



VETERANS

— for —

BRITAIN

Nouvelle Vague: An Audit of EU Defence Union Plans

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Executive Summary

The EU treaties contain aspirations for EU defence integration that are now being pursued openly. The fact of Brexit has not removed any anchor, but rather allowed the transition to happen at a speed that is now visible.

European Union Defence plans are associated with the eventual formation of a European Federal State. Under the current system of unaccountable governance, this means they will be run by an unelected oligarchy. A nation state that contracts out its defence has ceased to be.

From a UK perspective, as a major security player and a Permanent Member of the United Nations Security Council, this carries an elevated series of innate risks;

- A threat to Strategic Assets;
- A threat to the UK's status as the only European member of the Five Eyes Community;
- A threat to NATO, in the context of dissimulation by proponents of EU Defence Integration saying no threat exists;
- The half-baked 'pie in the sky' operational involvement aims of the European External Action Service, a largely untested agency;
- Interference with the way national armed forces are administered, for example seeking the wider introduction of trades unions;
- The impact on UK defence industry and strategic resources;
- The generation of genuinely pooled financial resources in defence, with the consequential risk that this encourages member states to cut defence budgets even further;
- Decisions on UK defence priorities being made by the EU.

These swift changes carry extra risk in a period of major transition in the United States political scene, and risks encouraging rather than reducing the decoupling of the United States from European allies.

These also carry serious questions on the nature of the UK's future level of engagement in bilaterals and multilaterals with EU states, since the aspiration of the Commission and EEAS is to assume a measure of responsibility over these as well. No safeguards for preserving UK sovereign interests in those appear yet to have been considered.

The question that arises for the public of the United Kingdom is therefore this: do you want those whom you hold dear to be sent to war or into danger by people you cannot vote out of power?

The UK government should make it plain now that it will not become institutionally entangled with these dangerous developments; and underline that any EU expeditionary ambitions must not predicate themselves on UK capabilities and assets, which may be considered only poolable in

the context of the mutual defence of NATO members. That will take a more robust position in Brussels than diplomats and ministers apparently seem to display.

Introduction

To an outside observer, determining the political direction of the European Union at a given moment in time can be difficult. This is particularly so when assessing the likelihood of particular proposals being carried, amended or rejected at Council level, where national interests and aspirations are further coloured by party political interpretations.

Taken strategically however, the long term direction becomes much clearer. The EU is an entity that operates under an evolutionary model, with occasional spurts of accelerated growth. The Brexit vote, like 9/11 or the Laeken Conference, provides an opportunity to witness speedier policy development without the need for a time-lapsed camera.

The aspirational direction for developing the military side of integration has become clearly expressed. Germany's Defence Minister in September declared, "It's time to move forward to a European defence union, which is basically a 'Schengen of defence.'" Strikingly, she declared that "There will be a comprehensive air defence".¹ The following month, after some capitals had underlined that they would not sign up to anything overtly approaching a common EU army, the minister appeared to caveat her earlier comments by lowering ambitions by a couple of phases.²

However, the principle has been agreed by the key continental EU military powers. Paris and Berlin in September agreed to push for a greater deployable role for Eurocorps as an asset for the EU Council. They agreed on the desirability of a single EU budget for military research and for joint procurement of air-lift, satellite, cyber-defence assets and surveillance UAVs. There would be an increased role for the European Defence Agency.³

Much of what has subsequently been agreed can be linearly traced back to this meeting. Consequently, it is also important to factor in what was said in public at the gathering that also brought the Italian premier on board. Speaking on an aircraft carrier off the symbol-laden island of Ventotene (where arch-federalist and 'Founding Father of Europe' Altiero Spinelli worked on his manifesto to build a European state), defence cooperation was very much at the forefront of the political riposte to the Brexit vote, seeking faster integration to 'stop the rider falling off his bicycle'. French President François Hollande was unambiguous about his stance;

"S'il y a une volonté que nous devons partager, c'est que l'Europe doit assurer davantage qu'aujourd'hui sa propre défense. La France y prend sa part."

He continued, "*J'ai insisté aussi sur la défense parce que nous voulons qu'il y ait davantage de coordination, là-aussi, de moyens supplémentaires et de forces de projection.*"

Adding, "*Il faut faire de l'Europe une puissance également à l'extérieur.*"⁴

¹ Reuters, 8 September 2016.

² "German defence minister warns UK against meddling in EU security," Financial Times, 6 October

³ "France and Germany propose EU 'defence union'", EUObserver, 12 September 2016

⁴ Heads of Government meeting at Ventotene press conference, 23 August 2016, Élysée Press Office transcript

Angela Merkel for her part expanded on the remit into wider security issues, stating that exchange and cooperation among the intelligence services needed to be intensified. This comment was an early indicator that any development of the EU Defence Union was going to fit in a massive context reaching across EU competences. As it was already becoming clear, these would include internal (to the EU) security cooperation; the launch of an EU border guard force also incorporating an EU coast guard; increased intelligence cooperation; and aspects of policing.

This list of policy coordination, and the association of the emerging Defence Union with it, would grow further yet. It even developed its own name: the “proposed new Level of Ambition to develop a stronger Union in security and defence”.⁵ By November, the aspirational list put out by the High Representative included the following:

*strengthening the protection and resilience of its networks and critical infrastructure; the security of its external borders as well as building partners’ capacities to manage their borders; civil protection and disaster response; ensuring stable access to and use of the global commons, including the high seas and space; countering hybrid threats; cyber security; preventing and countering terrorism and radicalisation; combatting people smuggling and trafficking; building capacities to manage irregular migration flows; promoting compliance with non-proliferation regimes and countering arms trafficking and organised crime. Existing EU policies in these areas should be taken forward in a comprehensive manner.*⁶

The Council itself in November approved much of this, and tasked in turn the High Commissioner to crack on with the analysis in these terms;

The Council invites the High Representative to make proposals as early as possible by spring 2017 on further improving the development of civilian capabilities as required by the continuous demand for rapidly deployable and well trained civilian experts, through:

*a. Reviewing the priority areas of civilian CSDP missions, initially agreed at the Feira European Council in 2000 and subsequently taken forward, in light of evolving political priorities and in order to better respond to current and future security challenges related inter alia to irregular migration, hybrid threats, cyber, terrorism, radicalisation, organised crime and border management.*⁷

What that means in summary is that the EU is now in the process of a major shift. This has significant risks and consequences for all member states, including the UK even as it prepares to leave. It carries wider risks for the NATO alliance, the cornerstone of Western defence. If proposals are pursued rationally and democratically, bearing in mind the potential for catastrophic damage, and if the UK keeps out of institutional entanglement with the pernicious elements of this process, then there is the possibility of gains to be made. But those are large caveats, and UK ministers would be wise to approach these talks with considerable reserve and

⁵ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p2

⁶ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p3

⁷ Council conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence, 14009/16, 14 November 2016, p7

caution, and be prepared against the grain of Whitehall advice to cast a delaying veto where necessary to delay any kneejerk policies that have been ill-thought through.

Jean-Claude Juncker, in his annual 'State of the Union' address to MEPs, declared

*Europe needs to toughen up. Nowhere is this truer than in our **defence policy**.*⁸

What exactly does that mean in practice; and what are the risks that go with that?

The Threat to Strategic Assets

Juncker's address was notable also for stating that the EU "should also move towards common military assets, in some cases owned by the EU."⁹ What might that entail, and what UK assets might be of particular interest for pooling – even if the UK takes a step back from full EU membership?

The Commission's proposals are ambitious, and top level. It recommended the following, largely associated with central decision-making processes;

*A stronger European defence requires Member States' joint acquisition, development and retention of the full-spectrum of land, air, space and maritime capabilities. The Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy ("Global Strategy") identifies a number of defence capability priority areas in which Europe needs to invest and develop collaborative approaches: intelligence-surveillance reconnaissance, remotely piloted aircraft systems, satellite communications and autonomous access to space and permanent earth observation; high end military capabilities including strategic enablers, as well as capabilities to ensure cyber and maritime security*¹⁰

In this, the Council concurred. Ministers agreed that work should be taken forward on

*priority areas in which Europe needs to invest adequately and develop collaborative approaches, such as: Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR), Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems, satellite communications, and autonomous access to space and permanent earth observation; high end military capabilities including strategic enablers; response to hybrid threats; as well as other capabilities, in particular those needed to ensure cyber and maritime security, and force protection.*¹¹

However, we also have a wider understanding of the areas likely to come under the spotlight thanks to the output of the High Representative. Federica Mogherini, tasked with developing proposals, has her eye on additional areas;

The EUGS [EU Global Strategy] sets out the need for Member States to collectively retain and further develop full-spectrum military land, air, space and maritime capabilities. Echoing relevant capability priorities out of the Capability Development Plan (CDP) 2014, it highlights a number of defence capability priority areas in which Europe needs to invest and develop collaborative approaches:

⁸ State of the Union Address, Jean-Claude Juncker, 14 September 2016. Emphasis in the original (released text).

⁹ State of the Union Address, Jean-Claude Juncker, 14 September 2016

¹⁰ EU Defence Action Plan, European Commission, COM 2016 (950), p2

¹¹ Council conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence, 14009/16, 14 November 2016, p8

- *Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems, satellite communications, and autonomous access to space and permanent earth observation;*
- *high-end military capabilities, including strategic enablers;*
- *cyber and maritime security.*

These initial priority areas include the four flagship capability projects supported by the European Council in 2013, namely regarding Air-to-Air Refuelling (AAR), Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS), Cyber, and Satellite Communication (GovSatCom). Additional and complementary capability requirements and priorities based on the EUGS and the new Level of Ambition will be identified within the revision process of the CDP. Capability priorities identified by Member States will provide guidance to the European Defence Action Plan.¹²

Taken together, this generates a significant list of top level assets. An increased role by the EU institutionally would make Brussels far more central to the OODA loop of both defence management but also of international affairs, and indeed far more capable of independent analysis and ultimately of decision-making.

Intelligence

Access to, and especially control over, intelligence assets is key to an EU institutionally more in control of Defence policy-making. Recent proposals recognise and facilitate this.

The subject (as with many other features of recent proposals) merits a paper in its own right. For now, let us focus on an overview.

The EEAS is currently engaged in the process of “taking stock”, both of existing capabilities in INTCEN and EUMS INT, and also in developing a range of immediate and longer-term proposals. This starts from a principle of increasing the current level of connectivity between the EU intelligence cells and member state “entities”, which is very broad brush. The objective is to provide “situational awareness in order to further support the development of a European hub for strategic information, early warning and comprehensive analysis.” In other words, the ambition is to generate a major EU intelligence capability that stands on its own two feet.¹³

To achieve this, there is the recognition that the EU needs to considerably increase its own asset feed, including owning its own strategic assets. It need hardly be underlined that this generates considerable fall out, given the intense debates already existing within the European Parliament over legislative issues of privacy and human rights. The Commission’s Christmas wish list runs in these terms;

A stronger European defence requires Member States' joint acquisition, development and retention of the full-spectrum of land, air, space and maritime capabilities. The Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy ("Global Strategy") identifies a number of defence capability priority areas in which Europe needs to invest

¹² Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p20

¹³ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p5

*and develop collaborative approaches: intelligence-surveillance reconnaissance, remotely piloted aircraft systems, satellite communications and autonomous access to space and permanent earth observation; high end military capabilities including strategic enablers*¹⁴

Given the massive interest by MEPs in the Echelon system fifteen years ago, as well as reports of espionage within Brussels (countered by dedicated security elements within the Commission and European Parliament), it is not too surprising to note that EU institutions have an eye on this side of things.

There is no direct reference to the pooling of the nuclear deterrent – in practice with Brexit, that means the French Force de Frappe, and that is something that Paris would (and already has tried to) offer bilaterally first with the Germans who are politically nervous on the subject. However, there is a reference in the proposals to “strategic resources”, and the supply of fissile material will almost certainly fall into the category of areas covered.¹⁵

For her part, the High Representative sees the purpose of these assets as achieving the objective of EU decision-making being earlier in the decision-making cycle, in order to facilitate the prospect of the Mutual Defence clause being successfully triggered;

prioritising strategic foresight, anticipation and situational awareness, e.g. through the Hybrid Fusion Cell and CT analytical capacity in the INTCEN, and by making full use of the EU Satellite Centre;

*– underlining the relevance of the Mutual Assistance Clause of the Treaty (Article 42.7 TEU) as well as the Solidarity Clause (Article 222 TFEU) and explore the possibilities, if so requested, for the EU to contribute including through CSDP options.*¹⁶

Mogherini explains the mechanisms for achieving this as through expanding existing EU structures (which has the extra advantage of not requiring treaty change, and thus not triggering further referenda);

*Improving CSDP responsiveness requires enhanced civil/military intelligence to support anticipation and situational awareness, through the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity (SIAC) as the main European hub for strategic information, early warning and comprehensive analysis. This includes horizon scanning, updated situational assessment in support of political/strategic decision-making, and granular civil/military 24/7 situational awareness for the planning and conduct of missions/ operations. There is scope to better link the EU's Early Warning System and joint conflict analysis tools to support CSDP horizon scanning, decision-making, conflict-sensitive planning and implementation. The EU Intelligence Assessment and Situation Centre (EU INTCEN) and the Intelligence Directorate of the European Military Staff (EUMS INT) need to be adapted accordingly in scope, functionality and technical assets. Furthermore, interaction with other EU bodies must be enhanced in order to facilitate the implementation of an integrated approach to conflicts and crises. Interaction with NATO bodies should be improved as well.*¹⁷

¹⁴ EU Defence Action Plan, European Commission, COM 2016 (950), p2

¹⁵ EU Defence Action Plan, European Commission, COM 2016 (950), p2

¹⁶ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, pp14-15

¹⁷ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p26

Invited to consider these proposals, the Council approved. It signed off the development of “autonomous situational awareness”, and added that regular exercises should be conducted to improve capacity.¹⁸

From a UK perspective, it needs to avoid too close an association with this emerging intelligence agency. Unproven and inherently liable to be insecure, affiliation would risk the UK’s privileged status as the only European power within the Five Eyes Community.

The View from Above

The extension of EU competences into space can largely be laid at the door of Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, Chairman of the Convention on the Future of Europe, who inserted an ambitious clause into the EU Constitution. It survived the wreck of the No votes in the Netherlands and France, and entered into the Lisbon Treaty as Article 189, thus providing a legal basis for the EU ambitions already in play through the Galileo and associated programmes, and generating a legal basis for the development of the EU Satellite Centre.

The Commission’s proposals for exploiting this new competence in a Defence setting are suitably ambitious. It considers the prospect of its central use in surveillance and in tracking. By associating Article 189 activity across the wider remit of EU activities and ambitions in many areas, this will over time clearly become a core function and recipient of continued budgetary largesse. The Commission explains this openly in its recent proposals (and note in particular the reference to the key word ‘autonomy’ as an indicator of its thinking);

There is also a need to increase the coherence and synergies between defence issues and other relevant Union policies and sectors, thereby fully exploiting the EU’s added value.

In line with the European Space Strategy, investing in space capabilities will enable Europe’s access to space and safe use, ensuring its freedom of action and autonomy. The Commission is committed to contribute to ensuring the protection and resilience of critical European civil and military space infrastructure, enhancing the existing EU space surveillance and tracking (SST) support framework.

As underlined by the Space Strategy, space services can also strengthen the EU’s and Member States’ capacity to tackle growing security challenges. The Commission will seek to maximise synergies and complementarity with relevant activities of the EU Satellite Centre in the area of space security and defence.

Under the currently evolving threat environment, the mismatch between governmental satellite communications (SATCOM) user needs, and timely and appropriate solutions, increasingly creates risks to key mission security operations and infrastructures of the Union and its Member States.

¹⁸ Council conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence, 14009/16, 14 November 2016, p12

The Commission, in cooperation with the High Representative, EDA and the European Space Agency, is preparing an initiative to ensure reliable, secured and cost-effective satellite communications services for EU and national authorities managing security critical missions and infrastructures by the end of 2017.

To improve the EU's ability to respond to evolving security challenges related to border controls and maritime surveillance, the Commission will expand Copernicus capabilities taking into account new technological developments in the sector, the need to ensure adequate level of security of the infrastructure and services, the availability of different data sources and the long-term capacity of the private sector to deliver appropriate solutions.

The Commission shall explore how Copernicus could cover further security needs, including defence. It shall strengthen security requirements¹⁹

Other eye-in-the-sky ambitions are, literally, less stratospheric. The Commission also has aspirations for a greater EU role in relation to drones. This is through two routes. In the first instance, the Commission is underlining its role in the development of industry standards across the EU, and sees drone development as no exception to the rule. By pushing the Single Market envelope, the Commission is thus advancing its own power base once again in the teeth of treaty caveats. The second route it is testing limits is through making a linkage with aviation safety, in particular Single European Sky (SES) and Single European Sky Air Traffic Management Research (SESAR) activity. By pointing to Health and Safety aspects and specifically to its competence in aviation, the Commission is seeking to open a legislative door.²⁰

This is not a new approach: indeed, in 1999 measures impacting on military air traffic control hit speed bumps when attempts were made to integrate them with civil processes, with clear consequences to national defence management systems. But it does provide a clear example of how after Brexit, even if member states stall later development of the Defence Union, if the UK is structurally too closely associated with EU formats it will remain at risk from treaty competence creep by the ambitions of the Commission.

This also generates an alarm bell in relation to NATO, since ambitions relating to standardisation more properly fit within that structure. The most capable and largest forces European powers need to be interoperable with is with the United States, and not with the technology of the lowest bidder supplying a small European state. Thus we should be concerned to read the recommendation by MEPs that

invites the European Council to take concrete steps towards the harmonisation and standardisation of the European armed forces, in order to facilitate the cooperation of armed forces personnel under the umbrella of a new European Defence Union²¹

That job is already taken.

¹⁹ EU Defence Action Plan, European Commission, COM 2016 (950), pp17-18

²⁰ EU Defence Action Plan, European Commission, COM 2016 (950), p18

²¹ European Parliament Report on the European Defence Union, TA-(2016)0435, para 12

Battling Avatars

Space is not the only setting for expanding EU ambitions: so too is cyberspace. MEPs are leading this particular charge, which is connected to the development of a capability in psychological operations.

In the EP Report on the European Defence Union, MEPs observe,

that cybersecurity is by its very nature a policy area in which cooperation and integration are crucial, not only between EU Member States, key partners and NATO, but also between different actors within society, since it is not only a military responsibility; calls for clearer guidelines on how EU defensive and offensive capabilities are to be used and in what context²²

The EU has had an interest in this field even before Estonia found itself subject to cyber attacks. While NATO was to establish a cyber centre in that country and to work on a doctrine, the EU has separately been engaged in the field. It laid down a marker in particular with the development of ENISA, The European Union Agency for Network and Information Security, located in Greece (Athens and Crete). The founding principles underpin the protection of online market activity, but the remit looks set to grow massively. The Commission explains it in these “dual use” terms;

Considering the evolving importance of the cyber domain and its dual-use nature, synergies should be sought between cyber defence efforts and wider EU cyber security policies. The Joint Communication on a Cyber Security Strategy sets out measures to enhance the cyber resilience of IT systems, reduce cybercrime and strengthen EU international cyber security policy and cyber defence. Cyber security training should be reinforced, taking into account the work of the European Cyber Crime Training and Education Group and other similar activities.

The Commission will work in close cooperation with Member States, the High Representative and other relevant EU bodies to establish a cyber-training and education platform to address the current skills gap in cyber security and cyber defence by 2018.²³

So once again, the Single Market is providing a spring board that may preclude the need for treaty change.

This would presumably supply the mechanism for an associated policy development in Psy Ops. Noting how certain states have deployed ‘cyber trolls’ on their behalf in ‘hearts and minds’ campaigns, the EU has resolved rather than continue with futile attempts to explore how to ban them, instead to make use of its own strategic messaging more. The Commission already has an extremely developed PR system selling the EU in corporate terms.²⁴ It is correspondingly a relatively small step extending a policy of aggressive and aggrandising self-promotion into one of directly combating alternative messaging from another state as opposed to ordinary Eurosceptic citizens...

The Commission explains,

²² European Parliament Report on the European Defence Union, TA-(2016)0435, para 21

²³ EU Defence Action Plan, European Commission, COM 2016 (950), p18

²⁴ *The Hard Sell: EU Communication Policy and the Campaign for Hearts and Minds*; Rotherham/Mullally, Open Europe, 2009

*Countering disinformation and effectively communicating our actions internally and externally is crucial. In all these areas, the EU will intensify the coordination between its internal and external instruments, tools and policies. For the EU as a whole this priority is not new, but from an EU security and defence perspective it is a consequence of the deteriorated and more unpredictable security environment and builds on relevant CSDP developments in recent years.*²⁵

Such an approach has been signed off by the Council. However, there is the worrying prospect of a breach of protocols that would apply to NATO occurring, as the agreement endorses propaganda directed at EU citizens;

A proactive and coordinated strategic communication, directed both inwards to the EU citizens and outwards to partners and other organisations, should be given a special focus.²⁶

Any messaging from the EU targeting UK nationals, especially messaging not signed off by government ministers, should be blocked.

Strategic Issues: Global Perspectives

Certain motivational aspects underpinning the EU's corporate planning assumptions deserve mention as further risks. One relates to the nature of the threat against which the EU seeks to develop an integrated defence. The Commission notably identifies three named global actors whose defence sectors have been engaged in major upgrades in recent years, in contrast to European states. The three countries are China, Russia, and Saudi Arabia.²⁷

Then there is the inclusion of elements that risk opening the door to party political interpretations on defence rather than pragmatic analysis of capability at this stage. The recitals of the EP report contain several references linking CFSP and global warming, which threatens to introduce new complications on planning defence strategy.²⁸

Meanwhile, the High Representative's review of missions adds a moral and legalistic perspective;

*Throughout, it is critical to integrate full respect for international law, in particular obligations under relevant human rights and humanitarian law, mainstream gender perspectives and expertise, adhere to the highest standards of conduct, discipline and accountability, as well as promote the respect for international law among the EU's international partners when carrying out CSDP mandates.*²⁹

It is not difficult to determine the motive behind stressing these aspects. In addition to staking out a claim for 'neo-liberal interventionism' (and indeed the right of the EU to assume responsibilities for such deployments from member states, many of which are individually incapable of delivery), there have been reported incidents of abuse by troops deployed on EU missions.³⁰ However, by

²⁵ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p14

²⁶ Council conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence, 14009/16, 14 November 2016, p3

²⁷ EU Defence Action Plan, European Commission, COM 2016 (950), p3

²⁸ European Parliament Report on the European Defence Union, TA-(2016)0435

²⁹ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p18

³⁰ For example, the EUTM to the CAR.

emphasising these elements, the document also risks underlining these criteria as opposed to pragmatic deliverables when planning interventions.

In any event, the High Representative recommended that these mission objectives should include in broad ethical terms,

*Promoting respect for international law, in particular international humanitarian and human rights law, as well as gender sensitivity, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions, protection of civilians, and principles of democracy and good governance*³¹

The Council concurred with this interpretation and adopted these very objectives within its own conclusions word for word.³²

Strategic vision also includes some geographic emphasis of note. MEPs appear to be set on a power grab, seeking for the EU to take over the lead from NATO in operational activity in the old western USSR and in North Africa, or the EU's "near abroad". This has obvious and immense strategic risk if operations fail because NATO's full resources are not deployed. Yet MEPs contend,

*the political priorities of NATO and the EU may not always be identical, not least in the context of the US pivot to Asia; further notes that the EU possess a unique set of security-related instruments which are not available to NATO, and vice versa; is of the opinion that the EU should assume greater responsibility for security crises in its immediate neighbourhood, and thus contribute to NATO's tasks, especially in the context of hybrid warfare and maritime security; believes that, in the long run, reform of the Berlin Plus arrangements may prove necessary, also to enable NATO to make use of the EU's capabilities and instruments; underlines that the EU's ambition of strategic autonomy and framing a European Defence Union must be realised in full synergy with NATO, and must lead to more effective cooperation, equitable burden-sharing and a productive division of labour between NATO and the EU*³³

Notwithstanding the caveats, the reality of developing a distinct capability coupled with the motivation for primacy means the wording encourages EU unilateralism as much as it discourages it.

The High Representative explains what sort of operational involvement she would like to see capability being generated at EU level to deliver. They include in particular;

- *supporting conditions for achieving and implementing peace agreements and ceasefire arrangements, and/or rapidly providing EU bridging operations for the deployment of wider UN peacekeeping missions, including in non-permissive environments;*
- *temporarily substituting or reinforcing domestic civilian security, law enforcement or rule of law, in case of breakdown of normal state functions;*
- *projecting stability in order to re-establish security in a degrading humanitarian situation, by protecting civilians, denying a terrorist organisation or armed group a foothold in a fragile country, or creating a safe environment in which a country can recover from war and destabilisation;*

³¹ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p9

³² Council conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence, 14009/16, 14 November 2016, p4

³³ European Parliament Report on the European Defence Union, TA-(2016)0435, para 37

- contributing to maritime security/surveillance worldwide but most immediately in areas relevant to Europe in the context of specific security needs, including with aerial and space capabilities;
- providing rapid support to national or UN actors involved in addressing massive health pandemics or the fall-out of national disasters, including situations of public disorder;
- supporting the evacuation of European citizens if required with military means.³⁴

The list is highly informative. It includes operations involving peace making as well as peace keeping (a detail downplayed when EU Defence Integration was first added to the treaties). It includes emergency insertion actions when law and order has broken down. It adds an element of subjectivity by use of the term “degrading”, which carries massive legal baggage. It hints with “areas relevant to Europe” at the prospect of an EU Monroe Doctrine down the line. It generates the prospect of military incursion into areas of natural disaster and, without contemplation of the implications, of pandemic. It generates the ill-defined principle that “European citizens” merit intervention by the EU on their behalf.

Most significantly of all, the document notably does not state that this excludes deployment within EU or European states themselves.

To this we might add the recommendation elsewhere that it should include “Air security operations including close air support and air surveillance.”³⁵ The mission of managing air strikes goes even further than the initial proposal of denial of air space, referenced in our introduction.

Most significantly of all is that the Council’s response was that what had been approved in terms of mission planning was a “non-exhaustive list”.³⁶ The underlining is in the original.

Civilian Overlap

Some areas of EU interest in these defence documents are not overseas, but relate to the home territory. In particular, the Commission has long had an interest in the security of critical infrastructure which might be considered to be of wider continental interest. We can also expect more on this (there is a pooled register of this already), as well as revisiting plans in the coming few months on the personal security and monitoring of high risk and high profile individuals, which will be highly controversial. Here, the text refers us back to the dual use issue and thus the Commission’s legal basis to act through Single Market provisions, stating

*In line with the objectives of the EU Maritime Security Strategy, dual use capability solutions can ensure that both military and civilian authorities could benefit from relevant technologies, products and services. Such solutions developed by the defence industry could be effective in addressing security-related fields, such as maritime surveillance, risk management and protection of critical infrastructures.*³⁷

Combining a dubious legal basis and an interest in areas of immense national importance should alert us to the danger of continued Commission interference post-Brexit in areas that are of

³⁴ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p12

³⁵ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p16

³⁶ Council conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence, 14009/16, 14 November 2016, p16

³⁷ EU Defence Action Plan, European Commission, COM 2016 (950), p18

national concern, but where there is secondary impact if activity is interrupted. The best example of this to date has been over the attempt to extend EU remit into the North Sea. This was rebuffed at the time of the Lisbon Treaty, but was actioned subsequently through the Commission's remit in Health and safety issues. Brexit negotiators should be aware of the enduring risk to national control over oil and gas rigs, pipelines, cables and even unique items that could break or be broken (and thus hinder goods flow), for as long as the Commission retains a proactive interventionist role in managing the functioning elements of UK-EU trade.

A different threat arises from MEPs. Its social proposals add a different threat to the operational effectiveness of the armed forces, since in the UK they are not unionised, unlike in other member states. The EP report

*Calls on the Member States to particularly recognise the right of military personnel to form and join professional associations or trade unions and involve them in a regular social dialogue with the authorities*³⁸

But the fundamental element relating to overlap with civilian activity arises from the intent to develop the Military Union as an integrated part of the EU's wider set of competences. The High Representative's proposals on Defence feature prominently how it seeks to manage its civilian crisis management capabilities "rapidly, with the necessary support functions and equipment."³⁹ While there is some reference to this having to operate potentially in a non-permissive environment, ie a dangerous one, there appears to still be a gap in thinking on how this will work in practice. Current analysis is going into the rapid deployment of assessment teams as temporary support to EU Delegations; beyond this there is a vague pledge of "further developing regional approaches and civ/mil synergies".⁴⁰ One danger is that deployments happen with the expectation that EU pooled forces will be available to bail these exposed groups out; and they may not. Or, even worse, civilians are sent into dangerous locations in order to encourage military escalation by reticent troop providers. This is an area of policy development where gaps would need to be watched out for.

Finally, there is the age old problem of the train timetables. More correctly, MEPs have identified as an issue the transit of deploying assets and troops as they move across the EU. They note they are

*deeply concerned over reports that administrative procedures are unnecessarily slowing down the generation of forces for CSDP missions and the cross-border movement of rapid response forces inside the EU; calls on the Member States to establish an EU-wide system for the coordination of rapid movement of defence forces personnel, equipment and supplies for the purposes of the CSDP, where the solidarity clause is invoked and where there is an obligation to provide aid and assistance by all the means in their power, in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter*⁴¹

What this observation fails to reference, however, is the core role of NATO in facilitating transit between member states. Not only that, it does so in the very context of the Solidarity Clause – the mutual assistance clause that mirrors (but in fact exceeds) NATO's Article 5 obligations. So again, MEPs have been putting forward proposals that risk weakening the centrality of NATO.

³⁸ European Parliament Report on the European Defence Union, TA-(2016)0435, para 12

³⁹ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p13

⁴⁰ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p13

⁴¹ European Parliament Report on the European Defence Union, TA-(2016)0435, para 39

Defence Industries

The merger of European defence industries lies at the heart of the strategic development of a common EU defence ethos. It has extended pedigree, since the very foundation of the Coal and Steel Community was predicated upon putting war resources under international control. From a Commission perspective, it forms a logical corollary to managing policy on other industries, and in particular ending monopolies. It commits no state to the deployment of forces in dangerous ventures, yet increases dependency upon other states and thus generates an increased sense of collectivised activity.

For many of the same reasons, the UK should ensure that it is disentangled from commitments that reduce or destroy production capability and increase dependence on a foreign entity whose collective interests will be complex and strategically often divergent from our own (indeed, often internally).

The Commission is quite open about where it hopes this increased cooperation will lead.

The Commission is ready to engage at an unprecedented level in defence to support Member States. It will exploit the EU instruments, including EU funding, and the full potential of the Treaties, towards building a Defence Union.

However, the adoption of this Communication by the Commission is only a first step. [...] Based on a strong and shared commitment between the Member States and the institutions, the European Defence Action Plan can become a game changer for more European defence cooperation and greater solidarity between Member States.⁴²

The woman who will be in charge of much of this has a plan. Identifying capability gaps, particularly when compared with those provided by the United States, Mogherini declared that the “Level of Ambition” required “strategic coherence”, and suggested a mechanism to get this on track would be to generate an intergovernmental “Coordinated Annual Review on Defence”. This forum would share national plans, identify potential lead nations to fill gaps, and work out what funding delivery would require by participants. While this would happen using NATO targets,

It would also foster a gradual synchronisation and mutual adaptation of national defence planning cycles and capability development practices, which should also enable more systematic cooperation.⁴³

The High Representative, who is also the person in charge of the European Defence Agency, set out her stall with this wish list of taskings;

EDA with its participating Member States to develop further proposals concerning output-oriented capability development, Key Strategic Activities, R&T, more structured cooperation, critical enablers, and Security of Supply, and prepare for their implementation.⁴⁴

⁴² EU Defence Action Plan, European Commission, COM 2016 (950), p19

⁴³ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p22

⁴⁴ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p5

It is inferred rather than stated, but merely by engaging in these meetings, parsimonious governments might be expected over time to cede capabilities to other lead states. This is probably as far as the documents could legally go, as we are reminded by the response of the Council itself,

Bearing in mind that capability development falls under the competence of Member States, encourages the Commission to support them in implementing the identified capability priorities through, notably, the measures that will be proposed in the forthcoming European Defence Action Plan.⁴⁵

The Council consequently tasked with Commission to deliver a European Defence Action Plan that had

concrete proposals in particular on: a possible future EU-funded Defence Research Programme to be examined under the next multiannual financial framework (MFF) (based on an assessment of the related Preparatory Action); fostering investments in defence EU supply chains and ensuring fair access to cross border markets and international supply chains, in particular for SMEs, involving all stakeholders (including contracting authorities and industry), enhancing security of supply and strengthening the defence internal market.⁴⁶

What will this likely involve in practical terms? Disentangling the morass of jargon, it boils down to three key elements;

- Increased spending on R&T targeted towards CDP priorities. This should be complemented by a wider Innovation Initiative on managing potentially disruptive technologies, directed towards the European Defence Technological and Industrial Base Strategy.⁴⁷
- An increased drive towards standardisation between EU-based suppliers, though this is less about interoperability (secured by NATO) than about the reduction in the number of competitors and increasing specialism in production. Policing this is to be gradually Europeanised.⁴⁸
- Modifying military standards so “dual use” items can be certified (though this comes at some risk to end military capability or to wider consumer cost, depending on where the product compromise lies).⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Council conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence, 14009/16, 14 November 2016, p9

⁴⁶ Council conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence, 14009/16, 14 November 2016, p11

⁴⁷ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p23

⁴⁸ This is to be achieved by (i) increased use of the Collaborative Database and the European Defence Standards Reference System (EDSTAR) (ii) Increased harmonisation of certification and inspection, with an initial focus on ammunition and (military) airworthiness (iii) Developing national test centres into a network, then linking the best into project development (iv) generating European-level training curricula exploited through national training centres. Thus the very oversight of procurement standards becomes Europeanised. (Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p24)

⁴⁹ This is particularly intended to cover cyber security development, though the concept is not constrained to this area. The intent is to generate a “European certification framework” and a voluntary labelling system for ICT security. Notably, the Commission observes that “One option being explored is the possible development of European standards through the processes established by the European Standardisation

The Council explained the importance for achieving this largely in Single Market terms;

Within the European Defence Action Plan framework, these proposals should contribute to developing an open, competitive, innovative and inclusive European Defence Technological and Industrial Base retaining its leading edge, competencies and ability to meet Europe's current and future security and defence needs while stimulating jobs, growth and innovation across the EU.⁵⁰

The Commission similarly was expressing itself in Euros and cents

The defence industrial sector is not only of strategic importance for Europe's security. With a total turnover of EUR 100 billion per year and 1.4 million highly skilled people directly or indirectly employed in Europe, it is also a major contributor to the European economy⁵¹

While both of these statements are true, it takes us to the core of the problem and one that Brexit negotiators will have to ground themselves on. There is indeed some interconnectivity between certain defence sectors. The military aspects of Airbus, and individual cooperative ventures such as the Eurofighter project, remind us that deals will need to be struck to ensure continued ease of cooperation post-Brexit. But the existence of that interdependence also reminds us that there will be other forces pushing for an easy transition that keeps non-tariff barriers down, in order to keep end costs down. In other words, negotiators should not see these cooperative ventures as hostages to fortune during Brexit talks, but as opportunities to demonstrate why free trade works for EU states as much as it does for the UK. What applies to defence industries works equally for civilian sector supply chains too.

But there are serious problems that arise from too close an affiliation to this integration. When the Commission makes reference to a "genuine Single Market for Defence", we know the model the institution is fond of: one that implies central planning and a monopoly of budgeting, in corporatist parody of the principle of the truly free market. The problem is twofold. Firstly, that with companies on this scale, the EU sees its economic rival as being continental and aspires to pool to take on the Boeings and General Dynamics; secondly, that to achieve this objective, by definition it has to destroy independent national capabilities. There is a logical economic rationale behind achieving this based on efficiency of effort by the most economic deliverer; however, when the production forms the ultimate guarantor of the physical defence of the nation state, the nation state has in contracting out its defence in effect ceased to be.

Thus while some UK industries would gain from pooling defence manufacturing, others would close. When, say, Govan and Yeovil have to close for a Rolls Royce factory in the Midlands to expand, the politics of the issue become more evident. When the UK finds it is no longer capable of building its own asset, that there is a lack of will amongst other countries to spend money on researching it, and the products that are being built are generations behind what would have been achieved with a US link up, then the strategic consequences become more clear. This is the ultimate consequence of what lies behind the Commission's Action Plan when it says,

Organisations." This whole area underlines the role that other international actors, in particular UNECE, rather than the Commission will play in the development of EDA products, which in turn highly undermines the concerns certain quarters raise against Brexit (since UNECE is a legally superior body to the EU in terms of treaty standards). EU Defence Action Plan, European Commission, COM 2016 (950), pp16-17

⁵⁰ Council conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence, 14009/16, 14 November 2016, p11

⁵¹ EU Defence Action Plan, European Commission, COM 2016 (950), p3

More competition, and a greater openness of the defence market in Europe, should help suppliers to achieve economies of scale, optimise production capacity and lower unit production costs, thus making European products more competitive on the global market. Competition should take place both at the level of prime contractors and suppliers.⁵²

The generation of “clusters of excellence” will be done subjectively, using a quota system, at 3am in the morning – like agreeing the TAC of a fishing quota. Collectively, the EU will gain a competitive edge, but at the cost of individual national capability. For a nation whose armed forces are more called for than most European states, and with a developed military manufacturing and research complex (indeed, whose military procurement forms a disproportionately surviving element of its remaining industrial base), this risks being a particular harm to the UK. The fall out will not only fall on larger industries, but across the supply industry as well, since as the Commission explains, defence procurement will be regionally focused;

Regional clusters specialising in industrial niches (also known as “clusters of excellence”) allow large firms, SMEs and research centres to work in close geographic proximity in order to increase R&D collaboration and specialise in a specific technology area (e.g. aircraft engines). While the decision to prioritise regional clusters rests in the hands of local and regional government actors, EU financing (including through EIB) could lead to successful technology demonstrator projects and the development of industrial and scientific partnerships between firms and research centres.

Furthermore, the Commission has launched the European Network of Defence-related Regions to support EU regions with important relevant industrial and research assets and to share best practices on integration defence-related priorities into their smart specialisation strategies. The Commission will encourage Member States to promote regional clusters of excellence, benefitting the defence sector.⁵³

If this was not enough of a concern, the Commission is also seeking to develop its EU Raw Materials Strategy. To some extent this makes sense, given where a number of resources sit globally. For example, China has a monopoly on a number of rare earths, and there are obvious supply concerns over energy, including radioactive isotopes. Yet it is telling that the Commission raises this as part of its thinking into the Defence Action Plan. Having sought to suppress coal and steel as issues of war, securing the physical supply of resources is entering the collective consciousness in a military context. The global context is hinted at rather than developed: for now the principle focus is on the sharing of resources, and in recognising that national capability is disappearing, of guaranteeing the delivery of products once factories have closed. At least the Commission has recognised the problem exists;

Security of supply is also a cornerstone to the establishment of a genuine single market for defence and is key to future cooperative programmes. Member States need to be confident that cross-border deliveries will not be disrupted. Strengthening security of supply at EU level implies enhancing mutual trust among Member States.

Certain measures, such as contract performance conditions, can help strengthen mutual trust among Member States regarding transfers of defence-related products. The Commission will therefore issue guidance on measures that Member States can take under EU public procurement law to reinforce security of supply.⁵⁴

⁵² EU Defence Action Plan, European Commission, COM 2016 (950), pp13-14

⁵³ EU Defence Action Plan, European Commission, COM 2016 (950), p12

⁵⁴ EU Defence Action Plan, European Commission, COM 2016 (950), p15

In short, if a country seeks to politically integrate with its neighbours, has limited interests in deploying in pursuit of its own interests, and is primarily concerned with taking a slice of the industrial cake (at the cost of being fatally dependent on other countries for its own protection), then signing up fully to the integration and rationalisation of the EU's military industries makes sense. It makes perfect sense if your sole intent is to generate a single EU state. Otherwise, post-Brexit, the best route will be to adopt a stance of cooperation where procurement interests coincide, and particularly where skill sets and technologies coincide. In many cases, the partner of choice will not be in the EU.

Money and Management

The traditional route for the expansion of EU input into policies where they may be contentious or contended is to first direct money into them. In this instance, we already observed Jean-Claude Juncker making a financial case for defence integration;

*The business case is clear. The lack of cooperation in defence matters costs Europe between €25 billion and €100 billion per year, depending on the areas concerned. We could use that money for so much more.*⁵⁵

As the variable between the mega sums betrays, the figures cited are completely “numberwang”. However, they do betray a known and massive inefficiency in European defence spending compared with the capability delivered. A mechanism to reduce that inefficiency, where the EU has an existing legal base, is through encouraging states to pledge an increased share of existing funding to pass through existing structures. A target for that was already set by the Council May 2015, at 20% % of the defence budget spending on procurement of equipment and Research & Technology, and 35% of total equipment expenditure.⁵⁶

But as we know from targets set by DfID, generating percentiles to aim for does not of itself generate value for money.

EU ambitions, however, reach beyond state spending into generating an independent budget of its own. The State of the Union address also pledged

*For European defence to be strong, the European defence industry needs to innovate. That is why we will propose before the end of the year a **European Defence Fund**, to turbo boost research and innovation.*⁵⁷

Indeed, that is precisely what subsequently happened. The Council “took note” of the Commission’s proposal, and endorsed further work on the detail on making it happen. That included the prospect of concrete proposals emerging on funding being released via the European Investment Bank (EIB), including through the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI).⁵⁸

⁵⁵ State of the Union Address, Jean-Claude Juncker, 14 September 2016

⁵⁶ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p18

⁵⁷ State of the Union Address, Jean-Claude Juncker, 14 September 2016 (emphasis in the original).

⁵⁸ Council conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence, 14009/16, 14 November 2016, p11

This option has significant consequences for the UK post-Brexit in the eventuality that the UK maintains its association with the EIB.

Other options also on the table include the possibility of generating bonds. This also has the potential for major risks. One is over contingent liabilities, given the notoriety of military R&D and the capacity for overspend and strategic failure (the UK's withdrawal from the Horizon Frigate programme also showing the kind of difficulties that can emerge). Another involves technology leakage and security. The Commission's plan notes,

Pre-commercial procurement (PCP) is an approach for procuring R&D services, enabling public procurers to share the risks and benefits of designing, prototyping and testing a limited volume of new products and services with the suppliers.⁵⁹

It is singularly unclear however the extent to which countries such as China could be allowed to become strategic partners in such projects. For an example of the types of concern that prospect raises, one might consider the track history in turn of the funding of the Galileo programme.

The ambition behind this budget is extensive. It will start with a test sum, which will then be hiked to half a billion Euros by 2020. As the Commission explains,

The Commission intends to launch a Preparatory Action on Defence Research in 2017, as called for by the European Council, with a budget of EUR 90 million for the period 2017-2019.²⁷ This will be a first step, limited in time and in budget, which will serve to test the added-value of the EU budget supporting defence research. The Commission will consider a delegation agreement with EDA on certain tasks related to the implementation of the preparatory action. The research topics will be established in the work programme following the comitology principles.

If Member States agree with this Action Plan, the Preparatory Action will pave the way for the "research window" to take the form of a European defence research programme within the next multiannual financial framework post 2020. This programme should be of a credible size. Given the importance of defence research investment, the scale of existing national defence research budgets and the high costs of developing cutting-edge defence technologies, such a "window" may need an estimated annual budget of EUR 500 million in order to make a substantial difference in line with the conclusions of the Group of Personalities on European defence research, as well as with the recent report of the European Parliament on this matter. This amount would place the EU among the top 4 of defence research & technology investors in Europe.⁶⁰

The final line is a telling indicator of the political ambition, nature and planned extent of this projected programme. The Commission seeks for the EU to become a corporate player in Defence Research on the scale of a nation state. The very size of the ultimate budget means it is likely to supplant national expenditure for the majority of member states. For a small country this might be a considerable gain; for one of the three other large defence research investors (specifically, the United Kingdom), the prospect should be approached with more circumspect analysis and an eye on risk to UK development capability.

How this will begin to operate in practice has already been outlined. "Key Strategic Activities" or KSA will be identified, which may be technologies, skills, or industrial manufacturing capacity,

⁵⁹ EU Defence Action Plan, European Commission, COM 2016 (950), Footnote 32

⁶⁰ EU Defence Action Plan, European Commission, COM 2016 (950), p7

and a pilot case will be picked for funding based on a “a structured dialogue between Member States and Industry”. This is a significant pointer. It suggests that funding will not be targeted necessarily at projects that are the most sought after on military grounds; but that “winners” might be picked from particular industries. Alternatively, sectors may be picked on the basis of political compromise based on their local economic importance. Again, the “structured dialogue” suggests a level of corporatism is already entering the planning cycle. None of these bodes well for the generation of a decision-making system that generates products needed by the military, created by the most innovative designers, and necessarily built by the most efficient factories.⁶¹

Much will depend on who sits in on the committees that will drive this process. For as long as the UK remains within the EU, Parliamentary Scrutiny of these groups will also be important, particularly to ensure that proposals are being put into the public domain. The core mechanism being proposed here is an Implementation Steering Group chaired by Mogherini. It is set to first meet in the first quarter of 2017, whereupon it will establish a consultation forum with the European defence industry “to best align the supply and the demand sides.”⁶²

This forms but one element of course of wider structural and conceptual changes that will need to happen. MEPs consider it essential to develop the principle of a security White Book, massively expanding the strategic role of the EU institutions across defence over time through it

whereas the EU-level White Book on security and defence should further strengthen the CSDP and enhance the EU’s ability to act as a security provider in accordance with the Lisbon Treaty, and could represent a useful reflection on a future and more effective CSDP [...]

whereas gradual defence integration is our best option for doing more with less money, and the White Book could offer a unique opportunity to propose additional steps⁶³

MEPs also foresee the need to beef up the meeting of Defence Ministers, by the setting up of a formal Defence Council (which has obvious implications for NATO’s counterpart), when it

Highlights the need for the establishment of a Council format of Defence Ministers to provide sustained political leadership and coordinate the framing of a European Defence Union; calls on the Council of the European Union to establish, as a first step, a permanent meeting format bringing together defence ministers of Member States which are committed to deeper defence cooperation as a forum for consultation and decision-making⁶⁴

This interpretation appears to be shared by the head of the EEAS, since Mogherini’s proposals declare,

We should continue to analyse jointly the threats, risks and challenges faced by the EU, and regularly review our priority actions. This could lead to regular high-level meetings (European Council or Foreign Affairs Council, including in Defence format or jointly with other relevant Council formations) to address internal and external security and defence issues facing the Union.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p23

⁶² EU Defence Action Plan, European Commission, COM 2016 (950), p19

⁶³ European Parliament Report on the European Defence Union, TA-(2016)0435, Recitals M and O

⁶⁴ European Parliament Report on the European Defence Union, TA-(2016)0435

⁶⁵ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p18

In the interim, closer coordination of existing management bodies would be needed;

further developing CSDP's links to the implementation of the Internal Security Strategy, respecting the roles of the different instruments and under the joint lead of the Political and Security Committee and the Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security (COSI) in shaping the way ahead, and with participation of the EEAS and Commission services.⁶⁶

Juncker's take was that the optimal approach was to use the post-Lisbon option of the go-ahead group format;

*The Lisbon Treaty enables those Member States who wish, to pool their defence capabilities in the form of a **permanent structured cooperation**. I think the time to make use of this possibility is now. And I hope that our meeting at 27 in Bratislava a few days from now will be the first, political step in that direction. Because it is only by working together that Europe will be able to defend itself at home and abroad.⁶⁷*

That is precisely what is now set to start happening. As the Council agreed in November,

To strengthen CSDP, the Council agrees to also explore the potential of an inclusive Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), including a modular approach as regards concrete projects and initiatives, subject to the willingness of Member States to undertake concrete commitments. It invites the High Representative to provide elements and options for further reflection as soon as possible.⁶⁸

The High Representative for her part had already outlined some of what she plans to include in such proposals;

reinforcing CSDP's ties with Freedom/Security/Justice (FSJ) actors, notably the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and Europol, at the strategic level and in the field, to support the monitoring and security of land, sea and air borders in light of security needs; – building Europe's strength and resilience, including by enhancing civilian and military capabilities, ensuring security of supply, protecting networks and infrastructure, and promoting technological innovation and defence investment,⁶⁹

Given the role of several Directorates General of the Commission and a number of Euroquangos with involvement in these fields, coordination of effort will be a major task that will generate the prospect for considerable horizontal expansion of competences down the line.

Taking these elements together, we can make the following observations;

- The European Commission and EEAS are encouraging Member States to pool national procurement funding;
- All parties are signed up to the principle of the EU having its own stand-alone procurement budget;

⁶⁶ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p14

⁶⁷ State of the Union Address, Jean-Claude Juncker, 14 September 2016

⁶⁸ Council conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence, 14009/16, 14 November 2016, p13

⁶⁹ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p14

- A new administrative system is being developed that carries inherent risks of corporatism and poor development practices;
- EU institutional oversight will change, adding an increased importance for the EEAS (whose head is also head of the EDA, though the future interrelationship between the two remains an unexplored open question);
- The planned interconnectivity between EU defence issues and other policy areas will inevitably boost the importance and centrality of the head of the EEAS, reducing the relative importance of national counterparts;
- The increase in the importance of the EU at the cost of national governments is recognised in this process, and indeed is central to it.

The Making of a Common Army

The rejection of the proposed European Defence Community revealed to European integrationists that military forces and capabilities were not suitable for a process of swift and accelerated pooling. Instead, it has happened indirectly and slowly, particularly in the wake of the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the less obviously pressing need to maintain extremely close multilateral ties with Washington to stave off Soviet invasion.

That gradualism can be seen in the measures now latterly proposed, which constitute several separate steps further towards the establishment of a common EU military.

The Commission's Action Plan includes elements of such pooling. It states that it seeks to set up

A "capability window" to support the joint development of defence capabilities commonly agreed by Member States. This would be financed through the pooling of national contributions and, where possible, supported by the EU budget.

The "research window" and the "capability window" will be complementary but distinct in their legal nature and sources of financing.

*The "windows" will be complemented by a coordinating mechanism in the form of a **Coordination Board**, bringing together the Commission, the High Representative, the Member States, the European Defence Agency, as well as industry as appropriate.⁷⁰*

There are key and notable exemptions: it does not include actual defence operations or other elements necessary to manage defence capabilities such as training, personnel and logistics.⁷¹ These would constitute an obvious jump into deployment and *esprit de corps*. However, it does amount to the push for a pooling of capability, and there is no thinking expressed on what will happen where national interests diverge (in particular, expeditionary force capability compared with continental interests – for instance whether money should be spent supporting the Royal Navy, or on a bigger fleet of German trucks).

Key components already exist that will be used to expand the common framework. The High Representative sees scope for many more multinational forces across other arms and services than presently exists, that could then form the core of EU activity;

This could build on existing models of cooperation such as with Eurocorps, the European Gendarmerie Force, and the European Air Transport Command. In the same vein, the

⁷⁰ EU Defence Action Plan, European Commission, COM 2016 (950), p6

⁷¹ EU Defence Action Plan, European Commission, COM 2016 (950), footnote 24

dialogue with regional 'clusters' of (defence) cooperation among EU Member States could be fostered.

Action 9: Member States to consider relevant multinational structures or initiatives in the area of security and defence in view of reinforcing cooperation with the EU or deepening existing frameworks of cooperation. In particular, to consider developing a concept to make better use of existing national or multinational deployable headquarters made available to the EU, on a rotational basis, with a focus on training, mentoring and advising.⁷²

After the failure to establish a credible EU corps from committed national elements, focus shifted two decades ago into the more deployable EU Battle Group (BG) concept. This forms another central element of thinking, and in particular making them more accessible by the EU (since 'owning' member states have a veto, and the funding processes for their use are less than streamlined). Mogherini envisages a new funding mechanism which appears to come out of the main EU budget.⁷³ MEPs concurred in this, seeing a need for "cost-sharing and common funding."⁷⁴ But it would also need to be much larger than currently provided for, since it would be a common budget to be tapped for associated civilian missions, undertaken at increased turn around (it is precisely for speed reasons that there is already a CSDP warehouse). There are similarly pointers that a new fast-track procurement set of rules is intended, though it is unclear whether this means more forward purchase and long term storage or a reduction in requirements on competitive tendering. Both carry additional cost implications.⁷⁵

As for the BGs themselves, MEPs ambitiously see them as forming the kernel of a standing EU army. The EP report sought

Reform of the EU battlegroups concept, aiming at the establishment of permanent units which would be independent of any lead nation and subject to systematic joint training⁷⁶

Thus the Battle Group concept is financially and physically becoming the spearhead once again of EU military aspirations, and one in which as a BG contributor the UK is currently strongly interlinked. The Government will have to reflect deeply on the nature of its future commitments to EU BG structures as this swiftly develops, since there is an emerging political burden. The European Parliament voted that it

Takes the view that the Union should dedicate own means to fostering greater and more systematic European defence cooperation among its Member States, including permanent structured cooperation (PESCO); is convinced that the use of EU funds would be a clear expression of cohesion and solidarity, and that this would allow all Member States to improve their military capabilities in a more common effort⁷⁷

The use of BGs as a tool is a perfectly logical one. The scale of them means that they are (or can be) highly deployable at the front end of EU foreign policy, in short order, and in numbers that are

⁷² Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p27

⁷³ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p28 (the existing funding plan was set to run out in December 2016, so this was a timely opportunity to advance matters).

⁷⁴ European Parliament Report on the European Defence Union, TA-(2016)0435 para 47

⁷⁵ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, pp 28-29

⁷⁶ European Parliament Report on the European Defence Union, TA-(2016)0435 para 47

⁷⁷ European Parliament Report on the European Defence Union, TA-(2016)0435 para 9

limited and thus which do not generate public concern about excessive and enduring military commitments in the way that a large deployment might. The numbers and prospect of use also however means that other strategic assets can fall under the spotlight to be developed in a way that incorporates them under the EU command system or even direct EU ownership.

Mogherini for example also proposed “developing a rapidly available common pool of strategic lift assets for the deployment of EU Battlegroups”, rather than leaving it down to contributing states to get them there. This is a shift in ambition, particularly for those BG states with limited deploying capability out-of-theatre. As an approach it also makes political sense, in much the same way as the development of the standing federal army of the United States was built upon a small force of technicians that would be impossible to swiftly train up at time of war (artillerymen and engineers). Thus MEPs proposed the establishment of

*an [sic] corps of military engineers created to address some very practical challenges related to climate change effects and natural disasters in third countries*⁷⁸

Juncker had already approved this branching out;

*It can be done. We are building a multinational fleet of air tankers. Let's replicate this example.*⁷⁹

The Council has now approved this ambition, and given carte blanche to explore the possibilities;

*Developing proposals and business cases for replicating the success of the multinational European Air Transport Command (EATC) in other domains*⁸⁰

We can already gage a fair impression of what proposals are currently be being worked on. The High Representative has already named three “concrete models”;

- Investigate replicating the successful model of the multinational European Air Transport Command in Eindhoven in other areas in order to ensure increased efficiency and effectiveness of related capabilities (e.g. Surface Movement of Military Assets, Logistics at Sea and on Land).*
- Explore the creation of a European Medical Command with a view to enhance synergies and interoperability of the different services; work on a European logistic hub.*
- Develop proposals on a European barter mechanism (e.g. exchange of services) designed to optimise the use of existing capabilities*⁸¹

The list provides strong confirmation that Paris and Berlin are central to what is coming out of the EEAS. The Franco-German proposals that seem to have been deliberately leaked in September included the creation of a new command centre for coordinating medical assistance, a logistics centre for sharing “strategic” assets and specifically air-lift capacities, and the sharing of satellite imagery. Consequently, we might also predict a push on other aspects of that joint document, in particular the attempt to create an EU military esprit de corps by creating a new military academy, with the fall back compromise already planned of having European courses at national

⁷⁸ European Parliament Report on the European Defence Union, TA-(2016)0435, Recital A

⁷⁹ State of the Union Address, Jean-Claude Juncker, 14 September 2016

⁸⁰ Council conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence, 14009/16, 14 November 2016, p10

⁸¹ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p23

military schools. The model and trajectory of the EU Police College may lend itself as a precedent.⁸²

An area policy drafters clearly have an eye on is the establishment of a permanent EU military Headquarters (or multiple HQs) for assets deployed under an EU flag. Juncker identified the objective in September 2016, claiming it was undermining operational efficiency.⁸³ MEPs stridently of course concurred, since standing EU battlegroups would only be independent of nation states if they reported directly to the EU for its chain of command. The EP stated it

encourages Member States to establish multinational forces within the PESCO framework, and make those forces available to the CSDP; underlines the importance and necessity of all Member States' implication in a permanent and efficient structured cooperation; believes that the Council should normally entrust the implementation of the task of peacekeeping, conflict prevention and strengthening international security to those multinational forces; suggests that both the policymaking processes at EU level and the national processes should be designed to allow a rapid crisis response; is convinced that the EU battlegroup system should be renamed and used and further developed to that end, politically, in modularity and with effective funding; encourages the set-up of an EU Operational Headquarters as a precondition for effective planning, command and control of common operations; underlines that PESCO is open to all Member States⁸⁴

With an eye for what was more immediately achievable (rather than what MEPs were seeking to generate over the longer term), Mogherini called rather for a mechanism to make better use of existing HQs that would be offered to the EU on a rotational basis.⁸⁵ The Council went for this more limited step, while adding it

Welcomes the current contribution of national and multinational structures to CSDP (such as EUROCORPS and EUROGENDFOR). It encourages Member States to reinforce cooperation of their relevant multinational structures/initiatives with the EU.⁸⁶

The Scale of New Ambitions

It is the nature of the institutions for the European Parliament to be most visionary and set out the long terms prospects of EU integration; for the institutions of the Commission to set out medium term arguments on what powers they aspire to in order to achieve certain goals; and for the Council (by dint of barter and compromise, but only ever in one direction) to concede gradually and incrementally in the short term to what is being proposed.

So it is with the latest set of proposals, counter-proposals and agreements over the EU Common Defence policy.

The High Representative expresses the ambition to rationalise defence planning between EU member states as a matter of efficiency and credibility

⁸² "France and Germany propose EU 'defence union'", EUObserver, 12 September 2016

⁸³ State of the Union Address, Jean-Claude Juncker, 14 September 2016

⁸⁴ European Parliament Report on the European Defence Union, TA-(2016)0435

⁸⁵ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p6

⁸⁶ Council conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence, 14009/16, 14 November 2016, p12

Europe's strategic autonomy entails the ability to act and cooperate with international and regional partners wherever possible, while being able to operate autonomously when and where necessary. This adds to the EU's credibility vis-à-vis partners. There is no contradiction between the two. Member States have a 'single set of forces' which they can use nationally or in multilateral frameworks. The development of Member States' capabilities through CSDP and using EU instruments will thus also help to strengthen capabilities potentially available to the United Nations and NATO.⁸⁷

Of itself, this is perfectly rational, and were it the end of it few objections could be made. The problem is that EU policies are made with the rip tide of integration persistently cutting away the bather's feet. The European Parliament report sought to remove the ambiguity of the timeframe on when defence integration will happen (there is an element of conditionality in the treaties, but the inclusion of the prospect of a Common Defence within them confirms it as a legitimate and permanent aspiration and direction). Thus MEPs remove the conditional and turn it into a more indicative and unambiguous tense, stating "the Member States are empowered to build a European Security and Defence Union that should lead in due time to the establishment of the European Armed Forces". Underlining their impatience, they begin,

whereas the security and defence-building capacity enshrined in the Treaties is far from optimal; whereas the European institutions may also have a very significant role to play in launching political initiatives; whereas Member States have so far shown a lack of will to build a European Security and Defence Union, fearing that it would become a threat to their national sovereignty⁸⁸

Even the EEAS report spoke in terms of "a vision of Member States working together to enhance their political solidarity and mutual assistance, based on a shared strategic interest in providing security for EU citizens while contributing to peace beyond our borders."⁸⁹ But MEPs themselves are keen to engage on the full panoply of interventionism; "joint disarmament operations, humanitarian and rescue tasks, military advice and assistance tasks, conflict prevention and peacekeeping tasks, and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking and post-conflict stabilisation," to which is added counter-terrorism activity which implies a possible interest in deploying 'EU' Special Forces overseas as well.⁹⁰

MEPs recognise that EU Missions (with which a post-Brexit UK may be affiliated) act as an accelerant towards defence integration. As such, too close a structural association would generate a potential risk to the UK's strategic independence post-Brexit, since the EP

Stresses that the launching of CSDP missions, such as EUNAVFOR MED, contributes to the achievement of a European Defence Union; calls on the EU to continue and step up missions of this kind⁹¹

A further opportunity spotted by MEPs lies in the development of the Mutual Defence Clause. Strikingly, their proposal appears to allow future recipients of support to dictate what support they

⁸⁷ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p4

⁸⁸ European Parliament Report on the European Defence Union, TA-(2016)0435, Recital D.

⁸⁹ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p14

⁹⁰ European Parliament Report on the European Defence Union, TA-(2016)0435, Para 2

⁹¹ European Parliament Report on the European Defence Union, TA-(2016)0435, para 29

are going to get. It would also mean that one fifth of the national defence budget would be managed by the EDA.⁹²

cui bono in all this? MEPs naturally have a great deal to gain, since Defence is an issue where they have limited play, as symptomized by the minor condition of their relevant committee. Indeed, it is a marker of motive and gain that MEPs seek to change all of that, contending it

*Believes that Parliament should play a prominent role in the future European Defence Union, and considers, therefore, that the Subcommittee on Security and Defence should become a fully-fledged parliamentary committee*⁹³

The EP Report has limited concrete force But it does display where across the EU institutions those looking at the horizon are seeking to plant themselves in due time. Governments come and Governments go, but the European institutions are enduringly integrationist.

Association and Competition

A recurring thread is the statement that these plans do not constitute a threat to NATO. Far less expressly stated is the intention that any changes should not affect the independent status of the defence capabilities of member states. Both are, however, under threat as a consequence of this increased drive on EU Common Defence, which itself has come about largely as a means of self-identification by EU member states in reaction to Brexit.

The High Representative's proposals recognised that the heads of government she reports to include a number who support NATO, to the extent that they are concerned that EU military integration poses a genuine threat to it. Her wording constitutes a balancing act, aspiring towards greater collective EU capability, in the context of missions where NATO might not be interested in engaging (or by inference, where EU states aspire to take the political lead rather than allow the Americans in). Thus,

*Europe's strategic autonomy entails the ability to act and cooperate with international and regional partners wherever possible, while being able to operate autonomously when and where necessary.*⁹⁴

It is, however, significant that the explanatory section on strengthening a distinct EU military component as detachable elements of NATO frameworks also focuses heavily on deployability on other missions flagged by institutions, particularly the OSCE and the UN. For its part, the Council agreed, adding as a strategic partner on an apparent par with NATO the African Union.⁹⁵ This concept of corporate partnership between the EU and NATO emerges in the Council direction;

the Council underlines that work is also to be taken forward in a complementary way on the implementation of the Joint Declaration signed in Warsaw by the leaders of the

⁹² European Parliament Report on the European Defence Union, TA-(2016)0435, para 40

⁹³ European Parliament Report on the European Defence Union, TA-(2016)0435, para 42

⁹⁴ Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, Office of the High Representative, 14392/16, 14 November 2016, p17

⁹⁵ Council conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence, 14009/16, 14 November 2016, p6

*institutions of the EU and NATO, in full respect of the decision-making autonomy of both organisations*⁹⁶

EU autonomy (as opposed to the sovereignty of national governments) – “with due respect for the autonomy of EU decision-making and the principle of inclusiveness” - is repeated a few pages later and is clearly considered to be an important principle.⁹⁷

By far the greatest threat however arises from the prospect of pooling resulting in the loss of national capability. MEPs were typically up front about this, even if no one else has been, as it

*Notes that all Member States have difficulties in maintaining a very broad range of defensive capabilities, mostly because of financial constraints; calls, therefore, for more coordination and clearer choices about which capabilities to maintain, so that Member States can specialise in certain capabilities*⁹⁸

This development is unlikely to be consequential for countries with limited interests or capability in deploying globally; it will also not be of concern to those countries, like France and Germany, who are psychologically prepared to form a joint venture and make efficiency gains at the cost of strategic capabilities, since they envisage making ever closer union a viable political project. This is, unhappily, at the top of the EU agenda, since France and Germany have declared they wish to see their proposals implemented by “2017 to 2018”.⁹⁹

Involving itself in that scheme, unfortunately, once again leaves the United Kingdom at a disadvantage. At least with Brexit that generates an opportunity to avoid excessive entanglement, and settle terms that protect British independence

Conclusions

The United Kingdom is leaving the European Union. It is not our part to strive to burn barnyard buildings as we depart. But we are within our rights to actively encourage EU partners to pause to reflect on post-Brexit cooperation from a rational and pragmatic viewpoint; and to avoid new liabilities for us arising from decisions made in the meantime.

The EU 27 (and in particular, Paris and Berlin) are of course perfectly at liberty to develop EU capabilities in any way that they want, and can agree on. The decision by the United Kingdom to pull out of the EU no doubt is allowing planners to move ahead faster and in different ways than if we had voted to stay in. It also shows that the EU has been and is determined to drive on taking over sovereign responsibilities as it moves to ever closer union, and that our comments in the run-up to Brexit were correct in that assessment – and the British people were right to vote the way they did. The variable was only ever time, never direction.

If some other EU states are prepared to give up their sovereignty and allow all these proposals to go through, then that is their decision – and it is not up to us to gainsay that. And if (and it is a big if) the EU can in the end generate and deliver greater fighting power – and show that they are

⁹⁶ Council conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence, 14009/16, 14 November 2016, p3

⁹⁷ Council conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence, 14009/16, 14 November 2016, p6

⁹⁸ European Parliament Report on the European Defence Union, TA-(2016)0435, para 13

⁹⁹ “France and Germany propose EU 'defence union'”, EUObserver, 12 September 2016

actually prepared to use it on sustained operations – then it is also not our part to disparage that. If it supports greater continental security then that is a good thing overall.

Yet it is also proper for London to play the role it has always played in the EU while we are within it; that is to raise the question of whether any proposal is a considered one; to encourage colleagues to listen to other EU states that like us may diverge from the Paris-Berlin axis point of view; and to avoid any enduring entanglement to ourselves arising (perhaps even unexpectedly) from the small print.

As with other areas (most notably, over economic integration and making the Eurozone work), the EU faces a confliction between its intent and its capability. The EU is largely unprepared to engage in defence activity; to make it prepared requires a major effort to integrate. This applies to its industrial output, its strategic planning (and thus the geopolitical strategy of individual member states), the equipment and training of its armed forces, and indeed the very existence of formed bodies.

Veterans for Britain Board Member Major General Tim Cross explains the conundrum now facing EU planners in these terms;

whilst these are in some ways admirable intentions I reckon the chances of most of them happening are pretty slim. These sorts of ideas reflect some put forward by Lord Carrington back in the 1960's and by several others since – they failed then because of National Interests, which may have changed a bit since then with developments in the EU but I for one am not convinced that those national interests have changed sufficiently to actually make a significant difference.

No doubt States will sign up to the intent – and attempt to secure some of the funds for their industries – but things will only change significantly if/when EU integration is developed much further – which is of course the aim of Junker and others.

To make EU defence integration work requires a level of commitment that is not in the UK's national interest. It requires the dismantling and export of parts of its defence industry, and thus the loss of strategic production capability (to be replaced by a dependence on other states). It necessitates the generation of a new geo-political outlook, and thus the weakening of old ties and commitments. It demands a new loyalty for our armed forces towards the Brussels command chain rather than to the Queen via the instructions of her Government.

None of these are in the UK interest for the efficiency and trade benefits that may be gained, and only providing UK negotiators are good at trading closure of one factory for expansion of another.

A number of these proposals are founded on perfectly reasonable intentions. Collectively, European countries do not provide the same degree of deployable effectiveness as the United States. There is a great deal of duplication of effort, which is particularly felt where it is happening in states least likely to proactively contribute their assets in the common NATO cause. What these changes forget, though, is a lesson bitterly learnt many times in the past. While “efficiency” and the avoidance of duplication sound good on paper, the reality and uncertainty of war is that duplication and redundancy are vital both in capabilities and in defence industrial production. The European Commission, with an eye on becoming its own monopoly provider, seemingly finds this strategic reality hard to admit.

Brexit has generated an opportunity to advance the EU's Defence Union, perhaps by a decade. It would have happened anyway at a slower, less perceptible rate. The referendum event has provided the UK with an opportunity to make a clear untethering of itself from these nascent and

dangerous EU defence structures; and at the same time alerts pro-NATO countries within the EU of the need to plug what was a slow but still fatal leak.

The UK Government for as long as it remains a member of the EU should be robust in standing up to the Franco-German proposals where other states seek to generate a blocking vote, allowing all European governments time to patiently consider the implications and the general direction. The age of President Trump is upon us, and an opportunity to revitalise the NATO alliance through the aspirations of national independence and a commitment to defence that's not done on the cheap.

Biographies



Major-General Julian H A Thompson CB OBE is the Chairman of Veterans for Britain. He served in the Royal Marines for 34 years in the Near Middle East, the Far East, Europe and Northern Ireland.

During the Falklands War, he commanded 3 Commando Brigade.

He is a graduate of the Royal College of Defence Studies; and of the British Army Staff College, where he subsequently instructed. He retired as a Major General and is a Visiting Professor at Kings College London.

He is the author of a number of books, including *No Picnic: 3 Commando Brigade in the Falklands*; *Ready for Anything: The Parachute Regiment at War 1940-82*; and *The Lifblood of War: Logistics in Armed Conflict*.



Dr Lee Rotherham (@DrBrexit) is the Executive Director of Veterans for Britain. He has been an adviser to John Major's whipless rebels, Eurosceptic MEPs, three Shadow Foreign Secretaries, the Conservative delegate to the Convention on the Future of Europe, a delegate to the Council of Europe, and government ministers.

He was Head of Opposition Research for the No Campaign in the AV Referendum, and Director of Special Projects at Vote Leave, the designated pro-withdrawal campaign during the 2016 referendum.

Outside of Westminster he has worked in publishing, teaching, heritage, and in Defence. Lee is a reservist in the British Army, and has served on three overseas deployments.

About Veterans for Britain

VETERANS

— for —

BRITAIN

Veterans for Britain is led by ex-Armed Forces personnel, but welcomes support from everyone who cares about the UK's autonomy, particularly in defence.

It campaigned during the referendum for a Leave vote, and now seeks to make that a practical reality by ensuring that UK links with the EU are not constrictive or damaging to the

country's strategic interests.

The UK and its Armed Forces would be freer, more effective, under more democratic control, and more able to retain their distinctive capabilities and ethos if they were without the impositions being applied by the EU in defence command, defence structures, operations, procurement, intelligence and the development of new technology.

We believe it is essential to maintain and where necessary re-establish the United Kingdom's autonomy in defence in the context of its pre-existing alliances and to ensure it is directly and solely accountable to the UK Parliament.

You can sign up to the campaign at www.veteransforbritain.uk to keep in touch with us.

Or you can follow us on twitter @VeteransBritain.



Cover image: Dr Lee Rotherham