

WHAT EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY DO WE NEED?

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The Jacques Delors Institute's European Steering Committee (ESC) brought European personalities to Paris on 23 and 24 October 2015 to debate EU security and defence issues. The debate was introduced by Michel Barnier, Special Adviser for European Defence and Security Policy to Jean-Claude Juncker, the President of the European Commission, and by Nicole Gnesotto, Full Professor of the European Union Chair at the CNAM and Vice-President of the Jacques Delors Institute.

1. A range of globalised crises and conflicts on the EU's doorstep

One has but to reread the first sentence in the European Security Strategy document of 2003, which noted that "Europe has never been as prosperous, as safe or as free as it is today", to realise the extent to which the EU's internal and external environment has deteriorated. We have no choice but to take on board the fact that we have left behind us what we considered at the time to be a "period of peace and stability without precedent in Europe's history".

Europe's stability is under greater threat today than it was in 2003. Far from having succeeded in turning its neighbours into "a well-governed group of countries with which the [European] Union can enjoy close ties based on cooperation", the EU today is facing a range of crises stretching on its doorstep from the southern rim of the Mediterranean to Ukraine in the East. On the internal front, populism and extremism are making political capital out of the fears triggered both by the ongoing economic and social crisis and by the refugee crisis, to undermine European cohesion.

The United States' position has also changed a great deal. In 2003 that position was marked by a stance in favour of bellicose intervention in the shape of the invasion of Iraq. Today, as it faces the seriously negative upshot of the policy pursued in Iraq and in Afghanistan, the Obama administration is adopting

a very prudent position with regard to the prospect of any new military commitment. The United States is thus far more hesitant over the position to adopt towards conflicts taking place in the European Union's neighbourhood. The European Union and the United States are less able than ever to influence their Middle Eastern allies, namely Turkey, Israel and Egypt. These countries are pursuing their own agendas and engaging in action which may run counter to the Europeans' strategy and interests in the Middle East.

We can no longer take the same view of defence today as we took five or ten years ago. We need to get the impact of external military operations and of the use of force to stabilise a country into perspective. Use of force is often crucial, but it can only be used in support of a political solution. Yet we cannot help but feel concerned by the decrease in the Europeans' military resources for acting in the EU's peripheral areas, and by the current risk of an industrial and technological disconnect in the defence sphere.



As external and internal threats become increasingly closely interlinked, we need to succeed in establishing a seamless continuum between defence, security and foreign policy. This, because Europe's defence policy can so easily find itself involved in internal security issues (refugees, terrorism and so forth). If we wish to impart a fresh boost to Europe's foreign policy, we need to make greater room for the European defence policy needed to back it up. Yet given that foreign and defence policy issues have traditionally been the European countries' *raison d'être* throughout history, Community integration in those fields continues to be particularly sensitive. If we are to achieve it, we need to heed the expectations of Europe's citizens, who are aware of the benefits to be reaped from the greater mutualisation of our individual national defence capabilities.

2. Revising the EU's strategic software

European solidarity in the security sphere has been deployed only partially to date and is lagging very much behind in relation to the scope and magnitude of the current threats. The Europeans still do not have a common headquarters. Their battle groups have never been used. Six different member states are currently pursuing six different frigate construction programmes. At the cross-border level, there is no European border guard corps. And on the external front, the EU has no common foreign or defence policy. We need to forge a common diplomatic ethos and develop a common geopolitical approach in order for the member states in the West and in the South to take the Eastern member states' challenges on board and vice-versa.

Thus a revision of Europe's security strategy is an excellent initiative. It must help us to forge a common geopolitical approach and to define our common interests. But it must also then pave the way for a White Paper on European Defence in 2017 capable of allowing us to determine our capabilities and our priorities, and of translating Europe's revised strategy into an operational tool.

"Updating the EU's strategic software" to adapt both our threat analysis and our tools for responding to those threats, means first and foremost transcending mere crisis management in order to develop a greater capacity for analysis and reflection upstream of crises. It is also a matter of overcoming

the mutual mistrust that exists between the member states and the European Commission, among the European institutions, and among the member states themselves.



3. How to act without delay?

Bearing in mind the "hybrid threats" besetting the EU's stability, we cannot be content with institutional debates that postpone urgent strategic decisions. What is lacking today is the political will on the part of those who currently own the power to make decisions. Thus we need to work within the current treaty framework and to make full use of existing tools so that we are ready when the member states evince their amenability to thrashing out a political agreement in favour of strong integration in the sphere of defence. Our priority should be to forge good tools, starting, for example, with the creation of common legislation governing drone flights, because there are currently twenty-eight different air spaces for drones. The establishment of a fully-fledged European border guard corps would also allow us to mutualise the EU's border monitoring capabilities in order to bolster the European citizens' security.

Acting without delay means adopting an "action plan" within the European Commission, addressing the defence, energy, space and research markets. A budget item devoted to military research should be built into the next budget. But greater flexibility could already be introduced in the way the Union's budgets are handled, particularly with a view to bolstering security capabilities in the neighbourhood countries with which the Europeans cooperate in the context of their "train and equip" programme. The link forged between security and development today points to a cultural revolution taking place within the European Commission, prompting it to train and

equip foreign armed forces, and which can also allow it to support other, similar initiatives in the future.

Another aspect crucial to our neighbours' stabilisation is their economic development, because economic crises are a veritable breeding ground for instability and radicalisation. The economic side of Europe's security policy would therefore have everything to gain from being strengthened, rather than confining itself simply to the lever of trade policy. We need to support businesses. In that connection Tunisia, but also Lebanon and Jordan, should benefit from a Marshall Plan designed to bolster their economies. Appointing an economic adviser to the High Representative would help to develop such a policy.

In addition to this, special attention should be devoted to preserving the technological and industrial base in the defence sphere, because the Europeans' entire military culture depends on that base. We need to succeed in checking the average 30% cut in defence budgets over ten years in the EU, which has already translated into the loss of key technologies. All the partners have to be grouped together to adopt a proactive strategy in the field of research. The European Defence Agency cannot become more effective unless its financial resources are increased.



A European security strategy should also concern itself, on the one hand, with protecting strategic assets in the spheres of energy, telecommunications (satellites) and health, demanding greater transparency with regard to foreign investors' purchase of certain assets, and on the other, with building up stocks of rare earths in a framework of European cooperation.

Making full use of the potential enshrined in the current treaties to mark out a path of gradual integration in the defence sphere would demand, in particular, the establishment of permanent structured cooperations (PESCO), starting with the mobilisation of about ten member states with one or two priority goals (such as, for example, research in the field of defence technology). The United Kingdom would be unlikely to join such a PESCO, but that would not rule out bilateral cooperation between the PESCO and the United Kingdom. And finally, a boost to Europe's credibility in this sector would also help to strengthen NATO, whose weakness is first and foremost a European weakness caused by the cut in defence capabilities in the 22 European countries that are both members of the European Union and members of NATO. Short of setting up a European caucus within NATO, a move which numerous member states refuse to countenance, the Europeans would have everything to gain from working together on preparing common positions ahead of each NATO summit, acting for instance within the framework of already existing European institutions. That would allow us to avoid those situations - as happened, for example, back in the days of the Georgia crisis in 2008 - in which the differences between NATO's and the EU's positions are caused, in part at least, by European countries adopting a different position within NATO from the position that they adopt within the EU.

More specific attention was devoted during the debate to relations between the EU and Russia. It was admitted that, while military dissuasion and intervention capabilities are chiefly NATO's province, the political side of bilateral ties is more the EU's concern. Adopting a balanced position recognising both the democratic future that the people of Ukraine have chosen for themselves and Russia's legitimate concerns regarding Ukraine, could prompt the Europeans to adopt an inclusive attitude towards Russia, while at the same time taking care not to allow themselves to be divested of the "Syrian dossier" by Russia, whose leadership does not yet appear to have developed a clear strategy for disengaging its troops in Syria. The European Union also has a role to play regarding Syria and Iran, because Iran and the United States cannot be kept in a one-to-one situation.

Finally, the establishment of a European Security and Defence Council meeting once a year, should highlight the longer-term issues that require greater coordination, mutualisation and investment. While High Representative Federica Mogherini needs to tackle the member states' and the European Parliament Speakers' relative apathy in the foreign policy field, the European Parliament and the national parliaments should also be more closely associated with the analysis of security and defence issues in the context of an ongoing forum for discussion.



1. On December 15th 2015, the European Commission proposed the creation of a European border and coast guard with an operational reserve composed 1.500 men and women. This European border and coast guard could act on its own initiative to support a Member State facing a particularly important arrival of migrants.

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