puheenjohtajuuskausi arvojen näkökulmasta [online]. *Politiikasta - Ajankohtainen ja ajatontiede-verkkolehti*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://politiikasta.fi/suomen-eu-puheenjohtajuuskausi-arvojen-nakokulmasta/>
- UK-Finland Framework Arrangement on Enhanced Defence Co-operation. [https://www.defmin.fi/files/5459/FIN\\_UK\\_FA.pdf](https://www.defmin.fi/files/5459/FIN_UK_FA.pdf)
- "Ulkoasiainvaliokunta puoltaa DCA-sopimusta", Helsingin Sanomat, 27.6.2024, <https://www.hs.fi/politiikka/art-2000010527791.html>
- Valtioneuvoston oikeuskansleri. (2024) *Luonnos hallituksen esitykseksi eduskunnalle Suomen ja Yhdysvaltojen välillä tehdyn puolustusyhteistyösopimuksen hyväksymiseksi ja voimaansaattamiseksi ja siihen liittyviksi laeiksi*. Lausunto 1 (7). Helsinki. OKV/855/21/2024 / -OKV-2. VN/36586/2023. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: [www.oikeuskansleri.fi](http://www.oikeuskansleri.fi)
- Hyväksymistä - "Edustajilla on vapaat kädet vastustaa sopimusta", KU - Kansan Uutiset, 27.6.2024, <https://www.ku.fi/artikkeli/5028398-vasemmistoliiton-saramo-suosittelee-dca-sopimuksen-hyvaksymista-edustajilla-on-vapaat-kadet-vastustaa-sopimusta>
- Visuri, P., Kesseli, P. and Geust, C-F., (2024), "Suomen sodat 1939-1945. Selviytyminen maailmansodasta", Docendo, 544 pp., Jyväskylä, 2024.



## Chapter three

### The View from Berlin

*Karl-Heinz Kamp*

#### **Abstract**

Germany has always been a strong supporter of the idea of a common security and defence policy for the European Union. However, like almost all other EU members, Germany was never prepared to provide the necessary resources for a truly autonomous or sovereign defence capability for the EU. As a result, the EU “Common Security and Defence Policy” (CSDP” or the “European Defence Union” [EDU]) always remained empty shells without any real military weight. Of course, the war in Ukraine put an end to these illusions and led to a fundamental change in German security and defence policy. This German “Zeitenwende” will be lasting and means that a European defence capacity is no longer being sought within the European Union, but as a European pillar within NATO. This will strengthen the indispensable transatlantic security relationship and will prepare Germany and Europe for the new threats from Russia as well as the new challenges in the Asia-Pacific region.

#### **Keywords**

Germany, Common Security and Defence Policy, European Union, NATO, Zeitenwende, Russia.

Germany has always been one of the countries that has benefited the most from European integration from the outset. Economically, the gradual process of European unification from the 1960s onwards enabled (West) Germany to rise again from the ruins of the Second World War. Politically, Germany was accepted into the community of democratic states and was, thus, able to free itself from its dark past.

With the end of the Cold War in 1989 and the unification of the two German states a year later, the idea of a united Europe took on even greater significance. Economically, a united Germany rose to become the powerhouse of Europe and politically, Germany's willingness to integrate ever more strongly into common European structures helped to dispel fears of a re-nationalisation of the largest economic power at the heart of Europe. Germany's willingness to abandon even its own currency, the "Deutsche Mark", which was regarded as particularly stable, in favour of a common "Euro", convinced even the last doubters that a "Fourth Reich" was not to be feared.

It is no wonder that European integration has always met broad approval in Germany and that all German governments, regardless of party combination, have always made further European integration a centrepiece of their policies. Until 1992, for example, the vision of a "United States of Europe", analogous to the United States of America, was explicitly mentioned in the party programmes of the long-standing governing party, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). Hardly any other member of the European Union would have been so readily prepared to swap its own government for a common European chancellor or president.

It was, therefore, no surprise that Germany was prepared from the outset to extend joint European action to the security and military sphere. If European unification had already progressed so far, it was argued in Germany that a common currency had been agreed, then common armed forces should also be possible and desirable. The fact that, despite all efforts and decisions, a real European Defense union or an effective common security and defense never materialised has changed little in Germany's advocacy of a militarily powerful EU until recently.

But what concrete steps has Germany taken for this European Defense capability? What has changed since the epochal shift triggered by Russia's attack on Ukraine and how can European security be guaranteed in the face of a revanchist Russia? What

consequences for European security and defense policy arise from the danger of an increasingly aggressive China and a gradual shift in the USA's security policy perspective towards the Asia-Pacific region?

### 1. European Common Defense: more appearance than reality

The idea of a common security and defense policy became increasingly important after the end of the East-West conflict. The dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and, in particular, the disintegration of Yugoslavia led to violent conflicts in South-East Europe, which directly affected the security of the members of the European Community. In 1991, Luxembourg's Foreign Minister Jaques Poos therefore coined the phrase "hour of Europe" (Drozdiak, 1999), which had come to bring order to the Balkans without the help of the USA. What followed was a disaster of European disunity and it took millions of displaced persons and over 100 000 deaths to stop the violence in the region under American leadership in 1995. Four years later, in 1999, it again took American leadership —this time as part of NATO's air war— to end the violence in Kosovo. However, here too the role of the Europeans was limited: more than 70% of all missions were flown by American combat aircraft and more than 80% of the munitions used came from the USA.

Under the strong leadership of Germany and France, Europe wanted to learn the right lessons from this obvious failure and took a series of far-reaching decisions in the following years to establish a joint European force for crisis management outside Europe. In addition to crisis management, this was even to include a common defense policy, as set out in the resolutions on the ESDP (European Security and Defense Policy), adopted in 1999 under the German EU Council Presidency. The EU agreed that, by 2003, a force of 60 000 soldiers was to be available for crisis operations, ready for deployment within sixty days (European Council, 1999; 33-42). In the following year, the European Union's defense ministers even pledged 100 000 soldiers, 400 aircraft and 100 ships for missions outside the EU.

None of this has even begun to be realised. This was mainly due to the fact that no EU member state was prepared to provide the necessary funding for such far-reaching plans. Germany in particular cut its defense spending sharply, as it saw itself surrounded by friends after the end of the bloc confrontation and, therefore,

believed it could reap a “peace dividend”. Even after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent deployment of the Bundeswehr in Afghanistan, the German defense budget did not increase, so the German armed forces were hollowed out and worn down, leaving even less money available for European Defense projects.

This did not prevent the EU from pushing ahead with the idea of common defense, but now less with concrete force planning and more in the conceptual and structural area. In 2009, the ESDP was renamed the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) in the Treaty of Lisbon and the office of “High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy” was created to represent the EU externally. In addition, Article 42.7 of the Treaty of Lisbon contains a mutual assistance clause, similar to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949, the founding document of NATO (European Parliament, 1992). This mutual assistance clause was activated for the first time in November 2015 by the then French President François Hollande following the terrorist attacks in Paris.

The “Permanent Structured Cooperation” (PESCO), which was primarily intended to promote cooperation in the field of defense, was adopted with similar aplomb in 2017. In the same year, French President Emmanuel Macron announced his demand that the EU must also become “autonomous” in defense and, thus, independent of the US military capabilities. In 2020, it was then decided—again under the German EU Council Presidency—to draw up a “Strategic Compass”, a strategic guideline document aimed at developing a common threat situation. Germany also campaigned for the so-called “European Peace Facility”. This is a budget that provides financial support to EU partner countries outside the EU in order to increase their security and stability. The model for this fund was the German national “Enablement Initiative”, which empowered Germany to provide military support to partner countries despite its restrictive arms export policy.

Although each of these steps was always praised as a milestone on the way to a European Defense and some saw the EU on the way to becoming a global security power, the real consequences were mostly minor. The repeatedly demanded “European Army” was never realised and the “Battle Groups” agreed in 2004 were created from the existing armed forces through double assignments (the same armed forces were earmarked for both NATO and EU missions) but, ultimately, never deployed. Since its foundation, PESCO has been praised as the core of military cooper-

ation, but, in 2023, only 18% of total EU defense spending was made within the framework of PESCO projects.

The Strategic Compass had been developed in lengthy negotiations since 2020 and was almost finalised in February 2022, when the Russian war against Ukraine began. Although the war in Ukraine was one of the biggest disruptions of the last two decades and called into question the foundations of Euro-Atlantic security policy, the EU presented the finalised compass just one month later, with only a few changes having been made.

France's repeated call for European strategic autonomy was another example of the gap between words and deeds. Germany in particular did not want to fully endorse this demand but spoke of "strategic sovereignty" instead of autonomy. In doing so, Berlin not only wanted to weaken the claim, but also to prevent such plans from being misunderstood in Washington as anti-American.

Even that was too high a standard, as France itself was unwilling to provide the necessary financial resources to procure the equipment required for autonomous action. It is significant that France was dependent not only on Spanish aircraft but also on heavy non-European military support provided by the United States for its military operation in Mali. Most other EU members were also neither willing nor able to provide defense budgets to buy all the expensive "strategic enablers" that made military operations beyond their own borders possible (air transport, air refuelling, reconnaissance, etc.) and which were provided by the US. In Eastern Europe, the desire for independent military capabilities of the EU—whether "autonomous" or "sovereign"—was met with fundamental criticism, as those EU-members closer to Russia wanted to remain as closely tied to the USA as possible.

The gap between the desire and reality of European military action became clear in a 2019 analysis by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), in which the authors calculated that the European NATO members would have to invest up to 360 billion dollars to defend Estonia and parts of Poland after a Russian attack without the help of the USA (Barrie *et al.*, 2019).

Only the European Peace Facility proved to be a great success. Originally equipped with comparatively small funds to provide military assistance in individual cases, it grew into a central instrument after Russia's attack on Ukraine to provide Kiev with considerable support.

### 1.1. German motives for living with the contradictions

But how can it be explained that, in Germany, as in many other EU Member States, the idea of a common security and defense policy has found such broad support, when the successes on the way to achieving this have been shown more in mere commitments or ever new structures and institutions, and not in a real military capability of the EU? How could the German side repeatedly ignore the fact that the European Union has not developed any effective joint military capabilities despite a number of global political wake-up calls and the repeatedly proclaimed "European moment"? Why have no conclusions been drawn from the fact that, even after decades of self-proclamation, the EU has remained an economic giant but still a dwarf in terms of security policy, playing no decisive foreign policy role either in the Middle East or in the Asia-Pacific region?

The reasons for this contradiction, which comes close to strategic self-deception, lie in a mix of partly interwoven, partly contradictory historical, political and cultural motives.

Initially, the EU was not designed as a foreign policy instrument, but primarily as an economic project. It is therefore difficult for it to become a tool for the effective exercise and containment of power. There are also clear criteria for the success of joint action in the economic sphere with factors such as growth, gross domestic product or export success, whereas there is no such clear cost-benefit ratio in foreign and security policy in this form. Attitudes towards the Middle East conflict, China's role in the world or Europe's tasks in the so-called Global South differ considerably depending on the history or geography of the individual EU members. It is therefore not surprising that there are no truly common positions on migration, security in East Asia or the challenges in sub-Saharan Africa. The demand to speak with one voice is raised time and again but is very rarely realised. Even when it comes to assessing a supposedly clear-cut situation, such as Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, positions within the EU differ, as the Hungarian example shows.

This intrinsic disagreement also results from the fact that the EU's two main foreign policy players, Germany and France, who were initially three before the UK's withdrawal, have long lived on different planets in terms of their strategic culture. As a nuclear state and permanent member of the United Nations Security

Council, France has traditionally viewed the EU as an instrument for expanding French options for power and action. Germany, on the other hand, cultivated the European Union in order to disappear into it in terms of power politics. France wants to be a global military power, while Germany has always viewed the use of "hard power" with scepticism and has long seen itself as a "peace power" that exerts its international influence primarily in economic terms. It is no coincidence that Germany's non-participation in joint military operations, such as the NATO mission in Libya, was justified with reference to the German "culture of restraint".

Another reason for Germany's positive attitude towards the CSDP, despite the lack of results, was the pro-European orientation of the German public. While NATO and its decisions were always debated and often criticised as the "militarisation" of foreign and security policy, EU military plans, no matter how ambitious, never led to significant public protests or demonstrations. In terms of security policy, the term "European" always had a better reputation in Germany than "transatlantic", although it was often not clearly differentiated whether one was talking about the European pillar of NATO or independent EU forces.

One could even assume that some of the enthusiasm for the CSDP also stemmed from the subliminal feeling of never really having to stand up militarily for the decisions taken. Sufficient financial resources were not made available for a functioning German armed forces for a long time anyway, neither for NATO tasks nor for European missions. It was significant that, in 2010, one year after the signing of the Treaty of Lisbon, in which the Common Security and Defense Policy was officially proclaimed, Germany decided to cut the already tight defense budget by a further billion euros each year.

Dreams of a "world power Europe" in terms of security policy were, therefore, not only largely free of charge for Germany, but also safe in terms of security policy. Germany's military security would always be guaranteed by NATO and, thus, with recourse to the enormous military capabilities of the USA. Germany did not want to do without this transatlantic protective shield under any circumstances. That is why, since the beginning of its membership of NATO, Germany had always opted in favour of NATO when it had to choose between European (French) ideas of autonomy and transatlantic (American) security guarantees.

This explains, for example, why Germany has repeatedly rejected French proposals for a bilateral dialogue on nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence since the 1990s or has placed them in a transatlantic framework. The “French-German Security and Defense Concept”, which was approved on the French-German Summit meeting in December 1996 clearly states that a Franco-German nuclear dialogue should take place in a transatlantic framework, recognizing that the highest nuclear security guarantee will be provided in NATO by the strategic nuclear forces of the United States (French-German Defense and Security Council, 1996). Under no circumstances did they want to sacrifice the existing and apparently credible nuclear deterrent within NATO for vague ideas of a European deterrent capability.

One of the few exceptions to this loyalty to the USA was the crisis surrounding the American-led “Coalition of the Willing” to overthrow Iraq’s ruler Saddam Hussein in 2003, in which Germany opposed the USA while the Eastern European NATO members sided with Washington. This led to the accusation by US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld that Germany and France belonged to “Old Europe”, while Eastern Europe represented “New Europe” (Baker, 2003).

The belief cultivated for many years in Germany that it was not exposed to any real military threat and that it could indulge in daydreams of a common European Defense capability (which would not even entail any particular costs) on the basis of a functioning transatlantic security alliance came to an abrupt end with Russia’s war against Ukraine in February 2022. This epochal shift in security policy fundamentally changed German, European and transatlantic security policy.

## 2. The consequences of the Ukraine War for security and defense

Russia’s attack on Ukraine on February 24, 2022 came as a surprise to many in Germany, despite Moscow’s ever-increasing threats. Although military preparations had been evident for weeks, an attack seemed rather unlikely. The USA, NATO and the EU had made it clear to Moscow that, although an attack would not be met with a military response, it would lead to severe economic and political countermeasures. Putin, it was assumed, would hardly do anything that would cause Russia such considerable damage in the long term and would, therefore, leave it

at threats. Germany had only had a new government of Social Democrats, Greens and Liberals for a few months, of which the Social Democrats in particular had long cultivated a pro-Russian policy and were still convinced of Russia's interest in a settlement with the West. This explains why Germany still favoured de-escalation and negotiations with Moscow in the weeks leading up to the outbreak of war.

The blatant breach of international law and the breaking of the taboo of open warfare in Eastern Europe sent shockwaves through almost all areas of international relations and had a significant impact on European policy with regard to Russia, China, the "Global South", NATO and, in particular, the CSDP.

For Russia, the attack signalled the final break with the West and with democratic Europe. Future relations with the European Union, NATO or countries close to these organisations will be permanently hostile as long as Putin or one of his henchmen rules in Moscow. Regardless of the outcome of the war, Russia will experience a threefold decline. Economically, because profits from energy exports will decrease and tough sanctions will make economic growth more difficult. Militarily, because it is literally burning up its modern weapons systems and cannot produce new systems of equal value. It has also lost hundreds of thousands of soldiers, especially well-trained officers. Politically, because it is entering the self-isolation of a dream of the "Russian world", to which hardly anyone apart from Russia itself wants to belong. It is not even certain how long Russia will be able to counteract the signs of disintegration on its fringes. The European Union is therefore confronted with a permanently aggressive and potentially unstable Russia and is also faced with the problem of integrating Ukraine into European structures as quickly as possible.

China has demonstratively sided with Russia, thereby clearly distancing itself from the current international rules based order. This made it clear that China also defines its relations with the so-called Western world, i.e. the community of liberal democracies, as adversarial. For the EU, this means a future balancing act between economic interests *vis-à-vis* China on the one hand and safeguarding its own democratic principles on the other.

For the regions south of the EU, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, the war usually means a worsening of their already difficult situation. Income from energy exports has fallen because the members of the EU are focussing more on alternative energy

sources. This threatens to increase poverty and inequality, which, in turn, increases the risk of regional crises and conflicts. Russia is also bringing conflict to the region by increasing its influence in countries such as Mali and Niger, at the expense of Western states. Subsequently, the region's greater susceptibility to crises results in higher migration pressure or a greater import of terrorist activities for Europe.

For NATO, the war means a return to its core task of deterrence and defense. In future, armed forces will primarily serve to safeguard the security and territorial integrity of its members rather than international crisis management beyond the Alliance's borders. This, in turn, has repercussions for the EU's security and defense policy ambitions.

## 2.1. The Ukraine War and CSDP

The effects of the war in Ukraine are fundamental for the Common European Security and Defense Policy in two respects. Firstly, they have demonstrated European unity and the ability to act *vis-à-vis* Russia, and secondly, they have finally dispelled defense policy illusions and placed the EU's security policy actions on a new footing.

The European Union, so often criticised for its disunity and bureaucratic inefficiency, functioned extremely well before and during the war in Ukraine. Presumably much to Vladimir Putin's (or Xi Jinping's) surprise, the EU members did not fall out over the pros and cons of Russian gas supplies but sent clear signals, even before the outbreak of war, that a Russian attack would be associated with high economic and political costs. The first package of sanctions against Russia was adopted before the outbreak of war, the second followed just one day after the fighting began. In the meantime (as of August 2024) sixteen such packages have already been imposed in the areas of finance, energy, transport and technology, which have built up ever greater pressure and made Russian attempts to circumvent them increasingly difficult. However one may judge the overall effectiveness of the sanctions regime, the European unity is particularly remarkable because the sanctions are also associated with considerable costs for the EU Member States and are a burden on private and public budgets due to rising prices.

In addition, the EU has taken a number of solidarity measures to ensure sufficient energy supplies for all its members and to calm

the occasionally exploding gas markets. This, in turn, contributed to the EU's unity towards Russia, as the individual member states recognised the benefits of joint European action.

Furthermore, the EU has reacted to the global food crisis and specifically promoted the export of grain from Ukraine, thereby slowing down a further rise in food prices. In this way, the EU has acted in terms of security policy far beyond the pure conflict zone and contributed to the stabilisation of already fragile regions in the Global South.

The EU's financial support for Ukraine is equally remarkable. Over six billion euros were made available for the Ukrainian armed forces between 2022 and 2024. The EU members have provided around 138 billion euros for economic aid, reconstruction and humanitarian measures by the beginning of 2024 (European Council, n.d.). This was done with great unanimity (with the exception of autocratically governed Hungary), although it demanded considerable sacrifices from all member states and entailed long-term debt.

Through this coherent action, the effects of which reached far beyond Europe, the EU has become what many supporters of a united Europe had always wished for, namely a heavyweight in international politics that was able to transform its economic significance into decisive security policy influence. However, all of this is about security *policy* and not military action. The military response to the war was the sole responsibility of NATO, which focused its military planning and force development on the need for deterrence and defense against an aggressive and revanchist Russia. Although the term CSDP also includes a defense component with the term "Defense", no one would have thought of seriously seeing the EU as an instrument of military defense against Russia's imperial expansion.

This increase in the EU's political significance and its simultaneous loss of military significance have settled the debate about the CSDP, which has been characterised by wishful thinking for years, once and for all. Although a few in the EU still harbour the idea of an autonomous military capability, there will be no such EU force, not only because no one is prepared to provide the necessary resources, but also because the majority of EU members do not want it. The same applies to the repeatedly proclaimed "European Defense Union", which was to be created by 2025. It too will not exist as an independent and militarily credible element for the defense of the EU. The Eastern European EU states in particular

are quite right to ask where the EU and Ukraine would have been in the current conflict with Russia without the military support of the USA. Without the USA and NATO, what would the EU have done to prevent possible aggression by Moscow against Poland or the Baltic states? How would it have been possible to achieve a credible nuclear deterrent against Russia without the USA (and the UK)?

This is particularly true if we look to the time after the end of the war in Ukraine, although such an end cannot be foreseen at present. Ukraine has been given the prospect of EU membership and accession talks with Brussels already started in June 2024. As the country that is most interested in credible military protection based on painful experience, it will not want to find itself in a supposedly autonomous European Defense union, but rather in a transatlantic alliance that can guarantee security and stability. For this reason, Ukraine is striving not only to join the EU but also to be integrated into NATO as fast as possible.

Even if military action is reduced to the area of crisis management beyond the EU's borders, EU operations will only be possible to a limited extent in future. In the past, EU members were able to send parts of their armed forces on EU missions, even though these were intended for defense tasks within the framework of NATO. The war in Ukraine has brought deterrence and defense back into focus, meaning that NATO's defense plans must once again be credibly backed up with armed forces. This is difficult enough for the majority of EU members due to years of neglecting their military capabilities, leaving little room for manoeuvre for military crisis management. The EU's difficulty in providing even a few frigates for the "Aspides" mission to protect merchant shipping in the Red Sea, which was decided in February 2024, shows this very clearly. The EU's military intervention force, which was already planned before the war in Ukraine and is set to grow to its full size of 5000 soldiers by 2025, will only ever be deployable for crisis operations if these forces do not have to be available for NATO defense planning. This means that most EU members are unlikely to be willing to deploy these troops on longer-term missions outside the EU.

This holds also true for Germany, where the neglect of the armed forces in the past decades was particularly visible. Hence, it is even more difficult now to rebuild an efficient and combat ready *Bundeswehr* able to take the defense commitments within the Atlantic Alliance. Of course, no one will formally exclude

German participation in future crisis management operations, as no one will be able to foresee potential future contingencies. Still, the political will to weaken defense capabilities for the benefit of crisis operations beyond NATO borders is very limited, in particular since most of these operations in the past had been of limited success.

The future, therefore, lies in ever closer functional cooperation between NATO and the EU, in which each of these institutions contributes its core competences. The idea of a real EU defense union has thus been permanently put to rest, because military defense is not part of the EU's core competence. On the other hand, NATO must also free itself from tasks that lie outside its capabilities. NATO can, at best, make a supporting contribution to threats such as terrorism, migration or climate change. In these areas, the EU clearly has better instruments that it can bring to bear in cooperation with NATO.

However, NATO-EU cooperation, as useful as it is for combining the special capabilities of both institutions, will continue to be challenged by the dispute between Greece (NATO and EU member) and Turkey (NATO member only) for a long time to come and will often reach its limits. In view of the changed global political situation, however, it seems more sensible to devote time and efforts to overcoming these concrete difficulties than to continue to follow the pipe dreams of an independent defense of the EU.

### 3. The German *Zeitenwende*

The epochal change brought about by Russia's attack has also shaken German foreign, security and defense policy to its foundations and led to a fundamentally new political and military course with regard to both NATO and the EU, and therefore also the CSDP. The keyword for this fundamental change is the *Zeitenwende* (historic turning point) that Chancellor Scholz announced in his speech on February 27, 2022, three days after the Russian attack.

It was not the first time that top German politicians had publicly declared their commitment to more security and defense engagement. German government representatives had already made similar announcements at the Munich Security Conference in 2014. However, the 2022 speech differed from previous German promises in two respects. Firstly, it was not the result of lengthy

strategic debates, but rather a spontaneous reaction to the realisation that Germany's own policy towards Russia had entirely failed. Germany had completely isolated itself in NATO and the EU in the weeks leading up to the war and the critical comments from Washington were unrivalled in terms of drama. The delivery of 5000 combat helmets offered by the German government to support Ukraine was seen as cynical and embarrassing. The *Zeitenwende*-speech was therefore virtually the last chance for a strategic reversal before Germany manoeuvred itself completely offside. This explains why some of the Chancellor's formulations were still unclear at the beginning and why it was not yet possible to fully assess the overall policy consequences of Germany's change of direction in security policy.

Secondly, this speech contained a central element that was missing from earlier German declarations of intent: the sum of 100 billion euros that was made available to credibly underpin promises made.

- The changes and re-evaluations that have been achieved since the announcement of the turning point were probably not even expected by optimists. Germany has not only become the second largest military and civilian supporter of Ukraine, but has also completely reorganised its security policy:
- The 100 billion "special budget" will be used to improve the *Bundeswehr's* equipment with weapons, ammunition and individual equipment for the soldiers. This could certainly have been done a little faster, but a year has been wasted with a completely ineffectual German defense minister (Christine Lambrecht). However, the new leadership in the German Ministry of Defense managed by mid-2024 to contract 99% of the special budget to concrete procurements projects.
- When it comes to military procurement, the purchase of existing equipment "off the shelf" on the international markets is favoured over complex cooperation projects. The fact that German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius has explicitly named the time factor as one of the criteria for armaments procurement means that future armaments projects will be judged primarily on how quickly they are available for the armed forces. This does not rule out European Defense cooperation, but it does set limits.
- German arms export policy is changing fundamentally. It is moving away from the moralising principle of not supplying weapons and equipment to areas of tension or to non-demo-

cratic countries, not at least because this approach was not always upheld in practice anyway. Instead, weapons are even being delivered to a war zone (Ukraine) and will in future be aligned with German security interests.

- For the first time in its history, Germany has drawn up a National Security Strategy in June 2023 in which, also for the first time in a government document, it is stipulated that 2% of the gross domestic product (GDP) will be spent on defense in future.

In addition to these changes relating more to the military “hardware”, it is above all the *Zeitenwende* in people’s minds that is signalling a new course for Germany’s foreign and security policy.

- Despite populist movements on the left and right, the majority of Germans continue to support aid for Ukraine and sanctions against Russia, even though both come at a cost to the individual.
- In June 2022, four months after the start of the war, 52% of respondents voted in favour of the presence of American nuclear weapons on German soil—65% of these supporters were Green Party voters (the same party that has its roots in the anti-nuclear protests in the 1980s) (Svan, 2022). Even in 2024, more than two years after the beginning of the war, there is a solid majority in Germany supporting the need for nuclear deterrence.
- Defense Minister Pistorius is in favour of a “war-ready” *Bundeswehr*. Any German minister who had called for Germany to be ready for war two or three years ago would have been forced to resign immediately. In the *Bundeswehr*’s new Defense Political Guidelines from November 2023, the term “war” appears fifteen times, in the previous document from 2011, this term was only mentioned once as “civil war”.
- While, in the past, many German universities had stipulated in their statutes that they would not conduct research that could serve advances in the defense sector, the German Ministry of Education is now calling on universities to cooperate with the arms industry.

### 3.1. The *Zeitenwende* and the Common European Security and Defense Policy

The sudden realisation, on February 24, 2022, of being exposed to a specific threat that can only be countered by effective deter-

rence and defense capabilities has also led to a reassessment of EU security policy in Germany. Instead of continuing to follow the rhetoric of an independent European Defense capability, Germany has clearly turned to NATO militarily, as only NATO can guarantee credible security provision. At the same time, Germany has supported the EU's political efforts with great commitment, thus taking into account the functional division of labour described above. This shift from European policy wishful thinking to defense policy realism can be seen in many ways:

In the new National Security Strategy, the capstone document of German security policy, the term "Common Security and Defense Policy" only appears once in a sentence that speaks of European crisis management; there is no mention of defense in this context. "EU Strategic Compass", the key document of the Union, also only appears twice in the National Security Strategy. This is all the more remarkable, given that the coalition agreement, which the three governing parties agreed when they came to power at the end of 2021, was considered to be particularly EU-friendly. NATO, on the other hand, is mentioned 36 times in the National Security Strategy.

The procurement of American or Israeli weapons systems, such as the F-35 fighter aircraft or the Arrow missile defense system, follows the principle of "off the shelf" and clearly rejects European options. This has led to fierce criticism from France, which sees this as a violation of European industrial interests.

Furthermore, Germany has accepted a fundamental conflict with France, which apparently still clings to European ideas of autonomy. This means that the sometimes heated disputes between Chancellor Scholz and French President Macron are not so much the result of personal animosities, but rather reveal different ideas on security policy. Such differing views between the two countries are nothing new, but, unlike in the past, they can no longer be rhetorically covered up with the common desire for European integration.

In August 2022, Chancellor Scholz launched the European Sky Shield Initiative (ESSI) for the joint procurement of air defense capabilities, which included non-EU members (the UK) from the outset. The initiative is not about joint development, but about the joint purchase of available systems in order to achieve cost advantages through larger quantities or to be able to organise joint maintenance. France demonstratively stayed away from this

project because American equipment is also to be procured, which contradicts French thinking in categories of EU independence.

The German decision to permanently station a combat-ready brigade in Lithuania will stretch the *Bundeswehr* to its limits and leave no room for the deployment of significant EU forces for crisis management.

Future joint armaments projects with German participation, such as the Franco-German-Spanish Future Combat Air System (FCAS), are likely to face even greater difficulties in future than they already do. The project's time horizon—it should be operational by 2040—contradicts the German goal of having operational material available as quickly as possible. There is also a rival project being run by the UK, Italy and Japan, which is due to be completed by 2035. This means that EU members are competing with each other. Ultimately, it is likely that the experience gained in the Ukraine War with mass deployable drones will require a reassessment of future air force requirements.

With these decisions, Germany has followed through at national level on what had become apparent at international level as a result of the war in Ukraine, namely the abandonment of the illusion of a European Defense Union worthy of the name. Instead, the indispensable security policy role of the EU is recognised when it comes to economic and political measures to contain Russia or to stabilise or rebuild Ukraine. NATO, on the other hand, is responsible for the military protection of its members and, in the future, of Ukraine. Joint military efforts by Europeans—whether inside or outside the EU—are to be welcomed because they strengthen the European pillar within NATO and stabilise transatlantic security relations.

#### 4. Europe's security and the United States' shift to the Asia Pacific

However, the sober realisation that there will be neither a European army nor a European Defense Union or an autonomous EU military force raises the question of how Europeans should react if the USA were to reduce its security policy commitment in Europe. This problem had already become apparent in 2016, when Donald Trump entered the White House as a president who rejected alliances in general and security promises for European NATO partners in particular.

However, even then, the danger of being left to their own devices in the future did not prompt the EU Member States to pull together in terms of security policy. Instead, a number of EU states tried to establish close bilateral relations with the USA in order to benefit from American military power. Apparently, even a Eurosceptic America was still expected to provide greater protection than the EU's future military capabilities. Fortunately, Trump's presidency ended after just four years, so he was unable to continue his destructive policies against the transatlantic relationship.

However, the problem of dwindling American commitment to Europe will also arise again in the future, regardless of who the future US president will be. As a global power, the United States sees itself more threatened in the long term by China's constant rise in power than by Russia's imperial aggression. While Russia is seen as a declining power despite its war against Ukraine, China is perceived as a rising power that not only challenges the Western-dominated world order, but also —unlike Russia— has the means to enforce its own ideas of order. China's huge build-up of armed forces over the past decade clearly points in this direction. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that China has been demonstratively siding with Russia since 2022 and, together with countries such as North Korea, Syria and Iran, is forming a joint "autocratic front" against the political West.

In order to counter these dangers militarily, it is conceivable that the USA will reduce its military involvement in Europe in order to have sufficient forces for possible conflicts in the Asia-Pacific region. This could happen as a confrontational act under a future President Donald Trump and would thus cause considerable damage to NATO and transatlantic security relations. However, it could also be conceivable as a consensually negotiated step towards a new burden-sharing arrangement in which the USA also defends European security interests in the Pacific region, while Europe assumes responsibility for safeguarding its own security and territorial integrity.

In the past, the mere possibility of the USA withdrawing from Europe was viewed with great concern by Europeans. They had become too accustomed to the US subsidising their own security and the regular calls from the US for more burden-sharing and more financial contributions from Europeans usually went unheard. It also seemed impossible that Europe would be able to withstand an aggressive Russia as the second largest nuclear power without the military power of the USA. However, the fact

that Europe's military weakness in recent decades was a fate it had chosen for itself because it was not prepared to provide sufficient resources for its own national defense was usually concealed. Instead, Europeans —whether inside or outside the EU—assumed that the United States would always have sufficient security interests in Europe to remain militarily engaged in the region.

These basic convictions have also been called into question by the war in Ukraine. A defense of Europe without the USA or only with very limited American support has become a real option and could even be successfully managed. The reasons for this lie in two opposing developments: on the one hand, Russia is becoming steadily weaker as a result of the war, while on the other, Europe's military power is steadily increasing.

The weakening of Russia continues with every day of the war. What Moscow intended to be a short campaign of conquest lasting only a few weeks has developed into a gruelling war of attrition, as a result of which Moscow has lost most of its modern weapons. Although Russia has large quantities of old military equipment and can apparently also produce sufficient ammunition, it cannot make any decisive gains against Ukraine, which is supported by the West. In over ten years of war (since the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014), Russia has occupied just 19% of Ukrainian territory. According to current estimates, Russian casualties amount to more than 315 000 dead and wounded; this corresponds to 90% of the 360 000 —strong Russian invasion force with which Russia started the war (Landay, 2023). Particularly painful is the loss of a large number of well-trained officers who cannot be replaced in the short term and will hamper Russia's fighting power for years to come.

The Russian Black Sea Fleet has suffered heavy losses and has had to withdraw a large number of its ships from Sevastopol and relocate them further east, as only a few British Storm Shadow cruise missiles posed a significant threat. The Russian air force has not yet been able to intervene significantly in the fighting.

The costs of the war are also enormous for Russia and will swallow up 40% of total government spending by 2025. The Russian gas company Gazprom, whose profits once accounted for 10% of the state budget, has lost 80% of its markets in Western Europe without being able to compensate for this with supplies to India or China (Milov, 2024). There are simply no pipelines for this.

Although oil is supplied to India and China, the prices realised barely cover the production costs. With NATO, Russia also faces an alliance whose GDP is more than twenty times higher than Russia's, not to mention the other supporters of Ukraine within the EU or the G7. So far, there are no signs that the alliance supporting Ukraine, which currently comprises 50 countries, will slacken its efforts. After the end of the war—which is not yet in sight—Russia will therefore only have a fraction of its economic and military strength.

At the same time, the military strength of the Europeans has grown considerably. After years of neglecting their armed forces, most members of the EU and NATO have significantly increased their defense spending and strengthened their armed forces. Even Germany reached NATO's 2% target in 2024 for the first time in decades.

Based on the increase in armed forces, NATO has developed comprehensive defense plans again for the first time and also changed its force structure. Already after the Crimea crisis in 2014, NATO stationed an "Enhanced Forward Presence" of smaller units in Eastern Europe, which were intended more as a "trip-wire" for deterrence purposes. Now, a comprehensive and combat ready military defense capability is being developed on the alliance's eastern borders. Moreover, in NATO's so-called "New Force Model", up to 800 000 troops are to be available in future, of which around 300 000 are to be kept at high and maximum readiness and be ready for deployment within thirty days. A large proportion of these troops will be provided by the Europeans. These plans are to be backed up by the corresponding armed forces from 2025 onwards and can, therefore, be implemented.

Europe would be further strengthened militarily if Ukraine were to join NATO as soon as possible. One positive aspect of the otherwise tragic war is that Ukraine now has strong and battle-hardened armed forces that are comparatively well equipped thanks to international support and have often been trained in NATO countries. If these were added to the modern European armed forces currently being built up, Europe would be clearly superior to Russia militarily.

However, a successful European Defense against Russia requires the USA to maintain its nuclear umbrella over Europe. Although Europe has two nuclear weapons states—France and the UK—and, therefore, two independent nuclear decision-making cen-

tres, a credible American extended deterrence—i.e. the extension of the US nuclear umbrella over its non-nuclear allies—is seen as indispensable. This has much less to do with the much smaller size of the French and British arsenals. The main impediment to a European nuclear deterrence without American nuclear weapons is the fact that France regards nuclear weapons as a strictly national asset and rejects the idea of “extended” nuclear deterrence or, as the French bon-mot says, *La nucléaire ne se partage pas*. This is legitimate, but it excludes French nuclear commitments for non-nuclear allies by definition.

In such a model, which is based on a stable transatlantic relationship and a remaining American nuclear commitment, Europe or the European pillar within NATO would certainly be in a position to stand up for its own security.

## 5. European Defense and a new Transatlantic Bargain

Europe’s security has always depended on a stable transatlantic partnership, i.e. the close connection between Europe and North America. This partnership began with what the former American ambassador to NATO Harlan Cleveland (1970) called the “Transatlantic Bargain”, i.e. the partly tacit and partly explicit agreement between the United States as the leading power and the European allies, in which the USA committed itself to the protection and reconstruction of war-torn Western Europe. The American military capabilities were not only intended to provide security from the threat posed by the Soviet Union. They also ensured that the Europeans could use a large part of their budgets for their economic recovery instead of investing in large armies with which they could threaten each other again, as they had done in the past. Conversely, Washington expected the European allies to see the transatlantic community, and NATO in particular, as an alliance of democratic values, to largely support the policy of the USA as the leading power in this community and, as fast as possible, to assume their own defense burdens. This transatlantic bargain thus formed the security policy core of the political “West”, i.e. the combination of democracy, liberalism and a market economy.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, this “West” and, thus, also the “Transatlantic Bargain” was extended to large parts of Eastern Europe, which were accepted into both NATO and the EU. American involvement in Europe was never altruistic, but always

driven by national interests, as it gave the USA significant political influence over one of the world's strongest economic regions, which in turn was indispensable for the American role as a global superpower. Although separated by the Atlantic Ocean, the USA was therefore always a "European power" (Holbrooke, 1995).

However, especially after the end of the Cold War, the impression grew in the USA that the Europeans were not fulfilling the Transatlantic Bargain in one important aspect, namely what has been laid down in Article 3 of NATO's Washington Treaty: the will to "...maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack" (NATO, 1949). The perception in Washington is that Europeans rely too much on US protection and even gain economic advantages because they have to invest fewer resources in their own defense. American governments have repeatedly pointed this out in the past. In this respect, the brutality of President Trump's demands differs only in tone from what previous presidents have always called for: fairer burden-sharing within the alliance.

The increasing efforts of the European Union since the 1990s to extend European integration to the military sphere and develop independent EU armed forces did not convince the USA. Washington recognised too clearly that these efforts were primarily reflected in new structures, agreements and euphonious terms and not in significant military capabilities. At times, Washington even saw the Europeans' efforts towards military independence as detrimental because they would unnecessarily duplicate existing structures and waste further resources. It was also feared at times that the EU could position itself against the USA.

Today, with a revanchist Russia in Europe and an autocratic-aggressive China in Asia, the question of the relationship between European and transatlantic security is being posed anew. Russia's attack on Ukraine therefore does not mean a repeat of the bipolar confrontation of the Cold War and will not lead to an "East-West Conflict 2.0". Instead, China represents a second threat that the transatlantic community must address. Consequently, a new two-dimensional "Transatlantic Bargain" must be negotiated in the coming years, which not only has a European task (protection from Russia) but also an Asia-Pacific dimension (protection from China). This must not necessarily mean a NATO engagement in the Asia-Pacific, since the Alliance understands itself as the *North Atlantic Treaty Organisation*. However, it would require different ways of burden-sharing withing the Euro-Atlantic community.

In practice, this will mean two things. On the one hand, it will require the Europeans to make the aforementioned greater military efforts in order to be able to guarantee their own security *vis-à-vis* Russia without the USA or only with limited American capabilities. On the other hand, it also requires the Europeans to be prepared to become militarily more active in their immediate neighbourhood in order to relieve the American armed forces. One can rightly ask why the USA still has troops stationed in Kosovo, although stability in the Balkans is a genuinely European concern. The same applies to European security provision in the Mediterranean or the Red Sea. If the Europeans were to show a greater military presence there, American armed forces, especially maritime forces, could turn their attention more to the Asia-Pacific region.

Whether the European military capabilities required for this are procured within the framework of the EU or as part of the European pillar of NATO is of secondary importance. The decisive factor is that the strengthening of European Defense comes about at all. If this succeeds, then the Euro-Atlantic security community will be able to maintain its security and its "way of life" against autocratic-dictatorial regimes in the future.

## Bibliography

Baker, M. (2003). US: Rumsfeld's "Old" and "New" Europe Touches an Uneasy Divide. *Radio Free Europe*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/1102012.html>

Cleveland, H. (1970). *NATO: the Transatlantic Bargain*. New York, Harper & Row. 204 p.

Douglas Barrie *et al.* (2019). Defending Europe: scenario-based capability requirements for NATO's European members. *International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)*.

European Council [online]. (n.d.). *EU Solidarity with Ukraine*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-response-ukraine-invasion/eu-solidarity-ukraine/#economic>

— (1999). *Presidency Conclusions*. Cologne. SN 150/99: 2. 79 p. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/21070/57886.pdf>

- European Parliament. (1992). *Mutual Defence Clause (Article 42.7 TEU)*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009\\_2014/documents/sede/dv/sede200612mutualdefsolidarityclauses\\_/sede200612mutualdefsolidarityclauses\\_en.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/sede/dv/sede200612mutualdefsolidarityclauses_/sede200612mutualdefsolidarityclauses_en.pdf)
- French-German Defence and Security Council. (1996). *French-German Security and Defence Concept*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: [https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/franco\\_german\\_security\\_and\\_defence\\_concept\\_nuremberg\\_9\\_december\\_1996-en-0215e246-27fd-46e5-8e83-8cefb0397592.html](https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/franco_german_security_and_defence_concept_nuremberg_9_december_1996-en-0215e246-27fd-46e5-8e83-8cefb0397592.html)
- Holbroke, R. (1995). America, a European Power. *Foreign Affairs*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/europe/1995-03-01/america-european-power>
- Landay, J. (2023). US Intelligence Assesses that Ukraine War Has Cost Russia 315 000 Casualties. *Reuters*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: [https://www.reuters.com/world/us-intelligence-assesses-ukraine-war-has-cost-russia-315000-casualties-source-2023-12-12/#:~:text=WASHINGTON%2C%20Dec%2012%20\(Reuters\),the%20intelligence%20said%20on%20Tuesday.](https://www.reuters.com/world/us-intelligence-assesses-ukraine-war-has-cost-russia-315000-casualties-source-2023-12-12/#:~:text=WASHINGTON%2C%20Dec%2012%20(Reuters),the%20intelligence%20said%20on%20Tuesday.)
- Milov, V. (2024). Oil, Gas and War: The Effect of Sanctions on the Russian Energy Industry. *Atlantic Council*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/russia-tomorrow/oil-gas-and-war/>
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization. (1949). *The North Atlantic Treaty, Article 3*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm)
- Poos, J. (1999). This is the hour of Europe, not the hour of the Americans. In Drozdiak, W. *Europe Follows American Lead*. Washington D. C., *Washington Post*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/balkans/stories/europe032699.htm>
- Svan, J. H. (2022). German Public Changes Minds on Presece of US Nukes, with 52% now in favor, poll reveals. *Stars and Stripes*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.stripes.com/theaters/europe/2022-06-17/more-support-nuclear-weapons-6372237.html>

## Chapter four

### Italy's role in the European Defense project

*Alberto Pagani*

#### **Abstract**

The proposed analysis focuses on the perspective of Common European Defence, especially in relation to the new geopolitical challenges, through the particular vision of Italy. The study starts from the indispensable transformation/adaptation of the instrument of National Defence - in Italy and in the other member states - according to the new threats and the new face that war has taken on.

In this perspective, the articulated security and defence system of the Italian Republic is described; its evolution to pure professionalism and, with it, the change of paradigm in relation to the citizens and the constitutional dictate in relation to the international member organisations.

Italy is a founding country of the European project as well as of the Atlantic Treaty with a fundamental role in both the southern and eastern flanks. The contribution of the Italian experience in the redefinition of an adequate and prompt Common Defence and Security Policy gains particular importance for the characteristics of mediation and realism recognised in Rome's Foreign Policy;

especially in reference to the PESCO mechanisms of enhanced cooperation, in the regulatory framework of the Lisbon Treaty and in the Council of the Union, the real engine and calibrator of EU integration.

***Keywords***

Italy, Common European Defence, Enhanced Cooperation, New Threats, CSDP-OTAN.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Foreword

The design and construction of a new integrated European Defense system, and, thus, the proposal that each country can realistically put forward, necessarily starts from three preliminary points:

- The external context, i.e. the analysis of the international relations of the European Union and its Member States in the present. Foreign, security and defense policies are closely interconnected and enable the EU to play an active role in the international arena, so they must necessarily adapt and be adapted to it.
- The physiognomy of the new wars. The military instrument serves to guarantee the security of Europe and the peoples of Europe, to protect them from possible external threats and to maintain peace. Therefore, its physiognomy depends on the character of the threat and the forms of war. To think of a military instrument apart from its use, and, thus, from war, is a useless, wrong and very dangerous exercise.
- The real and current conditions to be changed. An analysis of the situation, the resources deployed, the capabilities acquired, and the activity performed is a necessary premise for any evolution. Only what is there can evolve, modifying itself, with the available resources, within an evolutionary path towards a goal, which requires time and obstacles to overcome.

### 1.2. What kind of war will it be?

With Russia's aggression against Ukraine on February 22, 2022, Hamas' attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, and the ensuing military escalation in the Middle East, the apparent peace situation to which Europe had become accustomed is over. In a new perspective of 'offensive realism' (Mearsheimer, 2001), international crises are seen as opportunities by the Great and New Global and Regional Powers, and by the so-called 'Swing States' (De Vito, 2024) who produce and use them to take their maximum advantages and advance in global governance. But these crises have taken on a different physiognomy from the past, now more ambiguous, disguised, and more difficult to decipher and interpret. Today we live in the era of 'unconventional' international confrontation. The concept of the 'new war' became evident in 2001.

The shocking 9/11 represented a paradigm shift: the images of the flaming towers collapsing on live TV sent an irrefutable message to the world: no one could feel safe anymore and that terrible act of terrorism did not only concern the United States; it was the beginning of an open war 'without limits' (Liang & Xiangsui, 2016). 'The face of the god of war has become indistinct', wrote the two Chinese Air Force officers Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, in a book made famous by the American intelligence apparatus. It was back in 1996 when the two colonels translated Deng Xiaoping's aphorism 'it doesn't matter whether the cat is black or white, as long as it catches mice' into a study of military strategy, centered on the concept of the weapon system. They thus introduced a new point of departure, arguing that new individual high-tech weapons, in the age of technological integration and globalization, could no longer characterize warfare (with the exception of AI, the development of which was not reasoned about), as was the case in the past, when it was the invention of a new weapon (the stirrup, the 'Maxim' machine gun, the atomic bomb) that changed the face of war. The Chinese colonels called it 'limitless war'; Gen. Gerasimov, Chief of Staff of the Russian armed forces, calls it 'ambiguous, non-linear war' (Gerasimov, 2013: 476; 2016: 624); Western military doctrine speaks of 'hybrid war', or 'war in the grey zones'.

These are different ways of understanding the same thing: contemporary war is a mixture of military and non-military actions, which are based on deception, concealment of intentions, actors, field forces and tactical and strategic objectives. The new war is still the 'continuation of politics by other means' (Clausewitz, 1942; 154-786), but it is no longer the military conflict that follows a formal declaration that enshrines its condition. War is no longer declared, it is denied even in the face of evidence, or called something else. It is often waged by proxy combatants, who are not regular soldiers, but puppets fighting by proxy, on behalf of others.

### 1.3. Systemic crisis

The loss of feeling between the West and the Global South and the growing conflict with autocratic Eurasian regimes (Russian Federation, People's Republic of China, Islamic Republic of Iran) have progressively disintegrated the rule-based World Order and turned the multilateral system into a conflictual and anar-

chic mosaic, increasing the risk of total war. Emerging players, such as India, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, South Africa, Egypt, Mexico, Algeria and Indonesia, are moving unconstrained by Western strategies, seeking their best positioning. Cliff Kupchan, (2023) in *Foreign Policy* ('Six Swing States Will Decide the Future of Geopolitics'), and Tareq Hasan, (2023) in *Modern Diplomacy* ('The Future of Geopolitics Will Be Decided by 6 Swing States'), wrote about this framework on the concept of 'strategic autonomy' (De Vito, 2024). The anarchic drift of international relations places the issue of its autonomous defense and deterrence capabilities before Europe. The EU Member States are bound by a pact of defensive solidarity, should one of them become the victim of a threat, aggression or attack (European Parliament, 1992).

The mutual defense obligation binds all member states does not affect the neutrality of some member states and is consistent with the commitments of NATO Member States, but Europe does not yet have an integrated and structured system of collective defense. The principle of 'defensive solidarity' should be intensified in the common area of mutual aid and cooperation policies, in relation to the obligation for member states to act jointly, should one of them be the target of a terrorist attack or the victim of a disaster. Until now, the European states have settled their historical anxieties and memories in the construction of European integration and accession to the Atlantic Pact. This has allowed the longest period of peace known to Europe because the only European wars have broken out in areas outside the Union: the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East and North Africa. With the emergence of new asymmetrical wars, Western security and defense apparatuses have had to adapt their response capability to so-called 'swarming attacks' (Arquilla & Ronfeldt, 2000) of international terrorism; a *modus operandi* capable of emphasizing the characteristics of mobility, obscurity, communication, unity and coordination of criminal cells in the new ICT (Information and Communications Technology) environment. This new scenario has also forced the EU to reflect on its ability to develop new and more effective forms of collaboration by pooling the Member States' know-how and exchanging privileged information, structuring the Member States' defense cooperation perspective. The assertion of the EU as a global geopolitical actor would at least require an effective and prompt form of common intervention in the CSDP, which can only come from an inter-governmental acceleration. At present, the Common Security and Defense Policy has become an integral part of the EU's

Common Foreign and Security Policy but has not yet achieved real substance.

#### 1.4. Supranational governance

Settling conflicts through dialogue and negotiation, to ensure peace, is a priority that deserves every effort. After the Second World War, the international community created political, social and financial supranational institutions to implement shared forms of governance and thus protect new generations from the risk of new war tragedies. With the progress of interdependence and globalization, the architecture of international institutions and treaties has been enriched: the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Accords for shared governance of climate change; the International Criminal Court set up to act to protect human rights where they are violated, and Free Trade Agreements to contain the risks of trade wars. The Covid 19 pandemic made the role of the World Health Organization clear. The G20 was created as an instrument for broad involvement in a world that can no longer be governed by the G7 alone. In each continent, continental and sub-continental forms of cooperation or integration were established to pursue common solutions to common problems. The core of this system is of course the United Nations, the pivot of a multilateral system of consultation and governance of global political dynamics. No significant issue today is governable by national policies alone, and national sovereignty increasingly appears to be a narrow dimension. However, all supranational institutions are 'societies of nations' whose effectiveness derives from the will of nation states, which are always reluctant to relinquish sovereignty. Paradoxically, this effort to create a new order occurs in the time of international anarchy, which destroys places and subjects of supranational governance, whose institutions lose their capacity for action. There is an urgent need to redefine strategies, objectives and structures of the international architecture, to give supranational institutions new effectiveness and authority.

## 2. Italian Defense today

### 2.1. Analysis and evolution of the Italian Defense and Security System

Italy's security and defense policies from the last 20 years have been driven by the need to maintain an effective and efficient

system in view of the relative 'limited' resources allocated to the sector and the overall difficulties of the state budget: Italy invests just over 30 billion euros in Defense, or about 1.5% of its GDP. The 'Martino' law (named after the then Minister of Defense of the second Berlusconi government), passed on August 23, 2004 with a broad and transversal parliamentary consensus between right and left parties, represented a real change in the interpretation and perspective of the entire sector. This reform law anticipated the suspension of compulsory conscription in peacetime (envisaged by the D'Alema government's Proxy Law 331/2000) with the immediate transition to the Professional Defense system, *ipso facto* allowing the Italian armed forces to be deployed in operational theatres of conflict: from the first Gulf War in 1991, to Kosovo 1998, to the military operations in Afghanistan in 2002. This has changed the dimension of action in the international scenario: Italy has become a responsible actor in delegated or participated international missions, with proportionate and specific 'combat' tasks. The adjustment to military professionalism has progressively changed the perspective with which Italians view the Armed Forces: operationality and combat have become a concrete expectation for those who enlist and no longer a remote possibility of a military instrument aimed only at deterrence. This is a paradigm shift in support of a country's international role, which is significantly played on the deployment of war and the primacy of individual choice. Subsequently, the law on the revision of the military instrument (No. 244 of 2012) provided for a reduction of the Armed Forces' overall endowment to 150 000 by 2025. The deadline was then extended to 2035 (Law No. 201 of 2023), and the number of personnel was increased to 160 000 (Legislative Decree 185 of 2023). To the traditional three domains of armed Defense - Army, Navy and Air Force -, the Italian Republic adds approximately 108 000 *Carabinieri* (fourth armed force Law No. 78 of March 31, 2000) with military police tasks in missions abroad and under the direction and control of the Ministry of Defense and approximately 70 000 *Guardia di Finanza* soldiers with economic and tax police tasks under the direction and control of the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

## 2.2. The employment of the Italian Armed Forces

The reorganized defense and security system has now barely enough to guarantee participation in all military missions abroad, which have progressively assumed considerable importance and

consideration. In recent years, there has been a shift from simple humanitarian interference operations to complex peacekeeping, peace building and peace enforcement missions, with the participation —since World War II— in more than 120 missions outside national borders, conducted by international organizations or in alliance between several countries. The Constitution of the Italian Republic lays down the rules for the employment of Italian military personnel abroad, some of whom are positioned in logistical and tactical bases, while the others participate in operations that protect national interests considered strategic by the Government and Parliament. In short, the Italian Armed Forces currently have the necessary resources and capabilities to support institutional tasks abroad and security tasks on national territory; offensive exposure in theatres of war with full dialogue and confrontation with other military powers would be another matter. In the second hypothesis, the Italian integrated defense system is absolutely neither sufficient nor competitive. Therefore, in the international context, Italian capabilities have specific and diriment qualities only if applied in joint operational environments, within NATO, precisely because they have been conceived and reorganized in this single function. Unfortunately, the evolution of regional and international crises and conflict scenarios are increasingly characterized by intersystem conflict, no longer in an isolated and local perspective.

### 2.3 The necessary coherence of Italian Defense with the NATO strategic concept

The military Alliance to which Italy belongs and which guides the evolution of its Defense is NATO, of which it has been one of the twelve founding countries since 1949. From the adhesion to the Atlantic Pact until today, Italy's strategic concept is therefore consistent with that of the Alliance, because it helps define it. Therefore, no distinction can be imagined between the scenario analysis contained in NATO's strategic concept and Italy's Defense policy. Any hypothesis for the development of the strategic autonomy of the European Union<sup>1</sup> must therefore harmonize with this analysis, and not contradict it. The strategic

---

<sup>1</sup> The European Coal and Steel Community, founded by Italy, France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg in 1951, was the first step in the European Union process. In 1957, the representatives of the six European countries signed the two treaties establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European

concept defined at the Madrid 2022 NATO Summit is considered the most significant breakthrough in the Atlantic Alliance's security and defense strategy since the end of the Bloc confrontation. The Atlantic Alliance reaffirms that it "does not seek confrontation or pose a threat" to Moscow, but, at the same time, that it "cannot consider it a partner"; due to "hostile policies and actions", Russia is not the only "authoritarian actor challenging our interests, values and democratic way of life", the document states. So do "the stated ambitions and coercive policies of the People's Republic of China", which "employs a wide range of political, economic and military instruments to increase its global footprint and project power, while remaining opaque about its strategy, intentions and military development". For the first time, Beijing is explicitly mentioned as a potential global security threat to NATO, even given "the deepening strategic partnership between China and Russia" in the space, cyber and maritime sectors and the use of "economic leverage to create strategic dependencies and strengthen its influence".

### 3. The European Union and the need for security

#### 3.1. Why no Common European Defense?

In 1954, the failure of the European Defense Community projects (due to France's refusal to share its security with countries that, until a few years earlier, were enemies) led to the issue being shelved, concentrating the integration process on economic dimensions with the establishment of the ECSC, the MEC and EURATOM. As a result, the security of Western Europe was entrusted to NATO. For a long time, Europe benefited from external providers: the US guaranteed security, Russia ensured energy, China and the emerging countries offered their markets. Advantageous and propitious conditions allowed the EU to concentrate on its own integration processes, safe from external risks. Military self-sufficiency and defense policies have always been a fundamental pillar of national sovereignty, and each country tends to jealously preserve those matters as exclusive. So, security and defense were not on the European agenda. In the institutional architecture of the European Union, there were structurally ministerial meetings in all areas: from agriculture

---

Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) in Rome. Thus, Italy is a founding country of both NATO and the EU.

to industry, from the interior to justice, from foreign affairs to infrastructure to financial policies, but no meetings of Defense Ministers at all, until a few years ago. The evolution of the global context led to the conviction of four EU countries—France, Germany, Italy and Spain—to urge with a joint declaration to the European Commission and the European Council for the activation of a common strategy on security. This request was taken up by the High Representative Federica Mogherini, who, in 2017, presented a program of structured cooperation on security and defense (PESCO), which gathered the adherence of 25 out of 27 countries within two years.

### 3.2. The progressive enlargement of EU borders and European security

In eighty years, there has been no more war within the borders of the Union, the only threats to European security have come from conflicts on its borders (Caucasus, Balkans, Ukraine). The Ukrainian crisis and the decision to open the Union's doors to Kiev and Chisinau, to integrate those regions and remove them from instability and conflict, have forced an acceleration without a definite timeframe. Enlargement is inescapable and necessary, for the security of the entire continent. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, it was a farsighted decision to open the door to the countries of Central Europe, to which integration into the EU—and NATO— offered the essential leverage for moving towards democracy and a market economy, without lacerations and traumatic conflicts. And today, in the light of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, we can well gauge how fraught with danger a closure of the EU to the Central European countries would have been.

The overall instability of the international system, which, in Robert Gilpin's (1989) conception, is based on the hegemony of a security community (the Liberal Leviathan (Ikenberry 2011; 2021)) is producing the progressive drift of the effectiveness of international law and the protracted paralysis of the resolution mechanisms of international organizations: first and foremost, the UN Security Council blocked by the cross vetoes of the permanent members. For there to be a true European security policy, there needs to be a qualitative leap forward in the Union's foreign policy, of which a security and defense system is a complementary dimension. The experience of recent years has

shown the many difficulties the EU has encountered in pursuing and implementing a common foreign policy, even though the EU responded to Putin's aggression against Ukraine with a degree of cohesion and common initiative that is a welcome novelty. The main problem with EU enlargement concerns the European way of decision-making, which requires unanimity, effectively granting a veto right to dissenters. Unanimous consensus is often achieved around the bare minimum rather than the necessary maximum. The lowest common denominator on which everyone agrees often generates heartfelt appeals and vague, abstract declarations of principle, but it is unlikely to produce an incisive, authoritative, credible foreign policy. In order to achieve a real change of pace, it is also necessary to overcome the constraint of unanimity, with the use of 'qualified' majority voting to make decisions that are binding for all. But this goal, for now, is only realistic if placed on the horizon, so a different process must be imagined.

### 3.3. A necessary change of step

For the first time, the Member States are converging on a paradigm shift: they are abandoning the basic scheme consistent with the peacekeeping inspiration that was the foundation of European integration, i.e. a European Defense system not aimed at offence, nor at promoting or supporting armed conflicts, for a new vision of the EU, absolutely more contextualized with the new scenarios and challenges of the regional and interregional context. Only a recent innovation in legislation has allowed European participation in peacekeeping initiatives and military missions in hot theatres limited to circumscribed geopolitical contexts that are local and, therefore, free from global systemic repercussions. Currently, the EU's joint military engagement is in seven conflict stabilization and quell missions [Bosnia, Somalia, the Red Sea, Libya, the Central African Republic, Mozambique and Mali (now suspended)] and in more than ten civil missions (Kosovo, Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Libya, Iraq, Palestine, Niger, Mali, Guinea, Central African Republic) aimed at training defense and security apparatuses, border management, monitoring systems, fighting crime, strengthening the rule of law, and women's empowerment. Against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine, some political choices regarding the accession perimeter remain surprising: the western flank, i.e. the Balkan area, appears even more problematic and very treacherous from the security point of

view. In this strategic area, if, from a political point of view, the granting of candidate status would have a high symbolic value given the current international situation, on the other hand, denying it would represent a symbolic victory for Moscow.

However, this has opened a window of opportunity for the candidate countries, in particular Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia, despite the difficulty in meeting the so-called Copenhagen criteria and the adoption of the *acquis communautaire*. To date, none of the six countries has implemented the reforms needed to complete the accession process<sup>2</sup>. The difficulty of structured cooperation for EU defense is essentially due to the prevalence of the specific national interests of states over the shared European vision. The great challenge will, therefore, be to pool individual experiences to achieve a common strategic vision, without which there can be no common foreign policy, hence no defense policy either. The military intervention in Libya in 2011, the child of nationalist visions of the interests of some European countries, has led to consequences that are extremely harmful to all, stemming from the political instability of the Libyan area, then to terrorism, to the loss of control over migratory flows, and then to the loss of Europe's role and the entry of other regional powers (Russia-Turkey) capable of seizing the strategic opportunity provided by the conflict and, thus, exerting their influence.

### 3.4. New problems and new threats call for a new policy

As the international context has changed radically today, as new threats have emerged at Europe's borders, as conflicts have erupted on the European continent and in the Mediterranean area, the consequences of which are common to and involve all EU Member States in the terrorist risk, in the repercussions on the economic and information sphere and in the cyber domain, the dilemma of how to deal with these changes is posed for European policy. There is, therefore, a first question that good politics has a duty to ask itself: whether 'unconventional' con-

---

<sup>2</sup> This is a high-risk situation because three concatenating variables are added together, thus with a consequential trigger:

1. Serbia's geopolitical posture.
2. the unresolved condition of Kosovo.
3. the Black Sea area that becomes a double border with Russia and Turkey, an actor that has long since assumed a dialogue and convenience confrontation with the EU.

flictuality (Martino, 2018) hybrid warfare, therefore, crosses the border between European Nation States and unites the whole of Europe, how can the EU independently equip itself with all the necessary tools to protect itself against this threat? In recent years, the EU has taken important measures to protect itself and its Member States from the risks of asymmetrical warfare. After terrorist attacks in several countries, the European Parliament supported the strengthening of Europol, the agency responsible for supporting and enhancing police cooperation between EU Member States to combat organized crime and terrorism<sup>3</sup>. In relation to the cyber threat, the EU introduced the EU Directive 2016/1148 NIS (Network and Information Systems) and the subsequent EU Directive 2022/2555 NIS2, which replaces it, which contains the necessary measures to create a common high level of Cybersecurity and improve resilience and responsiveness to cyber incidents. With the transposition of this directive, Member States are obliged to adopt national cybersecurity strategies, establish national cybersecurity authorities and cybersecurity incident response teams (CSIRTs), supervision and enforcement obligations<sup>4</sup>. After the Covid-19 pandemic, a debate opened up in the European Union on health security, but also on information security and the threat of cognitive warfare, which became evident after monitoring the effects and impact of the no-vax movements produced by hostile PsyOps and cognitive warfare actions, i.e. the offensive occupation of the field of knowledge (Harboulot, 2023). The link between cognitive encirclement strategies and economic warfare is very close. They are usually the two legs on which an asymmetrical warfare strategy based on the concealment of the attack and the identification of possible footholds in civil societies walks. Concealment of attack is a fundamental element of the notion of cognitive encirclement, which is an informational process aimed at weakening, subduing or subjecting an adversary to cognitive dominance.

---

<sup>3</sup> The measures adopted provide for systematic checks at the EU's external borders, the introduction of a new biometric entry-exit registration system, the introduction of ETIAS, the European Travel Information and Authorization System to track the movements of non-European persons and the PNR code, the introduction of the ISF Internal Security Fund 2021-2027, greater police and judicial cooperation to identify suspects and threats, and initiatives to counter radicalization phenomena.

<sup>4</sup> These rules apply to medium-sized or large public or private entities operating in the energy, transport, banking, financial market infrastructure, health sector, drinking water, wastewater, waste management, biomedical, digital infrastructure, b2b service providers, public administration, transport and space sectors.

“We are in the presence of three frames of action: weaken, subjugate and make dependent or submit, which goes beyond dependence. When we are totally subjugated, we do not even have the right to speak. I would like to emphasize that the war in Ukraine is part of a logic of systemic economic warfare. Why systemic? I say this with reference, once again, to the consequences of the retaliatory measures taken against Russia after the outbreak of the war and Russia’s response on the economic front. We can see very clearly that if we hit Russian gas, we will hit other parameters that are not just energy and that will very quickly affect the economic systems and even the functioning of the economies of our countries. From many points of view, we are really in a systemic case” (Harboulot, 2023).

One cannot understand the significance of the consequences of the Russian-Ukrainian war on the market and on the price of gas or grain, just as one cannot understand the economic consequences of the Houthi terrorist attacks in Yemen against the Red Sea transit merchant shipping, if one does not interpret them as economic warfare. Cognitive encirclement produces a narrative that conceals the intentions of the aggressors, but objectively, Europe is directly involved in this war because it is intentionally targeted and directly suffers the consequences. Can it refrain from defending itself?

### 3.5. The second political question

A defense and security policy must place itself in a global scenario and, therefore, relate to and cooperate with other actors. First is Great Britain, a member of the UN Security Council, a nuclear power, with an important military industry. It is difficult to think that a European Defense and security system can do without a strong cooperative relationship with London. The EU already has security cooperation relations with other non-EU countries, such as the United States, Canada, Norway, Japan and Australia. The increased instability on the African continent—together with a pervasive presence of China and Russia—calls for cooperation with the African Union and individual countries. Finally, the strategic criticality of the Indo-Pacific—starting with the stability of Taiwan—urges collaboration with the democracies of the region and the AUKUS alliance. The systemic and global nature of the planet’s security requires the European Union to independently pursue its security with a global vision and systemic strategies.

So, there is a second question that a good European policy should ask itself: what strategic autonomy does Europe really need in the military sphere? In the bipolar era, NATO was the military alliance of the West. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Atlantic Organization has gradually expanded into its former adversary camp: Central Europe and the Balkans. Now, it has also integrated Sweden and Finland and started cooperation with Ukraine and Moldova. The changed international context prompts it to define its strategies by looking at critical chessboards: the enlarged Mediterranean, equatorial Africa and the Indo-Pacific region. The European Defense/NATO relationship revolves around two concepts: 'strategic autonomy' and 'complementarity'. This means that Europe does not need strategic autonomy as opposed to the Atlantic Alliance, but a European military capability that is supplementary and complementary to NATO. Building a European Defense system totally autonomous from NATO would require unsustainable investments, so it is a hypothesis that is pointless to discuss. Therefore, the relationship between NATO and the EU is clear: there must be no duplication of capabilities and no discrimination in mission participation compared to other European countries that are not members of the Alliance. It follows that the EU intervenes in military crisis management operations, where NATO is not engaged, using NATO's common assets and capabilities in terms of planning, Command and Control and Intelligence, or by resorting to the specific planning capabilities of one of its member states. The Alliance thus remains the international organization of the common military standard and allows the EU to deploy an autonomous capacity for intervention that would otherwise be difficult to achieve.

Now, NATO costs are 80% borne by the United States, which is calling for a rebalancing of this ratio. A comparison of European military expenditure with that of the United States, China and Russia makes clear the need for an increase in Europe's defense and security resources. This need is consistent with NATO's call for all its members to raise national defense spending to at least 2% of GDP. "We will share equally the responsibilities and risks for our Defense and security" the Atlantic Pact allies signed up to in the document on NATO's new strategic concept. Most of the European states are members of the Atlantic Alliance and have, therefore, signed up to these commitments. The question now is how to fulfil them, whether by increasing the capabilities of individual states or by building new common capabilities. The ambition for European strategic autonomy must be interpreted in this

sense. What is needed is a common military capability greater than the sum of individual states. European Defense is Europe's ability to intervene in operational theatres of its immediate interest. This capacity is made up of men and means, but, above all, it is the capacity to make decisions. Having adequate men and means ready for deployment and not being able to quickly decide where and how to deploy them, with what objectives and what rules of engagement, is a useless waste of resources. A European Defense apparatus without a foreign policy would only serve in parades. The question now is what strategy will enable Europe to move progressively closer to achieving this capability. It is clear to everyone that European strategic autonomy is a goal that can only be pursued and achieved gradually. But the necessary gradualness must bring progress, otherwise it is not gradualness but paralysis.

## 4. European Defense

### 4.1. An integrated defense and security system

Europe's strategic autonomy requires a strategy of standardization and harmonization of defense systems and military equipment, which today are largely differentiated and disharmonized. Investment in military expenditure requires its rationalization, hence the need to pursue the progressive integration of the defense industries of European countries. No European Defense system can be credible if each country only procures from its own national industry and without harmonization of standards. Significant steps have been taken with the adoption of the Strategic Compass (2022), the Planning Coordination Cell and the activation of a military rapid reaction force of 5000 personnel, provided by the Member States. The European Defense Strategy can count on the European Defense Fund, with a budget of eight billion euros. Since it is unrealistic to think of substantial transfers from state budgets, the possibility of drawing resources from the capital market, based on the positive experience with Next Generation EU financed by issuing bonds, is decisive. A first significant step was taken with the recent allocation of fifty billion euros to support the economic and financial stabilization of Ukraine, which was largely financed on the capital market. Another financial instrument —next to the European Defense Fund— is the European Peace Facility with a budget of five billion for the period 2021-2027.

## 4.2. Enhanced and permanent cooperation for European defense

If the last goal of a construction process is to build a common European Defense system, the best path to achieve it is through realistic intermediate goals that allow for real increase in capabilities, ready for deployment and deployable after rapid political decisions. Enhanced cooperation is a procedure that allows a minimum of nine Member States to establish advanced integration or cooperation in a specific area within the European Union when it becomes clear, as in this case, that the Union as a whole is unable to achieve the objectives of such cooperation within a reasonable period of time<sup>5</sup>. Since these states can advance at different speed and towards different goals than those member states that decide to remain outside the scope of enhanced cooperation, the goal of building up more European Defense capabilities can be realized through this procedure. It is an incomplete process because it does not expand European competences to foreign and defense policy but allows those states that adopt it to autonomously integrate their capabilities and adopt appropriate governance tools<sup>6</sup>.

## 4.3. Permanent Structured Cooperation

Thus, the starting point for European Defense is the Lisbon Treaty, which provided for the possibility of member states that "fulfil higher criteria in terms of military capabilities and have made more binding commitments in this regard for the most demanding missions to establish permanent structured cooperation within the Union". PESCO<sup>7</sup> is a framework and process for enhancing defense cooperation between certain EU Member States that have the capability and wish to do so. Twenty-five EU Member States have joined PESCO, agreeing to invest, plan, develop

---

<sup>5</sup> Article 20 of the Treaty on European Union and Title III of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. Enhanced cooperation in the field of common foreign and security policy (PESCO) is a novelty introduced by the Treaty of Nice. The procedure is designed to break the deadlock in case a particular proposal is blocked by one or more member states that do not wish to participate. However, it does not allow for an extension of competences beyond those authorized by the Union Treaties.

<sup>6</sup> It is important to emphasize that this can only concern the implementation of a joint action or a common position, while all matters with military or defense implications are explicitly excluded, as provided for in Article 27B TEU.

<sup>7</sup> Introduced by Articles 42(6) and 46 of the Treaty on European Union and Protocol 10

and integrate their military capabilities. Currently, Denmark and Malta have not participated in the PESCO framework. The objective of PESCO is the joint achievement by interested Member States of a comprehensive and coherent range of military capabilities available for national and multinational missions and operations<sup>8</sup>. Participating member states develop projects by working together to enhance military training and exercises and jointly strengthen their capabilities, including in cyberspace<sup>9</sup>.

#### 4.4. The political decision to create a hard core

To seriously implement a common European Defense system, a hard core is needed. Composing a common capability by integrating national capabilities that can be harmonized and grown together requires an explicit expression of willingness to do so. Without a structured and permanent agreement between a few countries, PESCO only finances occasional initiatives or programs, which do not really constitute the core of a common defense system, but only increase national capabilities. Only if a group of countries agree to share and harmonize the fundamental joint strategic development choices of their national defense system, they will create the hard core of the future European Defense. The standardization processes required to harmonize the Armed Forces of different countries and to accustom them to operating outside the area in joint and combined configurations must progressively achieve:

- Full compatibility (suitability of products, processes or services to be used together under certain conditions to meet important requirements without causing interactions).
- Full interchangeability (suitability of one product, process or service to be used in place of another to satisfy the same needs).

---

<sup>8</sup> PESCO aims to:

1. strengthen the European Union's capabilities in the field of international security;
2. help protect citizens of the European Union;
3. optimize the effectiveness of defense spending. Although participation is voluntary, decision-making remains in the hands of individual member states, considering the specific character of their security and defense policies.

<sup>9</sup> PESCO provides for the financing and implementation of projects for the development of military capabilities and equipment. Each project is carried out by a group of member states that may vary from time to time and is coordinated by one or more member states participating in the project. States participating in the project may, by mutual agreement, allow other member states to join the project or become observers.

- Full commonality (the state achieved when using the same doctrine, procedures and equipment)<sup>10</sup>.

Therefore, the hard core must set, pursue and achieve common goals in the fields of organization, training, and armament procurement.

For this last aspect, it is necessary for the Armed Forces of the hard core countries to agree and share the operational requirements of the new armaments to be developed by the industry, because if there are no shared operational requirements, common projects cannot be developed.

Only a political decision and an agreement between EU Member States willing to share a structured program can create a truly deployable common capability for European missions or for several multilateral joint missions. Today, this political decision is not yet there, which is why European Defense is a project that is struggling to really get off the ground. At this point, we must ask ourselves what the premises on which this decision can be based are. These are the political knots that must first be unravelled by the Member States that want to form the hard core from which European Defense can really begin. No one has yet taken these steps explicitly, which is why we are proceeding in an uncertain manner. The first condition for a change of pace is fundamentally political. It entails the willingness to invest national resources in programs whose deployment will no longer depend exclusively on national will. When a new capability is only jointly deployable, the decision to deploy it must be taken together. Individually, this new capability becomes unusable, so the possibility of employing this force is removed from national sovereignty. Objectively, this, therefore, implies a partial cession of sovereignty, which is not provided for in any treaty. This is a political decision that the EU has never wanted to take, but which individual member states are free to take voluntarily, to the extent they deem possible, expedient and useful, agreeing among themselves. The second and consequent condition is to explicate the willingness to invest additional economic resources, together with other mem-

---

<sup>10</sup> Interoperability must be pursued with determination, albeit gradually, continuously and comprehensively, and the development and acquisition process is long and requires, among other things, adequate financial resources. For this last reason, the European Union sees interoperability as the capability to be realized within the framework of a European Defense market, by means of a community defense equipment policy.

ber states, to increase the capabilities of national armed forces and to jointly have more forces at their disposal than could be achieved by investing only their own national resources. This is the real object of European Defense capability enhancement. It is about doing more, rather than spending less. Multiannual planning is needed to improve jointly in operational efficiency, training and armament procurement because these components are interrelated: they either increase together or they do not really increase at all. Finally, there is a third political condition: when countries decide to cooperate, they must sign an agreement to define the objectives and boundaries of this cooperation. There are bilateral agreements between EU Member States on security and defense, but these bilateral agreements do not come together in a European Defense design. This is, therefore, not a military problem, but a political one. Political agreement is needed first of all to define and share the governance system. The attainable capability increase is jointly deployable, so the decision-making process of deploying the new joint capability in European missions or in other multilateral contexts needs to be formalized. When this political knot is untied upstream, it will be possible to solve the military and industrial problems downstream. It does not matter if only a few member states take this step, what matters is that they agree on the political direction and objectives they want to achieve together, because "if a man knows not to which port he sails, no wind is favorable" (Seneca).

#### 4.5. PESCO and enhancing operational and technological capabilities

A useful European Defense is one that provides security for Europe and protects it against threats from hostile actors and their proxies. Russia, China and Iran are strategic adversaries that combine military activities in Ukraine with other forms of asymmetrical warfare: cyberwarfare, terrorism<sup>11</sup>, economic warfare<sup>12</sup>, infowarfare and cognitive warfare. PESCO must increase European capabilities and adapt them to these threats. To gain real strategic autonomy, we must maintain operational superiority

---

<sup>11</sup> Such as the attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, which was planned and activated by the Iranians via Hamas, set the Middle East ablaze and may expand in terrorist form into Europe as well.

<sup>12</sup> E.g. the Houthi attacks on merchant ships in the Red Sea are terrorist actions aimed at economic warfare, primarily against Europe.

through superior technology, despite the fact that our adversaries are moving faster. Therefore, we need to work on common capabilities, both operational and technological. The latest approved projects range from future military rotorcraft and air-launched missiles to communication infrastructure and joint training for air defense transport. Also very important are projects covering relevant military sectors: land, maritime, air, cyber/C4ISR and joint training, which will be led by seven different Member States as project coordinators. The CSIP (Critical Seabed Infrastructure Protection) Project aims to increase the EU's operational efficiency in the protection of critical seabed infrastructure. The six participating Member States are: Italy, Germany, Spain, France, Portugal and Sweden. An initial project timetable for the collection and harmonization of requirements will last until 2024, with a possible agreement on a joint procurement expected in 2028. This is a good and concrete starting point for building a common defense capability.

## 5. Necessary steps in industrial cooperation

### 5.1. PESCO and land capability: the new tank

PESCO improves collaboration between national defense industries by funding research on joint projects, to avoid redundant spending, underfunding of complex projects and unnecessary duplication of efforts that need to be tackled jointly. However, PESCO has not yet made it possible to unify efforts on the main industrial projects of the future, which today do not yet involve the main European countries and industrial systems. In 2017, France and Germany had initiated two projects of major importance for the Defense Industrial System, the Main Ground Combat System, i.e. the new tank of the future, and the Future Combat Air System, the sixth-generation fighter, which was also initiated together with Spain. The MGCS Programme is managed by KnDs, a Franco-German consortium formed by the defense groups Krauss-Maffei Wegmann (Kmw, Germany) and Nexter Defense Systems (France), in cooperation with Rheinmetall. By 2035, the Franco-German MGCS should replace the Leopard 2 and Leclerc tanks, in service at the German and French armies respectively. The project is in danger of failing due to the differences between Berlin and Paris, which have never been fully resolved. Italy and Poland repeatedly asked to join the MGCS Programme, but Paris and Berlin wanted to keep the project exclusively bilateral, until

the development of a prototype. The Franco-German cooperation broke down and the project was stuck in the architecture study phase, which was regularly extended for several months. Meanwhile, Sweden and Italy joined as observers in the MGCS Programme. But instead of including these new partners in the original MGCS Project, Germany now seems to have preferred to start a new project for the development of the successor to the Leopard 2 tank, Main Battle Tank ('Mbt') with Italy and Sweden together with Spain, sidelining France.

A planned purchase of Leopard 2 A8 tanks would keep Rome in the game for a role in the MGCS Programme, helping Italy to be more closely involved with German industry, but this is not yet the wide-ranging project that would serve to consolidate the European Defense advancement process. The two-year Mbt Project can be used to develop technological elements for the benefit of the MGCS, or to replace it. The future decisions of the countries involved, and their industrial systems will inevitably have very important repercussions on the future of European defense, which cannot realistically progress if the major projects for future weapon systems do not converge.

## 5.2. PESCO and air capability: the sixth-generation fighter

The same can be said for the design and implementation of the new sixth-generation fighter. Air superiority is a principle that will remain true in the future. If a true integration of European military capabilities is to be built, interoperable instruments, capable of exchanging up-to-date and quality data in real time, which will probably use quantum calculators instead of computers, to be able to manoeuvre from land, air or sea, to be faster, stronger and taller than the enemy, cannot be ignored. The Franco-German-Spanish FCAS Program was launched in 2017 and designed to replace the French Rafale and the German and Spanish Eurofighters from 2040. Belgium will join in 2025.

The project involves the development of a next-generation fighter aircraft, remote aircraft carriers and a combat cloud and involves national defense companies Dassault Aviation, Airbus and Indra. It is a pity that even this program does not have the necessary breathing space to be one of the industrial cornerstones around which European Defense development can revolve. The market of these countries alone is too small to amortize the enormous investment needed for research and development, which

is assumed to exceed 100 billion euros. The market required to fund research and excel in this program is halved by the rival GCAP Program, led by the UK with Italy and Japan. In 2020, the UK, Italy and Sweden signed a Memorandum of Understanding to collaborate on the project. The three national industries included major defense companies from the UK (Bae Systems, Leonardo Uk, Rolls Royce and Mbda Uk), Italy (Leonardo, Elettronica, Avio Aero and Mbda Italy) and Sweden (Saab and Gkn Aerospace Sweden). But, in December 2022, the Tempest Project became part of the Global Combat Air Program, a trilateral partnership between the UK, Italy and Japan to develop a sixth-generation combat aircraft by 2035. At the same time, Stockholm decided to abridge the program.

The GCAP is expected to cost tens of billions of dollars, but the parties have not yet decided how the budget will be divided. The British Ministry of Defense had earmarked two billion pounds for the project, formerly known as Tempest, before it became part of GCAP. Recently, speculation appeared in the press about a possible German abandonment of the FCAS Project. This would be followed by a change in Germany's alliance, which could then converge into the GCAP Project. This change would have far-reaching implications for European Defense industrial cooperation and for the future geopolitical landscape of the continent. Be that as it may, among the challenges that the developers of both projects will have to face is the architecture of the combat cloud, which must be natively developed to be interoperable with the other weapon systems of other European and NATO countries<sup>13</sup>. The combat cloud could therefore be the first common point to work on in order to converge the two programs, which do not make sense to continue developing in competition.

### 5.3. PESCO and naval remote air projection capability

The possibility of the convergence of the two alternative programs for the development of the sixth-generation fighter aircraft is a prerequisite for a future convergence also in shipbuilding. The importance and need for Europe to equip itself with next-generation aircraft carriers is clear. Today, the navies of the EU Member States have a total of only three aircraft carriers in ser-

---

<sup>13</sup> The interoperability of different tools requires at least the development and adoption of common protocols, as is the case with mobile phones developed and produced by different companies, which can connect to each other via the general Internet protocol.

vice<sup>14</sup>. At present, there are no longer any US naval units in the Mediterranean capable of flying combat aircraft, as there were in the past. The consequence is that it is up to European forces to ensure the protection of NATO's Southern Front, especially the navies of Italy, France and Turkey. Today, 28 aircraft carriers are operational worldwide, but according to current plans this will increase to 36 by 2040. Since there is no credible European strategic autonomy that does not include the increase of remote air projection capacity, a political and industrial strategy must be envisaged to pursue this objective. A new *Porte Avion Nouvelle Generation*, which should replace the Charles De Gaulle nuclear aircraft carrier, is integrated into the FCAS Program and focuses on the French industrial system (TechnicAtom for propulsion, Naval Group for shipbuilding, involving Framatom, Jeumont, Thermodyn and Aubert & Duval). The failure of the political and industrial agreement between Naval Group and Fincantieri, which could have created the world's leading military shipbuilding centre, has prevented Italy's involvement in such a major program.

The costs of this project would be more sustainable if they were spread over two or three sister ships, but for this to be possible, it is necessary to integrate programs that are now competing. In other words, only if the major EU Member States can agree to implement major defense industrial program together, they could avoid waste and get the best overall result from the resources they decide to deploy. To make up for the capability deficit of the European Armed Forces, this common goal is strategic. The cooperation of the main European countries on the largest defense industrial projects is not a sufficient condition for the advancement of European Defense, but it is a necessary condition. Therefore, it is not a question of industrial strategies and choices, but of political strategies and choices. If the governments of these countries believe that it is necessary to strengthen European military capabilities together, sooner or later they will also have to decide on the convergence of major industrial programs, because the real construction of European strategic autonomy requires the progressive replacement of old weapon systems with a new generation of weapon systems that guarantee technological superiority. These require large investments, which are not within the reach of small alliances between a few countries.

---

<sup>14</sup> Charles de Gaulle, 42000 t, nuclear, CATOBAR; Cavour, 27100 t, conventional, STVOL; Giuseppe Garibaldi, 13850 t, conventional, STVOL.

#### 5.4. PESCO and space launchers

The ability to project independently into space, which was one of the main challenges of the Cold War in the bipolar balance of terror, is no less important today.

"Europe is facing crucial decisions concerning its unity and sovereignty, closely linked to the fundamental importance of autonomous access to space. The race to create new public-private partnerships, which has pushed and blatantly decreed US strategic superiority to date, leaves little time and space for internal conflicts and reasons of state in a Europe that should unite and pursue a common line, with a European space program that can at least maintain its current status of relevance"<sup>15</sup>.

The overwhelming foreign competition underlines how necessary it is for Europe to invest in launchers<sup>16</sup> capable of reaching Medium Earth Orbit<sup>17</sup>. These launchers are the main enablers of the present and future strategic-military and space economy. Their technical payload capability ensures the projection of satellite assets, cargo and human transport vehicles, In-orbit servicing and Orbital manufacturing operations in both MEO and Geosynchronous Earth Orbit (GEO) and cislunar space, which will see massive investment over the next two decades, with a market worth one trillion dollars by 2040<sup>18</sup>. The scene is dominated by the power clash between the United States of America, the

---

<sup>15</sup> The demiurge of the current phase of warfare, commercialisation and space capitalism is the American company Space X with its partially reusable Falcon 9 Block V launcher, which has revolutionised the growth trajectory of orbital launches, guaranteeing from its full operation in 2018 a reliability rate of 99% and in 2023 a rate of one launch every four days. Visit: <https://aiaig.it/wp/pubblicazioni/>

<sup>16</sup> Launchers are rocket-powered vehicles capable of transporting a payload from the Earth's surface to space and can be used to carry satellites or spacecraft to various orbits.

<sup>17</sup> The classification of satellites is usually based on orbital altitude, which directly influences the area of coverage and the speed at which the satellite travels around the planet and is chosen taking into account the purpose, data to be acquired, services to be offered, cost, area of coverage and desired viability. The MEO is an intermediate orbit between low orbit and geostationary orbit, whose altitude ranges from 2000 to 20 000 km.

<sup>18</sup> More generally, the growth of the space sector is expressed by substantial global indicators:

- At the military level, the creation of organically structured space armed forces and the formal recognition of Space as the fifth battle domain.
- At the economic level, the growth of the sector with a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) at 6% and the doubling of Space Companies over two five-year periods. (*Ibidem*: 7).

People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation, proponents of highly technological and challenging space policies and projects, engaged in a geopolitical competition in which launchers are key enablers for independent access to Outer Space.

International collaboration in rocketry has always proved impractical, and of more than twenty state entities that manage in-orbit satellites, only nine of the Globe's countries have both the technological aerospace expertise and at least one spaceport on their national territory, to which prestige and deterrence capacity are attached. The militarization of Space (Space Weaponization), articulated in Space Domain awareness targeting —information advantage— all joint domain operations, develops along multiple lines:

- Preventive saturation of strategic orbital belts and the electromagnetic spectrum.
- Anti-Satellite (ASAT) weapons hard kill and soft kill.
- Cyber-satellite attacks expressed by hacking, zero-day and backdoor exploitation.
- Occupation of Lagrangian points as deep gateways for space communications.
- Colonization of the Moon and Mars for the exploitation of raw materials.
- Ability to launch into orbit assets at short notice and under emergency conditions (Space Responsiveness).
- Ability of the Armed Forces to operate in a denied, degraded and disrupted space operational environment (D3SOE). Thus, maintaining a pre-electronic warfare competence without relying on space systems. The absolute relevance of space assets in warfighting strategies emerged both with the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, where Starlink provided SATCOM and PNT services to the Ukrainian armed forces, which were essential to counterbalance Russian military superiority, and in the Indo-Pacific theatre, where the PLA identifies space infrastructure as the US armed forces' Clausewitzian centre of gravity, as a prerequisite for the information dominance needed to coordinate multiple combat assets across a vast geographical quadrant.

It is, therefore, of vital importance for European countries to identify a strategic line capable of re-establishing an autonomous space projection capability in all classes of payloads in a highly competitive and constantly evolving geopolitical condition. Investing in European launchers for MEO could be the key to returning Europe's strategic autonomy in accessing an orbit that

is for now minimally committed, but steadily growing. Financial support for the development of such launchers as a long-term investment would become necessary to reduce dependence on external solutions. Having autonomous launch capabilities is essential for national security. The Space Defense Strategy is extensively discussed in the document Space Policy Review and Strategy on Protection of Satellites<sup>19</sup> of the US Department of Defense or the equivalent EU Space Strategy for Security and Defense<sup>20</sup> of the EU. This autonomy is particularly relevant given the growing contestation of space, as analyzed in the annual report of the Secure World Foundation<sup>21</sup>. It is here that PESCO could come into play, supporting massive investments in reusable or partially reusable medium-heavy launchers (with additional boosters, also heavy) for MEO orbit and in the GEO and cislunar perspective, and consequently a production of satellites with smaller volumes but technical characteristics of greater tonnage and durability over time: this would also require a greater investment in R&D for materials, tests and test facilities.

## 6. Concluding summary on Italy's role

For geopolitical reasons linked to its history and its Mediterranean location, Italy is called upon to play an active role in the construction of the European Defense and security system.

Italy is a founding country of European integration, and it is very important in geopolitical terms:

- for its Mediterranean projection.
- for its contiguity with central and south-eastern Europe.
- for its role in NATO.
- for the strength of its economy, eighth world power by GDP and member of the G7 and G20.
- for the national capabilities of the defense industrial system in shipbuilding, ballistics and aerospace.

Therefore, a convinced commitment by Italy in the construction of European Defense cannot be avoided. At present, the Italian

---

<sup>19</sup> Available at: <https://media.defense.gov/2023/Sep/14/2003301146/-1/-1/0/COMPREHENSIVE-REPORT-FOR-RELEASE.PDF>

<sup>20</sup> Visit: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2023/754598/EPRS\\_BRI\(2023\)754598\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2023/754598/EPRS_BRI(2023)754598_EN.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Visit: [https://swfound.org/media/207541/swf\\_global\\_counterspace\\_capabilities\\_2023\\_es\\_en.pdf](https://swfound.org/media/207541/swf_global_counterspace_capabilities_2023_es_en.pdf)

armed forces, in all its articulations, make one of the highest contributions in terms of men and means to UN peacekeeping missions. An equally central role is played in European military and civil missions. In the NATO context, Italy holds a strategic position in the 'Southern Flank' security architecture, of which it is the main European backer.

These are all assets that call for active participation in the construction of the European security and Defense system. Moreover, Italy is not perceived as a country of colonial nostalgia, an *atout* that allows our country to be an interlocutor that can be relied upon especially for interlocutors in the Middle East and North Africa area. PESCO allows for the gradual achievement of objectives to increase capabilities and qualify procurement but requires a qualitative leap to achieve significant progress. To achieve this change of pace, an awareness and a political decision is needed that commits some countries to greater coordination among themselves and to sharing the main technological development programs. The establishment of a hard core and the definition of its governance system is a precondition for subordinating industrial strategies in the Defense sector to a common and explicit political will. Therefore, one can imagine a gradual process of conquering European strategic autonomy, complementary to NATO, progressively proceeding from an initial hard core of countries, including at least all the four countries (France, Germany, Italy and Spain) that signed the joint declaration that launched this process. This core should be voluntarily joined by those countries that intend to share the effort and invest in common programs, identifying a new governance system for the collaboration processes that have been activated and signing multilateral agreements to this end.

## Bibliography

- Arquilla J. & Ronfeldt D. (2000). *Swarming and the Future of Conflict*. Santa Monica (CA), Rand Corporation.
- Clausewitz, C. (1942). *Della Guerra*. Trad. Stato Maggiore Regio Esercito, Ufficio Storico, pp. XLIV-786.
- De Vito, C. (2024). Los «estados oscilantes». La India y la «autonomía estratégica». *Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos (IEEE)*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: [https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs\\_opinion/2024/DIEEO05\\_2024\\_CARVIT\\_India.pdf](https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2024/DIEEO05_2024_CARVIT_India.pdf)

- European Parliament. (1992). *Art. 42, para. 7 TEU in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter*.
- Gerasimov, V. (2013). Ценность науки в предвидении (The value of science is foresight). *Military-Industrial Commission of Russia (VPK)*, (8), p. 476. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <http://vpk.name/print/i85159.html>
- . (2016). По опыту Сирии. Гибридная война требует высокотехнологического оружия и научного обоснования (According to the Syrian experience. Hybrid warfare requires high-tech and scientific fundamentals). *Military-Industrial Commission of Russia (VPK)*. (9), p. 624. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <http://vpknews.ru/print/articles/29579>.
- Gilpin, R. (1988). The Theory of Hegemonic. In: *War. Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 18(4), pp. 591-613.
- . (1989). *Guerra e mutamento nella politica internazionale*. Bologna, il Mulino.
- Harboulot C. (2023). Come funziona l'accerchiamento cognitivo (estratto dell'intervento). In: *Seminario Iassp del Master in Intelligence Economica*. Istituto Alti Studi Strategici e Politici (IASSP). [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.iassp.org/2023/02/information-warfare-come-funziona-laccerchiamento-cognitivo/>
- Hasan, T. (2023) *The Future of Geopolitics Will Be Decided by 6 Swing States*. *Moderndiplomacy*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2023/06/08/the-future-of-geopolitics-will-be-decided-by-6-swing-states/>
- Ikenberry, J.G. (2011). *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order*. Princeton, Princeton University Press. Princeton Studies in International History and Politics.
- Ikenberry, J.G. (2021). *A World Safe for Democracy, Liberal Internationalism and the Crisis of the Global Order*. Milan, Catholic University Milan. 352 p. Series of the Alta Scuola di Economia e RR.II. (ASERI).
- Jordán, J. (2018). Un modelo de análisis geopolítico para el estudio de las relaciones internacionales [Documento Marco]. *Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos*.
- Jordán, J. (2018). El conflicto internacional en la zona gris: una propuesta teórica desde la perspectiva del realismo ofensivo. *Revista Española de Ciencia Política*.

- Kupchan, C. (2023). Six Swing States Will Decide the Future of Geopolitics. *Foreign Policy*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/06/06/geopolitics-global-south-middle-powers-swing-states-india-brazil-turkey-indonesia-saudi-arabia-south-africa/>
- Martino L. (2018). The fifth dimension of conflictuality. The rise of cyberspace and its effects on international politics. *Politics & Society*. Bologna, Il Mulino. 1, pp. 61-76. ISSN 2240-7901.
- Mearsheimer, J. J. (2001). *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York, W.W. Norton & Company, pp. 592. ISBN 0393020258. OCLC 46678382.
- Qiao L. & Wang X. (2016). *Guerra senza limiti. L'arte della Guerra asimmetrica fra terrorismo e globalizzazione*. Edited by Gen. Fabio Mini. Rimini, Leg edizioni. 198 p.

## Chapter five

### **If not now, then never. Poland towards the European Defense development**

*Agnieszka Bieńczyk-Missala*

#### **Abstract**

Poland has been a significant player in addressing European security issues, with security at the heart of its foreign policy since the pro-democratic transition in 1989. Integration into NATO in 1999 and the European Union in 2004, alongside strong ties with the United States and European nations, has solidified Poland's position within the Western community. This foundation has been crucial for bolstering state security, especially given Poland's historical experiences and its geopolitical location near Eastern Europe.

The recent revisionist policies of the Russian Federation, particularly the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the war in Ukraine, have tested Poland's security strategies and alliances. In response, Poland increased its defense expenditure to 4% of GDP and advocated for strengthening NATO's Eastern flank, as well as stronger European security and defense engagement. Poland demonstrated its commitment to the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) from the outset by actively participating in Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) missions and operations, European Union Battle Groups (EUBG), and PESCO

projects. Poland hosted the European Union's Military Assistance Mission to Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine). The government expressed support for the European rapid response forces and announced Poland's participation in the European Sky Shield Initiative.

However, NATO is perceived as the best guarantor of security and an organization that quickly adapts to new challenges. Therefore, it is to be assumed that Poland will support the development of European Defense capabilities without compromising the unique capabilities and role of NATO.

### *Keywords*

Poland, Eastern Flank, Central Europe, NATO, European Union, Defense.

## 1. Introductory remarks

Poland exemplifies a European state deeply engaged in addressing security issues. It is no exaggeration to say that security was at the center of Poland's foreign policy after the pro-democratic transition in 1989 (Kuźniar, 2001; Kupiecki, 1995; Zięba, 2020). The integration of Poland into NATO in 1999 and subsequently into the European Union in 2004, alongside the cultivation of ties with the United States and European nations, solidified Poland's position within the Western community, which was crucial for strengthening state security (Bieńczyk-Missala, 2016). Poland's historical experience and geopolitical location have resulted in a deep understanding of the processes taking place beyond Poland's Eastern border, and thus the NATO and EU borders, and have sensitized it to the threats coming from the East. This "Polish expertise" was not always understood among Western partners.

The most recent context for understanding Poland's current security policy, including its vision for the development of European defense, is the revisionist policy of the Russian Federation, especially the war against Ukraine, which started with the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014. It has served as a test for the security strategies and policies enacted by Poland, as well as its security alliances and partnerships.

In response to the longstanding deterioration of security behind its Eastern border, Poland counted on heightened commitment from its allies to strengthen NATO's Eastern Flank. Significant measures were initiated as early as 2014, when Poland resolved to elevate defense expenditure to 2% of GDP from 2016 and advocated for a continuous NATO troop presence within its borders. This era marked intensified dialogue with the United States and signaled NATO's gradual shift towards prioritizing defense activities over extraterritorial endeavors, aligning with Poland's strategic outlook on security challenges (Bieńczyk-Missala, 2014-2023).

At that time, Poland observed the initial skepticism expressed by France and Germany concerning the establishment of permanent NATO bases in Central European countries, as well as Ursula von der Leyen's declaration, as Germany's Minister for National Defense, regarding the state's inability to fulfill its allied obligations in the event of armed aggression, citing outdated equipment as a primary constraint (Der Bild, 2014). The annexation of Crimea by Russia and the subsequent escalation in Eastern Ukraine failed to

generate significant momentum towards the practical advancement of the European Union's security policy (Kruk, 2019). This strengthened Poland's conviction that its security policy should be continuously anchored within the framework of NATO, along with its strategic partnership with the United States.

Just after the escalation of Russian aggression against Ukraine in February 2022, the dynamics remained largely unchanged. The United States, the United Kingdom, the Baltic States and Romania among others, together with Poland, showed the greatest resolve in supporting Ukraine and countering Russian progress. The French and German leaders initially maintained a dialogue with Putin and remained skeptical about supplying advanced weaponry to Ukraine to avoid antagonizing Russia. Over the course of time, there was a discernible evolution in their policies. Germany announced a paradigm shift in its security policy (*Zeitewende*), and France declared an increasing commitment to helping Ukraine. Even if declarations were not always backed up by deeds, Poland appraised the revised policy adopted by European leaders favorably. Poland also welcomed the European Union's adoption of sanctions against Russia, as well as the flexibility of European instruments and mechanisms such as the European Peace Facility (EPF).

At the end of 2023, Poland started prominently advocating for the advancement of European Defense capabilities. This advocacy was partly fueled by the U.S. Congress decision to withhold aid to Ukraine, the U.S. election campaign and mounting uncertainties regarding future U.S. engagement in Europe in the event of a victory by the candidate Donald Trump.

A factor favoring Polish involvement was also the election victory of the Civic Coalition, which formed the government with the Poland 2050 party. Prime Minister Donald Tusk (2023), renowned for his tenure as president of the European Council from 2014 to 2019 and later as president of the European People's Party (EPP) until 2022, expressed his ambition to expand Poland's role in European affairs during his address to the parliament on December 13, 2023.

## **2. Historical context - from the Eastern Bloc to NATO and EU Membership**

Poland, since regaining its independence after 123 years in 1918, has pursued a policy aimed at strengthening its statehood and

ensuring its existence. However, peaceful and steady progress in this regard was hampered by its problematic geographic position between two powers, Germany and the Soviet Union, both of which sought to exert dominance over Central Europe (Howard, 1990; Porter-Szucs, 2021; Kuźniar, 1992). Consequently, Poland experienced the burden of World War II, resulting in the loss of part of its territory and over forty years of dependence on the Soviet Union. The collapse of the Eastern Bloc and the end of the Cold War necessitated the formulation of a new security policy. In 1991, the Warsaw Pact ceased to exist, followed by the dissolution of the Soviet Union. This left the security situation in the region characterized by uncertainty and instability.

The decision to build a democratic state naturally led Poland to align with Western democratic states (Bieńczyk-Missala, 2016). Under the government of the first democratic Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Foreign Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski articulated the priorities of Poland's foreign policy. The main goal was formulated as a co-creation of the European security system, working together for the unity of the European continent. Minister Skubiszewski (1990) acknowledged that the consequences of the Cold War division of Europe could be bridged by building a common secure Europe. The Western European Union served as Poland's initial point of contact for forging cooperation in the realms of security and defense. Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski engaged, first of all, in negotiations within the European institutions to discuss the terms of Poland's potential accession to the Brussels Treaty of 1954 (Ciupiński, 2018; 357-358). Poland's unequivocal commitment to the European integration was demonstrated through the adoption of the Association Treaty with the European Communities on December 16, 1991. This seminal agreement underscored Poland's strategic orientation towards deeper engagement with the European project (Kuźniar, 2020).

In subsequent years, the trajectory of Poland's security policy evolved to prioritize membership in NATO, transcending political divisions to converge on a shared objective. This overall strategic reorientation underscored Poland's recognition of the paramount importance of anchoring itself within established European and transatlantic security frameworks. Poland joined NATO Partnership for Peace Programme in 1994. At the Madrid Summit, Poland, together with the Czech Republic and Hungary, received an invitation to join the Alliance. Its accession to NATO

on March 12, 1999 was a crowing accomplishment of Poland's foreign policy, followed by the accession to the European Union in 2004 and joining the Schengen Area in 2007 (Koziej, 1999; Kuźniar, 2009; Zięba, 2023).

Participation in NATO's collective defense system emerged as the central pillar of Poland's security policy, a status reaffirmed by the periodic adoption of Poland's National Security Strategies. Poland held collective defense as the most valued function within NATO. However, Poland also actively participated in NATO military operations, notably in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Afghanistan (Kupiecki, 2019a; Koziej, 2012: 19-45). This participation reflected Poland's commitment to solidarity within the Alliance and was viewed as an investment in both the Alliance's effectiveness and Poland's own security. In this context, the European Union assumed a complementary role in the Polish security policy, particularly significant for non-military dimensions<sup>1</sup>. It was perceived an element of influence in shaping the security environment in Europe.

### **3. The specificity of Poland's perspective on threats and security environment**

Poland's accession to NATO and the EU marked a significant milestone in its foreign and security policy endeavours, signifying both achievement and the onset of new challenges. The primary objective of Poland's security policy was to align its defense system with Euro-Atlantic standards and NATO, which was perceived as the essential guarantor of its security. The advent of the 21<sup>st</sup> century ushered in a host of novel challenges and threats necessitating a calibrated response from Polish policymakers. Paramount among these challenges were the evolving dynamics within Poland's security environment and a threat perception that remained incomprehensible to many European partners (O'Donnell, 2012). They found expression in numerous strategic documents, e.g. National Security Strategies, which, within the Polish legal and political framework, served as pivotal instruments shaping the state security policy (Kupiecki, 2015a; Kuźniar 1994; Soroka, 2006).

Before the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by the Russian Federation in 2014, the prevailing assessment of the security

---

<sup>1</sup> Defense Strategy of Poland', May 23, 2000.

environment was optimistic. This was associated with Poland's anchoring within Euro-Atlantic and European structures and positive development of neighborly relations. There was no risk of traditional armed aggression. Poland recognized global threats such as terrorism, uncontrolled migration, inequalities and disparities in the standard of living between societies. Following the gas crisis in Ukraine in 2006, the energy-related threats were recognized, prompting the inclusion of countering them as one of the objectives of Polish foreign and security policy. Therefore, all Polish governments were critical about Nord Stream I and Nord Stream II, perceiving them as anti-European projects. They expressed their concern, that German-Russia investments would increase the dependence of the countries in the regions on energy carriers from Russia and would generate the risk of using energy supplies as an instrument of political and security pressure.

The 2014 National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland was drafted in very different circumstances from previous documents. It was already issued after the Russian Federation's aggression in Ukraine, including the illegal annexation of Crimea. The Strategy identified an increased threat to state security associated with the excessive concentration of conventional military potential amassed near Poland's eastern borders. Concerns were also raised regarding potential internal political, social, or ethnic tensions in the region, as well as the rise of authoritarianism and unpredictability in politics, for example in Belarus and Ukraine (Kupiecki, 2015b).

In the subsequent years, the security landscape grew progressively intricate and precarious. It was openly acknowledged that the most significant identified threat stemmed from the neo-imperial policy pursued by the authorities of the Russian Federation, often employing military force. The aggression against Georgia in 2008, the unlawful annexation of Crimea in 2014, and military actions in Eastern Ukraine blatantly contravened fundamental principles of international law and eroded the foundations of the European security framework. The Russian Federation has been actively increasing its offensive military capabilities, particularly in its western strategic direction, especially in the Baltic Sea region, including the Kaliningrad. In addition, the Russian Federation has conducted intensive military exercises (also in cooperation with Belarus), assuming scenarios involving conflicts with NATO Member States, rapid deployment of significant military formations and even the potential use of nuclear weapons. It

has engaged also in activities below the threshold of war, referred to as hybrid warfare, which carried the risk of triggering conflict, including unintended escalation resulting from incidents, particularly of a military nature (Menkiszak, 2017).

It can be concluded that Poland appropriately identified the threats and challenges inherent in the security environment. However, it has not been able to communicate convincingly of its vision in the European Union, as some states have long assumed that Russia was a reliable economic partner with no interest in larger-scale military confrontation.

In 2022, the security situation in the region deteriorated dramatically due to intensification of the Russian aggression against Ukraine. There was a risk of the conflict spilling over into neighboring countries, and the threat of a Russia-NATO military confrontation was assessed as likely, especially in the event of a possible Ukrainian defeat, a concern frequently raised by the leaders of Poland and the Baltic States (Duda 2023). Poland was keen to participate in initiatives aimed at deepening international cooperation and stabilizing security environment in the region.

#### **4. Poland's contribution to the evolution of ESDP**

Before joining the European Union, Poland had limited involvement in discussions regarding the direction of European Defense capabilities within the framework of the Western European Union (Zięba, 2010: 126). There were concerns that investing in the European Defense dimension might weaken NATO and hinder its expansion. Following the significant decisions made at the 1998 Saint Malo Summit on enhancing security and defense policy of the EU, Poland adopted a stance similar to that of the United States. It warned against the potential repercussions of separating the European security and defense system from NATO and duplicating structures and resources (Kupiecki, 2019b).

Poland expressed the view that European military planning should be aligned with the Strategic Concept of the North Atlantic Alliance, while the potential creation of military forces for EU should be in accordance with the NATO defense planning system. It advocated for the establishment of a close mechanism of cooperation between the EU and NATO. During NATO's North Atlantic Council's meeting on December 15, 1999, Foreign Minister Bronisław Geremek emphasized that the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) could play a crucial role in enhancing NATO's effec-

tiveness. As an EU candidate country, Poland declared its intention to participate in shaping the security and defense dimension of the European Union, as well as announced the participation of Polish soldiers in EU crisis management forces.

Poland's cautious position was shaped by the sense of being marginalized within Europe, particularly in the 1990s. The US administration under Bill Clinton demonstrated a greater understanding of Polish security concerns. Additionally, Polish authorities perceived little opportunity for the realization of a cohesive defense policy within Europe (Kuźniar, 2018: 55-67). It preferred to be focused on NATO and the development of partnership with the United States.

Poland's support for the American intervention in Iraq in 2003 diverged from the stance taken by the majority of its European counterparts, eliciting widespread disapproval (Longhurst & Zaborowski, 2007). Concurrently, Poland pursued substantial military acquisitions from the United States, notably opting for the procurement of the US F-16 multirole combat aircraft to bolster the capabilities of the Polish Air Force. This decision garnered disappointment from some European political circles.

However, there was a constant positive evolution in Poland's approach to the Common Security and Defense Policy. Defense Minister Radosław Sikorski authorized Polish soldiers to participate in EU military operations. Moreover, President Lech Kaczyński and Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński even proposed the creation of a 100 000 strong European army, albeit one that would remain under NATO command (Kuźniar, 2018: 55-67). Poland endorsed the European Security Strategy and incorporated its perspective into its own Security Strategy. It maintained also a favorable stance towards the security and defense provisions outlined in the Constitutional Treaty and, subsequently, in the Lisbon Treaty in 2007. They were not the subject of political discussions and controversies in Poland. Furthermore, Poland advocated for the inclusion of a reference to the "spirit of solidarity" in the context of the European energy policy. If one or more member states experience a disruption in energy supply, they could depend on energy assistance from other states.

The Polish Presidency in the Council, which was held between July and December 2011, proved to be a positive impetus. In fact, ESDP was one of major priorities of the Polish presidency in the Council of the EU (Major & Wassenberg, 2011). Unfortunately,

Europe's aspirations for security engagement at that time were impeded by the extensive financial crisis that commenced in 2008, precipitating a protracted period of economic recession, and a concomitant surge in unemployment. EU States pursued austerity measures and assistance programs, exhibiting reluctance to allocate resources towards the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP).

What proved beneficial was the improvement in relations and collaborative efforts among Poland, France and Germany, following the assumption of power by the Civic Platform in Poland and the appointment of Donald Tusk as Prime Minister in 2007. Three states within the Weimar Triangle formula issued a public *communiqué* to High Representative Catherine Ashton in November 2010 advocating for the reinvigoration of the European Security and Defense Policy (Lang & Schwarzer, 2011). This initiative garnered additional support of Italy and Spain. Finally, cooperation between all five states and the EU institutions has yielded tangible results. Among the achievements during the Polish Presidency was the inauguration of the EU Operations Centre in Brussels to support the interaction between military and civilian actors in ESDP missions based on the Council decision of March 23, 2012.

Poland also leveraged its Presidency to advance the Eastern Partnership program, a joint initiative introduced by Poland and Sweden in 2008. The intention was to intensify relations between the European Union and its eastern neighbours and to spread stability in the region. However, Poland's efforts to strengthen cooperation with Eastern Partnership countries did not receive support from other member states (Sus, 2014: 191-208), nor did suggestions for more intensive EU-NATO cooperation.

Implementation of the Polish priorities was diplomatically complicated due to limitations of the post-Lisbon institutional framework (Mieñkowska-Norkiene, 2012: 45-47; Cianciara, 2012: 27-42), but the overall contribution of the Polish presidency was evaluated positively (European Union, 2011).

In the following years, the involvement of Poland and the other Weimar Triangle states as well as Spain and Italy continued. They sought to improve the functioning of civil-military structures, develop the concept of Battle Groups and intensify cooperation within the European Air Transport Command (EATC). Poland was keen to ensure the functionality of the Battle Groups, hence it came up with specific proposals regarding the command's abil-

ity to expand them with a maritime and air component and to include civilian aspects (Ciupiński, 2018: 357-368).

Following 2015, Poland exhibited a lack of consistency in its support for the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). The annexation of Crimea by Russia and the persistent conflict in Eastern Ukraine redirected Poland's focus primarily towards security concerns along NATO's Eastern Flank. Consequently, attention was predominantly directed towards the North Atlantic Alliance and fostering cooperation with the United States. There was insufficient progress within the ESDP to adequately address the escalating threat emanating from the East. Moreover, engagement in ESDP endeavors was further hindered by contentious disputes over the rule of law between Poland and EU institutions, as well as by a crisis in cooperation within the Weimar Triangle framework.

Poland was not included in the Franco-German proposal to create the EU Defense Union in September 2016. However, it supported the establishment of the European Defense Fund, as well as the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). Poland advocated for an open character of PESCO, but also linking it with NATO as closely as possible (Terlikowski, 2018).

The 2016 NATO Summit's decision to deploy allied troops to the Eastern Flank, constituting a pivotal component of NATO's defensive and deterrent stance *vis-à-vis* Russia, was widely regarded in Poland as a significant achievement. In addition, the United States announced establishing its Armoured Brigade Combat Team in Poland on a rotating basis. Poland's commitment to enhancing collective defense within the Alliance framework and addressing regional security concerns in the face of evolving geopolitical dynamics was a crucial security task.

Amidst the presidency of Donald Trump and the deteriorating relations between the United States and the European members of NATO, Poland harbored concerns regarding the potential ramifications of advancing European strategic autonomy and security policy instruments (Gotkowska, 2020: 63-67). There was apprehension that such developments could potentially undermine NATO and foster a two-speed Europe in defense. It was feared that, contrary to the principle of European solidarity, states would be selectively admitted to PESCO projects. Ultimately, PESCO's open accession criteria eased Poland's concerns, which supported the new possibility of military cooperation within PESCO.

## 5. Practical engagement

Poland demonstrated its commitment to the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) from the outset by actively participating in Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) missions and operations, as well as in European Union Battle Groups (EUBG). These endeavors incurred significant financial and logistical costs for Poland, but it was also a way to engage in military cooperation with European partners and support the adaptation processes of the army and its modernization.

Polish military engagement in European Union (EU) operations predates Poland's accession to the EU. In 2003, prior to joining the EU, Polish soldiers participated in the EUFOR Concordia Operation in Macedonia, marking Poland's inaugural involvement in an EU-led military mission. This early engagement laid the foundation for Poland's ongoing support for security efforts, particularly in regions beyond its immediate geographic vicinity.

Since 2004, Poland has maintained its commitment to Balkan security by actively participating in the EUFOR Althea Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This operation succeeded the activities of the NATO Stabilization Force (SFOR), demonstrating Poland's continued involvement in stabilizing the Western Balkans (Usewicz *et al.*, 2021: 12-16).

Poland's operational contributions extended beyond Europe's borders. From 2015 to 2020, Poland participated in the EU naval operation EUNAVFOR MED SOPHIA in the Mediterranean Sea, primarily focused on combating criminal organizations engaged in illegal migrant trafficking. This commitment persisted with Poland's involvement in the successor operation, EUNAVFOR MED IRINI, which prioritized enforcing the arms embargo on Libya since April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020. Moreover, Poland contributed officers to various EU missions, including EUNAVFOR Atalanta, a naval operation combating piracy off the Horn of Africa, and the EU Training Mission in the Central African Republic (EUTM RCA), aimed at providing military advisory and training services. Additionally, Polish military contingents were active participants in the EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) from 2013 to 2014 and the EU military operation in the Central African Republic (EUFOR RCA) from 2014 to 2015, supporting United Nations activities.

Poland's history of participation in African operations dates back to EUFOR RD Congo in 2006 and EUFOR Tchad/RCA in 2008.

These missions underscored Poland's willingness to contribute to multinational efforts aimed at promoting stability and security, both within Europe and on a global scale.

Poland was among the countries eager to engage in the creation of EU Battle Groups (Górniak, 2017: 14-28). Poland co-founded Battle Groups with Germany, Lithuania, Latvia, and Slovakia in 2010, and with Germany and France as part of the Weimar Triangle Battle Group in 2013. Moreover, in 2016 and 2019, Poland participated in the Combat Groups alongside the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary, with Ukraine joining in 2016 and Croatia in 2019 (Visegrad Battle Groups+). In both of these groups, it served as the framework state, deploying the majority of the forces and establishing an Operations Command based on the Land Operations Centre, Land Component Command in Krakow. Thus, the Polish Armed Forces joined a select group of European armies with such capabilities.

The concept of Battle Groups did not meet Polish expectations, as they were not designed for tasks related to collective defense (Ciupiński, 2014; Kawałowski, 2007). Moreover, they required significant costs and lengthy preparations, while remaining operationally ready for only six months. Nevertheless, Poland sought opportunities for military cooperation with European partners and, through engagement, expressed its political ambitions to play a significant role in the European policy. For instance, Poland did not have interests in Africa, but the opportunity to cooperate with European partners provided an opportunity to demonstrate a pro-European option in Poland's foreign policy. Demonstrating its preparedness to participate in military engagements in the southern neighbourhood of Europe, Poland concurrently sought to enhance European comprehension of the threats posed by Russia in the Eastern region. This multifaceted approach underscored Poland's strategic commitment to bolstering security both within and beyond its immediate geographic vicinity. Proving their readiness to engage militarily in the southern neighbourhood of Europe, Poland aimed to increase the European understanding of the threats represented by Russia in the East at the same time.

Over time, Poland increasingly made deliberate decisions regarding the deployment of its military resources beyond its borders, mainly due to the incurred costs and the lack of full satisfaction with its participation in interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan. As

a result, although it supported the intervention in Libya in 2011, it practically did not engage in it (Dyll, 2011).

In the context of the EU Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), Poland remained steadfastly committed to the principle that all European Defense initiatives ought to serve the dual purpose of reinforcing NATO's adaptation strategies, particularly in terms of deterrence and defense *vis-à-vis* Russia, while simultaneously addressing Poland's own specific capability needs. This guiding premise underscored Poland's approach towards PESCO, ensuring alignment with broader strategic objectives aimed at bolstering transatlantic security cooperation and enhancing the collective defense posture of the Euro-Atlantic community.

In a singular instance, Poland assumes the role of project coordinator, in relation to the Special Forces Medical Training Center (SMTC) Project. Regarding 12 PESCO initiatives, Poland has a status of participant, while in an additional 12, it assumes the role of observer (Ministry of National Defense, 2022a).

The priority areas of engagement for Poland proved to be: military mobility, logistics and cyberdefense. Improving military mobility and the creation of logistic centers was of particular significance for the Eastern Flank. In Poland, the full operational capability of the center in Kutno is expected to be achieved by the end of 2024.

The actions taken by the EU in the field of military mobility respond to the military needs of European countries and are also consistent with NATO's requirements. The project concerning military mobility also involves third countries such as the USA, Canada, Norway and the United Kingdom. Interest in cooperation within the project primarily indicates its operational significance for cross-border military transportation in Europe. The goal is to reduce the response time of the armed forces, including the reduction of time allocated for procedures which is an important element of conventional deterrence in Europe.

A number of projects within the European Defense Agency are also in line with the above. Poland, which joined the Agency as one of the founding members, guided by its own strategic interests, actively participates in 38 projects and programmes, representing 28% of EDA's total project portfolio. Some of them are capability development projects, including coopera-

tion on the EU Multimodal Transport Hub Network, Maritime Surveillance, EU Satellite Communications Market and Additive Manufacturing for Logistic Support. Moreover, Poland is involved in 32 research and technology (R&T) projects. In four cases, Poland plays the role of the lead nation (European Defense Agency, 2022).

Poland also welcomed the initiative of the European Defense Fund (Kozioł, 2020), hoping that it would be an important contribution to the development of the ESDP, as well as contributing to the transformation of its Defense Technological and Industrial Base. Participation in the European Peace Facility represented an opportunity to obtain financial support for research projects conducted within the country. Moreover, for the domestic defense industry, including small and medium-sized enterprises, involvement in the EDF meant the possibility of joining the international supply chain of defense equipment components. Although Polish entities have participated in significant projects, including award-winning ones, Poland has been less able to benefit from the Fund compared to larger, more developed EU countries in terms of the arms industry (Maślanka, 2023).

## **6. Poland's response to the war in Ukraine: implications for European Defense policy perspectives**

The invasion on February 24, 2022 significantly worsened the regional security situation. Some of the demands put forth by Russia directly regarded NATO's Eastern Flank, including the withdrawal of NATO forces from countries that became its members after 1997. Poland's policy at that time was guided by several key considerations: the looming threat of the conflict spilling over into neighboring territories, apprehension regarding the potential repercussions of Ukraine's defeat on Poland's security, recognition of the conflict as an opportunity to significantly diminish Russia's power and liberate Europe from reliance on Russian energy resources. In seeking international attention and support for Ukraine, authorities underscored Ukraine's struggle for independence and its alignment with Western values such as freedom, democracy and human rights (Bieńczyk-Missala, 2022: 341).

Poland's foreign policy objectives prioritized securing military, financial and humanitarian assistance for Ukraine, orchestrat-

ing a cohesive international approach to imposing sanctions on Russia, and undertaking measures to bolster Poland's defense capabilities alongside fortifying the entire Eastern flank of NATO.

As a contiguous state to Ukraine, Poland assumed a pivotal role in facilitating the transit of military assets, humanitarian relief supplies and Ukrainian agricultural products, thus constituting a critical component of the logistical network. Furthermore, Poland assumed primary responsibility for accommodating war refugees, emerging as the principal destination for refugee influx. Between February 24, 2022, and January 10, 2023, Poland witnessed the arrival of more than 9.5 million refugees across its borders, with over 1.5 million formally registered individuals within its territories (Szeptycki, 2023: 93-111; 2024: 1-11).

Poland emerged as a one of key contributors by leveraging its own military resources to furnish substantial assistance, among others: anti-aircraft missile systems (S-125 Neva SC, 9K33 Osa, 2K12 Kub), portable anti-aircraft missile systems Piorun, S-60 anti-aircraft guns, Grot rifles, Krab self-propelled howitzers, T-72 and Leopard tanks, BM-21 Grad rocket launchers, Goździk self-propelled howitzers, infantry fighting vehicles, Mig-29 fighters and ammunition for Ukrainian artillery systems, firearms, and individual equipment for soldiers. Moreover, 98 Polish policemen demined areas liberated from Russian occupation as part of bilateral aid in 2023. Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski announced, during the presentation of Poland's foreign policy priorities in the parliament, that Poland has so far provided Ukraine with military aid worth around 9 billion dollars (The Military Magazine, 2024; European Pravda, 2023).

Polish authorities maintained a steadfast approach in advocating for increased military assistance to Ukraine from other nations. Their efforts extended beyond mere encouragement, as they actively sought to orchestrate the provision of advanced military equipment, such as fighter aircraft, Leopard tanks or anti-missile systems Patriot, through the consolidation of international support and the formation of coalitions among like-minded countries. This strategic maneuvering involved discreet channels for the transfer of requisite weaponry to bolster Ukraine's defense capabilities amidst escalating hostilities. By fostering collaborative endeavors and discreetly facilitating the transfer of advanced military assets, Polish authorities aimed to augment Ukraine's capacity to withstand external aggression while fostering solidarity within the international community. This approach under-

scored Poland's commitment to upholding regional security and stability, as well as its proactive engagement in shaping the dynamics of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

### 6.1. Self-investments

Concurrently, Poland embarked on an accelerated trajectory of fortifying its armed forces through extensive investments in equipment and modernization endeavors. Predominantly sourced from the United States, acquisitions encompassed a spectrum of assets such as F-35 aircraft, Abrams tanks and HIMARS rocket launchers, augmented by framework agreements with the Republic of Korea for K2 tanks, K9 howitzers, K239 rocket launchers and FA-50 aircraft. Supplementary procurements from European counterparts included CAMM missiles from the United Kingdom, Pleiades Neo satellites from France, and multi-role AW149 helicopters from Italy's Leonardo Group.

In 2023, the governmental authorities pursued further acquisitions, encompassing a diverse array of military assets. Notable among these were the procurement of 96 AH-64E Apache attack helicopters, complete with accompanying equipment such as radars, 1844 AGM-114R2 Hellfire missiles, 460 JAGM air-to-ground missiles and 508 Stinger anti-aircraft missiles. Additionally, acquisitions included six additional batteries of the PATRIOT/IBCS system, two naval rocket units, an automated ZENIT-MP+ command post tailored for PILICA+ sets and FlyEye drones. The acquisition roster extended to encompass Bayraktar unmanned systems sourced from Turkey, alongside the commencement of leasing arrangements from the United States, inclusive of an option for procurement, for MQ-9A drones (Ministry of National Defense, 2022b; Czulda, 2023; North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2023a).

Complementing these acquisitions, domestic production initiatives gained traction, with the Defense Minister's approval on October 11, 2023, paving the way for contracts related to accompanying MS-20 Daglezja-S bridges, Zawilec command vehicles, motor vehicles for Naval Rocket Units and an annex for the delivery of 120 mm ammunition to RAK self-propelled mortars. Concurrently, negotiations with South Korea were underway, with impending orders for K2 tanks, K9 self-propelled howitzers and FA 50 light fighters, signaling further diversification and enhancement of Poland's military capabilities.

Underpinning these acquisitions was the Homeland Defense Act of March 11, 2022, enacted in response to the conflict, which sought to augment the size of the armed forces to approximately 300 000 personnel and escalate defense spending from 2.2% of GDP in 2022 to even more than 4%<sup>2</sup> in subsequent years (Kość, 2023; Cepparulo & Pasimeni 2024; Karnitschnig, & Kość, 2022). This legislative framework facilitated streamlined procurement processes owing to exigent circumstances and the imperative for expeditious measures to bolster defense capacities. However, the procurement modality, primarily reliant on foreign suppliers and circumventing conventional tendering procedures, potentially precluded the incorporation of offset mechanisms facilitating technology transfer to Poland.

## 6.2. NATO

Concurrently, Poland endeavored to fortify NATO's Eastern Flank and rectify its actual standing within the Alliance and predicated on augmenting the numerical strength of NATO forces in the region and fortifying military infrastructure. The NATO summit in Madrid, scheduled for June 2022, provided a pivotal juncture to pursue these objectives, coinciding with the articulation of NATO's declaration and strategic concept. Although the strategic document underscored Russia as the preeminent threat to Alliance security and advocated for bolstering Allied forces on NATO's Eastern Flank, it did not constitute a paradigm shift.

Prior to the NATO summit held in Vilnius on July 11 and 12, 2023, Poland embarked on a strategic initiative aimed at recalibrating defense plans within the Alliance. Key objectives included bolstering infrastructure along the Eastern Flank, particularly in the form of ammunition depots, and augmenting the contingent of NATO troops designated as rapid reaction forces. Collaborating closely with members of the Bucharest Nine, Poland advocated for the establishment of permanent brigade-sized battlegroups as per NATO's 2022 decision. This proposition sought to introduce a novel framework for Alliance forces, geared towards ensuring the immediate defense of NATO territory in the event of aggression. Although this proposal did not garner consensus in Vilnius,

---

<sup>2</sup> Poland allocated 3.9% of GDP to military expenditures in 2023, the most among all NATO countries, implementing contracts concluded in the previous year. In the draft budget for 2025 defence spending is expected to amount to 4.7 percent of Poland's GDP.

individual member states responded by enhancing their presence on the Eastern Flank, such as Germany in Lithuania and Canada in Latvia (Gotkowska & Graca, 2023).

Additionally, Poland contended that NATO's strategic adjustments must account for the deployment of Russian nuclear assets within Belarusian territory. This concern prompted a joint communication, alongside Lithuania and Latvia, to NATO leadership and the Secretary-General on July 7, 2023. The missive advocated for a comprehensive review of nuclear deterrence strategies in light of evolving geopolitical realities, integration of conventional threats emanating from Belarus into NATO's military adaptation initiatives and fortification of the Alliance's resilience against hybrid threats. Consequently, the summit's final communiqué (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2023b) acknowledged the security ramifications stemming from the military integration of Russia and Belarus, as well as the planned deployment of Russian nuclear weaponry in Belarus. This development may catalyze deliberations regarding Poland's potential inclusion in NATO's nuclear sharing program, contingent upon the certification of F-35 aircraft by the United States (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2023; Bieńczyk-Missala, 2023: 328-332).

Poland supported the proposal to withdraw the Russia-NATO Founding Act of 1997, which ultimately did not happen, and the establishment of the NATO-Ukraine Council. A recognition of Poland as the "advocate of Ukraine in NATO" was the establishment of the NATO-Ukraine Joint Analysis, Training, and Education Center in Bydgoszcz.

Poland intensified consultations and cooperation not only at multilateral forums but also bilaterally, notably with the United States and the United Kingdom. Both countries augmented Poland's security by deploying additional troops, with approximately 11 000 American soldiers and 600 British soldiers stationed in Poland at the peak moment. Symbolizing solidarity, President Joe Biden's visit to Poland in March 2022 and February 2023 underscored the unwavering commitment to supporting Ukraine and upholding NATO's principles. For Poland, the permanent presence of US troops was particularly important. In March 2023, the Regional Support Group (Area Support Group Poland, ASG-P) stationed in western Poland was transformed into the US Army Garrison Poland (USAG-P) and became the eighth permanent garrison of US armed forces in Europe and the first permanent garrison of US troops in Poland (Ministry of National Defense, 2023).

In December, the operational readiness was achieved at the Redzikowo base, which is part of the US missile defense shield. Energy cooperation with the United States was also further developed. Purchases of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from American suppliers increased and Poland was one of their largest recipients in Europe. In 2023, it imported 126% more American raw material than in the previous year. Poland also chose American technology for the construction of reactors for the first Polish nuclear power plant. The second planned nuclear power plant was to be based on South Korean technology.

Poland and the United Kingdom, in turn, have signed the "Polish-British Defense Cooperation Plan" and the "Declaration on the Polish-British Strategic Partnership in Foreign Policy, Defense, and Security 2030". The British Sky Sabre air defense system was deployed on Polish territory. Moreover, British companies, including MBDA, were involved in the construction of the short-range Narew air and missile defense system and frigates (Polish Press Agency, 2024).

### 6.3. European Union

Russia's aggression in the context of European security dynamics was motivated by a strategic aim to dismantle the existing security architecture, which had evolved in collaboration with Russia following the Cold War and accommodated its security interests (Madej & Terlikowski, 2021: 114-131). However, Russia's actions led to a rupture in its engagement with the established security framework, prompting NATO, as well as EU, to respond by seeking to diminish Russia's influence while concurrently bolstering its own defense capabilities. This shift in dynamics underscored the evolving geopolitical landscape and the recalibration of security priorities within Europe. Europe's response was swift, decisive and largely unprecedented.

In a revised "Strategic Compass" adopted in March 2022 (European Union, 2022) by the Council, it was admitted that Russia's "aggressive and revisionist" actions of the "Russian government" posed a "direct and serious" threat to the security of Europe and its citizens. The document stressed that, by launching an unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine, Russia has violated basic principles of international law and the UN Charter, which the EU is determined to defend. For the first time, an EU document has explicitly stated that the Russian goal is to build a

sphere of influence in Europe and pointed to the direct threat from Russia to the territorial integrity of European states. Moreover, in the introduction, Joseph Borrell admitted that the EU was aware of Russia's use of energy trade as a "political weapon," but did not take sufficient action to reduce this dependence (Strategic Compass, 2022). It is worth recalling that, in the first version of the document, Russia was not considered a threat to EU and even the prospect of selective cooperation with the country was suggested, despite the annexation of Crimea and ongoing military operations in eastern Ukraine. The final change was absolutely in line with Poland's perception of security threats and challenges; however, the Strategic Compass didn't propose many new concrete actions (Madej & Terlikowski, 2023: 66-87).

In regard to Ukraine, Polish authorities advocated for the broadening of sanctions against Russia and Belarus, while also actively supporting and leveraging tools established within the framework of the ESDP. The European Peace Facility (EPF), to facilitate military support to Ukraine, anticipating appropriate reimbursement for incurred expenses, proved to be a particularly valuable instrument for Poland, which has donated massive amounts of its armaments to Ukraine.

Poland hosted the European Union's Military Assistance Mission to Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine), aimed at training members of the Ukrainian armed forces, further testament to its commitment to regional stability and security. Nearly 40 000 Ukrainian military personnel have undergone training under the auspices of EUMAM to Ukraine, with a primary focus on training activities conducted in Germany and Poland (Nieczypor *et al.*, 2024). About 30% of the training was carried out by Poland.

Moreover, Poland actively engaged in the ammunition initiative for Ukraine, collaborating closely with Estonia (Polish Press Agency, 2023). This initiative aimed at facilitating the transfer of one million rounds of ammunition to Ukraine, reflecting a concerted effort to support the country amidst ongoing conflict. Poland, in partnership with the Estonian Minister, embarked on a diplomatic endeavor to ensure the realization of this commitment, underscoring the depth of its involvement in regional security affairs and its commitment to aiding Ukraine during times of crisis. Unfortunately, it proved challenging to implement.

Poland was also prepared to engage in initiatives aimed at strengthening Europe's defense capabilities, especially follow-

ing a change of the government after the elections in 2023 and improving relations within the Weimar Triangle (France-Germany-Poland) (Baerbock, Sejourne & Sikorski, 2024). In March 2024, together with Germany, it announced its commitment to assuming responsibility for the rapid reaction forces in Europe (the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity, RDC). As of July 2024, the joint battle group comprising 2500 Polish soldiers and 2500 German soldiers will be prepared for swift deployment and reaction as a part of EU Strategic Compass implementation (Caulcutt, von der Burchard & Angelos, 2024; Maślanka, 2024).

The plans for the development of the European Defense industry may also be an opportunity for Poland, which is why Poland has supported the initiatives to date. Despite being among the countries with the highest defense spending in terms of GDP, its defense industry has not embraced new initiatives as much as the largest European countries have. This stemmed from the lack of a strategy for the development of the defense industry and the absence of reforms in the sector (Palowski, 2024). The vast majority of defense production in Poland is controlled and managed by the state-owned Polish Defense Holding (PGZ). Consequently, there is no significant competition in the Polish market, although there are positive exceptions (WB Electronics, Remontowa Shipbuilding) (Zaborowski, 2018).

Following February 2022, Poland shifted its focus towards procuring military equipment from abroad, a decision that was comprehensible given the circumstances, but it missed the opportunity to invest in bolstering its domestic production capacity. Over the years, Poland has exhibited a preference for American solutions over European ones, evident in choices such as the construction of anti-missile systems. This trend mirrors that of many other European countries, which have increasingly turned to either domestic production or non-EU purchases for their military equipment needs. Despite this, Polish innovation in the defense sector remains at a nascent yet promising stage, and engagement in European cooperation offers the potential for advancement and mutual benefits. It is imperative for Poland to establish itself as a significant participant in production processes and leverage cooperation for technological advancement.

However, Polish defense companies currently lack the competitive edge enjoyed by their Western European counterparts. Hence, it is vital to implement effective safeguards to prevent scenarios where Polish firms entering into joint ventures with

larger European entities risk being relegated to mere subcontractor roles, thereby undermining their autonomy and potentially eroding confidence in the European Defense project (Zaborowski, 2018). It seems crucial that the development of the European armaments industry should not be based solely on *ad hoc* grants but should result from a solid identification of needs and be derived from an agreed strategy (Madej & Terlikowski, 2023: 67-86).

It is also about reducing the current state of fragmentation in the European industry, which does not serve competitiveness and effectiveness (Lefebvre, 2024). There is an opportunity for this, given the European Commission's announcement of its first-ever European Defense Industrial Strategy and a proposal for a European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP) to mobilise 1.5 billion euros between 2025 and 2027 to support ammunition production and joint procurement.

Additionally, Poland must demonstrate credibility and consistency in its support for European cooperation, a commitment that has been somewhat lacking in recent years.

## 7. Conclusions

As a flank state of both the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Poland holds a potentially pivotal role in collective defense efforts. Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Poland demonstrated itself as a constructive contributor to security endeavors. It stands today among the most determined nations in fostering both its own and European Defense capabilities, as evidenced by its levels of security expenditure. It comprehends and supports the development of European security and defense cooperation, and those issues will belong to priorities of the Polish Presidency in 2025.

Prime Minister Donald Tusk expressed support for European rapid response forces and announced Poland's readiness to participate in the European Sky Shield Initiative. The EU defense policy is perceived as an opportunity for industrial development, but there is also a need for the establishment of a European information and telecommunication security system, as well as a system to counter hybrid actions in response to Russia's influence. Consequently, there exists a conviction that Europe must fortify its defense dimension in the current security situation. Poland

demonstrates its commitment to being a responsible contributor in this regard.

However, Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski, speaking at the University of Warsaw during a conference commemorating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NATO in March 2024, advocated for strategic harmony between NATO, the European Union and the United States, rather than the strategic autonomy of Europe. The past has shown that NATO remains the best guarantor of security and an organization that relatively quickly adapts to new challenges. It is uncertain whether the EU will ever reach the level of interoperability and efficiency of NATO. Therefore, it is to be assumed that Poland will support the development of European Defense capabilities without compromising the unique capabilities and role of NATO.

## Bibliography

- Baerbock, A., Sejourne, S. & Sikorski, R. (2024). Germany, France and Poland: This Moment May Define Our Children's Future. *POLITICO*.
- Bieńczyk-Missala, A. (n. d.). Annuals articles in "Rocznik Strategiczny" (Strategic Yearbook) 2014-2023. Warsaw, *Scholar Publishing House*.
- (2016). Poland's Foreign and Security Policy: Main Directions. *UNISCI Journal*. 40.
- (2022). Polityka zagraniczna Polski po agresji Rosji na Ukrainę. In: *Rocznik Strategiczny 2021/2022*. Warsaw, *Scholar Publishing House*, p. 341.
- (2023). Po pierwsze, bezpieczeństwo: polityka zagraniczna Polski w drugim roku agresji Rosji na Ukrainę. In: *Rocznik Strategiczny, 2023/2024*. Warsaw, *Scholar Publishing House* pp. 328-332.
- Caulcutt, C., von der Burchard, H. & Angelos, J. (2024). Only Military Might Will Win Europe Respect, Poland's Tusk Tells Fellow Leaders. *POLITICO*.
- Cepparulo, A. & Pasimeni, P. (2024). Defense Spending in the European Union. *Discussion Paper 199*.
- Cianciara A. (2012). Rotating Presidency within Post-Lisbon Institutional Duda Andrzej's interview with BBC, 12 February 2023, <https://www.president.pl/news/andrzej-duda-interview-with-bbc,64519> Dynamic. *Yearbook of Polish European Studies*. 15, pp. 27-42.

- Ciupiński, A. (2014). Zdolności wojskowe Unii Europejskiej. Perspektywy grup bojowych. *Rocznik integracji europejskiej*.
- (2018). Polska wobec rozwoju polityki bezpieczeństwa i obrony Unii Europejskiej. *Rocznik Integracji Europejskiej*. 2, pp. 357-358.
- Czulda, R. (2023). Poland's Military Modernisation – Still Many Challenges Ahead. *Pulaski Policy Paper*. 10.
- Der Bild, (2014). *Ursula von der Leyen im BILD-Interview: Wie Schrott ist die Bundeswehr, Frau Ministerin?* [Accessed: April 24, 2024]. Available at: <https://www.bild.de/politik/inland/ursula-von-der-leyen/wie-schrott-ist-die-bundeswehr-37925584.bild.html>
- Dyll, D. W. (2011). Poland, Libya, and NATO, *New Atlanticist*.
- European Defense Agency. (2022). *CE in Poland for high level talks*. [Accessed: April 24, 2024]. Available at: <https://Eda.Europa.Eu/News-And-Events/News/2022/04/27/Ce-In-Poland-For-High-Level-Talks>
- European Pravda. (2023). *Polish Police Conducts Secret Operation in Ukraine, Clearing Mines in Kyiv Oblast for Five Months*.
- European Union. (2011). *Speech by High Representative Catherine Ashton on the Common Security and Defence Policy in the European Parliament in Strasbourg*. [Accessed: April 24, 2024]. Available at: [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/126896.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/126896.pdf)
- (2022). *A Strategic Compass for a Stronger EU Security and Defence in the Next Decade*. [Accessed: April 24, 2024]. Available at: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7371-2022-INIT/en/pdf>
- Geremek, B. (1999). On European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI). *NAC*. [Accessed: April 24, 2024]. Available at: <http://www.polonya.org.tr/sec5-ue-nato-esdi-pl-position.htm>
- Górniak, D. (2017). The European Union Battle Groups in the Development of the Common Security and Defense Policy. *Reality of Politics*, pp. 14-28.
- Gotkowska, J. (2020). Poland and the European strategic autonomy debate. In: Zandee, Dick *et al.* *European strategic autonomy in security and defence: Now the going gets tough, it's time to get going*. The Hague, Clingendael Institute, pp. 63-67.
- Howard, M. (1990). Springtime of Nations. *Foreign Affairs*.
- International Institute for Strategic Studies. (2023). *Poland's Bid to Participate in NATO Nuclear Sharing*. 29(26).

- Jak rozwijały się relacje polsko-brytyjskie w ostatnich latach? (2024). *Polish Press Agency*. [Accessed: April 25, 2024]. Available at: <https://www.pap.pl/aktualnosci/jak-rozwijaly-sie-relacje-polsko-brytyjskie-w-ostatnich-latach>
- Karnitschnig, M. & Kość, W. (2022). Meet Europe's Coming Military Superpower: Poland. *POLITICO*.
- Kawałowski, M. (2007). Zaangażowanie Polski w Grupach Bojowych Unii Europejskiej. *Zeszyty Naukowe AON*. 3.
- Kość, W. (2023). Poland's Military Gets Strong Backing from Incoming Government. *POLITICO*.
- Koziej, S. (1999). Polish Strategy and Defence Policy in the Context of NATO Membership. *Polish Quarterly of International Affairs*. 81.
- (2012). Pierwsza dekada funkcjonowania w strukturach bezpieczeństwa NATO i UE—strategiczne doświadczenia Polski. *Bezpieczeństwo Narodowe*, pp. 19-45.
- Koziół, A. (2020). The European Peace Facility: A New EU Security Initiative. *Polish Institute of International Affairs*.
- Kruk, K. (2019). The Crimean Factor: How the European Union Reacted to Russia's Annexation of Crimea. *The Warsaw Institute Review*.
- Kupiecki, R. (ed.). (2015a). *Strategia bezpieczeństwa narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej pierwsze 25 lat*. Warsaw, Wojskowe Centrum Edukacji Obywatelskiej.
- (2015b). *Strategia Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego RP 2014 jako instrument polityki państwa. Uwarunkowania zewnętrzne i aspekty procesowe*. *Bezpieczeństwo Narodowe*.
- (2019a). NATO w polskiej perspektywie 1989-2019. *Polish Institute of International Affairs*. Warsaw.
- (2019b). Poland and NATO after the Cold War. *Polish Institute of International Affairs*.
- Kupiecki, R. & Szczepanik, K. (1995). *Polityka zagraniczna Polski 1918-1994*. Warsaw, Scholar Publishing House.
- Kuźniar, R. (ed.). (1992). *Krajobraz po transformacji. Środowisko międzynarodowe Polski lat dziewięćdziesiątych*. Warsaw, Dom Wydawniczy i Handlowy ELIPSA.
- (1994). *Między polityką a strategią: Polska w środowisku międzynarodowym*. Warsaw, Scholar Publishing House.
- (ed.). (2001). *Poland's Security Policy 1989-2000*. Warsaw, Scholar Publishing House.

- (2009). *Poland's Foreign Policy after 1989*. Warsaw, Scholar Publishing House.
- (2018). Wspólna polityka bezpieczeństwa i obrony Unii Europejskiej. In: Barcz, J. et al. (ed.). *Polska w Unii Europejskiej. Nowe wyzwania Komisja Europejska Przedstawicielstwo w Polsce*. Warsaw, pp. 55-67.
- (2020). Polska w zjednoczonej Europie. In: Bieńczyk-Missala, A. & Kuźniar R. (ed.). *Dziedzictwo Krzysztofa Skubiszewskiego w polityce zagranicznej RP*. Warsaw, Scholar Publishing House.
- Lang, K. O. & Schwarzer, D. (2011). Consolidating the Weimar Triangle. European Policy Functions of German-Polish-French Cooperation. *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik Comments*. 30.
- Lefebvre, M. (2024). Has The Time Come For European Defence? *Foundation Robert Schuman*. [Accessed: April 22, 2024]. Available at: <https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/european-issues/743-has-the-time-come-for-european-defence>
- Longhurst, K. & Zaborowski, M. (2007). *The New Atlanticist. Poland's Foreign and Security Policy Priorities*. Institut Français des Relations Internationales. London, Chatham House/Blackwell Publishing.
- Madej, M. & Terlikowski, M. (2021). Wspólna Polityka Bezpieczeństwa i Obrony w 2021 r.: czy kompas pokaże właściwy kierunek? In: *Rocznik Strategiczny, 2021/2022*, pp. 114-131.
- (2022). Wspólna Polityka Bezpieczeństwa i Obrony w 2022 r.: systemowe słabości i wojenny zwrot na wschód. In: *Rocznik Strategiczny, 2023/2024*, pp. 66-87.
- (2024). Wspólna Polityka Bezpieczeństwa i Obrony UE w 2023 r.: wsparcie dla Ukrainy szansą (niepewną) na skok integracyjny (w przemyśle). In: *Rocznik Strategiczny, 2023/2024*, pp. 67-86.
- Major, C. & Wassenberg, F. (2011). Warsaw's ambitious CSDP Agenda. *SWP Comments*. [Accessed: April 22, 2024]. Available at: [https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/comments/2011C25\\_mjr\\_wsb\\_ks.pdf](https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/comments/2011C25_mjr_wsb_ks.pdf)
- Maślanka, Ł. (2023). *An EU War Chest: the Success and Uncertain Future of the European Peace Facility*. Centre for Eastern Studies Commentary.
- (2024). The EU Rapid Deployment Capacity: Political Priorities and Real Needs. *OSW Commentary 2024*.

- Menkiszak, M. (2017). The Russian Challenge: Its Nature and the Right to Response it. *Security Policy Working Paper*. 27. [Accessed: April 28, 2024]. Available at: [https://www.baks.bund.de/sites/baks010/files/working\\_paper\\_2017\\_27.pdf](https://www.baks.bund.de/sites/baks010/files/working_paper_2017_27.pdf).
- Mieńkowska-Norkiene, R. (2012). The Limited Role of the Council Presidency After Lisbon – Much Ado About Nothing. In: *Yearbook of Polish European Studies*. 15, pp. 45–47.
- Ministry of National Defense. (2022a). *More Orders for the Most Modern Equipment for the Polish Armed Forces Soon*.
- (2022b). *Polish Involvement in Implementing EU Common Security and Defence Policy – Military Dimension*. [Accessed: April 27, 2024]. Available at: <https://www.gov.pl/web/national-defence/poland---european-union>
- (2023). *Permanent Garrison of the US Forces in Poland*. [Accessed: April 25, 2024]. Available at: <https://www.gov.pl/web/national-defence/permanent-garrison-of-the-us-forces-in-poland>
- Nieczypor, K., Gizińska, I. & Maślanka, L. (2024). The EU Approves Financial Assistance for Ukraine and Negotiates Military Assistance. *OSW Analysis*.
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization. (2023a). *Defence Expenditures of NATO Countries (2014-2023)*. [Accessed: April 27, 2024]. Available at: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_216897.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_216897.htm)
- (2023b). *Vilnius Summit Communiqué*. [Accessed: April 27, 2024]. Available at: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_217320.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_217320.htm?selectedLocale=en)
- O'Donnell, C. M. (2012). Poland's U-turn on European Defense: A Missed Opportunity? In: *U.S. – Europe Analysis Series*. 53.
- Palowski, J. (2024). *Where is PLN 13 billion for the Polish Defence Industry?* [Accessed: April 25, 2024]. Available at: <https://defence24.com/industry/where-is-pln-13-billion-for-the-polish-defence-industry>
- Poland Supports Coalition of Ammo Producers for Ukraine (2023). *Polish Press Agency*.
- Porter-Szucs, B. (2021). *Poland in the Modern World*. Wiley Blackwell.
- Szeptycki, A. (2023). Poland's Aid to Ukraine since 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022. In: Stępniewski, T. (ed.), *Europa Środkowa i Wschodnia w cieniu wojny Rosji z Ukrainą: wyzwania geopolityczne i*

- dylematy bezpieczeństwa*. Lublin, Institute of Central Europe, pp. 93-111.
- (2024). Polish Assistance for the Ukrainian Refugees: Current State and Perspectives of Research. In: *Migration Studies – Review of Polish Diaspora* [online], pp. 1-11.
- Skubiszewski, K. (1990). *Exposé by Minister for Foreign Affairs of the RP, Krzysztof Skubiszewski*. Warsaw.
- Tusk, D. (2023). *Exposé by Prime Minister Donald Tusk's*. [Accessed: February 10, 2024]. Available at: <https://www.gov.pl/web/premier/stenogram-expose-premiera-donald-tuska>
- Soroka, P. (2006). *Strategia bezpieczeństwa zewnętrznego Polski. Proces formułowania*. Warsaw, Oficyna Wydawnicza - Poligraficzna „Adam”.
- Sus, M. (2014). Polish Role in Shaping the EU Foreign and Security Policy during its Council Presidency in 2011. In: *Yearbook of Polish European Studies*. 17, pp. 191-208.
- Szef MSZ: Polska przekazała Ukrainie pomoc wojskową o wartości 4,5 mld USD. (2024). *The Military Magazine*. [Accessed: April 27, 2024]. Available at: <https://milmag.pl/szef-msz-polska-przekazala-ukrainie-pomoc-wojskowa-o-wartosci-9-mld-usd/>
- Terlikowski, M. (2018). PESCO - The Polish Perspective. *Armament Industry European Research Group*. [Accessed: April 22, 2024]. Available at: <https://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Ares-32.pdf>
- Usecicz, T., Torbicka, K. & El Ghamari, M. (2021). Common Security and Defense Policy of the European Union Through the Prism of Polish Experiences and Security Interests. In: *Polish Political Science Yearbook*. 50, pp. 12-16.
- Zaborowski, M. (2018). Poland and European Defence Integration; European Council on Foreign Relations. *Policy Brief*.
- Zięba, R. (2010). *Główne kierunki polityki zagranicznej Polski po zimnej wojnie*. Warsaw, p. 126.
- (2020). *Poland's Foreign and Security Policy*. Cham, Springer.
- (ed.). (2023). *Politics and Security of Central and Eastern Europe: Contemporary Challenge*. Cham, Springer.



## Chapter six

### **Understanding Security and Defense in Spain. A national view on CSDP and its relationship with NATO**

*Abel Romero Junquera*

#### **Abstract**

To understand Spain's approach to European defense, and, in particular, within the framework of the EU (the CSDP), it is necessary to take into account, among others, some geographical, historical and sociological elements.

Located in the southwesternmost end of Europe, Spain is a bridge country between Europe, and Africa and America, almost a geopolitical pivot according to Bzrezinski, and with the Pyrenees as a geographical wall to the continent. During the last 200 years, since the invasion by Napoleonic troops, Spain has not fought any war abroad, but only some civil wars, ending with the one in 1936, all of which have, to some extent, set up the national social vision towards the Armed Forces and military issues.

In addition to the above, it should be mentioned the loss of the empire, the last overseas possessions, in 1898, that triggered a wave of introspection at national level and, as a result, certain isolationism from Europe, all of which has drawn in some way our particular strategic culture.

In this scenario, the return of democracy in 1978, and the entry into the European Economic Community in the 80s, meant the opportunity for Spain to really return to Europe. In some way, the participation in European Defense matters, such as the entry into NATO in 1982, could be understood as a ticket, part of the fee to be paid, to enter the European club.

Since then, Spain has been a loyal and committed ally and partner, both in NATO and in the CSDP, where it is also an active participant, but more following the guidelines of Brussels than our own agenda, which is really to be part of Europe.

In this sense, as Emilio Lamo says, Spain is a deeply Europeanist country, not so much from a foreign policy or defense policy perspective, but more as a backbone of domestic policy. We do not want to go to Europe, but that Europe comes to us; we want to europeanize Spain and not really spanishize Europe.

### ***Keywords***

Madrid, Brussels, Isolationism, Strategic culture, Civil War, European Defense, Followers.

## 1. Introduction

In an attempt to understand how Spain acts in foreign policy, in security and defense policies, and essentially in the European sphere, it is necessary to take into account some of Spain's particular characteristics.

At first of all, geography, which conditions the axes of our foreign policy. Spain is part of Europe, and although located in a peripheral location, it is a bridge to Africa, and is open to the Atlantic, the United States (US) and Latin America (Lamo de Espinosa 2021: 311), all of which makes Spain a crossroads country. In this geographical framework, and in accordance with Bzrezinski<sup>1</sup> (1998: 48-56), Fojón and Baqués (2023: 26-32) consider that Spain would not be far from the standards for being a "geopolitical pivot". Although in the past it was a key strategic actor, it is no longer so, and in order to regain some of the pulse, the first step should be to clarify the national interest.

On the other hand, the last two centuries of history, marked mainly by internal political events and civil wars, have moulded a Spanish society distanced from security and defense issues, and a political class focused on domestic affairs and with little strategic culture. Spaniards have a marked lack of interest in foreign policy and international relations, and exhibit a certain isolationist, self-absorbed and even endogamic attitude (Lamo de Espinosa, 2021: 331), which, added to Spain's peripheral position in Western Europe, favours our country's geopolitical introspection (Jordán, 2023: 71).

However, authors such as Torreblanca (2010) argue that, since the 1980s, with the return of democracy, Spain has prioritised breaking out of its isolation, developing a foreign policy with a single, two-fold objective: the integration of Spain into Europe, and the integration of Europe itself. Within this great objective, we must include security and defense, where Spain has actively supported the development of the Common Security and Defense Policy<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Bzrezinski defines "geopolitical pivot" as those states that, due to their geographical position, are called upon to play an important role in the world, not in terms of their own interests, but in terms of the interests of third parties. On the other hand, he defines "geostrategic player" as those states with the will and capacity to exert power and influence beyond their borders, based on their national interests.

<sup>2</sup> The ESDP (European Security and Defense Policy), born in 1999, was renamed as CSDP (Common Security and Defense Policy) with the entry into force of the Lisbon

(CSDP), within the framework of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), especially through its participation in many of its initiatives, particularly in missions and operations.

In this regard, Muñiz (2023:89) states that the two characteristics that best define Spain's approach to the CSDP are loyalty and commitment, which are materialised in a very active participation, contributing personnel, assuming command responsibilities and contributing resources to EU missions and operations. However, Muñiz himself wonders about the reasons behind this participation, which are almost always unclear or non-existent, and considers that what is really lacking is a global strategy that justifies this commitment. It might seem that the Spanish relationship with the CSDP is mainly based on the pursuit of the "milieu goal"<sup>3</sup> of a stronger EU.

In the following pages, we will try to identify and analyse the reasons for this loyal and committed behaviour towards the CSDP, and the possible elements that may explain this engagement, approaching European security and defense mainly from the viewpoint of the Union, but also from the NATO perspective. To this end, in addition to the classic political factors, the aim is to analyse some other ones.

We have divided this work in two main parts; the first one, on which we start studying some historical factors that lead us to understand Spanish particular background, which leads us to the second element of our analysis, deeply linked with our history which is defense culture of our society. These two factors will let us understand in some way Spanish national strategic culture, which we will address the latest, analyzing the content and evolution of the most relevant national strategic documents published in recent years.

---

Treaty in 2009. Throughout the document, ESDP will be used until 2009 and CSDP from then on.

<sup>3</sup> The "milieu goals" could be translated as "goals of the environment" as opposed to the classical "goals of possession". It is a Wolfers' concept, which links realism with liberalism, with certain shades of institutionalism, according to which, the logic of maximising the state's own power at the expense of other states is one of the two *leit-motifs* that guide foreign policy behaviour. The other would be "goals of environment", which are defined as those that do not seek to increase the possessions of nations at the expense of others, but rather to shape conditions beyond their national borders. The EU embraces this idea, shying away from zero-sum games, from dominating or enclosing third parties, seeking more to redefine the international scene among all, with less coercive means.

In the second, more pragmatic part, we will address the Spanish contributions to CSDP, mainly in the framework of missions and operations, although a brief analysis will be also included on the outcomes of the Spanish presidencies of EU Council regarding CSDP, to end up with a brief look at Spain's contribution to the development of capabilities at the European level and at the defense industry level, as a key element in contributing to the consolidation of a capable, effective and efficient CSDP.

We will end the chapter with some general conclusions on what has been achieved so far, followed by some brief reflections on how Spain could improve its contribution to the CSDP, and to European security and defense.

## 2. Security and Defense Policy in Spain. A European vision understood from a domestic perspective

In May 1982, Spain, with its newfound democracy, joined NATO, which caused a strong social fracture that was not resolved until 1986, when an intense political debate, highly ideological but not very pragmatic, was brought to a close with a referendum. Thus, Javier Solana<sup>4</sup>, a minister in the first Socialist government that had won the October 1982 elections, and who, during the 1980-82 period, had led the Socialist campaign against NATO membership, changed his position towards a utilitarianism that framed NATO membership as a counterpart to a discourse focused on modernising the country, on "Europeanism", and on ending Spain's secular isolationism. In essence, as a convenient step towards joining the EU.

Being in NATO was to be interpreted within the framework of the overall project of Spain's incorporation into Europe, a key element of Spain's modernisation, and Solana himself wondered whether it was possible to be in the European Economic Community (EEC) but not in NATO (Muñoz, 2016: 19-49).

In 1986, Spain joined the European Communities and began to put an end to decades of isolation. It joined the European family of peoples, with a "Europeanism" that is indisputable, but also with its pacifism—inherited from the civil war—and even with a certain degree of "anti-Americanism" (Lamo de Espinosa,

---

<sup>4</sup> Solana was Secretary General of NATO (1995-1999) and High Representative for the CFSP (1999-2009).

2021: 309 and 355)<sup>5</sup> —inherited from Franco’s regime— which made the aforementioned entry into NATO, a condition for Spain’s full incorporation into the international order, a complex process (Lamo de Espinosa, 2021: 307).

A foreign policy consensus has been reached on what has come to be called “Euro-Atlanticism”; an unquestionable and explicit “Europeanism”, doubled by a firm, discreet, though sometimes shameful “Atlanticism” (Lamo de Espinosa, 2021: 308). Europe, and mainly the European Union (EU), is the priority in foreign policy, and it is already domestic policy. We are pro-European, but no longer so much as a foreign policy but more as a structuring element of domestic policy: we do not want to go to Europe, but for Europe to come to us: “we want to Europeanise Spain and not Spanishise Europe” (Lamo de Espinosa, 2021: 309).

This tendency, together with a public opinion that is not interested in, and is clearly distanced from security and defense issues, which is reflected in the political class itself, partly explains Spanish scant participation in the processes of building and defining European security and defense policies, where we opt more to assume as our own the strategic interests set by Brussels (which are defined by others), rather than to influence them from real Spanish national strategic interests, which we do not have defined clearly.

Ortega y Gasset’s statement<sup>6</sup>, “Europe is the solution to Spain’s problems” was obvious to the Spaniards of the time, regardless of their ideology. Europe was the model to follow, the goal, the desired and finally realised identity of Spaniards, to stop being different (Lamo de Espinosa, 2021: 309).

Fuente (2023) points out that, in those years, geopolitics aroused little interest in Spain, so that, in a favourable international context, Spain was able to relax its security and defense policy for

---

<sup>5</sup> Lamo de Espinosa considers that the relationship with the United States has always been viewed with suspicion, with a certain political anti-Americanism, possibly derived from the sum of several factors: the Spanish-American War of 1898, American support for Franco, and even imported from Latin American anti-Americanism. Anti-Americanism tends to be more virulent with Republican administrations than with Democratic ones.

<sup>6</sup> Ortega y Gasset was a Spanish philosopher and essayist with an important work of enormous influence on national and even European political thought during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. An advocate of a United States of Europe, he considered that Spain’s way out of its melancholy, self-absorption and decadence, derived from 1898 (loss of its last possessions, Cuba and the Philippines), was to integrate into Europe (which was the solution).

decades, in a scenario where there were practically no threats, the few risks could be easily managed, and the shortfalls in capabilities would be provided by others. The priority was integration into Europe, and with public opinion not very aware of security needs (but which were resolved in the framework of Euro-Atlantic security), the country opted for a low-profile strategy of joining the majority, which for years allowed it to opt for peace and leave the cannons to one side (Fuente, 2023), which is reflected in the low figures for defense spending during these decades.

## 2.1. A historical overview of defense and security in Spain

Going back in time, Jordi Marsal (2016) provides some interesting historical reflections that help us understand Spanish society's relationship with security and defense issues, and its foreign policy introspection.

He argues that Spain is a country where the perception of direct threat against the territory has been traditionally very weak. During the Middle Ages and the *Reconquista* (the struggle between Christians and Islamists), a "frontier spirit" was developing in Spain and, once this enterprise was over, new horizons were sought abroad, in the Mediterranean and, later, in America. During the Habsburg period (16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries), the possibility of a credible direct threat to the national territory was remote, and the conquest of America was a very different enterprise from the European wars of the time, although the decline of the Habsburgs led Spain to a defensive withdrawal and self-absorption, with internal conflicts taking centre stage (such as the separation from Portugal in 1640). Subsequently, the Spain of the Bourbons (18<sup>th</sup> century onwards) transformed the expansive imperial vision (Habsburg) into a defensive one, trying to preserve the Empire in America.

The Peninsular War (1808-1814), although primarily a struggle against the Napoleonic invader, also had elements of civil war (absolutists against the democratising revolution). It is the turning point where Spain's loss of prominence as an international global actor becomes apparent (Marsal, 2016). If, on the one hand, it was the last great war fought by Spain against an external enemy to defend its territory, it also meant the loss of most of its overseas Empire and its relevance in the international concert<sup>7</sup>.

---

<sup>7</sup> Spain, despite its past, was not a major player at the Congress of Vienna in 1815.

As a result, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the so-called *Espadones*<sup>8</sup> took centre stage, and the army became involved in civil conflicts (three Carlist Wars) in the absence of threats to the territory, while European armies continued to fight external enemies. There was a tendency to withdraw into ourselves, to become self-absorbed in our own problems, to gradually isolate ourselves from European dynamics, which became a trend until the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Foreign policy took a back seat to domestic issues.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the conquests in North Africa provoked pacifist and anti-militarist currents. The military became an instrument of internal public order. After the Second Republic (1931-36), civil war broke out (1936-39), leaving deep wounds and giving rise to a dictatorship under General Franco. Self-absorption, isolation and isolationism conditioned the world view, foreign policy, and defense policy of the new regime. The idea of a military power autonomous from civilian power was established (Marsal, 2016).

Two hundred years of civil wars, without external aggression to the territory, and with the military playing a leading role in domestic political affairs, have outlined a very particular culture and perception of defense matters in the Spanish population, at least quite different from that of our European neighbours.

## 2.2. "Security and Defense Culture" in Spain

Analysing the level of defense culture of the Spanish population, and Spain's own strategic culture (Marsal, 2016)<sup>9</sup>, should allow us to better understand our national security and defense posture, particularly in the CSDP framework.

We can state that there is little "defense culture" in Spain, mainly due to the fact that there is no perceived direct threat against the territory, to which we can add historical factors such as the

---

<sup>8</sup> "Espadones", which could be translated as "swordsmen", relates to high-ranking military officers who took political positions and made pronouncements.

<sup>9</sup> According to Marsal, the culture of security and defense is part of a country's political culture and is formed by individual and collective perceptions of how safe its society is, and of the risks and threats that may exist, as well as how to respond to them. As for *strategic culture*, it expresses, among other elements, preferences about the use of force, how to resolve conflicts, priority geopolitical areas for national interests, or the most appropriate alliances to defend them. The latter is considered to be a concept that is not unalterable, that evolves.

aforementioned two centuries, where the military component has been the protagonist in domestic politics, where the only wars in which Spain has participated have been civil wars, and where the military has exercised government tasks through dictatorships, which has led to complex relations between civilians and the military and in the population's own perceptions of the military (Marsal, 2016). In the following paragraphs, we will learn that national sociological studies conclude that defense matters are very much respected, but from a distance, they are neither of interest nor do they have the majority support of the population, all of which has implications for the political agenda, where, consequently, these matters do not have a high priority.

To mitigate this reality, in 2002, the Ministry of Defense launched a "Defense Culture Master Plan" with the idea of involving and bringing these issues closer to society. Despite having achieved some progress, research carried out since then shows that the level of defense culture among the Spanish population remains quite low (Marsal, 2016). In 2021, as a result of the most relevant strategic documents of the moment<sup>10</sup>, and with the idea of emphasising the more comprehensive and broader nature of the concept of security, a new a broader initiative, the "Integral Plan for National Security Culture", was launched, for which there are still no results (Doñate, 2021).

### 2.2.1. What do sociological studies say about Spanish defense culture?

In relation to what Spanish citizens think, the IEEA has carried out some research<sup>11</sup> on National Defense and the Armed Forces, analysing for years (every two years between 1997 and 2017) various sociological studies<sup>12</sup>. The main results and trends show a positive assessment of the Armed Forces, fairly stable over the series but, on the other hand, a low level of interest of Spanish society in matters related to the Armed Forces. However, there is majority support for their participation in international peace

---

<sup>10</sup> National Security Act of 2015, and the National Security Strategies of 2017 and 2021

<sup>11</sup> Available at: [https://www.ieea.es/Galerias/fichero/ESociologicos/2016/CIS\\_XI\\_Encuesta\\_Sep2015.pdf](https://www.ieea.es/Galerias/fichero/ESociologicos/2016/CIS_XI_Encuesta_Sep2015.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Conducted by the CIS (*Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas—Center for Sociological Research*) for many years (from 1997 to 2017) and subsequently by other pollsters.

and humanitarian missions, which improves the image of the Armed Forces, and the citizens themselves consider that this has the effect of increasing confidence in our country and our weight in international politics. In essence, they improve the country's image.

For many years, a majority of Spaniards considered defense spending to be excessive<sup>13</sup>, although they were aware that it was lower than in other neighbouring countries (almost half of those surveyed had no opinion on this aspect, which confirms the public's lack of concern about these issues). However, in recent years, and above all as a result of the war in Ukraine, Spaniards almost overwhelmingly (three out of four) support maintaining or increasing the military budget, while just over 10% are against it<sup>14</sup>.

In general, for many years, and even today, the existence of an external threat is hardly perceived, and only a small percentage<sup>15</sup> considers that some country could be a military threat to Spain (essentially Morocco or Arab countries), consolidating the idea that the area of greatest risk to our security is North Africa and the Sahel. Russia, as a result of the war in Ukraine and despite the geographical remoteness of the conflict, is currently beginning to cause serious concern among Spaniards and politicians.

A study (2022) by *Fundación Alternativas* (2022) largely confirms the above; how little interest the population has in security and defense issues. Terrorism is considered to be the main threat, and instability in North Africa and the Sahel are of greater concern than the power and influence of China, Russia or the US. However, in relation to defense capabilities and spending, there is a certain change of course: it is considered that Spain should strengthen its own resources, regardless of its defense alliances, even if this means higher spending.

In relation to alliances, the EU is seen as the most capable organisation for protecting citizens, above NATO. There is growing support for the creation of a common European brigade, and for

---

<sup>13</sup> This part of expenditure is politically biased, as 67% of those who define themselves as left-wing consider it high, while 40% of those who define themselves as right-wing consider it low.

<sup>14</sup> Survey conducted by NATO, the results of which are included in the NATO 2023 Secretary General's report, p. 51. Available at: [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/2024/3/pdf/sgar23-en.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2024/3/pdf/sgar23-en.pdf) (Accessed: March 18, 2024)

<sup>15</sup> Between 25% and 30% of respondents.

Spain to advocate a Europe of Defense. Aware of NATO's importance, it is believed that the EU should take a greater role and independence in security matters, and the idea of creating a unified Armed Forces of all EU member states has considerable support among the population.

The results of all the studies consulted are fairly homogeneous and quite stable over time, and confirm the biases mentioned above. Citizens respect the Armed Forces, but remain aloof, and have little interest in security and defense issues. There is support for missions abroad, especially humanitarian missions, which are seen as adding value to international policy. In terms of security and defense organisations, there is a clear preference for the EU (soft power) and the CSDP as a security provider, although aware of the need for NATO (hard power), in line with our traditional "Euro-Atlantism". In any case, greater sympathy for the European option.

In line with this feeling, it is relevant to highlight the results of a very recent (February 2024) survey<sup>16</sup> by *Bertelsmann Stiftung* where, to the question of whether the EU needed a common defense, a resounding majority favour a common EU Defense policy, with Spain in the lead (94%), out of the seven Member States surveyed (the others being Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Poland), backing the initiative, with the main parties of center-right and center-left being the most supportive (98%), meanwhile far right and far left were the least.

The lack of a clear perceived threat of possible aggression from abroad (in line with our history) is constant in all the studies, but if there were one, it is believed that it would most likely come from North Africa or the Sahel. It is worth noting that, in general, should this threat manifest itself, we do not have full confidence of being supported by either the EU or NATO, which is mentioned in the various strategic documents<sup>17</sup> as "non-shared threats", those that are perceived and will have to be confronted by Spain autonomously.

---

<sup>16</sup> Visit: <https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/publications/publication/did/the-war-and-the-vote> <https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/publications/publication/did/spain-the-war-and-the-vote>

<sup>17</sup> *Defense Policy Directive* (DPD) 2020. Available at: <https://www.defensa.gob.es/Galerias/defensadocs/directiva-politica-Defensa-2020.pdf>; or the *Armed Forces Employment Concept* (military strategy) itself, available at: [https://emad.defensa.gob.es/Galerias/emad/files/CEFAS\\_2021.pdf](https://emad.defensa.gob.es/Galerias/emad/files/CEFAS_2021.pdf)

The latter allows us to interpret Spanish participation in both CSDP and NATO, on the one hand, as a contribution to strengthening our security and overall defense capability (but not in all cases), while, on the other hand, we see it as a kind of fee to be paid for belonging to Europe, in order to break out of our historical Spanish isolationism and self-absorption (despite the lack of confidence in receiving support in all cases, especially in cases of “non-shared threat”).

### 2.3. Spain’s “Strategic Culture” in recent decades

Many authors consider that the Spanish strategic culture is scarce and, in any case, very insufficient. Baqués and Fojón (2023: 33) consider that Spain lacks a strategic mentality, which implies a lack of strategic culture. It is therefore common to follow events, which leads to a reactive attitude, and to admit that whatever partners and allies decide is good for Spain.

Jordán (2023: 74-78) considers that it is difficult to find a document that makes our Spanish strategic interests explicit. Although a distinctive feature of our foreign action is the commitment to *Europeanism*, present in most documents, the scant references to foreign action and defense can be interpreted as meaning that both policies are either not relevant or that we assume the postulates coming from Brussels, when we should be more proactive and defend our national interests. He describes the strategic culture as localist, which pays little attention to the variables inherent to foreign action, relegating defense to a secondary role, limited to military operations that do not involve the use of force (Jordán, 2023: 79-80).

It can be said that our self-absorption limits us from developing a solid strategic culture, which is also favoured by the lack of interest of citizens and the political class, despite Spain’s privileged geopolitical situation.

In any case, it is necessary to consider the so-called policy documents<sup>18</sup>, their content and their evolution over the last 25 years (since the birth of the CSDP), as primary sources for

---

<sup>18</sup> *Strategic level documents*. For this study, National Security Strategies, External Action Strategies, National Defense Directives, Strategic Defense Review (2003) and Defense White Paper (2000), Defense Policy Directives, and Concept of the Use of the Armed Forces (military strategy level) are mentioned.

understanding and interpreting Spain’s level of strategic culture. High-level political speeches are not considered because they have been scarce and, in general, of little relevance to the CSDP.

We assume the doctrinal hierarchy defended by Muñiz (2013: 91-101), where the National Security Strategy is at the highest level (Presidency of the Government); National Defense Directives, White Paper, and Strategic Defense Reviews are at a second level, where we also include the Foreign Action Strategy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and at a third level, we include Military Strategies, which we will barely mention. We should be aware that it is not without reason that authors such as Arteaga (2022) consider that there is a certain amount of regulatory chaos, and that the proliferation of strategies without ordering them hierarchically makes it difficult to align ends, ways and means, which are already poorly defined in the documents themselves (Arteaga, 2022), as explained in the following paragraphs.

In any case, we will address the evolution of these documents, not in hierarchical order, but with a certain disorder, seeking a balance between content, importance, and the time when they have been published.

The chronology of the various strategic documents over the last thirty years is detailed in Figure 1).

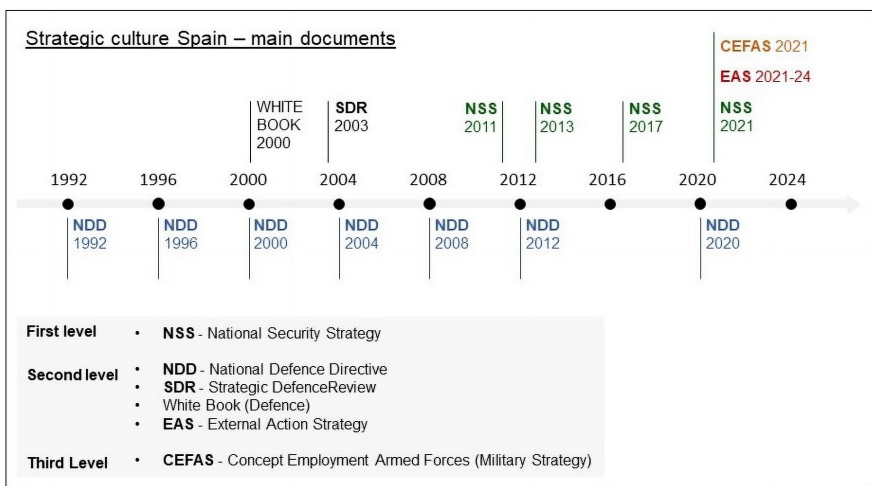


Figure 1. Spanish main National Strategic documents (1992-2023). Source: made by the autor

### 2.3.1. National Defense Directives<sup>19</sup> (NDD); from 1992 to 2020

The NDD is the document by which the government establishes the lines of action and objectives of the Ministry of Defense for each term. It is usually issued every four years (it has been done since 1980) at the beginning of the term and is the maximum defense planning document. After the Organic Law of National Defense<sup>20</sup>, it occupies the main place in defense policy.

It seems necessary to go back at least to the 90s, where the 1992 NDD, which highlights the change of strategic scenario resulting from the collapse of the USSR, already shows a strong "Europeanist" character, opening the door to contributing with special attention to the development of the European dimension of security and defense, although it also stresses the importance of the contribution to collective security and defense in the framework of NATO. The 1996 and 2000 Directives, under centre-right governments, maintain the same line of "Europeanism", although they have a somewhat stronger "Atlanticist" accent, which has been the trend in these governments. In any case, a certain consensus of the two major political parties for "Euro-atlantism" is maintained, with nuances.

The 2000 NDD is particularly relevant, as it recognises the growing importance of the EU in security and defense (following the birth of the ESDP in 1999) and highlights the objective of contributing to crisis management missions in international security and defense organisations<sup>21</sup>. It also sets the objective of drafting a "Strategic Defense Review" to integrate Spanish defense into the framework of shared security with our partners and allies, to determine the necessary military capabilities<sup>22</sup>, and to support the processes of establishing European political and military structures. Without losing Spanish "Atlanticism", there is a clear commitment to a European dimension in security and defense.

---

<sup>19</sup> Visit: <https://www.defensa.gob.es/defensa/politicadefensa/directivadefensa/>

<sup>20</sup> Available at: <https://www.defensa.gob.es/Galerias/defensadocs/LO-defensa-nacional-2005.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> In those years, and in the framework of the new NATO Strategic Concept adopted in 1999 at the Washington Summit, NATO does not really have deterrence and defense tasks, and focuses, to some extent in competition with the EU and the newly created ESDP, on crisis management tasks.

<sup>22</sup> In 1999, the Helsinki European Council established the CSDP Military *Headline Goals*.

In 2003, as a result of the Iraq War, a crack (but not a break) in the consensus on security and defense between political forces appeared. The NDD corresponding to 2004 and 2008, with centre-left governments, put more emphasis on "Europeanism", to the detriment of "Atlanticism". The first one<sup>23</sup> stresses terrorism as a transnational threat<sup>24</sup> and, in line with the European Security Strategy (ESS) approved a few months earlier, multilateralism centred on the United Nations is actively defended. Europe is highlighted as the main area of interest, a genuine ESDP is promoted, and support is declared for initiatives towards a common defense and European capabilities to intervene actively and autonomously. However, despite political tensions (particularly with the US following the withdrawal from Iraq), the reality is that this strong "Europeanism" still coexists with a strong transatlantic relationship, and it is argued that a strong Europe strengthens the relationship.

It should be noted that we "imported" some of the ideas contained in the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS) and made them our own (Spain did not yet have a National Security Strategy, for which we would have to wait until 2011), instead of influencing the content of European strategies from Madrid. The ESS, which is only about security and does not address defense, is well received by the national authorities, as it advocates a Europe of soft power, which is also well accepted by public opinion.

This influence, or a certain "followerism" towards security and defense policies coming from abroad, which has been picked up on by various authors (Fernandez, 2023: 122-126), denotes the aforementioned lack of a clear strategic culture, with a clear predisposition to "import" the strategic objectives of Brussels, instead of influencing them. This trend continued over the following years, in a scenario where Spain returned to its preference for domestic policy, as a result of the 2008 economic crisis and the increasingly polarised domestic political debate, leaving security and defense on the back burner. Brussels' decisions were assumed without contributing very actively to their design, although Spain

---

<sup>23</sup> It should be borne in mind that the 2004 DDN was published after the change of government, following the elections held three days after the 11M attacks in Madrid, and that this marked a major change of course in foreign policy, particularly in relations with the US, which went from solid support for the coalition in the Iraq War (2003), to withdrawing troops and orienting the national position towards a strong "Europeanism", at that time led by the Franco-German front.

<sup>24</sup> A few months earlier, the March 11 attacks in Madrid had killed almost 200 people.

continued to participate in missions and operations, and loyally fulfilled its commitments.

The 2008 NDD is a continuation of the previous one, and the most novel element is that it identifies the need to draw up a National Security Strategy (NSS)—which we did not yet have—, but which would not see the light of day until 2011.

In 2012, with a new centre-right government, a new National Defense Directive was approved, which, without abandoning a strong “Europeanism”, emphasised collective defense in the NATO framework, and stressed the need to prioritise military capabilities to confront and deter “non-shared threats”. It addressed the need to review the recently approved National Security Strategy (which would be done in 2013), and to address a new Strategic Defense Review (the first and only one had been released in 2003).

As a result of the growing internal political tension, a new NDD would not be approved until 2020 (skipping 2016), which confirms the limited importance of security and defense, not only for the population but also for the political class, once again “self-absorbed” in domestic affairs. In addition, the new Strategic Defense Review<sup>25</sup> was not finally addressed, despite the radical change in the strategic scenario, from the unipolar one at the beginning of the century, centred on multilateralism, to the current, more realistic one, with a return to competition amongst great powers.

The latest NDD, currently in force, was approved in 2020, once again with a left-wing government, which without forgetting NATO, delved into a profoundly *Europeanist* rhetoric, with mentions of the *EU Global Strategy* (2016), and of deepening the “Europe of Defense”<sup>26</sup> (concept not defined in the document), a process that will serve to complement NATO capabilities, which it

---

<sup>25</sup> It had been proposed in the 2012 NDD. In 2024, it has not yet been done and there are no plans to do so.

<sup>26</sup> The concept of Europe of Defense is an idea that is poorly explained at the national level and subject to diverse interpretations, which mainly includes the development of military capabilities and the European Defense industry (it would answer to the how) and which, together with “strategic autonomy”, generates a diffuse and ambiguous framework due to the very diverse interpretations of the countries. In this sense, it would be desirable to clearly define the position at the national level, and whether this “Europe of Defense” and “strategic autonomy” are essentially oriented towards crisis management and cooperative security tasks, as seems to be interpreted from the different national texts, or whether something more is sought, encompassing the defense of European territory itself, as other countries can defend.

is considered will be more solid with a more cohesive and capable European component. Among the lines of action identified, it is considered that the progress of the CSDP must be the main focus of our principles and values, which is why it is intended to maintain a high level of commitment and initiative in its various instruments<sup>27</sup>, while maintaining the commitment to solidarity contributions in the NATO framework.

The Alliance is essentially cited as “an important foundation of our collective defense”, and we talk mainly about Spain’s contribution to NATO, but not about what NATO can contribute to our national defense (it is about collectively defending our allies and them defending us), but the feeling that there is no external threat remains in the Spanish imaginary, and proof of this is that the reaction to an aggression against the population, territory or national interests is not clearly described in the DDN, nor in the ESN itself. We focus on preventing conflicts, containing threats, and on actions to contribute to peace (Pérez, 2020).

From the whole NDD series, which is, let us not forget, a Defense document, it can be concluded that there is a reasonably solid and pragmatic consensus around “Europeanism-Atlanticism”, an issue that is not high on the political agenda in any case. While centre-left governments put more emphasis on “Europeanism”, sometimes hiding “Atlanticism” without formally disavowing it, centre-right governments seek a more equitable balance, although both emphasise the need to seek complementarity between the EU and NATO on security and defense issues.

### 2.3.2. Defense White Paper (2000)

In 2000, Spain completed an exercise of reflection on defense and the Armed Forces in the form of a White Paper<sup>28</sup>, which analysed all the changes that had taken place in recent years and came up with recommendations on the future of defense policy and the Armed Forces. The second chapter, which emphasises the commitment to the Alliance’s new Strategic Concept (Washington, 1999) to the development of a European Defense Identity within NATO, and to a European Defense capability, should be high-

---

<sup>27</sup> CSDP missions and operations, PESCO, industrial and technological cooperation, and participation in financial instruments, among others.

<sup>28</sup> Available at: <https://www.defensa.gob.es/Galerias/defensadocs/libro-blanco-defensa-2000.pdf>

lighted. These were the times of President Aznar, with a newborn ESDP, where “Atlanticist-Europeanism” had a strong pro-American accent. This exercise has not been carried out again, nor is there a new White Paper planned.

### 2.3.3. National Security Strategies (NSS); from 2011 to 2021

Although it is the main and highest-level document at the national level, we analyse it in second place because it is not until 2011, with a significant delay in relation to our allies, and even eight years after the ESS itself, that Spain publishes its first NSS, which reaffirms this scarce national strategic culture.

The 2011 NSS<sup>29</sup> is the first document that addresses security and defense in a comprehensive manner, involving all state administrations, and not just the Ministry of Defense, as the DDNs do, and where the very title, “Everyone’s responsibility”, emphasises this commitment. The aim is for the strategy to achieve the political consensus that will facilitate responsible and active membership in the most important International Organisations (IOs) that have contributed to Spain’s security and defense (Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies, 2011).

This first national strategy takes the EU as a reference in terms of identity and influence, and is clearly based on the ESS, which could be considered its conceptual guide<sup>30</sup>, citing as principles of international action, in this order: the European framework, multilateralism, legitimacy and international legality, peacebuilding, protection of civilians and the responsibility to protect. The strategic interests<sup>31</sup> he cites are essentially the same as those identified in the European strategy itself, which confirms Madrid “following” Brussels.

---

<sup>29</sup> Visit: <https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/documents/9BED-CF7A-estrategiaespanola-deseguridad.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> The document is the result of a working group led by Javier Solana, who had just left his post as High Representative for the CFSP in 2009, and who was an active participant in the drafting of this first national strategy, which has a strong Europeanist accent, but within the framework of an Atlantic Europeanism, of a consensus that is trying to recover after a few years (since 2004) of a certain anti-Americanism.

<sup>31</sup> On page 14, it states: “We also have strategic interests, which concern the achievement of a peaceful and secure environment: the consolidation and proper functioning of the EU, the establishment of a stable and just international order of peace, security and respect for human rights, the preservation of freedom of trade and communications, and constructive relations with our neighbourhood”.

References to NATO and its new *Strategic Concept* (Lisbon, 2010), though few, are solid and constructive as well. It defines NATO as the largest intergovernmental defense alliance, central to the security of the Euro-Atlantic region, reaffirms its regional scope of action, and emphasises that its action outside traditional NATO boundaries should be exceptional (as opposed to the global character advocated by other allies).

Solana's influence can be interpreted in this search for a balance between a post-modern Europeanism<sup>32</sup> reflecting the work of Cooper (2003: 16-37), which is in the DNA of the ESS and where soft power prevails, but which, at the same time, seeks to be compatible and complementary with an "Atlanticism", more oriented towards modern states and realist theories, which is defended as necessary.

Although it has the virtue of being the first, the document has shortcomings, such as the absence of a definition of the very concept of national security, but above all, because it does not achieve the desired consensus, as it is revised in only two years (after the change of government at the end of 2011), when the normal timing would have been five years.

In May 2013, the second NSS was published<sup>33</sup>, a document that improved on the previous one and achieved somewhat more consensus, but still had notable shortcomings, such as the fact that it did not detail the national interests to be protected, which methodologically would be an essential element in any security strategy<sup>34</sup>.

---

<sup>32</sup> Robert Cooper defines the post-modern state as one that arises from the collapse of the modern state (which is built on the concept of the "nation-state", in which the state has an exclusive monopoly on the use of force) and, although it may seem paradoxical, it drifts towards a situation of greater order. He considers this to be the case of the European Union, which was born from the Treaty of Rome, where a new order was created from the failures of the previous one, based on the modern state. This new order is not based on the balance of power, nor does it emphasise sovereignty or the separation between internal affairs and international relations. It replaces balances of power based on force and mistrust with a security that is built on mutual trust, transparency and common morals and principles, which apply to both international relations and domestic affairs.

<sup>33</sup> Available at: [https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/OtrasPublicaciones/Nacional/Estrategia\\_Seguridad\\_Nacional\\_2013.pdf](https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/OtrasPublicaciones/Nacional/Estrategia_Seguridad_Nacional_2013.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> It is estimated that they were already included in the 2012 DDN, although this was only for Defense and not Security. García Malo de Molina (2014:221), in his doctoral thesis, *Comparativa entre la ESN 2011 y 2013, y las de nuestro entorno*, states that these are not clearly established, although it can be inferred that they include freedom, democracy and respect for the dignity of the human being.

Regarding the policy to be developed in relation to Europe, a continuity can be seen. The *post-modern* discourse of the ESS continues to take centre stage.

In December 2017<sup>35</sup>, the 2013 Strategy was revised for reasons of time (after nearly five years), due to the approval of the National Security Law in 2015, and above all, to the evolution and important changes in the national and international geopolitical panorama (Ballesteros, 2017). The new document stresses Spain's geostrategic position, to which it grants a European, Atlantic and Mediterranean identity in a globalised world, which it obliges Spain to be a relevant and reliable member of both NATO and the EU (Ballesteros, 2017). In the latter area, the participation in the six CSDP military operations at the moment<sup>36</sup> (which is valued as a greater effort than it should be) stands out and that, together with France, Germany and Italy, we are the main promoters of the Permanent Structure Cooperation<sup>37</sup> (PESCO), which marks the path towards greater integration of the CSDP, cooperating in the development of military capabilities at the European level.

The document makes a clear reference to the area of national defense, in "ensuring the defense of Spain's sovereignty and integrity and the protection of the population and territory against any conflict or threat from abroad", much more specifically than in previous strategies, and adds to the 2013 Strategy the idea of "taking an active role in relaunching the EU's CSDP and strengthening defense diplomacy, particularly with neighbouring countries".

Finally, in 2021, following a new change of government in 2018, a new NSS<sup>38</sup> was published, which is currently in force, relevant (Dacoba, 2022) in view of the speed of change on the international scene<sup>39</sup>. Although it continues the main lines of the pre-

---

<sup>35</sup> Available at: [https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/serviciosdeprensa/notasprensa/presidenciadelgobierno/Documents/2017-1824\\_Estrategia\\_de\\_Seguridad\\_Nacional\\_ESN\\_Estrategia\\_de\\_Seguridad\\_Nacional\\_ESN\\_doble\\_pag.pdf](https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/serviciosdeprensa/notasprensa/presidenciadelgobierno/Documents/2017-1824_Estrategia_de_Seguridad_Nacional_ESN_Estrategia_de_Seguridad_Nacional_ESN_doble_pag.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> It also makes a great effort in the NATO framework, as the 8<sup>th</sup> budget, it was (at that date) the 5<sup>th</sup> contributor to operations.

<sup>37</sup> Visit: <https://www.pesco.europa.eu/>

<sup>38</sup> Available at: <https://www.dsn.gob.es/es/documento/estrategia-seguridad-nacional-2021>

<sup>39</sup> Resurgent powers such as China and Russia, the role of the US in the world, the weakening of multilateralism, demographic prospects, the emergence of new non-state actors, as well as the Covid pandemic.

vious ones, it returns to that profoundly pro-European accent, highlighting Spain's role as an "important member" in the EU and a staunch defender of progress in European construction. Reinforced multilateralism and European strategic autonomy are promoted<sup>40</sup>, complemented by a greater NATO role.

In conclusion, it can be said that the NSSs, although they are late in coming and have only been published since 2011, are reference documents that set out objectives (albeit sometimes in a diffuse manner), areas of interest, and identify risks and threats to national security, although, in general, everything remains rather declarative. They have important shortcomings such as not clearly defining national strategic interests, not consistently articulating ends-ways-means (Jordan 2023: 77), and a tendency to use ideas and concepts imported from European strategies. Simón (2023) considers that Spain should convince itself that it can play a proactive role in the international arena and that it should overcome the normative and "followerist" reflex, "letting Europe do the thinking for Spain", which has often characterised us in foreign policy, and reconcile itself definitively with the concept of national interest.

In general, and regardless of the government, a balance is maintained between Europeanist security, which is more "soft power", and deterrence and defense that is more "military power" and "Atlanticist" in nature. In any case, there is a clear general preference for the former, more pronounced in centre-left governments, which, in line with what has been analysed in relation to national defense awareness, and despite the lack of closeness and interest between citizens and their Armed Forces (including their activities), the post-modern and friendlier discourse of the EU, of the CSDP, is more widely accepted by public opinion<sup>41</sup>,

---

<sup>40</sup> In this area of strategic autonomy, there are two lines of action: promoting decisive leadership in the formulation and development of the CSDP, and contributing to strengthening the EU's autonomous strategic capabilities, including the construction of the Europe of Defense and the development of industrial and technological capabilities.

<sup>41</sup> In a recent survey by the Alternativas Foundation on the culture of defense in Spain, and where it should be noted that six out of ten citizens still consider themselves to be little or not at all informed on defense and national security issues, 60% believe that ESP should continue to rely on NATO as a guarantor of security and defense, while 75% advocate for a more independent EU (not autonomous) in security matters. With regard to protecting citizens, 25% consider the EU to be the most capable institution, followed by NATO with 18%, and the Spanish state itself with 12.6%. Available at: <https://fundacionalternativas.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/1cad-52dd91f14a0e0e26bdd730cbab46db.pdf>

which very much welcomes participation in humanitarian and crisis management missions abroad.

Fernandez (2023: 123-124) reminds us that the difference in Spain's attitude towards the EU and NATO derives from domestic causes: while there has always been a political and social consensus towards the EU, NATO has generated dissent among the political class and is also more contested at the level of public opinion. As Mora (2015: 50-51) recalls, the "European magic" makes CSDP more palatable for Spain, where, for historical reasons, Spaniards have a convoluted relationship with military affairs, associated with Western security and defense, which is not recognised by an important part of civil society.

In this scenario, the CSDP is somewhat of an exception, as it comes with a "European flavour", which gives governments a margin of manoeuvre that hardly exists in any other defense framework and, as a consequence, results in a high level of CSDP ambition. Along the same lines, Arteaga (2015: 51-52) argues that Spain has no vocation as a global actor and that it delegates this role to the EU, particularly in crisis management, and stresses that the CSDP helps legitimise Spanish defense policy, a policy that, as we saw earlier, has little domestic support.

#### 2.3.4. Strategic Defense Review (SDR). A 2003 exercise that has not been continued

Although it was conducted more than twenty years ago, reference to the 2003 SDR is mandatory. As previously stated, the objective of the 2000 NDD was to conduct a *Strategic Defence Review* to integrate Spanish defense into the framework of shared security with our partners and allies, and to determine what military capabilities were needed. It should not be forgotten that the project came into being in 2003, in the early years of the ESDP, years of institutional optimism<sup>42</sup> in Brussels in security and defense policy, when the strategic environment tended towards unipolarity, multilateralism was the protagonist, and competition amongst great powers seemed something of the past. This

---

<sup>42</sup> The first years of the ESDP's construction were characterised by strong institutional optimism in a "favourable" strategic environment. The rupture in 2003, resulting from the Iraq War crisis, with Germany and France on the one hand, and the United Kingdom, Italy and Spain on the other, was "solved" in 2004 with the changes of government in France and Germany, while Spain, which changed its position as a result of the change of government, remained somewhat "isolated" in the new European order.

review exercise made it possible to address an organisational restructuring of the Armed Forces, seeking to make them more operational, more joint, and above all seeking interoperability with our partners and allies.

Although it can be considered a success, at least on a theoretical level, its implementation was not so successful, since, in addition to the lack of political consensus, materialised in the abrupt change of government in March 2004, the new one did not assume many of the document's objectives, there was the lack of a monitoring and evaluation process for the strategic planning process, the non-binding nature of the Review itself, and the lack of sufficient measures to achieve progress in the culture of Defense in Spanish civil society (Dulysh, 2016). In any case, although incomplete, it was an important step in the right direction.

The radical change that has taken place over the last twenty years in the strategic scenario, with a more unstable European environment, makes a new Strategic Defense Review highly recommendable, in order to update and adapt defense, and in particular the Armed Forces, to the new scenarios, and above all to the challenge Europe faces, with a NATO that could undergo changes, but which in any case calls for a stronger, more solid and more capable European Defense dimension, whether within NATO or not. While the 2012 NDD already identified and called for such a Review, the reality is that twelve years on, and more than twenty years since the first one, this exercise has still not been addressed, possibly for the aforementioned reasons of limited public interest, low priority on the domestic political agenda, and growing domestic political tension.

The relevance and clarity of this document is unquestionable, since, with the exception of the 2003 SDR, it is difficult to find an official document that makes explicit and prioritises Spain's strategic interests, which are usually given as implicit: the EAS (External Action Strategy) 2021-24 does not include an explicit list of objectives or interests, the 2021 NSS makes repeated mentions of interests, but without clearly detailing what they are, and the 2020 NDD itself establishes objectives, but without linking them to clear interests (Jordán 2023: 75-76).

### 2.3.5. External Action Strategy (EAS) for the 2021-2024 period

Outside the field of defense, mention should be made of the EASs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and, at least, a brief reference

to the recently approved 2021-2024 strategy, which allows us to observe again that Spain's pro-European and multilateral vocation continues, aspiring to a more relevant role on the international stage by projecting values<sup>43</sup> that characterise us, and will do so through external action centred on four guiding principles: a commitment to "more Europe", with a more integrated, autonomous and leading EU in the world; promoting "better multilateralism"; favouring "strategic bilateralism", more selective in the prioritisation of our bilateral relations, and deepening Spain's "commitment to solidarity", with a new vision of development cooperation<sup>44</sup>.

The document advocates a strategic autonomy for the EU, whose first dimension would be a "Europe of Defense", which is not defined, but which is oriented towards military capabilities and a broad and strengthened industrial base, without duplicities and in complementarity with NATO, in what is no less a declarative balancing act, more typical of Brussels than of the fourth country with the greatest theoretical weight in the Union itself.

Given that the Armed Forces are clearly an instrument of the State's Foreign Action, and the CSDP is part of the CFSP itself, there is hardly any mention of these extremes<sup>45</sup>, and the little that is included is eminently declarative, in line with European strategies and even with national security strategies, which are essentially committed to a multilateralism that reality shows to be increasingly less effective, and where some more realistic proposals could have a place. Along these lines, Fernandez (2023: 125) argues that Spain has opted for a constructivist approach, which we have called the "Europeanisation" of Spanish policy, according to which, national policy must adapt to European policy, which implies a certain renunciation of national interests in favour of European ones, based on a supposedly European identity.

### 3. Spain's contributions to CSDP

In the following paragraphs, we will deepen on the main contributions Spain provides to CSDP. The main line of action is our

---

<sup>43</sup> Freedom, peace, equality, solidarity, justice, diversity, democracy, sustainability and progress.

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.exteriores.gob.es/es/Comunicacion/Noticias/Documents/ESTRATEGIA%20ACCION%20EXTERIOR%20ESP.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> Essentially on page 71 of the document.

participation on CSDP missions and operations, mainly on the military ones, but some institutional developments and proposals essentially framed within the Spanish presidencies of the EU Council should also be pointed out, as well as the actions and participation on the different projects and initiatives to improve military capabilities, as well as defense industry framework, at EU level.

### 3.1. Missions and operations abroad

If one thing can be said about Spain, it is that we are a loyal and very active participant in CSDP missions and operations, particularly military ones, as Muñiz (2013: 89) points out. Although somewhat less well-known and publicised, this is in addition to a parallel and very notable participation in the NATO sphere as well.

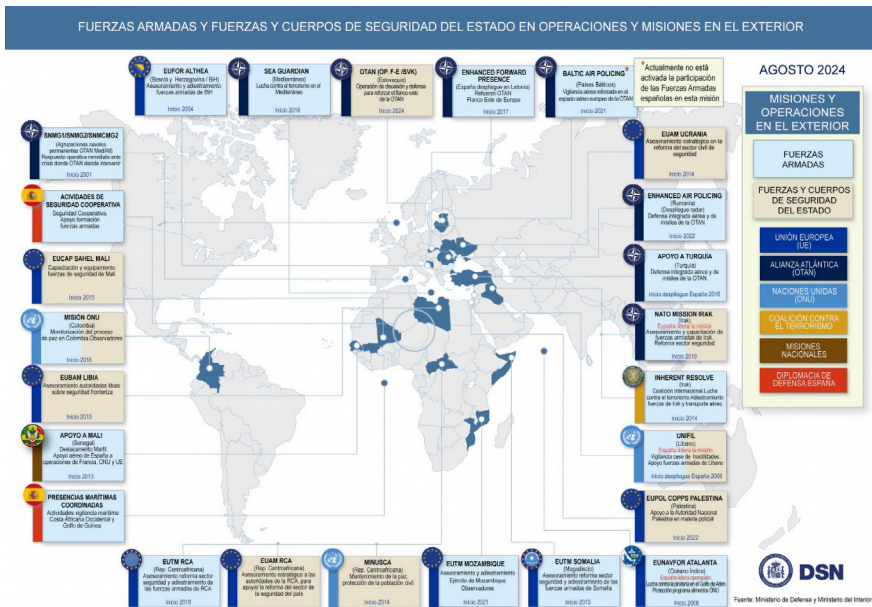


Figure 2. Armed Forces and State Security Forces and Corps in Operations and Missions Abroad. Source: Department of National Security. Available at: <https://www.dsn.gob.es/en/current-affairs/infographics> (accessed: August, 2024)

Figure 2 details Spain’s participation in the different EU CSDP missions, in NATO missions and in other missions of national interest, which gives figures for CSDP missions of around 550 deployed

military personnel (EUFOR ALTHEA, EUNAVFOR ATALANTA, EUTM MOZAMBIQUE, EUTM SOMALIA, EUTM RCA, EUTM MALI), which represents around 15% of the total, clearly above Spain's specific weight in the EU.

To this, we add the more than 700 troops in UN missions (UNIFIL and UN Mission Colombia), and more than 2200 in NATO operations (to which it should be added those corresponding to the temporary deployments of Air Police, and the contributions to the Standing Naval Forces and the SEA GUARDIAN operation).

As Jordán (2023: 86-89) reminds us, Spain is an active member and very committed to military operations, particularly in the CSDP framework (where it has participated in most of them), but these do not constitute a vector of economic expansion for Spain, unlike other neighbouring powers, which is in line with what Muñiz (2013: 90) indicates about the difficulty of finding the reasons that lead Spain to support certain missions.

In the case of EU civilian CSDP missions, which have a smaller number of troops, Spain also contributes<sup>46</sup> but, on average, with a much lower percentage than in the case of military missions.

As indicated in previous paragraphs, participation in missions and operations abroad, particularly in the CSDP framework, has considerable public support.

Following on from the sociological studies cited above, and in relation to military capabilities for CSDP operations, recent surveys indicate that 65% of the population would agree that Spain should join the European brigade<sup>47</sup> of 5000 troops under the common EU flag, an initiative linked to strategic autonomy, to which should be added that greater coordination between the US and greater EU autonomy from the US in matters of foreign and security policy is supported by almost 70% of the population (Fundación Alternativas, 2022).

These data are in line with those reflected in another recent survey<sup>48</sup> (2022), where Spain is among the countries that most support the creation of a European army, particularly after the

---

<sup>46</sup> Available at: [https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/pb\\_2011\\_csdp\\_compact\\_brief\\_1\\_civilian.pdf](https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/pb_2011_csdp_compact_brief_1_civilian.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> The so-called *Rapid Deployment Capacity*, which is detailed in the *Strategic Compass*

<sup>48</sup> Visit: <https://yougov.co.uk/international/articles/42386-support-eu-army-grows-across-europe-following-russia-n-invasion-of-Ukraine>

Russian invasion of Ukraine. In addition, the importance given to NATO in the defense of national territory has increased by more than 10 points, reflecting the fact that, as a result of the war in Ukraine, Spaniards are increasingly aware of this threat.

### 3.2. Institutional contributions. Spanish presidencies of EU Council

Another framework in which the EU Member States are trying to promote and give visibility to certain EU policies are the periods of EU Council presidencies. Since the creation of the ESDP in 1999, Spain has presided<sup>49</sup> over the Council three times (2002, 2010 and 2023), although its CSDP proposals and results have been rather limited.

During the 2002 presidency, the Spanish leadership, under the slogan "more Europe in the world", supported making Europe a global actor and strengthening transatlantic relations. Great attention was paid to making the civilian and military instruments of the ESDP available in 2003, and to including the fight against terrorism among the ESDP objectives, providing it with resources (which was included in the Declaration of the Seville European Council (2002)). The Presidency had a pro-European character (Powell, 2003), like previous presidencies, although the transatlantic link<sup>50</sup> also played a leading role. *François Vuillemin*<sup>51</sup> summed it up as a presidency that was "liberal in its economic dimension, resolutely Atlantic in its strategic dimension, but convinced of the advantages of a strong Europe in which Spain has its present and future": "Euro-Atlantism" in its purest form.

The 2010 presidency was marked by the economic crisis, and was one of institutional transition, influenced by the activation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) that, in some way, relegated the leading role of the rotating presidency in CSDP issues. Among the most relevant achievements<sup>52</sup>, we could mention:

---

<sup>49</sup> Spain has presided over the EU Council on five occasions, 1989, 1995, 2002, 2010 and 2023, but for ESDP/CSDP purposes we only address those after 1999; the last three.

<sup>50</sup> Available at: [https://repositori.uji.es/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10234/120983/Balance\\_Dastis\\_TDPaz\\_2002.pdf?Sequen ce=1&isAllowed=y](https://repositori.uji.es/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10234/120983/Balance_Dastis_TDPaz_2002.pdf?Sequen ce=1&isAllowed=y)

<sup>51</sup> Visit: <https://www.robert-schuman.eu/entretiens-d-europe/147-la-presidence-es-pagnole-de-l-union-europeenn e-ou-le-pragmatisme-iberique>

<sup>52</sup> Visit: [https://www.cvce.eu/obj/balance\\_de\\_la\\_cuarta\\_presidencia\\_espanola\\_del\\_consejo\\_de\\_la\\_union\\_euro pea\\_first\\_semester\\_2010-en-f58ec007-1299-4bb2-ac66-5aef84ebbc80.html](https://www.cvce.eu/obj/balance_de_la_cuarta_presidencia_espanola_del_consejo_de_la_union_euro pea_first_semester_2010-en-f58ec007-1299-4bb2-ac66-5aef84ebbc80.html)

strengthening the role of defense ministers, with the proposal of creating a new EU Council format for defense ministers only, which did not fully materialise due to opposition from foreign ministers (Fernández 2023: 131), opening the door to drawing up a European maritime security strategy and, in operations, the launch of the EUTM (*EU Training Mission*) Somalia operation.

Finally, the recently concluded Spanish presidency of 2023 has been a missed opportunity, in a European framework marked by security and defense, a consequence of the war in Ukraine, but where our internal political situation, a return to our ghosts, has not been conducive to addressing important issues in the CSDP. In fact, some of the first balances<sup>53</sup> on the results of the Presidency do not even mention the area of security and defense.

Although it had a low profile on security and defense, the hosting of the first LIVEX exercise of the *EU Rapid Deployment Capacity*<sup>54</sup> could be mentioned, where planning and management procedures were tested but, with a force of only 2800 troops and with only nine countries, of which Spain contributed a majority of the force. At the institutional level, there are no relevant results, which, to a certain extent, confirms that we are making progress with the development of the CSDP, especially in the operations part, but we still have little influence in determining its destiny and direction.

### 3.3. Defense industry and military capabilities. Spanish contribution towards a strong European cooperation

One of the pillars underpinning the development of the CSDP and of a "Europe of Defense", which has taken centre stage in recent years, is the development of military capabilities and the defense industry at the European level.

Over the last few decades, Spain has invested quite little in defense, with one of the lowest budgets in Europe in relation to GDP. Changes in the global security scenario and NATO commitments have forced a significant increase in recent years, of 26% in 2023, rising in a decade from 0.9% in 2014 to the current

---

<sup>53</sup> Available at: <https://media.realinstitutoelcano.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/ari4-2024-garcia-balance-de-la-quinta-presidencia-espanola-del-consejo-de-la-union-europea.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> Theoretically a rapid deployment force of 5000 troops as detailed in the "Strategic Compass".

1.24% according to NATO (2023: 159) data<sup>55</sup>, with the commitment to reach 2% of GDP by 2029.

In this new budgetary scenario, the latest strategic documents published<sup>56</sup> highlight the political commitment to make Spain (Arteaga, 2023) one of the leading countries in strengthening the *European Defense Technological and Industrial Base* (EDTIB).

The recently approved *Spanish Defense Industrial Strategy*<sup>57</sup> (2023) sets the primary objective of safeguarding national interests in strategic industrial and technological areas, increasing the level of national strategic autonomy, thus reducing dependence on third parties. Within this framework, emphasis is placed on strengthening both the EDTIB and the Defense Industrial and Technological Base (DITB) at national level, with the main objectives set out in the strategy being (in order of priority): to increase the level of national strategic autonomy and reduce dependence on third parties; to contribute to the development of the Europe of Defense, the CSDP and the EDTIB, and to consolidate a competitive and sustainable national DTIB. The underlying idea is to acquire the necessary capabilities through the national market and, when cooperation with third parties is necessary, to participate in European projects, bilateral or multilateral, that strengthen EDTIB. A position of support for new European instruments and initiatives and for strengthening EDTIB is maintained but, in this case, national interests are clear and, although the aim is to align them with European interests, the former prevail.

Within the framework of the Council's initiatives, Spain's active participation in PESCO stands out, as it is involved in 33 of the 72 current projects, of which it leads six<sup>58</sup>, although we should ask ourselves whether this is enough, as countries such as France, with more than fifteen; Italy and Germany, with more than ten, and even Greece, with seven, lead more projects. We also

---

<sup>55</sup> Data included in the NATO Secretary General's report NATO 2023, p. 159. Available at: [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/2024/3/pdf/sgar23-en.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2024/3/pdf/sgar23-en.pdf) (Accessed: March 18, 2024)

<sup>56</sup> In particular the 2020 NDD and 2021 NSS. One of the strategic guidelines included in the 2020 NDD calls for prioritising the "strengthening of the national defense industry and the development of a European Industrial and Technological Base", while the 2021 NSS establishes a strategic line to "develop the defense, security and space industrial sector".

<sup>57</sup> Visit: <https://publicaciones.defensa.gob.es/defence-industrial-strategy-2023.html>

<sup>58</sup> Available at: <https://www.pesco.europa.eu/> (accessed: February 22, 2024).

make active use of other initiatives<sup>59</sup> such as the EDF (European Defense Fund), led by the Commission, an instrument framed within the scope of European industrial policy, which seeks to encourage and support research and the development of collaborative projects between the Member States in the area of defense<sup>60</sup>, although always with the specific understanding of strategic autonomy (Fiott, 2023), which postulates that any EU defense effort strengthens NATO and the transatlantic relationship. Spain consistently maintains, also in this area, its traditional position of "Euro-Atlantism".

The new financial instruments have sparked a debate on the Commission's ambition to extend its regulatory power, to the detriment of the governments themselves, in policies that are closely linked to national interests (industrial, economic, technological and strategic autonomy), within the framework of an essentially intergovernmental policy (CSDP). Some Member States have shown their opposition to these moves by the Commission and, in the particular case of Spain, although it does not oppose them outright, as it considers that they respond to a context of urgency and that these instruments have allowed Spanish companies to be integrated into European consortia, it intends to facilitate the interaction of its national DITB with the European one, but without opening the door to the Commission extending its competences. Spain integrates these instruments into its national decision-making process and defends the complementarity between national and European Defense industrial policies. It supports the development of capabilities at the European level, strengthening the European industrial and technological base, working with the rest of the Member States and with the Commission itself, provided that national sovereignty in defense industrial matters is not compromised (Arteaga, 2023), and that the objectives set out in the Defense Industry Strategy (2023) are respected. The recently approved European Defense Industry Strategy<sup>61</sup> should complement national interests with European initiatives and under no circumstances subordinate them.

---

<sup>59</sup> The Commission has launched initiatives such as EDF (European Defense Funds), EDIRPA (European Defense Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement Act), EDIP (European Defense Industry Program) and ASAP (Act Support of Ammunition Production) to strengthen defense industry at European level.

<sup>60</sup> These funds fully support collaborative research and partially support collaborative capacity building projects.

<sup>61</sup> Available at: [https://commission.europa.eu/news/first-ever-european-defence-industrial-strategy-enhance-europes-readiness-and-security-2024-03-05\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/news/first-ever-european-defence-industrial-strategy-enhance-europes-readiness-and-security-2024-03-05_en)

#### 4. Conclusions and final summary

Historical, sociological and geographical factors have led Spain to perceive security and defense issues in a very particular way. Our geographical location in the southwesternmost end of Europe, somewhat removed from the continent, has traditionally given us a sense of security and the absence of threats to Spanish territory. In addition, over the last two centuries, since the Napoleonic invasion at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and due to causes such as the loss of the Empire, a process of isolation from the outside world began, a process of self-absorption, with internal conflicts and civil wars, in which the military also played an active and leading role in national political life, which has led to a distancing between the military and the civilian population. This has led to a lack of interest in foreign policy matters, in security and defense itself, which has resulted in a serious lack of strategic and defense culture of the population and the political elites themselves.

In the 1980s, with the return of democracy, Spain turned towards Europe and assumed as a requirement, as a quota for entry into the *European club*, its necessary integration into international security and defense organisations. Initially, and after an intense political debate, it joined NATO and, during the 1990s and 2000s, it intensely supported and actively participated at the operational level in the development of a European security and defense policy.

During these years, Spain has displayed a solid "Atlanticist Europeanism", with loyalty, support and commitment to the CSDP, with broad public support manifested, above all, in its very active participation in EU missions and operations, which has been compatible and complementary with an also important contribution to NATO, somewhat less visible and less supported by public opinion, but very relevant as well.

Despite the traditionally low percentage of defense spending in terms of GDP, in terms of participation, we are a quite committed country. Integration into the Alliance's military structure has allowed us to improve the capabilities of our Armed Forces, and the "Europeanism", that we enthusiastically embrace in our strategic documents give our armies a potential role as Spain's contribution to the process of European construction and the development of the CSDP (Jordán, 2023: 89).

The reality is that, without prejudice to Spanish loyal and solid "Atlanticism", which we sometimes hide for historical and ideological reasons; in security and defense matters, Spain seems to maintain a tendency in favour of "Europeanism" and multilateralism (Lasheras, 2015: 57), and, therefore, of the CSDP, although it might not be so real.

This "Europeanism" facilitates a certain rapprochement between the population and its Armed forces, and even the political class, which also shows enthusiastic bipartisan support for EU soft power, the CSDP, multilateralism in external action, and European "milieu goals". The problem is that not only are these principles supported in Brussels, which makes sense, but they are imported and incorporated as the main lines of Spanish strategic documents, to the detriment of national interests and our own strategic objectives that we are unable to define clearly, possibly as a result of these centuries of isolation and self-absorption, and of a low perception of threat. All of these explains, in some way, our poor national strategic culture.

In terms of military capabilities and defense industry, Spanish governments have always shown a bipartisan consensus on strengthening the CSDP role and capabilities, and on making it compatible with transatlantic cooperation in the NATO framework (Arteaga, 2017: 52), although, in this specific dimension, national interests in defense industry, well identified in the corresponding strategic documents, are very much taken into account.

It can be concluded that, in the area of security and defense, the objective mentioned by Torreblanca of "integrating Spain into Europe, and of integrating Europe itself" has been satisfactorily achieved, particularly in the first part: we are active and full members of the European security and defense club, in its two dimensions, EU and NATO, although we are somewhat more passive and "follow" Brussels Schuman in terms of Spanish contribution to European integration in this dimension.

In any case, and in spite of some scarce political declarations, usually very pro-European, the bipartisan consensus and the national position, continuously reflected in the various strategic documents, can be said to be well established in support of an EU oriented towards crisis management, with its various instruments, and simultaneously of an Alliance that deals with territorial defense and deterrence. In capability development, European initiatives are promoted to consolidate European capa-

bilities that minimise the current fragmentation and diversity and thus improve not only their effectiveness but also their efficiency, which would allow CSDP to have capabilities for crisis management, which, in turn, would be used by NATO in deterrence and defense.

We could state that, in line with what was agreed at the 1996 NATO Foreign Affairs ministers' meeting in Berlin, Spain, in a pragmatic approach, would support an idea similar to the one outlined with the ESDI (European Security and Defense Initiative, 1996); an autonomous European capability for crisis management outside the EU territory, within a NATO oriented towards the defense and deterrence of the Euro-Atlantic space.

Notwithstanding the above, the two words that perfectly sum up Spanish policy towards the CSDP are loyalty and commitment (Muñiz, 2013: 89).

## 5. Possible recommendations for future action

The war in Ukraine and the return to competition between great powers means that the CSDP, and of course NATO, are currently at the centre of the debate on the future of European security and defense, with a CSDP in the process of redefinition, still without a clear and agreed final objective.

At the national level, it is a debate that is beginning to interest and concern Spanish public opinion (despite the remoteness of Ukraine), which could be an opportunity to make "more Europe", more CSDP, by being more active at the institutional level, contributing our own proposals and initiatives to building more Europe.

In this sense, it would be necessary to develop a more solid national strategic culture, defining clear national interests and objectives in security and defense, with the idea of influencing the development of the CSDP at the institutional level in Brussels Schuman. This would require not only revising and giving greater content to the different strategic documents, making them less declarative and somewhat more executive, but also seeking ways to order them, prioritise them and coordinate their development<sup>62</sup>. This would make it possible to actively contribute to

---

<sup>62</sup> As said before, Muñiz (2013: 92) orders the strategic documents into three levels: a first level, "Security", which would include the National Security Strategies; a second level "Defense", which would include the DDN, the Strategic Reviews, and even the

redefining the CSDP on the basis of a more solid national posture, more aligned with national interests, possibly with a more realistic accent, leaving aside a European strategic autonomy, already almost discarded, as well as promoting security and defense in the Mediterranean area, and prioritising more active participation in PESCO projects of greater national interest (Fernandez, 2023: 131-132).

Within this necessary exercise of building and consolidating a solid national strategic culture, and in the current framework of redefining European security and defense, it would be highly advisable to address a new national Strategic Defense Review without much delay (pending since 2012 and more needed than ever), in order to adapt the current Armed Forces to national demands and to the foreseeable new situation of European security and defense, both in the CSDP framework and in the Alliance.

A proactive and strategic attitude is required to influence Brussels in favour of our national interests, as other countries do, especially at a time when the EU is redefining European Defense with relevant changes in areas such as strategic redefinition, financing, command structures, development of the Defense Industrial Base, and security and defense (Jordán 2023: 74-78). In the defense industry, it is foreseeable that Spain will continue to participate actively, as it is doing with the PESCO projects but, this time, the direction should be from Madrid to Brussels, with well-defined national interests in this area, unlike what it has done so far with the institutional and strategic dimension of the CSDP.

Although we are a loyal and committed partner and ally of European security and defense and, in particular, of the CSDP, we need to be more active and participatory in its institutional redesign, contributing with proposals that meet our national interests and contribute to define the European ones.

---

White Paper, and a third level 'Military', which would include the military strategies, or the current CEFAS (Concept of Employment of the Armed Forces), which could be a starting point. Possibly, the Department of National Security, within the framework of the Presidency of the Government, would be the most appropriate body to undertake this organisation, hierarchisation and coordination exercise, given its cross-cutting and inter-ministerial nature. This exercise should also take into account current legislation, such as the National Security Law, the Organic Law on National Defense and any others that might be relevant.

However, the internal political debate that has been monopolising the government's agenda for years, and which has returned us somewhat to our traditional self-absorption, does not allow us to be overly optimistic in the short term. It seems that our memories are, in some way, coming back.

Being a bit optimistic, in the medium term, the bipartisan consensus on security and defense allows us to harbour some hope that these reforms can be carried out, because, in the current uncertain, worrying and rapidly evolving geostrategic scenario, Brussels needs Spain's active contribution, and not simply participation in operations and "institutional follow-through" in the CSDP sphere.

## Bibliography

- Arteaga, F. (2022). Estrategia de Seguridad Nacional 2021: más discurso que novedades. *R.I. ELCANO*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/comentarios/estrategia-de-seguridad-nacional-2021-mas-discurso-que-novedades/>
- (2023). Spain's perception of the EU Defence Industrial "tool-box". *ARES (Armament Industry European Research Group)*. [Accessed: February 22, 2024]. Available at: <https://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/ARES-89-Comment.pdf>
- Arteaga, F., Fernández, N., Colom, G., Baqués, J., Fojón, E. et al. (2023). *La realidad geopolítica de España. Hacia el estatus de actor estratégico*. Ed.: Baqués J. & Fojón, E. Madrid, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED).
- Ballesteros, M. A. (2017). What's New in the 2017 National Security Strategy. *Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos (IEEE)*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: [https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs\\_analisis/2017/DIEEEA74-2017\\_Novedades\\_ESN2017\\_MABM.pdf](https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_analisis/2017/DIEEEA74-2017_Novedades_ESN2017_MABM.pdf)
- Baqués, J. (2023). *La construcción de una política exterior y de seguridad común en Europa. ¿Por qué es tan complicada?* Madrid, Catarata.
- Brzezinski, Z. (1998). *El gran tablero mundial. La supremacía estadounidense y sus imperativos geoestratégicos*. Barcelona, Paidós.
- Cooper, R. (2003). *The Breaking of Nations. Order and chaos in the 21st Century*. London, Atlantic Books.

- Dacoba, F. (2022). A New National Security Strategy for a New Reality. *Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos (IEEE)*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: [https://www.ieee.es/contenido/noticias/2022/02/DIEEEA08\\_2022\\_FRADAC\\_Estrategia.html](https://www.ieee.es/contenido/noticias/2022/02/DIEEEA08_2022_FRADAC_Estrategia.html)
- Doñate, M. (2021). Del Plan Director de Cultura de Defensa 2002 al Plan Integral de Cultura de Seguridad Nacional 2021, dos décadas transcurrentes. *Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos (IEEE)*. [Accessed: February 12, 2024]. Available at: [https://www.ieee.es/publicaciones-new/documentos-de-opinion/2021/DIEEEO131\\_2021\\_MARDON\\_Cultura.html](https://www.ieee.es/publicaciones-new/documentos-de-opinion/2021/DIEEEO131_2021_MARDON_Cultura.html)
- Dulysh, M. (2016). Does Spain Need a New Strategic Defence Review? *Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos (IEEE)*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.ieee.es/temas/seguridad-y-defensa/2016/DIEEEO106-2016.html>
- European Council. (2002). *Conclusions*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/20928/72638.pdf>
- Fiott, D. (2023). Investing and innovating? Spain and the European Defence Fund. *ELCANO*. [Accessed: February 22, 2024]. Available at: <https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/en/analyses/investing-and-innovating-spain-and-the-european-defence-fund/>
- Fojón, E. et al. (2015). Spain and the CSDP. In: Fiott, D. (ed.). *Common Security and Defence Policy: National Perspectives. Egmont Paper*. 79. Brussels, Egmont, pp. 49-53.
- Fuente, I. (2023). Why Spain needs to have its own geopolitical vision. *Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos (IEEE)*. [Accessed: February 11, 2024]. Available at: [https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs\\_analisis/2023/DIEEEA50\\_2023\\_IGNFUE\\_Vision\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_analisis/2023/DIEEEA50_2023_IGNFUE_Vision_ENG.pdf)
- Cultura de Defensa en España. (2022). *Fundación Alternativas*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://fundacionalternativas.org/publicaciones/que-amenazas-enfrenta-la-seguridad-de-espana-y-quien-la-protege/>
- García Malo de Molina, L. (2014), *Comparativa entre la ESN 2011 y 2013, y las de nuestro entorno*, p. 221. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: [http://e-spacio.uned.es/fez/eserv/tesisuned:IUGM-Jmgarcia/GARCIA\\_MALO\\_MOLINA\\_Jose\\_Tesis.pdf](http://e-spacio.uned.es/fez/eserv/tesisuned:IUGM-Jmgarcia/GARCIA_MALO_MOLINA_Jose_Tesis.pdf)
- Lamo de Espinosa, E. (2021). *Entre águilas y dragones. El declive de Occidente*. Barcelona, Espasa.

- Lasheras, B. (2015). The end of CSDP theology? Spain's shifting security policy and the CSDP. In: Fiott, D. *Common Security and Defence Policy: National Perspectives. Egmont Paper 79*. Brussels, Egmont, pp. 55-60.
- Marsal, J. (2016). Evolución histórica de la cultura de defensa en España. *Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos (IEEE)*. [Accessed: February 4, 2024]. Available at: [https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs\\_opinion/2016/DIEEEO26-2016](https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2016/DIEEEO26-2016)
- Muñiz, M. (2013). Spain. The Quixote of European Defence. In: Santopinto, F & Price, M *National Visions of EU Defence Policy*. Brussels, COST, GRIP & CEPS, pp. 89-110.
- Muñoz, J. (2016). El final de la utopía. Los intelectuales y el referéndum de la OTAN en 1986. *Ayer*, pp. 19-49. [Accessed: February 25, 2024]. Available at: [https://www.revistaayer.com/sites/default/files/articulos/103-1-ayer103\\_OTAN.pdf](https://www.revistaayer.com/sites/default/files/articulos/103-1-ayer103_OTAN.pdf)
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (1996). *Paragraph 5.1 of the Final Communiqué of the NATO Foreign Ministers Meeting*. In: European Security and Defence Initiative. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1996/p96-063e.htm>
- (2023). *NATO Secretary General's report*, p. 159. [Accessed: March 18, 2024]. Available at: [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/2024/3/pdf/sgar23-en.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2024/3/pdf/sgar23-en.pdf)
- Pérez, E. (2020). La Directiva de Defensa Nacional 2020 y los problemas que permanecen sin resolver. *Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos (IEEE)*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: [https://www.ieee.es/contenido/noticias/2020/07/DIEEEO102\\_2020ENRPER\\_DDN.html](https://www.ieee.es/contenido/noticias/2020/07/DIEEEO102_2020ENRPER_DDN.html)
- Powell, C. (2003). Un balance de la Presidencia Española de la Unión Europea de 2002. *Revista Estudios Políticos*. 119, pp. 535-561. ISSN: 0048-7694. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=496733>
- Simón, L. (2023). Punta de Lanza? Spain, Europe and the Global South. *Real Instituto El Cano*. [Accessed: 2024]. Available at: <https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/policy-paper/punta-de-lanza-espana-europa-y-la-batalla-por-el-sur-global/>
- Comparative analysis of the Spanish security strategy. Everyone's responsibility (2011). *Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies (IEEE)*. [Accessed: January 17, 2024]. Available at: [https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs\\_analisis/2011/DIEEEA17\\_2011EstrategiaEspanolaSeguridad.pdf](https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_analisis/2011/DIEEEA17_2011EstrategiaEspanolaSeguridad.pdf)

Torreblanca, J. I. (2010). A confused Spain in a disoriented Europe. *Política Exterior*. [Accessed: January 1, 2024]. Available at: <https://www.politicaexterior.com/articulo/una-espana-confusa-en-una-europa-desorientada/>

## Chapter seven

### **A regional pillar in a world of conflict: Sweden, the Nordic-Baltic area and European Defense**

*Magnus Christiansson*

#### **Abstract**

As shown by the developments after the full-scale Russian attack on Ukraine in 2022, the EU is a weak strategic entity. The chapter discusses this circumstance and elaborates on what could be done in defense cooperation among European states, primarily from a Swedish perspective as part of a Nordic-Baltic setting. As a consequence of shifting strategic patterns among its major powers, the international system is increasingly marked by power political entanglements. As shown in the chapter, the Nordic-Baltic region is increasingly an arena where these entanglements (mainly between Russia, China and Iran) are played out. This is currently a militarized period of history and there are several signs of a potential evolving hegemonic war. In the Nordic-Baltic region, as caused by this deteriorating security situation, several subregional initiatives for security and defense cooperation have developed over the last decade. All states in the region identify Russia as a central threat and, in Sweden, CHOD has made a public call for war preparation, and the defense budget has increased dramatically. Further, as the region is interlinked in a case of war, Article 5 is the main regional priority. Hence, to Sweden, the EU is secondary to NATO in the defense dimension.

Sweden and Finland, as allies in NATO, have created a new northern flank. This means that there is a Nordic dimension to defense planning (something between national plans and Article 5), and all countries in the region have defense cooperation agreements (DCA) with the U.S. Indeed, the new northern flank is integrated in defense via Washington rather than Brussels.

***Keywords***

Sweden, Nordic-Baltic region, Northern flank, Defense cooperation, DCA.

## 1. Europe once again

We define historical epochs in retrospect, and the 1989-2015 period (from the fall of the Berlin Wall to the Minsk II agreement) could be labelled "the European moment". The first stages of this epoch were experimental and aimed for a rapid institutionalization of the European project. To most of its members states, the EU was an opportunity. Eventually, a more mature phase emerged, influenced by a number of mistakes (e.g. the Balkans), but also as an ambition of trying to move beyond improvisation and incrementalism. This mature phase was evident from the launch of the "European Security Strategy" (European Union, 2003), various partnership "instruments" (2004-2009), up until the diplomatic compromise of the Minsk II-agreement (2015), which partly accepted a Russian ambition to scrap the fundamental principles of the European security system. However, the EU continued with the ambition of producing more and more pragmatic "strategies", all the way up to the "Strategic Compass" (European Union, 2022), which was launched on the verge of the Russian escalation in Ukraine.

Looking back, the remarkable aspect about the European moment is how little strategy (i.e. a rational connection between ends, ways and means) mattered. Further, the most comfortable world view for a non-strategic entity is that peace will last forever, because it means that there will *never be* a need for strategy. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Europe became a test laboratory, a beacon of light, a parody, as well as tragedy for security policies and military strategies. Europeans can be proud of many things, but leadership in the defense field is not one of those. Europe is a limited actor, for the simple reason that Europe operates reactively by design.

One of the most overlooked effects of February 24, 2022 is that it exposed this non-strategic character of the European project. Nowhere in the myriads of white papers, policies, strategies and instruments could Europe find guidance for how to deal with a great interstate war in Europe. Thus, what was designed as a "peace facility" (European Union, 2021) to prevent conflicts and build peace, was improvised for arms supply to a combatant. There was no guidance in the newly adopted "compass" of how to increase the production of artillery ammunition or how to design (and maintain) sixteen sanction packages. The European Defense industry has been boosted with a great many acronyms

but has failed miserably when put to the test after 2022. Further, the Commission has advocated a number of protectionist solutions in order to safeguard strategic EU interests but, in that process, the vision seems to be more and more of an ever *closing* Union. The trend of “re-nationalization” gives the slogan “united in diversity” a whole new connotation. Again, this development is not by design, but rather a reaction to a development in world affairs where the international system has transformed: from liberal ideas of common interests and plus-sum games to national interests and the necessity to play zero-sum games in the name of European security. Europe does not do strategy, and it has become more and more difficult to claim that Europe is a strategic project.

Instead, this is a world for realists. Thus, the obvious conclusion would be that NATO is, more than ever, the primary organization in Europe, but what happens if the “indispensable nation” gets distracted or fails to meet its commitments? In 2017, Chancellor Angela Merkel used self-therapy language when she claimed that Europe could no longer rely on the U.S. or the UK (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2017). Like a yo-yo, with President Macron’s moniker “strategic autonomy”, backed up by the verdict that NATO was “brain dead”, France returned to the default position of its national interest (The Economist, 2019). Although the idea that NATO would die under a Trump presidency turned out to be yet another false alarm about the imminent “death” of the Alliance, there is a fundamental point behind these warnings: what does Europe do if the Americans leave or hollow out NATO as organization?

This has started an animated debate *among* realists. Some argue that Europe, via its economic muscles, is more than capable of rebuilding its own military posture to deter Russia (Posen, 2020). Contrary to this, some scholars point to the key factors, like strategic coherence and key enablers, that make it impossible for Europe to shoulder the responsibilities of the U.S. (Meijer & Brooks, 2021). The very core of this debate concerns Europe’s ability to have escalation dominance, which includes crossing Rubicon in the nuclear dimension. Europe or a European country would have to acquire an arsenal of tactical warheads on systems with stealth and range to reach St Petersburg and Moscow, in order to deter Russia. This “euro-minimal” deterrence would be logical in the sense that it would have the similar mechanisms as the double-track policy of the 1980s (i.e. theater deterrence

based on countervalue targeting). However, the whole debate (like most nuclear debates) is strangely disconnected from the domestic political realities. France is the only country with conditions for "euro-minimal" deterrence, but its strategic outlook makes it impossible as leader for countries "East of Berlin". In fact, Poland is more likely to try to establish its own nuclear arsenal, rather than relying on the single decisions made by the French president. However, this speculative option will, even in the best of circumstances, take decades to implement. Further, although a national solution is more credible than the idea of a "rotating" European nuclear button, it is not an answer concerning the security for Europe as a continent.

Then, given these pressing circumstances, why is it so difficult for Europe to come together in times of great uncertainty? Why is it that Europeans, in the words of Sven Biscop, do not trust their own deterrent value unless an American is in charge? (Biscop, 2022: 4). This puzzle is related to Europe as collective actor.

In essence, Mancur Olson called it "the collective action problem" (Olson, 1965), and it has mostly been mirrored in a European debate about various forms of integration mechanisms, with the intention of establishing more or less smart selective incentives for increased cooperation among the Member States. In line with integration theory, this process requires trust, as well as shared interests. Who we are decides who we trust, and what we believe is worthy of protection and sacrifice. Thus, a European solution would require a shift in identity where "An die Freude" becomes just as important as national anthems, and that is not likely to happen. Ergo, there is simply no good short term answer to the current situation.

This is the problem I will deal with in this essay. The challenge is that there ought to be a European policy given these constraints. However, I will limit myself to a sub-regional perspective and primarily discuss a Swedish outlook as part of a Nordic-Baltic context, and its role in an emerging strategic situation on the European continent: what could be done, why should it be done, and who should do it? This means that the following is not a discussion about EU versus NATO, but rather an analysis about the drivers and blockers of Euro-Atlantic security.

I will continue this essay with a closer look at the systemic conditions, i.e. how a transformed global security order is of crucial

importance for Europe. After that, I introduce the Nordic-Baltic regional setting and its development over the last decade. In the following section, I analyze how the Nordic-Baltic region is connected with the development of the global security order. Finally, I turn to a discussion about the consequences of the Swedish and Finnish NATO memberships on what I call a new northern flank.

## 2. Europe and the global security order

One highly neglected aspect of current world affairs, partly because of the repeated use of the Cold War historical analogy, is *the power political entanglements* the world is now facing. The Cold War was a bipolar confrontation, but the emerging international system is multipolar, or rather a “uni-multipolarity” system, to use the phrase of Samuel Huntington (1999). This means that the U.S. is by far the largest military actor, but not everywhere and not all of the time. Russia, Japan, India, Iran, Brazil and South Africa are all regional powers with pre-eminence in their respective regions. China is a special regional power in that it has the potential to become a superpower. Huntington’s point is that “the settlement of key international issues requires actions by the single superpower but always with some combination of other major states; the single superpower can, however, veto action on key issues by combinations of other states” (Huntington, 1999: 36). Further, unlike the assumptions at the time that globalization, or, in Thomas Friedman’s (2025) words, that “the world is flat”, does not mean that increasing flows of goods, services, and people, will lead to world peace.

Instead, in any multipolar system, there is constant interaction between the major powers through which the strategic intentions and military credibility are tested and evaluated. This was the case during the Concert of Europe (following the Congress of Vienna) or the European system before WWI. On a regular basis, some power or powers explored opportunities of moving beyond its perceived limitation, after which there was confrontation or accommodation on part of the other powers.

While the historical analogies are helpful, they also reduce the complexities of the contemporary setting. Regional powers may circumvent perceived limitations and skillfully explore asymmetries, which could play out as various forms of “salami tactics” (i.e. slow and hardly noticeable steps forward in order to establish a new norm in international relations) rather than a sudden chal-

lence of what Thucydides first identified as a “hegemonic war” (Gilpin, 1988). The point is that salami tactics may be coordinated and synchronized between rivaling regional powers, to the detriment of U.S. interests. However, the historical analogy with WWII is also relevant, as this hegemonic war started as three disconnected imperialist projects (i.e. Nazi-Germany, Italy and Japan), which were only focused and coordinated into a global conflict in the late 1930s.

With this systemic background, we may notice the structural similarities of the Baltic Sea, the Levant/the Red Sea, and the South/East China Sea: each feature a regional power with interests in a location where the U.S. have extended security commitments. China is currently challenging U.S. treaty allies (especially the Philippines and Taiwan). Western intelligence points to 2027 as a crucial year for Chinese military threats against Taiwan, with a window of opportunity until 2030 (Studeman, 2024). Across the Middle East, Iran is using proxies (i.e. Hamas, Hezbollah, Houthis, and several groups in Iraq and Syria) to directly attack U.S. forces and key allies like Israel. In Europe, via its war of aggression in Ukraine, Russia puts pressure on U.S. force posture and defense budget. While the U.S. is holding the high cards, it will have to play together with regional powers in order to win the tricks. From the other perspective, while regional powers hold the lower cards, they may still block the U.S. from winning the game. As much as academics previously have been engaged in a debate about the “stability” or “instability” of multipolar systems, we are thus approaching a situation where we will have first-hand empirical experience on this issue.

This systemic perspective is also recognized in U.S. doctrine. Already in the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) 2014, the aim of the U.S. joint force was to “defeat a regional adversary in a large-scale multi-phased campaign and deny the objectives of—or impose unacceptable costs on—another aggressor in another region” (Department of Defense, 2014: 22). Put differently, the U.S. joint force is overstretched in a situation where regional powers strike simultaneously in the Baltic Sea, the Levant/the Red Sea and in the South/East China Sea. Perhaps even more striking was the National Security Strategy of 2017, which openly admitted that U.S. dominated globalization had failed, and the U.S. should rethink “policies based on the assumption that engagement with rivals and their inclusion in international institutions and global commerce would turn them into benign actors and

trustworthy partners. For the most part, this premise turned out to be false" (The White House, 2017: 3). The world was supposed to become more like the U.S., but instead the world is becoming more like China.

Thus, U.S. strategy has adjusted accordingly over the last decade. Beginning with the Obama administration, not only was there a slow shift away from Europe, but above all the fundamental idea behind U.S. strategy was to form a network with trusted states (partnerships) and leading private actors (technology). The driver behind the Defense Innovation Initiative, a.k.a. "third offset strategy" (Christiansson, 2018), is the conviction that it is necessary for the U.S. to get a technological edge if it is to have any chance of "sustaining U.S. global leadership", to quote the title of the Obama strategy (Department of Defense, 2012). Thus, the hegemon has a strategy to deal with a situation where it simultaneously has to face several regional powers or a peer competitor. The fact that the U.S. recognizes its military limits is indeed the sign that the U.S. admits that it is no longer a hegemon. "Global power political entanglements" is the concrete expression of what theorists sometimes call "complex interdependence", which should be interpreted as a situation of opaque risk calculation, as well as overt power politics, in a system where the U.S. is the leading power but unable to dictate an international order.

### **3. The regional context: from the Baltic Sea to the high North**

Over the past decade, the security situation in the Baltic Sea region has shifted significantly. During the 1990s, it was something of a backwater and a clear example of multi-level security governance. This meant that mainly regional specialists in security studies cared about the development in the region.

However, after the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the low-intensity conflict in the Donbass, it became a confrontation point between Russia and the West, and it started to attract high-level attention in Washington and Brussels. The Russian military exercise patterns and use of what Mark Galeotti calls "heavy metal diplomacy" (Galeotti, 2016), slowly established a new normality that is all too familiar in a historical context. The warning voices from capitals "East of Berlin", including Stockholm, Helsinki, Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius and Warsaw, gradually were taken seriously and gained influence in international fora.

Of course, analysts in the Nordic-Baltic region regarded the Putin regime as a major concern already before 2008, but, up until the Russian aggression in Crimea, this was considered “hysteria” and “unfair” description of Russia in democratic transition. There are plenty of policy makers in Europe that are eager to “understand” the Putin regime, which often means that they tend to trivialize the consequences of its actions. Europe continued the policy of (conditional) “partnership” with Russia, and this is why the shock waves after Crimea were so notable. If the security order in Europe rested on the Charter of Paris and the OSCE principles, it simply became impossible to comprehend why a country would return to 19<sup>th</sup> century imperial behavior.

The European response to Crimea, it must be remembered, was diversified. The EU rallied around sanctions, NATO invented a whole range of new acronyms and intensified relatively small-scale military exercises in Europe, including the Nordic-Baltic region. The strategy to defend Poland and the Baltic states started as a “tripwire” deterrence mechanism (multilateral battalions) and has gradually been reinforced to a somewhat more robust “fence” (multilateral brigades). Still, after a decade, there are several question marks concerning the ability to back up these units with follow-on forces and political will. This is crucial, as a tripwire force has no deterrent value without follow-on forces.

Participation and commitment to collective efforts have been shifting, not least concerning is the recurring urge to spend 2% of GDP on defense. Even more important is the tendency to maintain incomplete military organizations, to the point that most countries in the Euro-Atlantic setting resemble slices of Swiss cheese: full of capability shortfalls.

However, it is important to note that although southern Europe has had a lukewarm interest in the Russian challenge, there is a growing interest in the events taking place in the Nordic-Baltic region. To these countries, Russia might not be priority number one, but, after February 24, 2022, slowly, the illusions concerning the nature of the Putin regime are fading in more realist circles.

Thus, this is why the security discourse of the Nordic-Baltic region has slowly colonized the debate in the Western security system. Terms like “geopolitics”, “power politics” and “A2/AD” (anti-area/access denied) became agenda items, even if they, in Walter

Gallie's (1955) terms, remained "essentially contested concepts" in the debate. Analysts East of Berlin were asked to give lectures about Russian foreign policy aims, and they did not have to update their old power point presentations in any substantial way. An increasingly curious audience in southern and western Europe learned about the (so-called) "Gerasimov doctrine", about "troll factories" and nuclear rearmaments. Following President Obama's visit to Stockholm in 2012, prominent U.S. policy makers and military commanders started to make regular visits to the region, bilaterally, as well as in regional constellations like "NB8", "Nordic Security Dialogue", "Northern Group" and later "Joint Expeditionary Force" (JEF) (Richards, 2012). In the region, Sweden and Finland also developed a bilateral defense cooperation (FISE, MOD in Sweden and Finland, 2018).

In general, the message from the countries East of Berlin was that Europe is facing a vital, even existential challenge. In their reading, the aim of the Putin regime is to establish a new security order in Europe. The days when Moscow silently accepted its role as "partner" with the West is over. Russia has stepped out from the shadows and now claims its sphere of influence in Europe. Thus, the war in Ukraine is not about Ukraine but Europe. As the basis for analysis of Russian intentions tends to be Kremlology combined with historical experience of dealing with Russia, the motives for Putin's policy were and are contested among Europeans. One might distinguish a "foreign policy imperative" (i.e. Russian imperialism) and a "domestic imperative" (i.e. the need for external enemies to legitimize the regime), depending on what factors analysts emphasize.

However, regardless of motives, the urgency of this challenge is difficult to ignore. It is worth noting that, before February 24, 2022, assessments were that it was possible for Putin to engage in two major-size military operations, with 100-150 000 troops. When consulting intelligence and production of Russian capabilities, planners discover that Russia is currently gearing up for confrontation with the West. As estimated by a recent discussion paper, Russia has the capacity to train around 130 000 troops every six months (Estonian Ministry of Defense, 2023: 10). Russia is currently spending around 10 billion euros every month on the war in Ukraine, and the military budget is one third of its federal budget. Thus, the current assessment is that Russia, *ceteris paribus*, may be in a position to directly threaten the West in a timeframe anywhere between three years and a decade.

Although there are several options for the Putin regime in a future military confrontation with the West, the scenario that has been the baseline for NATO's regional planning is the land-grab *fait accompli* scenarios. This is either a limited attack against NATO (the "Hamburg grab" in Cold War planning vocabulary), after which Russia put their sub-strategic nuclear warheads on high alert, or a slippery-slope fragmentation of the Baltic states below the Article 5 threshold. The main assumption in these scenarios is that the Putin regime has figured out where his regional power may exploit asymmetries with Europe: in the words of Edward Lucas (2008), Russia may suffer more, it may directly engage in warfare, and it may systematically lie about almost everything.

In Western defense planning, the *problematique* of the Nordic-Baltic has shifted: during the Cold War, the fear was that the Russians would break out from the Baltic (to cut off Europe from U.S. support), today the problem is to gain access, and secure sea lines of communication in a time of crisis and war (Clark *et al.*, 2018). The high North is vital for Russia (e.g. the Northern Fleet and its nuclear ballistic missile submarines), any hostile operation in the Baltic has immediate consequences also for Finland, Sweden and Norway in the North. Once again, Sweden is under the missile trajectories of the major powers in international politics. Regardless of option for confrontation, NATO has realized the need for credible Western assets or, indeed, policy to stand up to Russia, but, as this shifting strategy obviously will take time to implement, the states in the region feel that winter is coming. Although no one may know the plans of the Kremlin, the mere risk that the Putin regime has the ability to short circuit Article 5 makes it an issue for policy planners.

As I will discuss below, these regional circumstances are now the number one priority in Stockholm among the military, the political decision-makers and the defense intelligentsia, and considerable attention is devoted to countermeasures. Indeed, Sweden and Finland's membership in NATO must be viewed in this context of an interlinked operational area in the Nordic-Baltic region. In that sense, Sweden defines its interests primarily in regional terms.

In January 2024, the Swedish CHOD Micael Bydén publicly warned about the risk of war with Russia in the coming years and urged every citizen to have a "mental preparation" for this (Nordstrom, 2024). Another important response is an increase of the defense budget from 12.3 billion euros in 2024 to 15.5 billion euros by 2030 (ca. 30% increase), but this is a long-term solution, and

the Swedish Armed Forces are still facing very serious shortcomings over the next few years (Försvarsmakten, 2023). (The military exercise "Aurora 2017" was the first serious signal that Sweden started to reestablish territorial defense, but the exercise also showed that the armed forces had several shortcomings). Another countermeasure are operational plans and exercises for Baltic Sea contingencies in which the island of Gotland is a key piece of terrain: the power controlling the island is also in a potential position of making an entry into the operational area very costly. The release of the National Security Strategy, summer 2024, was another important step. The EU is important for Sweden and there is a declared ambition to strengthen its security role, but it is emphasised that it should be done "in a way that favors the transatlantic link without curtailing the competence of its Member States" (Swedish Government 2024: 19). Notably, the integration into NATO structures is considered "the single most important and most urgent measure to strengthen Sweden's security." (Ibid. 18).

#### 4. The Nordic-Baltic region and the global security order

It is in this context that the Nordic-Baltic region is slowly starting to become interesting in a global security perspective. The region has been propelled from a local security concern with implications for the credibility of the *Pax Americana* to a nexus where the end of *Pax Americana* is visualized with all its dangerous implications.

Two examples that have not been widely discussed, in which the region has become part of power political entanglements, are the China-CEE cooperation and the military exercise "Joint Sea 2017" (Higgins, 2017). The former, also known as "16+1", is an international cooperative format between China and Central and Eastern European countries. One facet of this cooperation is an arena for technological and economic cooperation, based on win-win logic and comparative advantage for the involved. However, looming in the background are the strategic implications of the Chinese investments in Eastern Europe. The Chinese investment philosophy (a.k.a. "the New Silk Road"), clearly mirrored in its investment strategy in Africa, is heavy on grand-scale infrastructure assets. Some 15 billion dollars have been devoted to investments in Central and Eastern Europe. While such investments create interdependency, they are also part of a long-term Chinese attempt to dominate the Eurasian landmass economi-

cally. Notably, in 2022, all three Baltic states withdrew from the cooperation.

Over the last decade, there has been coordinated signaling between Moscow and Beijing. During the summer of 2017, China celebrated the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), and the importance of the armed forces as part of Chinese national mythology must be taken into consideration. The Communist party is the precondition for the Peoples Republic: Chairman Mao's military campaign was the campaign that created Communist China. The PLA, in turn, is the corpus for the emerging naval capabilities that is central to the continuous and considerable Chinese armament program. Thus, any signaling concerning the use of naval forces is significant for understanding how the Chinese leadership view the place of their country in the world. That is why the naval exercise "Joint Sea 2017" is of such strategic interest. It was a relatively short joint exercise between Russia and China in the Baltic Sea, but it was also one of the first instances where the Nordic-Baltic region became an arena for Chinese strategic signaling. Following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, it is a well-known fact that Russia has relied on economic and military support from China (e.g. satellite intelligence, components to combat aircraft, telecommunication, advanced industrial tools, and not least, semiconductors). This development has alarmed the U.S. to put a sanctions regime against Chinese banks in December 2023 (Talley & Cullison, 2023).

Recently, there are even stronger signals of power political entanglements. The date October 7, 2023 is strongly associated with the massacres by Hamas in Israel, but it was also on this date that a Chinese registered vessel in the Gulf of Finland (with Russian crew) destroyed the gas pipeline (Balticconnector) between Estonia and Finland (Chiappa *et al.*, 2023). During the same period, China made provocations against the Philippines, and President Biden publicly warned China not to attack the Philippines (Sevastopulo, 2023). During summer 2024, China and Russia have cooperated in bomber aircraft and naval military exercises near Alaska, Taiwan and Japan (Pierson 2024), and China even made a military exercise in Belarus (Reuters 2024a).

Iran is mass producing drones for the Russian aggression in Ukraine (Bertrand, 2023) and there are even accusations of Iranian supply of ballistic missiles to Russia (Norman *et al.* 2024). In fact, as two Swedish analysts noted, the war in Ukraine "gave Iran the perfect opportunity to make use of its

defense industry to aid Russia” (Holmquist & Khan, 2024: 4). Simultaneously, Russia is smuggling grain to Iran and, following the Russian export of Su-35 aircraft, the recent announcement of a Russo-Iranian defense cooperation treaty makes perfect sense (Reuters, 2024b). The Yemen-based Houthi-rebels (an Iranian proxy) recently made a deal about safe passage for Russian and Chinese ships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden (Dagher & Hatem, 2024). Further, Chinese and Iranian hackers have been reported to make cyberattacks on U.S. water systems (Satter, 2024).

The overall signal is that this is an ongoing conflict, and Beijing, Moscow, and Teheran make coordinated efforts in all possible domains against the U.S. The message from Beijing and Moscow to Washington is that any Baltic Sea contingency comes with a risk of Chinese involvement, and that such contingency may spill over to East Asia. In a reversed chain of events, any strategic move that commits U.S. forces in East Asia comes with the potential risk of Russian escalation in the Baltic Sea region.

Importantly, these power political entanglements are openly recognized by the main actors in the drama. In his recent visit to China, Tony Blinken openly warned China about further support to Russia’s aggression in Ukraine (Bicker & Drury, 2024). The “Asia coordinator” for the Biden administration, Kurt Campbell, recently stated that the U.S. will hold China accountable for any gains Russia could do on the frontline in Ukraine (Agence France-Presse, 2024). When Speaker of the House Mike Johnson announced the support package to Ukraine, he motivated it as part of an effort to counter China, Russia and Iran (Ferguson, 2024).

In turn, what are the implications of the power political entanglements for the Nordic-Baltic region? The most important aspects are the increased risks and uncertainties. The global security order is more of a “raw” anarchy and, in a “uni-multipolarity” system, it is wise not to ignore the connections between developments in the Nordic-Baltic region, the Middle East and East Asia. Global affairs become more unstable in situations where signaling has not established and confirmed “red lines”. As there are practically no institutionalized negotiations between the regional powers and the U.S., these “red lines” are worked out with “trial and error” methods. Thus, in the current situation, there is need for continuous comparative regional analysis to identify possible indicators of a hegemonic war.

Even if there is no hegemonic war, or rather that it remains a multidimensional low intensity conflict, it is important to remember the discussion in the beginning of this essay: the point that the international regimes created to stabilize Europe, the EU and NATO, are in a flux. Some actors (like Turkey and Hungary) are likely to hedge their bets. Following the previous discussion, Sweden is most likely to develop a deeper regional cooperation. The states of the Nordic-Baltic region are likely to continue to explore bilateral and minilateral defense cooperation in order to strengthen their defense. In the words of Tomas Valašek (2011; 9), these "islands of cooperation" are likely to become more and more important for security in Europe. Regional cooperation is a plus-sum game, which still holds a door open for a healthy recovery of the U.S. political system. They do not solve the fundamental problems facing Europe but reflect the interests of relatively small states in having complementary arenas for coordination with more substantial regional actors.

### 5. The regional factor: a new northern flank

Sweden and Finland are now members of NATO. The escalation in Ukraine on February 24, 2022 led to a historic and speedy membership process. To be clear, the Russian escalation did not alter the nature of the Putin regime, nor did it challenge the European security order (as concluded, it was effectively scrapped in 2015), but it did make the Swedish government realize that its security doctrine of "military non-alignment" was fundamentally untenable.

Finland moved first, and that was important, because, without the Finnish process, Sweden was unlikely to have joined (Savolainen, 2024). Following the Russian full scale invasion, Finnish public opinion shifted quickly in strong favor of NATO membership. Already on the same day of Russian escalation, then Finnish President Sauli Niinistö and then Prime Minister Sanna Marin held a joint press conference, as a symbolic start of what became a close coordination between president, government and parliament. When Niinistö visited President Biden on March 4, it was obvious that Finland had decided to apply for membership. This extraordinary haste had historical explanations, as Finland has several times moved quickly to renegotiate its dependence from Russia. This was the case in 1917-18, when Finland declared its sovereignty as soon as the Bolsheviks decided to allow national

liberation. In a similar way, as soon as the Soviet Empire broke up in 1992, Finland quickly renegotiated the Finno-Soviet Treaty of 1948, which had been a strait jacket during the Cold War era. Speed was also essential after February 24: the Russian bear was bogged down in Ukraine and, to use the metaphor of Niinistö, Finland could “jump down from the fence” and move for protection in the West.

However, in Stockholm, things moved more slowly. The initial reaction from the then Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson was to make sure that Sweden would not abandon military non-alignment, something that would “destabilize” northern Europe. The long-time identity and policy of the Social Democrats was to have good relations with NATO, but to pass on membership. However, the Finnish decision created a situational dynamic that was impossible to avoid even for the Social Democrats. Freedom of action, which is the ultimate point of non-alignment, becomes both meaningless and potentially dangerous in a situation where Norway, the Baltics and Finland would end up at war with Russia. It only takes a quick glance at the map to understand that NATO’s defense of these countries requires access to Swedish territory, in one form or another, something that Russia is also well aware of. The first thing that would happen in a Russian attack on Baltic states is likely to be a phone call from the U.S. to Sweden about safe passage over Swedish territory for units from NATO countries (Clark *et al.*, 2018: 76). In other words, a war in northern Europe immediately puts the great powers’ focus on Swedish territory, and what is the point of freedom of action if Sweden is automatically involved in the operations?

On the contrary, NATO membership can be seen as increased freedom of action, as it would give Sweden an influence over how the plan for northern Europe is designed. Further, the FISE cooperation, initiated gradually over the last decade, has reached a point of operational planning “beyond the state of peace” but, if Finland joined NATO alone, it would be impossible to continue it, as Finland would then be loyal to Article 5 planning first and foremost. These strategic reasons, together with the fact that Sweden had an upcoming national election in September 2022, decided the issue for the Swedish Prime Minister (Holmström, 2023: 611-626). This time, Finland helped Sweden to think, and gently pushed it into NATO. There is historic irony to this, as it was a single-handed Swedish decision to join the EU that gently pushed Finland to become member back in the 1990s. The entire

mechanism is similar to the well-known story about "The three little pigs": the lazy fifer pig (Sweden) was scared in 2014 and rushed over to the more prepared fiddler pig (Finland) for cooperation (FISE), but when the Big Bad Wolf eventually showed up (February 24, 2022), the fiddler pig quickly dragged the confused fifer pig to the robust house of the practical pig (NATO).

### 5.1. Closer Nordic cooperation

On April 27, 2022, the grand old man of Swedish political scientists, Olof Ruin, published a NATO-debate article in Swedish daily *Dagens Nyheter* and ended his argument with the following words: "Tage Erlander's [Swedish PM 1946-69] old idea of a common Nordic defense, which was made impossible by Finland's relations with the Soviet Union, would come to existence within the framework of NATO". These words not only contain the embryo of a new political mythology that the Social Democrats can use to justify why they have changed their position in the NATO debate, but they also provide guidance on how we should consider the consequences of a Swedish-Finnish membership in NATO for Swedish defense. In April 2024, the Nordic defense ministers published a joint debate article on their vision for a new era of deeper Nordic defense cooperation (Jonson *et al.*, 2024). There should be "capability to conduct and lead multinational joint operations through common operational planning, which is a complement to national planning and NATO planning" (*ibid.*) In fact, this idea constitutes a level of its own in the European deterrent against Russia, a Nordic defense concept. Further, this Nordic vision was also part of the recent report from the Swedish Defense Commission (in preparation for the coming Defense Bill) (Försvarsdepartementet, 2024: 241-242).

One of the most common observations in a discussion about Swedish membership is that its armed forces have had such close cooperation with NATO that it very easily will become part of the Alliance. Unlike Sweden's political-strategic level, the military-strategic level has simply merged with its transatlantic counterpart: through operations in the Balkans (SFOR, IFOR, KFOR), Afghanistan (ISAF), Libya ("Unified Protector"), and through continuous training activities such as "Trident Juncture", "Cold Response", "BALTOPS", and not least in terms of staff concepts such as the "Combined Joint Task Force" (CJTF). But this is only one side of things, if we consider the Nordic-Baltic region.

In the international debate, the Nordic countries are often seen as a collection of like-minded states: stable democracies in northern Europe with similar welfare state solutions. There has been a passport free zone since the 1950s and lively economic and cultural exchange over hundreds of years. The debate that dominated defense and security policy discussions until the invasion of Crimea in 2014 often highlighted the Nordic region as an exciting example of states that had good conditions for in-depth defense cooperation. The creation of an ambitious mechanism on paper such as the Nordic Defense Cooperation (NORDEFECO, and later NORDEFECO++) was perhaps a little too seductive and useful as a PR tool.

However, both during and after the Cold War, in the defense area, there was always great asymmetry among the Nordic countries (i.e. different security policy choices and different structures of the armed forces), which meant that there were clear limits to how deep the cooperation could go. An important aspect concerns the industrial base and the different conditions for defense innovation. Sweden stands out as a defense industry giant, but its Anglo-Saxon industry connections often make it reluctant to engage fully with the EU defense industrial initiatives. However, the main obstacle was that Sweden and Finland were outside of Article 5, and, further, that Norway is not a member of the EU.

In one stroke, the Swedish-Finnish NATO memberships have turned many of these asymmetries into *synergies* within the framework of joint defense planning. The defense area would then no longer differ from many other policy areas, where there is already a very deep and natural cooperation. The threat, the geographical circumstances and the dependence on the U.S. would unite the Nordic-Baltic countries, and the long historical tradition of Nordic co-operation would no longer be limited by different security policy choices. However, these circumstances further limit the impact of the EU as channel for defense efforts.

## 5.2. Strategic implications

Finally, I shortly discuss a few implications concerning a new northern flank, especially related to operational planning and nuclear issues. The most fundamental task for Sweden and Finland, as new members, is to learn how NATO works and take all formal demands on, most importantly, the defense budget seriously, and to basically understand NATO as entity. This is indeed a new per-

spective for both new countries, as focus on NATO as organization has never been a necessity for partner countries.

Furthermore, it means to have equal input not only in the exchange of information, but also in the design of common plans for the northern flank. Concepts such as "acting together with others" and "not being passive", which Sweden and Finland have had as doctrine for quite a few years, would get a concrete meaning. The Swedish armed forces HQ must simply have (mental) maps that cover the entire Nordic-Baltic area.

There are three major tasks to be balanced by the new members: contributions to enhanced forward presence (eFP), NATO's operational planning, and support to Ukraine in its defense against the Russian aggression. The latter is coordinated in the Ukraine Defense Contact Group (UDCG or the "Ramstein group"), but it is important to note that force generation and support for Ukraine will take place in various international formats (e.g. EU, NATO, NORDEFECO), as well as bilaterally. It is also important to keep in mind that increased defense spending is likely to result in a stronger European pillar of NATO, even if it is unlikely to be exploited as an exclusive European feature (Biscop, 2022).

Above all, becoming members of NATO means a mental shift to regard themselves as allies, and this is a process that needs careful attention in order to avoid any "post membership blues" of disappointments or disturbing dreams about the good old days of "neutrality". This mental shift is often officially underlined but, in the following, I get into what it entails, in more practical terms, for Sweden and Finland.

### 5.2.1. Operational perspectives

Any discussion about the Swedish and Finnish contribution on the northern flank should consider two fundamental issues: the distinction between Article 3 (resist armed attack) and Article 5 (restore and maintain security). This distinction is not always clear in the defense debates in the new member states, as there is often a fundamental misunderstanding that Article 3 means "national effort for resilience and territorial defense" and Article 5 means "collective defense". However, both articles are open for multilateral cooperation; in Article 3 as "individual and collective capacity" and in Article 5 as "individually and in concert" (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 1949). Indeed, these distinctions are reflected in NATO's strategy for the Nordic-Baltic

region after 2014, as deterrence (Article 3) and defense (Article 5) (Deterrence and Defense of the Euro-Atlantic Area, DDA). The alliance is *resisting* via enhanced forward presence (eFP) and provide resources for *restoring* security with high readiness forces (NATO New Force Model). In this way, the northern flank is part of a bigger concept of Euro-Atlantic security.

The first aspect concerns Nordic-Baltic solidarity and Forward Land Forces (FLF). There is already a Multinational Corps North East (MNC-NE), and Sweden has a natural place together with Denmark in this tripwire construction. Sweden has announced a reduced battalion for Latvia in 2025 (Försvarsdepartementet, 2024: 243-244). Further, there is the issue of Finland, and its long border with Russia. One idea is to form a Swedish-Norwegian-Finnish division sized battle group to be located in northern Finland as Forward Land Forces (FLF). A more ambitious option would be to form a "Multinational Corps High North" where the multilateral unit in Finland is organized together with U.S. marines units in Norway. In addition to this, Sweden and Denmark could also form a high readiness force in the Baltic, to be used in Article 5 as part of NATO's second echelon. Perhaps the most important task for Sweden and Denmark on the northern flank is to defend the Baltic approaches, as this is crucial for JFC-Brunnsum's regional plan for the defense of Poland and the Baltic States.

There are several key islands in the Baltic Sea (e.g. Åland, Gotland and Bornholm). These islands are central to the A2/AD challenge and Sweden has an important role in defending Gotland and contributing to the Article 5 plans for Åland. Sweden also provides strategic and operational depth for Finland. Finland is sensitive to Russian air strikes and Sweden can act as rear area (e.g. infrastructure) for allied air force. A more ambitious option is to form a ca. 250 aircraft strong "Nordic Air Force" (featuring a mix of F-35s, Hornets, F-16s and Gripen fighters). It would make sense to organize the Finnish, Polish, Swedish and Baltic navies as a combined task group. This would allow the Danish and German navies to focus on the Baltic approaches and the high North, together with the Norwegian and U.S. navies.

### 5.2.2. Bilateral defense agreements with the U.S.

All countries on the new northern flank (i.e. Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland) have Defense Cooperation Agreements (DCA) with the U.S. This means that they all will have the U.S.

prepositioning military equipment to be used in a time of crisis and war. In 2023, Norway (which has had prepositioned U.S. equipment since the Cold War) finished negotiations on another four U.S. bases (three air force and one naval station). In 2024, Sweden and Finland made framework agreements for possible bases on seventeen and fifteen locations respectively (Dalsjö, 2024).

The strategic implication is mainly twofold. Firstly, Sweden becomes a platform and a bridge between the Baltic Sea and the Arctic, and the Baltic approaches and Finland. In this, Sweden can play an important role as a staging (i.e. base and transit) area for primarily U.S. and possibly British units. Swedish territory will be crucial for Article 5 in Norway, Finland and the Baltic states. Secondly, the important role of DCAs for the northern flank is a clear indication of the importance of U.S. presence in Europe. It is a sign that the transatlantic link is more important than the link to Brussels. In turn, this may be very important for the command and control arrangements for the northern flank, as Sweden and Finland have expressed clear interest not to have any other arrangements than the "atlanticist" countries Denmark and Norway.

### 5.2.3. Nuclear issues

Considering the Russian deployment on the northern flank, all their echelons are on Russian territory, unlike in the Cold War, where there were several "satellite states" as buffers. According to Russian doctrine, there may be a nuclear response if there is a threat to national survival. The implication of this is that Article 5 involves nuclear risk taking *per se*. Importantly, this is why Sweden and Finland *have no alternative* but to engage with nuclear issues, even if there is little political appetite to do so.

As pointed out by Karl Sörenson, the crucial challenge is "immediate deterrence", i.e. a situation of rapid vertical escalation with a nuclear component (Sörenson, 2024). The crux is to reestablish *status quo* in a relationship with the Russians, not just induce continued *status quo*. According to NATO doctrine, the ambition is to have "integrated deterrence", i.e. a range of conventional, nuclear, civilian and military capabilities, in order to have a proper mix of capabilities to deal with all possible contingencies. It is notable that, in principle, civilian capabilities generated within an EU framework could be utilized.

There are several different policy implications for Sweden. One would be to go for a "Norwegian option", i.e. a declaration not to base nuclear weapons in peace, but participate in Nuclear Planning Group (NPG). A possible "Finnish option" would be to change legislation in order to participate in NPG and possibly the Conventional Support of Nuclear Weapons (CSNO). However, without nuclear presence in some form on the northern flank, it would be solely up to "other countries to solve an immediate deterrence situation with a nuclear element for the High North" (Sörenson, 2024: 9).

### 5.3. Concluding remarks

As previously concluded, there are several links between the Nordic-Baltic region and the indicators concerning a hegemonic war between regional powers of the international system and the U.S. This backdrop of insecurity and uncertainty is fundamental for any analysis about Sweden and European Defense. A step-by-step process has taken Sweden from neutrality to solidarity, and this shift is now guiding defense planning. Therefore, Swedish-Finnish memberships in NATO are a planning revolution in Swedish defense, in that the voice of neighboring countries will have an important role and influence. The EU is likely to have a limited role in defense issues, perhaps with the exception of support for Ukraine.

The issues discussed on the new northern flank constitutes an agenda within NATO, which is competing with many other agendas to win the favor of the Americans. The point is that Sweden has to consider the opinions of its regional allies, in order to safeguard its own interests in European security. How can conventional and nuclear deterrence be best strengthened? How should military staff capacity within NATO be strengthened and focused? What role should Britain and Germany play on the northern flank? In these and other issues, Sweden has every opportunity to be a constructive player.

## Bibliography

Bertrand, N. (2023). Iran helping Russia build drone stockpile that is expected to be 'orders of magnitude larger' than previous arsenal, US says. *CNN*.

- Bicker, L. & Drury, F. (2024). Blinken says China helping fuel Russian threat to Ukraine. *BBC*.
- Biscop, S. (2022). The New Force Model: NATO's European Army? *Egmont Policy Brief*, pp. 1-6.
- Chiappa, C. & Ngendakumana, P. E. (2023). 'Everything indicates' Chinese ship damaged Baltic pipeline on purpose, Finland says. *Politico*.
- China helping Moscow in biggest military expansion since Soviet times, US says. (2024). *AFP*.
- Christiansson, M. (2018). Defense planning beyond rationalism: the third offset strategy as a case of metagovernance. *Defence Studies*. 18(3), pp. 262-278.
- Clark, B. *et al.* (2018). Regaining the High Ground at Sea. Transforming the U.S. Navy's Carrier Air Wing for Great Power Competition. *CSBA*.
- Dagher, S. & Hatem, M. (2024). Yemen's Houthis Tell China, Russia Their Ships Won't Be Targeted. *Bloomberg*.
- Dalsjö, R. (2024). FOI Memo 8503: Build it and they will come? Det Svenska försvarssamarbetsavtalet med USA. *FOI*.
- Department of Defense. (2012). *Sustaining Global U.S. Leadership: Priorities for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Defense*.
- (2014). Quadrennial Defense Review 2014.
- Emmanuel Macron warns Europe: NATO is becoming brain-dead. (2019). *The Economist*.
- Estonian MoD. (2023). *Setting Transatlantic Defense up for Success: A Military Strategy for Ukraine's Victory and Russia's Defeat*.
- European Union. (2003). *European Security Strategy. A Secure Europe in Better World*. Brussels.
- (2021). *Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/509 of 22 March 2021 establishing a European Peace Facility and repealing Decision (CFSP) 2015/528*. Brussels.
- (2022). *A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence*. Brussels.
- Ferguson, N. (2024). The Second Cold War is Escalating Faster than the First. *Bloomberg*.
- Friedman, T. (2005). *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Försvarsdepartementet (2024). *Stärkt försvarsförmåga. Sverige som allierad Ds*.

- Försvarsmakten. (2023). *Utvecklingen av det militära försvaret 2025-2035*. FM2023-23092:14.
- Galeotti, M. (2016). Policy Brief: Heavy Metal Diplomacy: Russia's Political Use of its Military since 2014. *ECFR*.
- Gallie, W. B. (1955-1956). Essentially Contested Concepts. *Proceedings in Aristotelian Society*. 56, pp. 167-198.
- Gilpin, R. (1988). The Theory of Hegemonic War. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*. 18(4). pp. 591-613.
- Holmquist, E. & Khan, I. (2024). FOI Memo 8528: Isolated together. Russian-Iranian Military Cooperation. *FOI*.
- Holmström, M. (2023). Den dolda alliansen. Sveriges hemliga Nato-förbindelser. *Natur & Kultur*.
- Higgins, A. (2017). China and Russia Holds First Joint Naval Drill in the Baltic Sea. *New York Times*.
- Huntington, S. (1999). The Lonely Superpower. *Foreign Affairs*. 78(2), pp. 35-49.
- Jonson, P. (2024). Nu börjar en ny epok i vårt nordiska försvarssamarbete. *DN-debatt*.
- Lucas, E. (2008). *The New Cold War. Putin's Russia and the threat to the West*. Bloomsbury.
- Meijer, H. & Brooks, S. G. (2021). Illusions of Autonomy. Why Europe Cannot Provide for its Security If the United States Pulls Back. *International Security*. 45(4), pp. 7-43.
- Merkel. (2017). Europe can no longer rely on allies' after Trump and Brexit. *BBC*.
- MOD in Sweden and Finland. (2018). *Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Finland and the Government of the Kingdom of Sweden on Defence Cooperation*.
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization. (1949). *The North Atlantic Treaty*.
- Nordstrom, L. (2024). Sweden's call for population to prepare for war sparks panic and criticism. *France 24*.
- Olson, M. (1965). *The Collective Action Problem: Public goods and the Theory of Groups*. Harvard University Press.
- Pierson, D. (2024). "Why China's and Russia's Militaries Are Training Together" *The New York Times* July 13.
- Posen, B. R. (2020). Europe Can Defend Itself. *Survival*. 62(6), pp. 7-34.

- Reuters (2024b). "Putin and Iran's Raisi to sign new interstate treaty soon" January 17.
- Reuters (2024a). "China, Belarus start joint military drills near Polish border" July 9.
- Ruin, O. (2022). Sverige och Finland måste fatta samma Nato-beslut. *Dagens Nyheter*.
- Satter, R. (2024). US warns hackers are carrying out attacks on water systems. *Reuters*.
- Savolainen, A. (2024). Mechanisms of threat: How Finland and Sweden abandoned non-alignment. *Comparative Strategy*. 43(2), pp. 87-103.
- Sevastopulo, D. (2023). Joe Biden warns China not to attack the Philippines. *Financial Times*.
- Studeman, M. (2024). Commentary: China is betting down for the gathering storm over Taiwan. *War on the Rocks*.
- Sörenson, K. (2024). Tailoring Deterrence for the High North. Nuclear Consequences of Sweden's Accession to NATO. *IFRI Memos*.
- Swedish Government (2024). *National Security Strategy*.
- Talley, I. & Cullison, A. (2023). U.S. Takes Aim at Chinese Banks Aiding Russian War Effort. *Wall Street Journal*.
- The White House. (2017). *U.S. National Security Strategy*. Washington.
- Valašek, T. (2011). Surviving Austerity. The case for a new approach to EU military cooperation. *Centre for European Reform*.



## CSDP – List of abbreviations

A2/AD	Anti-Area /Access Denied
ARF	Allied Response Forces
ASAP	Act in Support of Ammunition Production
AUKUS	Australia, United Kingdom and United States
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
BG (EUBG)	Battle Group (EU Battle Group)
CAMM	Common Anti-air Modular Missile
CARD	Coordinated Annual Review on Defense
CAT B	Category B (projects)
CDP	Capability Development Plan
CDM	Capability Development Mechanism
CDU	Christian Democratic Union
CFSP (PESC)	Common Foreign Security Policy
CHOD	Chief of Defense
CJTF	Combined Joint Task Force
CMC	Crisis Management Concept

CONOPS	Concept of Operations
COREPER	Committee of Permanent Representatives of the Governments of the Member States
CPCC	Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
CSDP (PCSD)	Common Security and Defense Policy
CSNO	Conventional Support of Nuclear Weapons
D3SOE	Denied, Degraded and Disrupted Space Operational Environment
DCA	Defense Cooperation Agreement
DGA	Délégation Générale pour l'Armement
EAS	External Action Strategy
EATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDA	European Defense Agency
EDC	European Defense Community
EDAP	European Defense Action Plan
EDF	European Development Fund
EDIDP	European Defense Industrial Development Programme
EDIRPA	European Defense Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement Act
EDTIB	European Defense Technological and Industrial Base
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEC (MEC)	European Economic Community
EES	European Security Strategy
EFP	Enhance Forward Presence
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EI2	European Intervention Initiative
EP	European Parliament
EPC	European Political Community

EPP	European People’s Party
EPF	European Peace Facility
ESA	European Space Agency
ESDC	European Security and Defense College
ESDI	European Security and Defense Identity (NATO)
ESDP	European Security and Defense Policy
ESN (NSS)	National Security Strategy
ESS	European Security Strategy
ESSI	European Sky Shield Initiative
EUBAM	EU Border Assistance Mission
EUCAP	European Union Capacity Building Mission
EU	European Union
EUFOR	EU Force
EUGS	EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy
EUMAM	European Union Military Advisory Mission
EUMC	EU Military Committee
EUMM	EU Monitoring Mission
EU MS	EU Member State
EUMAM	EU Military Assistance Mission
EUMS	EU Military Staff
EUNAVFOR	EU Naval Force
EUPOL	EU Police Mission
EUSC	EU Strategic Compass
EUTM	EU Training Mission
FAC	Foreign Affairs Council
FINNIDA	Finish International Development Agency
FCAS	Future Combat Air System
GCAP	Global Combat Air Program
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEO	Geosynchronous Earth Orbit
HG	Headline Goal

HR	High Representative (for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy)
HTF	Headline Goal Task Force
IA	Integrated Approach
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies
ISR	Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance
JEF	Joint Expeditionary Force
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
MCGS	Main Ground Combat System
MENA	Middle East and Northern Africa
MEO	Medium Earth Orbit
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MPCC	Military Planning and Conducting Capability
MQ	Mission Headquarters
MS	Member States
NACC	North Atlantic Cooperation Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NDD	National Defense Directives
NDPP	NATO Defense Planning Process
NIS	Network and Information Systems
NORDEFECO	Nordic Defense Cooperation
NPG	Nuclear Planning Group (NATO)
NRF	NATO Response Force
NSR	National Strategic Review
NSS (ESN)	National Security Strategy
OHQ	Operational Headquarter
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PESCO	Permanent Structured Cooperation
PfP	Partnership for Peace Program (NATO)

PLA	People´s Liberation Army (China)
PNT	Position, Navigating and Timing
PSC	Political and Security Committee
QMV	Qualified Majority Voting
RDC	Rapid Deployment Capability
R&D	Research & Development
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Command EUROpe
SATCOM	Satellite Communications
SDR	Strategic Defense Review
SMTC	Special Forces Medical Training Center
SNU	Service National Universel
SPP	State Partnership Program
TCN	Troop Contributing Nation
TEU	Treaty on European Union
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UDCG	Ukraine Defense Contact Group
UNCTAD	UN Conference on Trade and Development
UNEF	United Nations Emergency Force
UNTSO	United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation
UK	United Kingdom
US/USA	United States / of America
USEUCOM	United States European Command



## Biography of the participants

---

### NATIVIDAD FERNANDEZ SOLA

Professor of International Law and International Relations at University of Zaragoza, Jean Monnet professor at this University. Diplome High Level Course at ESDC (Brussels). She was professor at the Université de Toulouse, at the Higher School of Economics in Moscow, and *Prince of Asturias* Chair at Georgetown University (Washington DC). He has also taught at various European and Ibero-American universities. She was Coordinator at Security and Strategic Issues at the SEGENPOL (Spanish Ministry of Defence) for two years (2009-2011). Main research and publications on Spanish Foreign and Security Policy, EU Foreign and Security Policy

### SVEN BISCOP

Prof. Dr Sven Biscop lectures at Ghent University and directs the Europe in the World Programme at the Egmont – Royal Institute for International Relations in Brussels. He is a member of the Royal Academy for Overseas Sciences of Belgium and an Honorary Fellow of the European Security and Defence College (ESDC). He has been honoured with the cross of Commander in the Order of the Crown of the Kingdom of Belgium.

### MARJORIE VANBAELINGHEM

Dr Marjorie Vanbaelinghem, a French diplomat and scholar, is an alumna of the Ecole Normale Supérieure (1998-2003) and the Ecole Nationale d'Administration (2010-2012). She taught at several universities, in France and Great Britain, and currently lectures at Sciences Po Paris' School of International Affairs. She started her career in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2009 as desk officer for arms control and OSCE military dimension, and then took charge of the dossier of military operations in the Middle East and Afghanistan. She served on the French diplomatic network in Tokyo, London, Madrid, and as consul general in India. She was also director of the Institute for Strategic Research of the French Ministry of Armed Forces.

### TUOMO MELAUO

Tuomo Melasuo is Professor Emeritus in TAPRI, Tampere University, and Docent in Political History, University of Turku. He studied contemporary history and political science in Finland and in France.

Professor Melasuo is specialized on North African and the Mediterranean world, especially on Algerian colonial history. He has worked on other Maghrebin countries, on political culture in Muslim societies, and on the history of colonialism. Tuomo Melasuo has been designated «Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques».

### KARL-HEINZ KAMP

Karl-Heinz Kamp has been Head of the Security Policy Branch of the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation in Bonn, Research Director at the NATO Defense College in Rome, President of the German Federal Academy for Security Policy in Berlin and Special Envoy in the German Ministry of Defence. Today, he is a lecturer at the University Roma Tre in Rome and Associate Fellow of the German Council on Foreign Relations in Berlin.

### ALBERTO PAGANI

Alberto Pagani is a Professor and Advisor in the field of security, he was a Member of Parliament from 2013 to 2022, first in the

Transport and Telecommunications Committee, then head of the PD group in the Defence Committee and delegate to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. He holds a degree in Political Science from the University of Bologna, an IASD course at the Centre for Advanced Defence Studies, a Master's degree in Strategy and Global Security at the SUISS in Turin, a course on civilian aspects of crisis management at the European Security and Defence College, and an advanced training course in Intelligence and National Security at the University of Florence and DIS. He has been a public administrator and political executive, has taught at the Faculty of Sociology of the University of Urbino and lectured for UNICAL, SIOI, LUMSA, LINK Campus University, Capri Campus, 24ORE Business School Master, and for Intelligence Analysts of the Information and Security Department of the Italian Armed Forces. He has also published several publications on intelligence, geopolitics, national security and terrorism.

#### **AGNIESZKA BIENCZYK-MISSALA**

Prof. Agnieszka Bieńczyk- Missala is professor at the Faculty of Political Science and International Studies of the University of Warsaw; a participant in the scientific projects 'Russia's Wars' and 'Western Wars' funded by the National Science Centre (2020–2024, 2013-2017); a participant in the European Network on Humanitarian Assistance (NOHA); Deputy Director for Research and International Cooperation at the Institute of International Relations, University of Warsaw (2008– 2012); an analyst at the Polish Institute of International Affairs (2006– 2008); scholarship recipient from the Jan Karski Educational Foundation and alumni of Georgetown Leadership Seminar in 2016. She writes annual chapters on Poland's Foreign Policy in the Polish Strategic Yearbooks.

#### **ABEL ROMERO**

Abel Romero is a Spanish Navy Captain, currently working as analyst at the Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies (IEEE). He holds a Master on "Peace, Security and Defence" at UNED University. Related to "European Security and Defence" issues, he has been Chief of Staff at the Force HQ - EU EUNAVFOR SOPHIA, on board ITS Cavour, and in Brussels, he has been Counselor to PSC Ambassador at Spanish PERMREP (2009-2013); has been

assigned to the EEAS (2010-2011) to initiate works to develop the first "EU Maritime Security Strategy"; to the EU Operations Center (2014-2015); and has been Counselor to the Spanish Military Representative to NATO (2018-2021) at NATO HQ.

## MAGNUS CHRISTIANSSON

Magnus Christiansson is Assistant Professor at the Swedish Defence University. He holds a Ph.D. in political science from Stockholm University. He has been teaching at various positions at the Swedish National Defence College and the Swedish Defence University since 2000, and was Secretary-General for the Swedish Atlantic Council 2006-2009. Among other titles, he is the author of the award-winning *Defence Transformation in Sweden* (Santérus Academic Press, 2020) and (with Tuomas Forsberg) the forthcoming *The Northern Enlargement of NATO: Finland and Sweden's Path to Membership* (Bristol University Press).

## Composition of the working group

---

*Coordinator:*

**Mrs. Natividad Fernández Sola**  
*Professor in International Public Law.  
University of Zaragoza*

*Member and  
secretary:*

**Mr. Abel Romero Junquera**  
*Captain (Navy).  
Analyst of the IEEE*

*Members:*

**Prof. Dr. Sven Biscop**  
*Egmont Institute & Ghent University*

**Mrs. Marjorie Vanbaelinghem**  
*Former Director Institut de Recherche  
Stratégique de l'Ecole Militaire (IRSEM)*

**Mr. Tuomo Melasuo**  
*Professor, Emeritus and former Director of  
Tampere Peace Research Institute. Tampere  
University*

**Mr. Karl-Heinz Kamp**  
*Associate Fellow, German Council on Foreign  
Relations, Berlin*

**Mr. Alberto Pagani**

*Professor and advisor in the field of security.  
Former member of Italian Parliament*

**Mrs. Agnieszka Bieńczyk-Missala**

*Professor at Faculty of Political Science and  
International Studies. University of Warsaw*

**Dr. Magnus Christiansson**

*Assistant Professor in War studies –  
Swedish Defense University*

## Cuadernos de Estrategia

---

- 01 La industria alimentaria civil como administradora de las FAS y su capacidad de defensa estratégica
- 02 La ingeniería militar de España ante el reto de la investigación y el desarrollo en la defensa nacional
- 03 La industria española de interés para la defensa ante la entrada en vigor del Acta Única
- 04 Túnez: su realidad y su influencia en el entorno internacional
- 05 La Unión Europea Occidental (UEO) (1955-1988)
- 06 Estrategia regional en el Mediterráneo Occidental
- 07 Los transportes en la raya de Portugal
- 08 Estado actual y evaluación económica del triángulo España-Portugal-Marruecos
- 09 Perestroika y nacionalismos periféricos en la Unión Soviética
- 10 El escenario espacial en la batalla del año 2000 (I)
- 11 La gestión de los programas de tecnologías avanzadas
- 12 El escenario espacial en la batalla del año 2000 (II)
- 13 Cobertura de la demanda tecnológica derivada de las necesidades de la defensa nacional
- 14 Ideas y tendencias en la economía internacional y española
- 15 Identidad y solidaridad nacional

## List of Strategy Notebooks

- 16 Implicaciones económicas del Acta Única 1992
- 17 Investigación de fenómenos belígenos: método analítico factorial
- 18 Las telecomunicaciones en Europa, en la década de los años 90
- 19 La profesión militar desde la perspectiva social y ética
- 20 El equilibrio de fuerzas en el espacio sur europeo y mediterráneo
- 21 Efectos económicos de la unificación alemana y sus implicaciones estratégicas
- 22 La política española de armamento ante la nueva situación internacional
- 23 Estrategia finisecular española: México y Centroamérica
- 24 La Ley Reguladora del Régimen del Personal Militar Profesional (cuatro cuestiones concretas)
- 25 Consecuencias de la reducción de los arsenales militares negociados en Viena, 1989. Amenaza no compartida
- 26 Estrategia en el área iberoamericana del Atlántico Sur
- 27 El Espacio Económico Europeo. Fin de la Guerra Fría
- 28 Sistemas ofensivos y defensivos del espacio (I)
- 29 Sugerencias a la Ley de Ordenación de las Telecomunicaciones (LOT)
- 30 La configuración de Europa en el umbral del siglo XXI
- 31 Estudio de «inteligencia operacional»
- 32 Cambios y evolución de los hábitos alimenticios de la población española
- 33 Repercusiones en la estrategia naval española de aceptarse las propuestas del Este en la CSBM, dentro del proceso de la CSCE
- 34 La energía y el medio ambiente
- 35 Influencia de las economías de los países mediterráneos del norte de África en sus respectivas políticas de defensa
- 36 La evolución de la seguridad europea en la década de los 90
- 37 Análisis crítico de una bibliografía básica de sociología militar en España. 1980-1990
- 38 Recensiones de diversos libros de autores españoles, editados entre 1980-1990, relacionados con temas de las Fuerzas Armadas
- 39 Las fronteras del mundo hispánico
- 40 Los transportes y la barrera pirenaica
- 41 Estructura tecnológica e industrial de defensa, ante la evolución estratégica del fin del siglo XX
- 42 Las expectativas de la I+D de defensa en el nuevo marco estratégico

- 43 Costes de un ejército profesional de reclutamiento voluntario. Estudio sobre el Ejército profesional del Reino Unido y (III)
- 44 Sistemas ofensivos y defensivos del espacio (II)
- 45 Desequilibrios militares en el Mediterráneo Occidental
- 46 Seguimiento comparativo del presupuesto de gastos en la década 1982-1991 y su relación con el de Defensa
- 47 Factores de riesgo en el área mediterránea
- 48 Las Fuerzas Armadas en los procesos iberoamericanos de cambio democrático (1980-1990)
- 49 Factores de la estructura de seguridad europea
- 50 Algunos aspectos del régimen jurídico-económico de las FAS
- 51 Los transportes combinados
- 52 Presente y futuro de la conciencia nacional
- 53 Las corrientes fundamentalistas en el Magreb y su influencia en la política de defensa
- 54 Evolución y cambio del este europeo
- 55 Iberoamérica desde su propio sur. (La extensión del Acuerdo de Libre Comercio a Sudamérica)
- 56 La función de las Fuerzas Armadas ante el panorama internacional de conflictos
- 57 Simulación en las Fuerzas Armadas españolas, presente y futuro
- 58 La sociedad y la defensa civil
- 59 Aportación de España en las cumbres iberoamericanas: Guadalajara 1991-Madrid 1992
- 60 Presente y futuro de la política de armamentos y la I+D en España
- 61 El Consejo de Seguridad y la crisis de los países del Este
- 62 La economía de la defensa ante las vicisitudes actuales de las economías autonómicas
- 63 Los grandes maestros de la estrategia nuclear y espacial
- 64 Gasto militar y crecimiento económico. Aproximación al caso español
- 65 El futuro de la Comunidad Iberoamericana después del V Centenario
- 66 Los estudios estratégicos en España
- 67 Tecnologías de doble uso en la industria de la defensa
- 68 Aportación sociológica de la sociedad española a la defensa nacional
- 69 Análisis factorial de las causas que originan conflictos bélicos
- 70 Las conversaciones internacionales Norte-Sur sobre los problemas del Mediterráneo Occidental

## List of Strategy Notebooks

- 71 Integración de la red ferroviaria de la península ibérica en el resto de la red europea
- 72 El equilibrio aeronaval en el área mediterránea. Zonas de irradiación de poder
- 73 Evolución del conflicto de Bosnia (1992-1993)
- 74 El entorno internacional de la Comunidad Iberoamericana
- 75 Gasto militar e industrialización
- 76 Obtención de los medios de defensa ante el entorno cambiante
- 77 La Política Exterior y de Seguridad Común (PESC) de la Unión Europea (UE)
- 78 La red de carreteras en la península ibérica, conexión con el resto de Europa mediante un sistema integrado de transportes
- 79 El derecho de intervención en los conflictos
- 80 Dependencias y vulnerabilidades de la economía española: su relación con la defensa nacional
- 81 La cooperación europea en las empresas de interés de la defensa
- 82 Los cascos azules en el conflicto de la ex-Yugoslavia
- 83 El sistema nacional de transportes en el escenario europeo al inicio del siglo XXI
- 84 El embargo y el bloqueo como formas de actuación de la comunidad internacional en los conflictos
- 85 La Política Exterior y de Seguridad Común (PESC) para Europa en el marco del Tratado de no Proliferación de Armas Nucleares (TNP)
- 86 Estrategia y futuro: la paz y seguridad en la Comunidad Iberoamericana
- 87 Sistema de información para la gestión de los transportes
- 88 El mar en la defensa económica de España
- 89 Fuerzas Armadas y sociedad civil. Conflicto de valores
- 90 Participación española en las fuerzas multinacionales
- 91 Ceuta y Melilla en las relaciones de España y Marruecos
- 92 Balance de las primeras cumbres iberoamericanas
- 93 La cooperación hispano-franco-italiana en el marco de la PESC
- 94 Consideraciones sobre los estatutos de las Fuerzas Armadas en actividades internacionales
- 95 La unión económica y monetaria: sus implicaciones
- 96 Panorama estratégico 1997/98
- 97 Las nuevas Españas del 98
- 98 Profesionalización de las Fuerzas Armadas: los problemas sociales

- 99 Las ideas estratégicas para el inicio del tercer milenio
- 100 Panorama estratégico 1998/99
- 100-B 1998/99 Strategic Panorama
- 101 La seguridad europea y Rusia
- 102 La recuperación de la memoria histórica: el nuevo modelo de democracia en Iberoamérica y España al cabo del siglo XX
- 103 La economía de los países del norte de África: potencialidades y debilidades en el momento actual
- 104 La profesionalización de las Fuerzas Armadas
- 105 Claves del pensamiento para la construcción de Europa
- 106 Magreb: percepción española de la estabilidad en el Mediterráneo, prospectiva hacia el 2010
- 106-B Maghreb: perception espagnole de la stabilité en Méditerranée, prospective en vue de L'année 2010
- 107 Panorama estratégico 1999/2000
- 107-B 1999/2000 Strategic Panorama
- 108 Hacia un nuevo orden de seguridad en Europa
- 109 Iberoamérica, análisis prospectivo de las políticas de defensa en curso
- 110 El concepto estratégico de la OTAN: un punto de vista español
- 111 Ideas sobre prevención de conflictos
- 112 Panorama Estratégico 2000/2001
- 112-B Strategic Panorama 2000/2001
- 113 Diálogo mediterráneo. Percepción española
- 113-B Le dialogue Méditerranéen. Une perception espagnole
- 114 Aportaciones a la relación sociedad - Fuerzas Armadas en Iberoamérica
- 115 La paz, un orden de seguridad, de libertad y de justicia
- 116 El marco jurídico de las misiones de las Fuerzas Armadas en tiempo de paz
- 117 Panorama Estratégico 2001/2002
- 117-B 2001/2002 Strategic Panorama
- 118 Análisis, estrategia y prospectiva de la Comunidad Iberoamericana
- 119 Seguridad y defensa en los medios de comunicación social
- 120 Nuevos riesgos para la sociedad del futuro
- 121 La industria europea de defensa: presente y futuro
- 122 La energía en el espacio euromediterráneo

## List of Strategy Notebooks

- 122-B L'énergie sur la scène euroméditerranéenne
- 123 Presente y futuro de las relaciones cívico-militares en Hispanoamérica
- 124 Nihilismo y terrorismo
- 125 El Mediterráneo en el nuevo entorno estratégico
- 125-B The Mediterranean in the New Strategic Environment
- 126 Valores, principios y seguridad en la comunidad iberoamericana de naciones
- 127 Estudios sobre inteligencia: fundamentos para la seguridad internacional
- 128 Comentarios de estrategia y política militar
- 129 La seguridad y la defensa de la Unión Europea: retos y oportunidades
- 130 El papel de la inteligencia ante los retos de la seguridad y defensa internacional
- 131 Crisis locales y seguridad internacional: El caso haitiano
- 132 Turquía a las puertas de Europa
- 133 Lucha contra el terrorismo y derecho internacional
- 134 Seguridad y defensa en Europa. Implicaciones estratégicas
- 135 La seguridad de la Unión Europea: nuevos factores de crisis
- 136 Iberoamérica: nuevas coordenadas, nuevas oportunidades, grandes desafíos
- 137 Irán, potencia emergente en Oriente Medio. Implicaciones en la estabilidad del Mediterráneo
- 138 La reforma del sector de seguridad: el nexo entre la seguridad, el desarrollo y el buen gobierno
- 139 Security Sector Reform: the Connection between Security, Development and Good Governance
- 140 Impacto de los riesgos emergentes en la seguridad marítima
- 141 La inteligencia, factor clave frente al terrorismo internacional
- 142 Del desencuentro entre culturas a la Alianza de Civilizaciones. Nuevas aportaciones para la seguridad en el Mediterráneo
- 143 El auge de Asia: implicaciones estratégicas
- 144 La cooperación multilateral en el Mediterráneo: un enfoque integral de la seguridad
- 145 La Política Europea de Seguridad y Defensa (PESD) tras la entrada en vigor del Tratado de Lisboa
- 145-B The European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) after the entry into Force of the Lisbon Treaty
- 146 Respuesta europea y africana a los problemas de seguridad en África

- 146-B European and African Response to Security Problems in Africa
- 147 Los actores no estatales y la seguridad internacional: su papel en la resolución de conflictos y crisis
- 148 Conflictos, opinión pública y medios de comunicación. Análisis de una compleja interacción
- 149 Ciberseguridad. Retos y amenazas a la seguridad nacional en el ciberespacio
- 150 Seguridad, modelo energético y cambio climático
- 151 Las potencias emergentes hoy: hacia un nuevo orden mundial
- 152 Actores armados no estables: retos a la seguridad
- 153 Proliferación de ADM y de tecnología avanzada
- 154 La defensa del futuro: innovación, tecnología e industria
- 154-B The Defense of the Future: Innovation, Technology and Industry
- 155 La Cultura de Seguridad y Defensa. Un proyecto en marcha
- 156 El gran Cáucaso
- 157 El papel de la mujer y el género en los conflictos
- 157-B The role of woman and gender in conflicts
- 158 Los desafíos de la seguridad en Iberoamérica
- 159 Los potenciadores del riesgo
- 160 La respuesta del derecho internacional a los problemas actuales de la seguridad global
- 161 Seguridad alimentaria y seguridad global
- 161-B Food security and global security
- 162 La inteligencia económica en un mundo globalizado
- 162-B Economic intelligence in global world
- 163 Islamismo en (r)evolución: movilización social y cambio político
- 164 Afganistán después de la ISAF
- 165 España ante las emergencias y catástrofes. Las Fuerzas Armadas en colaboración con las autoridades civiles
- 166 Energía y Geoestrategia 2014
- 166-B Energy and Geostrategy 2014
- 167 Perspectivas de evolución futura de la política de seguridad y defensa de la UE. Escenarios de crisis
- 167-B Prospects for the future evolution of the EU's security and defense policy. Crisis scenarios
- 168 Evolución del mundo árabe: tendencias
- 169 Desarme y control de armamento en el siglo XXI: limitaciones al comercio y a las transferencias de tecnología

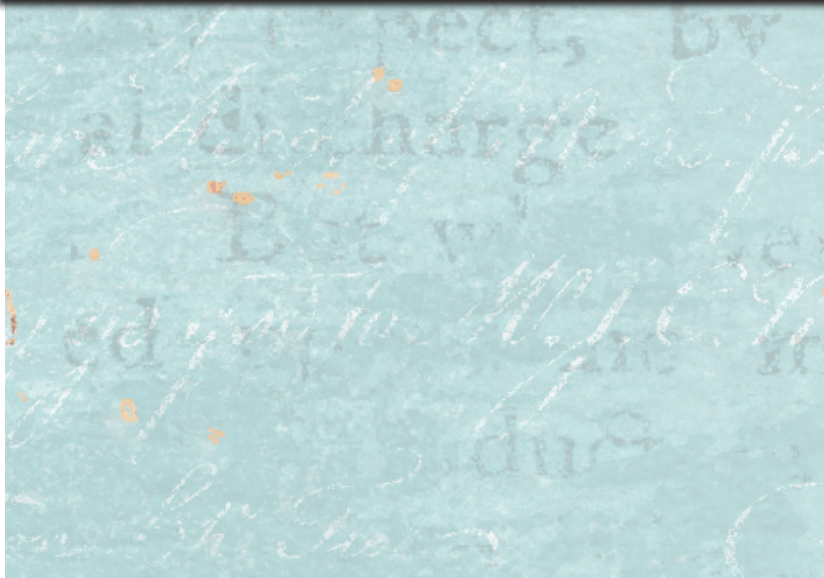
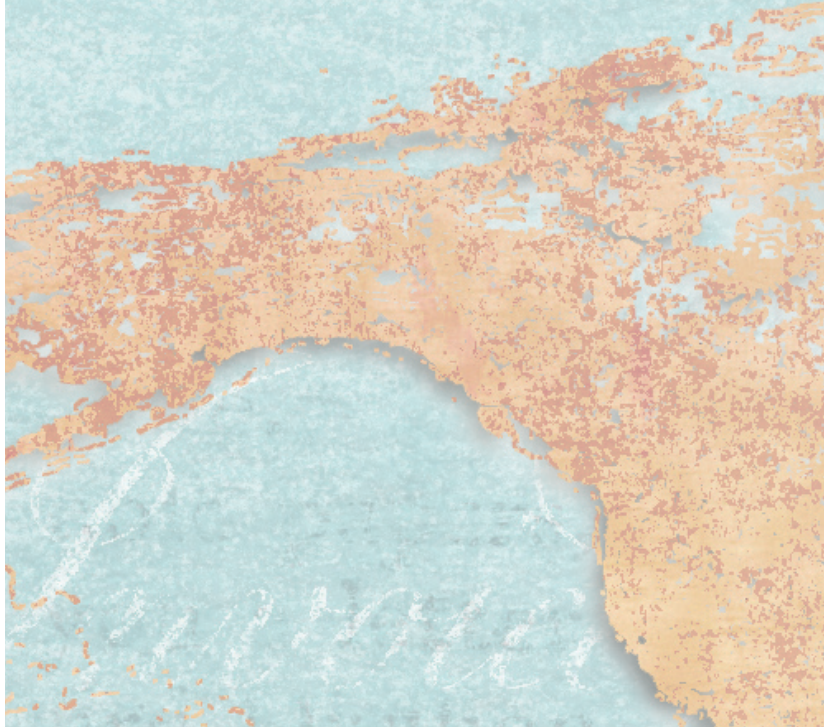
## List of Strategy Notebooks

- 170 El sector espacial en España. Evolución y perspectivas
- 171 Cooperación con Iberoamérica en materia de defensa
- 172 Cultura de Seguridad y Defensa: fundamentos y perspectivas de mejora
- 173 La internacional yihadista
- 174 Economía y geopolítica en un mundo globalizado
- 175 Industria Española de Defensa. Riqueza, tecnología y seguridad
- 176 Shael 2015, origen de desafíos y oportunidades
- 177 UE-EE.UU.: Una relación indispensable para la paz y la estabilidad mundiales
- 178 Rusia bajo el liderazgo de Putin. La nueva estrategia rusa a la búsqueda de su liderazgo regional y el reforzamiento como actor global
- 179 Análisis comparativo de las capacidades militares españolas con las de los países de su entorno
- 180 Estrategias para derrotar al DAESH y la reestabilización regional
- 181 América Latina: nuevos retos en seguridad y defensa
- 182 La colaboración tecnológica entre la universidad y las Fuerzas Armadas
- 183 Política y violencia: comprensión teórica y desarrollo en la acción colectiva
- 184 Una estrategia global de la Unión Europea para tiempos difíciles
- 185 Ciberseguridad: la cooperación público-privada
- 186 El agua: ¿fuente de conflicto o cooperación?
- 187 Geoeconomías del siglo XXI
- 188 Seguridad global y derechos fundamentales
- 189 El posconflicto colombiano: una perspectiva transversal
- 190 La evolución de la demografía y su incidencia en la defensa y seguridad nacional
- 190-B The evolution of demography and its impact on defense and national security
- 191 OTAN: presente y futuro
- 192 Hacia una estrategia de seguridad aeroespacial
- 193 El cambio climático y su repercusión en la Defensa
- 194 La gestión del conocimiento en la gestión de programas de defensa
- 195 El rol de las Fuerzas Armadas en operaciones posconflicto
- 196 Oriente medio tras el califato
- 197 La posverdad. Seguridad y defensa

- 198 Retos diversos a la seguridad. Una visión desde España
- 199 Gobernanza futura: hiperglobalización, mundo multipolar y Estados menguantes
- 200 Globalización e identidades. Dilemas del siglo XXI
- 201 Límites jurídicos de las operaciones actuales: nuevos desafíos
- 202 El SAHEL y G5: desafíos y oportunidades
- 203 Emergencias pandémicas en un mundo globalizado: amenazas a la seguridad
- 204 La dualidad económica Estados Unidos-China en el siglo XXI
- 205 La no proliferación y el control de armamentos nucleares en la encrucijada
- 206 Las ciudades: agentes críticos para una transformación sostenible del mundo
- 207 Repercusiones estratégicas del desarrollo tecnológico. Impacto de las tecnologías emergentes en el posicionamiento estratégico de los países
- 208 Los retos del espacio exterior: ciencia, industria, seguridad y aspectos legales
- 209 Minerales: una cuestión estratégica en el siglo XXI
- 210 Redes transeuropeas: vectores vertebradores de la España del siglo XXI
- 211 El futuro de la OTAN tras la Cumbre de Madrid 2022
- 211-B The future of NATO after the Madrid 2022 summit
- 212 China: el desafío de la nueva potencia global
- 213 El Mediterráneo: un espacio geopolítico de interés renovado
- 214 Terrorismo internacional: mutación y adaptación de un fenómeno global
- 215 La Unión Europea hacia la autonomía estratégica
- 215-B The European Union Towards Strategic Autonomy
- 216 Asia Central: de pivote a encrucijada
- 217 La amenaza biológica
- 218 El Ártico: la región para la colaboración (o las disputas)
- 219 Asia Oriental, la interdependencia como causa de conflicto
- 220 África: la ambición de las potencias sobre el continente
- 221 Irán en la encrucijada global
- 222 Crisis migratorias como elemento de coerción internacional
- 223 Retos y respuestas frente a la amenaza química
- 224 Geopolítica del poder militar

## List of Strategy Notebooks

- 225 Potencias medias: transitando hacia un orden multipolar
- 226 La inteligencia artificial en la geopolítica y los conflictos
- 227 Geopolítica azul. Los océanos, espacios clave en el nuevo orden global





 **KONRAD  
ADENAUER  
STIFTUNG**



**GOBIERNO  
DE ESPAÑA**

**MINISTERIO  
DE DEFENSA**

SUBSECRETARÍA DE DEFENSA  
SECRETARÍA GENERAL TÉCNICA

SUBDIRECCIÓN GENERAL  
DE PUBLICACIONES  
Y PATRIMONIO CULTURAL

ISBN 978-84-9091-962-0



9 788490 919620