
EU Defense: Development of the European Defense Space and Its Relation with NATO

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Abstract: *The European Union's Common Security and Defense Policy has often been associated with producing in the future a "real" common European Union army. However, many of the Member States of the EU are already a part of a defense alliance in the form of NATO. Consequently, what is the and what will the relationship be between these two organizations? This article provides a short overview of the relationship now and its potential future direction.*

Keywords: *CSDP, NATO, EU army, EU-NATO relationship.*

INTRODUCTION

During the War in Kosovo the ineptitude of the EU to tackle a crisis in what may be called its backyard was revealed and as a consequence it became a driving force for closer EU security and defense cooperation¹. On the other side of the Atlantic during this time, the Clinton administration looked favorably upon this type of development in the EU and encouraged an "ever closer Union"².

Since the early late 90s and early 2000s, the rhetoric has changed dramatically. In 2018, the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, is now calling for a "real EU army" to defend Europe against China, Russian and even the United States³. Macron's statement cannot be considered to be an exception either, as his statement echoes earlier statements made by the German Chancellor Angela Merkel calling for more independence from the United States in regards to defense⁴. Predictably on the other side of the Atlantic the President of the United States, Donald Trump labeled Macron's statements as insulting⁵.

Therefore, in the span of about 20 years the relationship between the EU and the United States, and in this context by extension NATO as the United States is the major military power behind NATO, has changed dramatically from a co-operative standpoint to almost an opposing stance.

Consequently, several important questions arise from this rhetoric, what is the present state of the common EU defense and would a divorce from NATO even be viable in the near future?

¹ Paul Cornish and Geoffrey Edwards "Beyond the EU/NATO dichotomy: the beginnings of a European strategic culture", *International Affairs* 77, no.3 (2001):588

² Caspar W. Weinberger "EU separate defense – a bad idea", *Forbes*, 3 April, 2000, 49

³ Eli Meixler, "French President Emmanuel Macron Calls for a 'European Army' to Defend Against China, Russia and the U.S.", *TIME*, November 7, 2018, <http://time.com/5446975/emmanuel-macron-european-army-russia-us/>

⁴ Jordan Fabian, Morgan Gsalter, "Merkel: Europe can no longer rely on US protection", *The Hill*, October 5, 2018, <https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/387067-merkel-europe-cant-count-on-us-to-protect-us-anymore>

⁵ Chris Stevenson, Jon Stone, "Trump attacks Macron's call for EU army to defend against US as 'very insulting'", *INDEPENDENT*, November 9, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/eu-army-trump-macron-france-europe-military-us-russia-china-defence-a8627176.html>

THE COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY (CSDP). ORIGINS AND OVERVIEW OF THE CSDP

The Saint-Malo Declaration of 1998 is seen by many as the launch pad for the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), however already at this stage the relationship it was to have with NATO was not entirely clear⁶. France and United Kingdom both had widely different interpretations of the meaning of "autonomy" in regards to NATO⁷. For France, autonomy meant independence from NATO strengthening the European political power, whereas for the UK it meant building up European military power to bring life to NATO⁸.

The UK has been known to slow the progress of the CSDP's development, however, with Brexit the UK seems to have paradoxically changed its position by making suggestions it would like to continue to be a part of the CSDP.⁹ Nonetheless, one might expect the French view on the autonomy in regards to NATO strengthen in the coming years, however, the situation is not so black and white as the development of the CSDP demonstrates.

After the St. Malo declaration at the Cologne Summit the European security and defense policy was launched which was subsequently changed to the CSDP under the Lisbon Treaty¹⁰. As to the Lisbon Treaty, the Security and Defense aspects are concentrated in Section 2 of the Treaty spanning from Articles 42 to 46 of the TEU, as well as Article 222 TFEU regarding the solidarity of the Union.

Consequently, an interpretation of the Treaty Articles is crucial to understanding the present state of the CSDP, for the Treaties form the primary law of the European Union. As to the method of Treaty interpretation, despite international customary law warranting an interpretation under Article 31 (and 32) of the VCLT, the situation is not always so simple in the EU¹¹. For example, in interpreting the Treaty compliance of the European Stability Mechanism the CJEU chose to interpret the situation not in accordance with international law but rather the political winds at the time¹². Therefore, the interpretation of the Treaty articles regarding the CSDP are mainly indicative as they may be interpreted contrary to their textual meaning in the future if sufficient political pressure is exerted.

Nonetheless, the key wordings of Article 42 include (2) whereby the CSDP "shall include the progressive framing of a common Union defense policy" which in turn "will lead to a common defense". From these wordings in accordance with Article 31 of the VCLT it is apparent that the objective of the CSDP is a common defense, and by that extension, what Macron may refer to as a "real EU army", at least eventually.

Furthermore, Article 42 (7) incorporates a more concrete collective defense provision, whereby if one MS is the "victim of armed aggression on its territory" other MS "shall have" an obligation of providing "aid and assistance by all means in their power". Interpreting this text in accordance with its ordinary meaning under Article 31 it is apparent that the other MS have, in case of an armed attack an obligation to provide all forms of assistance including military to the attacked MS. Considering the wording of "by all means in their power" attached

⁶ Chris J. Bickerton, Bastien Irondele, Anand Menon, "Security Co-operation beyond the nation-state: The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 49, no.1(2011):3

⁷ Ibid, p 3

⁸ Ibid, p 3

⁹ Federico Santopinto et al, CSDP after Brexit: the way forward(Belgium: European Parliament, 2018), 4

¹⁰ Bickerton, Irondele and Menon, "CSDP", 3

¹¹ Gunnar Beck, "The Court of Justice of the EU and the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties", *Yearbook of European Law* 35, no.1(2016):1

¹² Ibid, p 504

to the “aid and assistance”, the interpretation under Article 31 must include the deployment of troops and material provided the MS in question has a military under its control. Therefore, in effect this clause is not very different from NATO’s mutual defense obligation in Article 5, though Article 5 is more explicit as it references the use of armed force directly.

This “collective defense” provision of Article 42 (7) is complemented by Article 222, which provides for a “solidarity” obligation between the MS. More specifically, the article calls for “joint action” if a MS is the victim of a “terrorist attack or the victim of a natural disaster or a man-made disaster”. The term “man-made disaster” is broad and can include anything from a disaster at a Nuclear Power Plant to arguably, war, as the primary defining factor is that people i.e. “man-made” cause the disaster. Therefore, if put into the context of object and purpose of the Treaty under Article 31 it is not implausible to suggest that war is a “man-made disaster” that requires joint action, thereby reinforcing the message of Article 42 (7).

However, what of the relationship with NATO? Under Article 42 (2) it is additionally stated “this section shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defense policy” and “shall respect the obligations of certain Member States which see their common defense realized” with NATO and be “compatible with the common security and defense policy established within that framework”. Interpreting the above, it is evident that, at least when drafting the Lisbon treaty, the objective of the CSDP was not to replace NATO but rather complement it. This is evidenced by the exemptions made to the obligations certain MS have under their NATO membership, whereby Section 2 of the TEU shall not prejudice those obligations, therefore, placing the CSDP into a complementary or subservient role to the NATO obligations, that is to say, the EU CSDP obligations under this provision shall not override the NATO obligations.

Consequently, at least on paper, if interpreted in accordance with Article 31 and hence, in good faith in accordance with the ordinary meaning of the terms in their context and the object and purpose of the treaty, the EU primary law sets down a NATO friendly framework. However, as mentioned above the CJEU may later creatively interpret Section 2 of the TEU to fit a more anti-NATO political climate in the EU, or that the next iteration of the EU Treaties will be worded considerably less NATO friendly.

However, the “collective defense” provision of Article 42 (7) contains a caveat whereby “Commitments and cooperation in this area shall be consistent with commitments under” NATO “for the those states that are members of it”. Again this may be interpreted as suggesting that the NATO obligations may not be overruled by the provision of collective defense under Article 42 (7). Therefore, as not all EU MS are members of NATO, this creates a non-uniform framework for the application of CSDP provisions. This is due to the MS that are also NATO members being potentially able to, if they so desired, to not comply with the CSDP obligations by referring to a conflict with their NATO obligations. As a result, the Common Security Defense Policy may not be as “Common” as the EU would need it to be, in the case of conflicting obligations with NATO.

Since the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007, 2017 has been called a watershed moment for the CSDP by some owing to the numerous developments that took place, that may form the foundation for European security in the future¹³. In the field of joint research and development in 2017 the Preparatory Action for Defense Research and the European Defense Industrial

¹³ Nathalie Tocci, “Towards a European Security and Defence Union: Was 2017 a Watershed?”, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 56, (2018):135

Development Program (EDIDP) regulation were launched.¹⁴ In addition the Coordinated Annual Review on Defense (CARD) trial run was started to better co-operate the national defense budgets as well as increase transparency in this respect¹⁵.

Furthermore, 25 MS of the EU notified the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to activate the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).¹⁶ PESCO may go as far as to develop a single European armored vehicle as well as one of its most concrete impacts besides developing the joint capabilities of the MS armies. As a final note the first permanent European military command was established¹⁷. Consequently, 2017 was a busy year for the CSDP development and may well have long lasting effects on the CSDP in the EU, however, as the developments are so recent at the time of writing it remains to be seen what effect they will have in practice. Certainly, the development of a successful common European armored vehicle would be a tangible success for the CSDP, which may increase enthusiasm towards the project. However, equally if such a project is undertaken and the resulting vehicle is the product is akin to a soup with too many cooks, it may similarly spoil the appetites of the MS to develop military equipment together.

CSDP AND NATO

On the surface, the relationship between the EU, and by that extension the CSDP, and NATO has been clear, the two organizations have a “Strategic Partnership” contained in the 2002 Berlin plus agreement¹⁸. However, it is commonly understood that one of the key features of NATO is the guarantee of defense among allies, of which the United States is the single most important provider¹⁹.

Therefore, the relationship between NATO and the EU/CSDP is determined not only be the actions of the EU/CSDP but the United States. The United States that may be described as the last superpower²⁰ is generally speaking not interested in being an equal partner, but the leading partner in any coalition, certainly one between NATO and the EU²¹. This is further reinforced by the disproportionate contribution the United States makes into NATO, by providing 71.1 % of the alliance’s combined defense spending²², which naturally gives the US a more powerful voice. For NATO is certainly not an alliance of equals, but rather may be more aptly described as a collection of nations allying themselves with the United States and relying on it for protection. Therefore, as a result any discussion about the EU’s relationship with NATO will inevitably involve United States’ politics and their desires.

¹⁴ Ibid, p 135

¹⁵ Ibid, p 135

¹⁶ Ibid, p 135

¹⁷ Ibid, p 135

¹⁸ Simon J. Smith and Carmen Gebhard, “EU–NATO relations: running on the fumes of informed deconfliction”, *European Security* 26, no.3(2017):304

¹⁹ Ibid, p 304

²⁰ Hubert Muckel and Paul C. Jussel, *NATO and EU/European Defense initiatives: competitive or complimentary?*(Pennsylvania: US Army, 2006), 10

²¹ Petros Dimetriou, “NATO&CSDP: Can the EU afford to go solo?”, *Cogent Social Sciences* 2(2016):4

²² Holly Ellyatt, “Trump’s NATO criticism is ‘valid,’ Europe isn’t spending enough on defense, UK ex-minister says”, *CNBC*, July 11, 2018, <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/07/11/trumps-nato-criticism-is-valid-europe-isnt-spending-enough-on-def.html>

Consequently, one must continuously remember that as the EU/CSDP power grows the more it will begin to rival the global influence of the United States²³. Therefore, the relationship may become increasingly strained in the future if the CSDP's military power will begin to rival that of the United States'.

With that said, during the 2013 special summit on the CSDP the call was for more co-operations between the CSDP and NATO²⁴. A sentiment, which was echoed in the 2016 European Global Strategy, which aimed to "deepen" the relationship between the two alongside the Joint Declaration, signed in Warsaw two weeks later²⁵. Consequently, the calls by European leaders going as far as to say defense against the United States are quite clearly a recent phenomenon, for it is clear from the above that the relationship, at least on paper, has been one of co-operation.

Ironically, this shift may have its roots in 2016 as well with the presidency of Donald Trump, who has called for a cessation of the United States paying for Europe's defense²⁶. It must be stated that Mr. Trump's frustrations are not unfounded, as only four European member states of NATO, meet the agreed 2% minimum GDP defense spending agreed in 2006.²⁷ It is alarming that one of these four is the United Kingdom who is evidently intending to leave the Union, and despite the uncertainty raised earlier likely the CSDP as well. That would mean that the only 3 EU MS meeting the 2% NATO spending target are Greece, Estonia and Poland.

The notable omissions from the 2 % spending target are both France and Germany, which are held to be key for a credible CSDP, as they would form the Franco-German engine to power it²⁸. This fact has not escaped the notice of many other notable individuals besides Mr. Trump, such as MIT international relations professor Barry Rosen who in 2014 called for a 10-year gradual US withdrawal from NATO²⁹. His concerns were similar to Trump's, the alliance is simply not cost-effective and for the US the costs outweigh the benefits, even other US presidential candidates such as Bernie Sanders echoed this motion³⁰.

As a result, there is considerable underlying as well as sometimes-overt tension in the relationship between NATO and the EU/CSDP, which may result in a sort of a lose-lose situation for the EU. If the CSDP fails to become powerful enough to not be considered a free-riding ally of NATO, the US may well withdraw from NATO citing its financials, leaving the EU and by that extension, Europe vulnerable.

On the other hand, if the CSDP succeeds and becomes a powerful rival to the United States the relationship between the two organizations may suffer nonetheless as the present supremacy of the US will be challenged. Therefore, arguably a moderately successful CSDP would be the most fruitful ground for a co-operative relationship with NATO in the future; however, with the political rhetoric becoming increasingly opposing, this modest aim may not be what the EU will set as its target.

²³ Muckel and Jussel, *NATO and EU/European Defense initiatives*, 11

²⁴ Joylon Howorth, "Strategic autonomy and EU-NATO cooperation: threat or opportunity for transatlantic defence relations?", *Journal of European Integration* 40, no. 5(2018):525

²⁵ *Ibid*, p 525

²⁶ *Ibid*, p 528

²⁷ Dimetriou, "NATO&CSDP", 9

²⁸ Tocci, "Towards a European Security and Defence Union: Was 2017 a Watershed?", 134

²⁹ Howorth, "Strategic autonomy and EU-NATO", p 529

³⁰ *Ibid*, p 529

THE UKRAINE CRISIS AND A JOINT FAILURE?

The Crisis that began in 2014 in Ukraine has already been heralded as a failure from NATO owing to its lack of ability to deal with the Russian aggression.^{31,32} Obviously, this assessment is not without its caveats as Ukraine is not a NATO member and therefore not formally a part of the defense alliance. However, there had been a widespread notion that Ukraine will join NATO such as at the Bucharest Summit where allied leaders agreed that Ukraine would become a NATO Member in the future³³.

However, there was backpedalling on the part of Ukraine in 2010 regarding its NATO membership and there was no formal invitation from Ukraine for NATO assistance³⁴. Nonetheless, some state that the crisis revealed decision-making problems within NATO regarding the crisis, which was initially thought to be a mere small incident, which proved to be wrong when Russia annexed Crimea, by which time it was too late³⁵. To make matters worse, European NATO member states had pushed for less defense spending owing to the 2008 crisis and the US had begun to shift its focus towards Asia, which resulted in a storm of circumstances that left NATO looking weak on the global stage³⁶.

However, to say that the EU came out any better would be a false. The Common Security and Foreign Policy of the EU was far from common during the crisis³⁷. The flagrant violations of the “solidarity” of the EU MS was quite appalling, the UK sold sniper rifles, ammunition, drones and laser technology to Russia while criticizing France for the planned sale of the ship Mistral to Russia³⁸. This was additionally complemented by the internal bickering of the MS regarding the response towards Russia, with the severity of the actions to be taken being a highly divisive topic³⁹.

As if the situation could not get worse, according to the Ukrainian press, the supplying of weapons to the conflict was very confused among the EU MS as well⁴⁰. The UK, Germany, France, the Czech Republic, Austria, Italy, Greece and Cyprus provided weapons to Russia while Poland, Finland, the Czech Republic, the UK and Lithuania delivered weapons to Ukraine⁴¹. While supplying both sides may be an apt business strategy for the EU, it is certainly not a moral or unified strategy. As a result, the EU in effect supplied both sides of the conflict and did not provide a unified response, which one might expect under a Common Security and Foreign Policy. Needless to say, this makes the EU and by that extension the CSFP and CSDP look weak and divided on the international arena.

Therefore, neither NATO nor the EU demonstrated their finesse in dealing with military aggression on European soil. This failure brings into question the potential success of the CSDP in the future as a cohesive, unified and capable force on the international stage.

³¹ Hoffmann, T., & Chochia, A. (2018). The institution of citizenship and practices of passportization in Russia's European Neighborhood Policies, 'Russia and the EU Spaces of Interaction, Abingdon: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 223-237.

³² Isaac Kfir, "NATO's Paradigm Shift: Searching for a Traditional Security–Human Security Nexus", *Contemporary Security Policy* 36, no.2(2015):222

³³ Ibid, p 223

³⁴ Ibid, p 223

³⁵ Ibid, p 223

³⁶ Ibid, p 223

³⁷ Ondrej Filipec, "(In)efficiency of EU Common Foreign and Security Policy: Ukraine, Brexit, Trump and beyond", *Slovak Journal of Political Sciences* 17, no. 3-4(2017):284

³⁸ Ibid, p 284

³⁹ Ibid, p 284

⁴⁰ Ibid, p 284

⁴¹ Ibid, p 284

CREDIBILITY AND VIABILITY OF A NATO INDEPENDENT EU CSDP

As Kofi Annan once stated “You can do a lot with diplomacy, but you can do a lot more with diplomacy backed up with firmness and force”⁴², consequently, for an EU army and by that extension the CSDP to be effective, it must have credible military force behind it. This is especially true if any semblance of Macron’s vision of a “real EU army” that could protect Europe from China, Russia or the United States is to be chased after.

As expressed by the Americans above regarding the European states free-riding on their defense, the state of the European militaries appears far from ideal. During the crisis in Kosovo for example, the United States flew 60 % of all sorties and 80 % of strike sorties and the European forces were heavily dependent on US intelligence⁴³. Memories such as these leave long-lasting impressions, which must be erased by operational successes by the EU/CSDP forces, if they are to be taken seriously by other global powers.

Germany especially has been the subject of very unflattering headlines regarding its military. Which is a huge concern if a Franco-German engine would be driving the CSDP in the future.

The headlines have included the German military resorting to the use of broomsticks in NATO exercises to cover-up the lack of machine guns in 2015⁴⁴. Which is barely the tip of the iceberg, as almost a third were missing, not to mention 41 % of their handguns, three-quarters of their night vision equipment and the Germans were using ordinary Mercedes vans as replacements for armored personnel carriers⁴⁵.

Similarly, in late 2017, once the scourge of the Atlantic, the entire German U-boat fleet was out of action, as all six need repairs⁴⁶. The situation became more embarrassing in 2018 when the German navy refused to commission their new frigates owing to their multiple faults⁴⁷ and a report stating that the armed forces as a whole were less ready for war than ever⁴⁸. Consequently, Germany can be held to be a prime example of the type of NATO “free-rider” the United States has grown increasingly tired of, as the Germans only spend 1.2 % of their GDP on their military⁴⁹.

On the European level, the situation is not much better as the defense spending of the EU countries dropped from 2.8 % of their GDP in 1988 to an average of 1.5 % in recent times, which does not compare favorably to e.g. Russia 5 % GDP⁵⁰. Therefore, the abysmal situation with the German military may be representative of a much wider problem throughout the EU MS, which must certainly be addressed if the CSDP is to be taken seriously globally. For it is unlikely that future Russian aggression will be deterred by the use of EU broomsticks.

⁴² Ibid, p 286

⁴³ Cornish and Edwards, “Beyond the EU/NATO dichotomy”, p 588

⁴⁴ Justin Huggler, “German army used broomsticks instead of guns during training”, *The Telegraph*, February 18, 2018, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/germany/11420627/German-army-used-broomsticks-instead-of-guns-during-training.html>.

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ Associated Press, “Germany’s entire submarine fleet is now out of action”, *Business Insider*, 20 October, 2018, <http://uk.businessinsider.com/ap-germanys-entire-u-boat-fleet-is-out-of-action-2017-10>

⁴⁷ Robert H. Charette, “New German Warship Fails Sea Trials Due to Tech Woes”, *IEEE Spectrum*, February 7, 2018, <https://spectrum.ieee.org/riskfactor/computing/it/new-german-frigate-fails-tests>

⁴⁸ Associate Free Press “Underequipped German army ever less ready for battle, damning report concludes”, *The Local.DE*, February 20, 2018, <https://www.thelocal.de/20180220/underequipped-german-army-ever-less-ready-for-battle-damning-report-concludes>

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Filipec, “(In)efficiency of EU Common Foreign and Security Policy”, p 287

However, even Russia's military budget, albeit shrouded in some mystery as to its exact size⁵¹, pales in comparison to that of the United States, which spent 686.9 billion USD on defense in 2017⁵². To put this in context, Germany only spent around 45 billion USD on its defense in 2017 with France hovering around the same number and the UK spent 55 billion USD⁵³. Therefore, to even nearly match the United States' military spending through an "EU army" would require a massive effort from the EU Member States, as the total for all the MS for defense adds to about 200 billion⁵⁴.

Therefore, regardless if the EU aims for strategic autonomy from NATO or a co-operative role with NATO, it would seem that in either case a substantial increase in the defense spending of the MS is in order. For it is unlikely that the United States, and hence the major defense provider of NATO, will continue to pay for a charade where only the US with very few exceptions is the only one meeting the agreed obligations.

This situation is made worse if the United Kingdom decides to stay completely outside of the CSDP and opts to leave the EU with a "hard" Brexit. It is no secret that the UK military is one of the biggest in Europe, and as established above one of the few that actually meets the NATO spending targets. As a result the disappearance of the British military entirely from the CSDP would be a blow felt deeply in the present state of affairs. As for example Germany is in no position to take the UK's place in terms of defense spending as it has stated to only reach a defense spending of 1.5 % of its GDP by 2024⁵⁵.

A further consideration is the fact that there may be a resulting power imbalance within the EU and the CSDP. This is due to the fact that out of all the European militaries only the UK and France have nuclear weapons⁵⁶. Consequently, if the UK were out of the equation, this would mean that France would have considerable leverage over the rest of the EU MS, as it is the only member with nuclear capabilities. This has not gone unnoticed in Germany, as there is a serious debate about equipping the nation with nuclear capabilities⁵⁷.

Nonetheless, in the near future if the EU/CSDP would divorce itself from NATO, however unrealistic this may be, and the UK separates entirely from the CSDP, the French will be in a favorable position to dictate its policies owing to its nuclear capabilities to the rest of the Union. Thus, the resulting power imbalance is no trivial concern, for it would likely only add further fuel to the euro skepticism of smaller EU nations that they are merely dominated by the more powerful MS.

⁵¹ Vladimir Jushkin, "What is Hidden in Russia's Military Budget", RKK ICDS, May 25, 2018, <https://icds.ee/what-is-hidden-in-russias-military-budget/>

⁵² Holly Ellyatt, "Trump's NATO criticism is 'valid,' Europe isn't spending enough on defense, UK ex-minister says", CNBC, July 11, 2018, <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/07/11/trumps-nato-criticism-is-valid-europe-isnt-spending-enough-on-def.html>.

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ "How much is spent on defence in EU?", Eurostat, Accessed 20 November, 2018, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20180518-1?inheritRedirect=true>

⁵⁵ Holly Ellyatt, "Trump's NATO criticism is 'valid,' Europe isn't spending enough on defense, UK ex-minister says", CNBC, July 11, 2018, <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/07/11/trumps-nato-criticism-is-valid-europe-isnt-spending-enough-on-def.html>.

⁵⁶ Matthew Karnitschnig, "German bomb debate goes nuclear", POLITICO, March 8, 2018, <https://www.politico.eu/article/german-bomb-debate-goes-nuclear-nato-donald-trump-defense-spending/>.

⁵⁷ Ibid

CONCLUSION

The development of a “real EU army” has taken considerable steps in the span of a relatively few years, notably in 2017. While the long-term results of these developments remains to be seen, it demonstrates the will and ambition of the EU to develop the CSDP into a respectable and formidable entity.

However, the reality of the force behind the CSDP, that is to say the European militaries, is at this stage appears quite dismal. Significant investments must be made into the military spending of the EU MS, which is aided by the joint research and development framework that has been developed especially in 2017. Nonetheless, the fact remains that as of this moment there does not appear to be enough operational capability and force behind the CSDP for it to truly become a force to reckon with on the global stage. This is further reinforced by the poor demonstration of the “unity” and cohesion of the EU MS during the 2014 Ukrainian crisis where the EU MS response was far from unified.

Due to these factors, despite the increasingly opposing political rhetoric between the EU and the United States, and by that extension, NATO, as of this moment the EU simply does not have the capacity to divorce itself from NATO or the United States. Consequently, for the near future the relationship between EU and NATO ought to be, from the EU perspective that of the “strategic partnership” agreed in Berlin for right now Europe needs NATO more than NATO (that is to say, the United States) needs Europe. The EU is not capable of forming a credible defense for Europe on its own against an increasingly aggressive Russia, and certainly the thought of a credible defense against the United States as Macron called for is a fantasy at this stage. Therefore, it is in the EU’s best interest in the short-term is to develop the CSDP into an entity that is capable of being a credible strategic partner to NATO, and only later if the need or desire eventually arises in the distant future, a credible global entity on its own.

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