

THE EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY: THREAT TO NATO

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At the Helsinki Summit last year, a 65,000-strong European defence corps was created: a European army that is to be "autonomous", subject to majority voting and which will have an international and not merely a European ambit. Speaking well before Helsinki, in March 1998, Tony Blair issued an unequivocal pledge on which he has now reneged. "Britain", said the Prime Minister, "will never put at risk NATO, the foundation of our security. Britain, France and many others insist that there is no European Commission role in military matters. No country will ever yield up control of their own armed forces."

Contradicting Mr Blair's remark is the fact that the Amsterdam Treaty, with its roots in Maastricht, has already undermined the UK's control of its own forces - submitting their deployment to decisions made by majority voting at the European level. Title V of the Treaty states that, in respect of matters concerning the so-called Petersburg tasks (peacekeeping and peacemaking), majority voting applies once a common European Union strategy has been devised. Once any such strategy is agreed, the UK must indeed, like any other EU Member State, "yield up" control of her armed forces.

The only remedy for those uncomfortable with this scenario is (as it is for all aspects of European integration to which the UK population so objects) to renegotiate the treaty base from which it derives. Applicant states, including Turkey, have themselves many reasons, once admitted, to overhaul the *acquis communautaire* - which they must now incorporate in its entirety. Most applicant states, for example, will certainly want to renegotiate the flawed doctrine of "flexibility" or "enhanced co-operation", as the European Commission describes it, by which a Franco-German dominated inner core of states set the rules that all other states are eventually forced to accept. Unless flexibility is removed from the agenda, applicant states including Turkey will be forced one day to swallow the half-digested EU defence policy now confined to a select few - swapping proven defence under NATO for an under-funded and failed defence under the EU.

The Western European Union, a defence organisation, is already being folded into the EU. From France's perspective, the move is designed exactly so that Europe might one-day jettison NATO altogether. Why else would the empire-building Javier Solana opt to leave NATO to spearhead Europe's defence ambitions?

By any realistic measure, Europe is far from solving the lack of co-ordination that hamstrung its policy and action in the Gulf, Bosnia and in Kosovo. Indeed, it was Germany's unilateral decision to recognise Croatia that contributed to the problems that beset the former Yugoslavia throughout the 1990s. This fact did not stop Germany's foreign minister describing his country's recognition of Croatia as "the greatest victory of German foreign policy since 1945."

The Franco-German summit late last year contained declarations, not only on a shared military intelligence satellite (Syracuse 3) and a Rapid Deployment Corps, but also for a heavy-lift capacity. Dr Jonathan Eyal of the Royal United Services Institute has estimated that, excepting the unlikely prospect of America loaning Europe a fleet of Galaxy aircraft, acquiring heavy-lift capacity would cost the European taxpayer £62 billion a year for ten years. No wonder Brussels is pushing for tax harmonisation.

Belgium	2.8	2.0	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.5	
Denmark	2.1	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.6	
France	3.8	3.5	3.3	3.1	3.0	3.0	2.8	
Germany	4	3.0	2.2	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.5
Italy	2.3	2.1	2.0	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.0	
Luxembourg		1.0	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9
Netherlands		2.9	2.4	2.1	2.0	2.0	1.9	1.8
Norway	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.4	2.2	2.1	2.1	
Portugal	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.5	2.5	2.4	
Spain	2.2	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.3	
United Kingdom		4.5	3.8	3.4	3.1	3.0	2.8	2.7
NATO Europe		3.3	2.7	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.2
United States		6.3	4.9	4.3	4.0	3.7	3.5	3.3

France, moreover, remains committed to undermining NATO. Only in January did France side with China and Russia to argue that the Pentagon's proposed National Missile Defence system contravenes the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. A senior Pentagon official described the French position as "divisive", continuing: "[w]e took it very damn seriously when Europe was under threat from missiles which could not reach the United States."⁵ Despite it being only four years since France tested her own nuclear weapons in the face of near-universal condemnation, President Jacques Chirac even criticised the US Senate for failing to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. In sum, the European Union is at the same time groping towards common defence but not prepared to pay for it. Even were Europe successful in establishing a common defence force, past events suggest that the policy that that force would be called upon to implement would depart significantly from the UK's national interest. As Sir John Coles, head of the British Diplomatic Service from 1994 to 1997, points out:

"The ability to deploy sizeable, highly professional and well-equipped armed forces is a crucial element in British influence abroad. Should that ability ever become limited by the creation of European armed forces, subsuming national forces and subject to central EU direction, then British influence overseas would be sharply reduced."⁶

The broader point is that, as the EU develops, federalising reforms will ensure that fewer of its decisions require unanimity among its member states. Germany, as the largest and most powerful country in the Union, can expect its eastern neighbours in the final resort to vote with her, if only because they calculate that it is in their interests to maintain good relations with a state to which they are tied both by trade and company control.

As well as influencing its immediate neighbours, Germany's ownership of much of Russia's \$125.6 billion foreign debt gives it special influence in Moscow.⁷ With many European leaders wishing the EU ultimately to extend past the Ural Mountains, German influence in Russia may prove critical to the future direction of the entire Eurasian region. Whether Turkey and the UK are enfeebled members of, or outside counter-balances to this putative strategic alliance is, I submit, of the utmost importance to world security. Specifically, as a NATO member outside of the EU, the ESDP will deny Turkey its hitherto crucial role in European defence, despite it having the second largest army in NATO. In place of intimate involvement in European defence through NATO, Turkey will be offered only a "special consultation initiative"⁸ - Euro-speak meaning "nothing at all".

Excluding Turkey from European defence would be an affront to a nation that during the Cold War played such a pivotal part in the defence of Europe. Indeed, until 1962, US nuclear missiles stationed in Turkey were part of Europe's first-line of defence, whilst Turkey's resolutely pro-Western governments remained deaf to the Soviet threats which succeeded in intimidating so many other nations. The European Union's defence ambitions must not be allowed to prevent Turkey from playing the vital defensive role that its geopolitical situation has awarded it. Like the UK, Turkey must continue to play this role on the world stage through NATO, rather than be excluded from and then absorbed into an under-funded, Franco-German dominated, and anti-American European defence union.

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- 1 Wall Street Journal, European edition, London, 28 January 1999, pp. 1-2.
 - 2 Sources: NATO Press Release M-DPC-2 (98) 147: 'Financial & Economic Data Relating to NATO Defence', Table 3 and earlier editions.
 - 3 1998 figures are estimates.
 - 4 These percentages have been calculated without taking into account the expenditure for Berlin.
 - 5 Daily Telegraph, London, 21 January 2000, p. 17.
 - 6 Sir John Coles, British Influence and the Euro, London: New Europe, 1999.
 - 7 'Global Development Finance', World Bank, Washington, 1999, pp.452-454.
 - 8 European Union Presidency Conclusions, July 2000.